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**Research Article****GENDER ROLES IN DECISION-MAKING ACROSS THE GENERATION AND ETHNICITY****D. Devkota\* and K. N. Pyakuryal**

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**ABSTRACT**

A study was conducted in Khairahani VDC of Chitwan district during 2007 to 2010 to compare and analyze gender roles in relation to agriculture and household decisions across the generations and ethnicity. This study employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches for data collection using household survey, focus group discussion, and case study. A reconnaissance survey was done to help determine sample households. Accordingly, 150 Tharu households and 181 non-Tharu households were purposively identified and used in the study by following a standard questionnaire survey. A total of 331 households and 662 individuals covering both Tharu and non-Tharu were interviewed across the old and young generation of respective ethnicity, and their responses were analyzed in terms of level of involvement in decision-making process at the household level. Old generation people were those having 50 years and above age whereas the young generation was defined as those between the ages of 25 to 49 years during the time of study. This study covered agricultural land use and household labour allocation decision; crop production and marketing; livestock rearing; family care and management, and income generation and migration related decisions from generation as well as ethnicity perspective. The major impression of the findings was such that agricultural land use and labour allocation decision was evident by more than four-fifths of the male domination in the past, but at present it is almost exclusively for jointly done among Tharus whereas this scenario equally been reflective in the case of non-Tharus as well. Likewise, crop production and marketing-related decisions in the case of Tharus was also distinctly visible in favor of joint decision which was a remarkable change in decisions from male alone dominating in the past. Indeed, with the less extent, similar changes were observed among non-Tharu for crop production and marketing decisions. The decision on livestock rearing activities well followed the trend of changing gender roles from either male alone or female alone to jointly done with the similar findings for the broad decisions on family care and management, income generation, and migration. This firmly indicated that as in the case of other aspects, gender roles should also be viewed as of changing process necessitating to consider such changes to adjust with appropriate planning and execution of the related development activities so that gender related issues would be rightly addressed in terms of decisions, participation and implementation.

**Key words:** Gender, decisions, generation, ethnicity, change**INTRODUCTION**

Families not only divide works between members, but decisions are also divided between and are made by the members in the family (Chhetri, 2007; Devkota and Rauniyar, 1998- 1999). This situation generates the concept of roles in the households. As work is divided into 'inside' and 'outside', decision can also be taken as major and other/ minor (Chhetri, 2007). Gender roles thus well relates with household decisions. For this study, gender roles in decision-making were examined through the structured survey in relation to six different activities in the study district across the generation and ethnicity. These decisions included agricultural land use and household labour allocation, crop production and marketing, livestock rearing, family care and management, income generation and migration. This paper attempts to examine changed gender roles across the generations (old and young) and ethnicity in rural agrarian system of Nepal. Two ethnic groups namely Tharus and non-Tharus (Brahmin/Chhetri) were selected to compare gender roles in the changing society across the distinctly set two generations. Thus the main objective of this study was to compare and analyze gender roles in relation to agriculture and household decisions across the generations and selected ethnic groups. This study employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection in the Khairahani district of Chitwan, Nepal using household survey, focus group discussion and case study. This paper seeks to answer the following questions in relation to changes of gender roles in rural agriculture:

- a. Whether or not there have been changes in gender roles in agriculture and household decisions in rural Nepal and how it differs between ethnicity and generation?
- b. What could be the possible driving forces of such changes?

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## RESEARCH METHODS

This study followed household survey questionnaire and use of Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and case study. Khairahani VDC of Chitwan district was purposively selected for this study. The reason of selecting such VDC was due to the availability of two distinct ethnic groups in a VDC to compare the extent of changed gender roles across the generations and ethnicity. Those ethnic groups identified for the study were Tharu, and non-Tharu (Brahmin and Chhetri). Tharu ethnic group is taken as the aborigine of Chitwan district which has long historical background to pursue the knowledge on changed gender scenario, whereas among non-Tharu: Brahmin and Chhetri were the dominating ethnic group available in the study VDC. Indeed they are the migratory population with distinct access to, and control over, the land resources. They are comparatively early adopter of innovations and are pioneer in most of the agricultural and associated activities. Moreover, they are the dominating group among non-Tharu ethnic groups resided in the study site. Since the objective of this study was to compare changed gender roles in agriculture and household decisions across the generations (old and young generations) it was necessary to identify the study sites where such requirements would be satisfied. In this study old generation people were defined as those 50 years and above and the young generation was defined as those between the age group of 25 to 49 years during the time of study.

On the basis of findings of reconnaissance survey, ward 1, 3, 4, 6 and 8 of Khairahani VDC were identified as these wards had more households that could cover the required sample size of both studied ethnic groups. Total pool of households from those selected wards were 2354, among them, 150 Tharu households and 181 non-Tharu households were randomly identified and used in the study. Two generation respondents were identified based on age category. Rational for selecting population of 25-49 years, and 50 years and older was to collect information on changed role (if any) of the adults and elderly population and its possible consequences to household and rural agriculture system. Similarly, those categories of landholding i.e. household with having at least 10 kathha and more was to see gender involvement in different types of agricultural activities considering typical farming situation as in Chitwan, 10 kathha is considered minimum land holding to survive based on agriculture. Likewise, joint families were selected for the study. Respondents for household survey were thus selected purposively from the respective strata of the reconnaissance survey. This study was accomplished during 2007 to 2010.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Agricultural land use and household labour allocation decisions

Nepalese rural households are still dominated by the patriarchal system (Shrestha, 1994, Bhadra, 2016). Social norms and value system are still in favour of the male (Chhetri, 2007, Devkota, 2011, Bhadra, 2016). However, recent trend in gender roles is such that significant changes have been found in the gendered decisions on various agriculture and household activities across the generations (Devkota et al., 2015). Study findings revealed significant differences ( $P < 0.001$ ) regarding gender roles changed in Tharu ethnic group on major categories, such as buying/selling of land, and household labor allocation decisions which was in the past overwhelmingly dominated by male alone as responded by old generation Tharu respondents (response ranged 84-87%), whereas these decisions have found towards the strong favor of joint decisions at present as responded by the young generation respondents (response ranged 82-94%). It is thus clear that joint decisions were found dominating in terms of land and labour related decisions, which is indeed a change in gender roles at present (Table 1).

These findings are also supported by the response of old generation respondents at present that they strongly believed about the changing scenario of gender roles from male dominating (when they were young in the past) to jointly done work at present among young generation Tharus (Table 1). Accordingly, it was well learned the fact that at the contemporary society gender roles for agricultural land use and household labor allocation decisions, have been changing towards joint decision. Indeed, when those old generations were young (in the past) used to be male heavily involved for agricultural land and household labour allocation decisions, but at present those people when they are becoming old have changed their roles in favour of joint decisions among Tharus (Table 1).

On the other hand, gender roles across the generation among non-Tharus (Brahmin/Chhetries) were also reported changing from male dominated (when they were young in the past) to joint decisions (when they are becoming old at present) across the generations. Accordingly, majority of the old and young non-

Tharu respondents reported significant differences ( $P < 0.001$ ) at the decisions for buying/selling of land, and household labour allocation decisions have been changing across the generations (Table 1). For example, in the past, male domination was found in the above decisions as reported by the old generation respondents of non-Tharus (response of old in the past ranges from 69-78% for land and labor related decisions). Furthermore, none of the women used to be involved in the past for land related decisions, and with a relatively weaker involvement (as responded by less than 10% respondents) for household labour allocation decisions among the non-Tharu women. This weaker and very low level of female alone involvement on decisions for land and labor related work continued at present as well, as responded by old generation non-Tharu respondents (Table 1).

**Table 1. Gender roles in agricultural land use and household labour allocation decisions across the ethnicity and generation (percent respondent responded)**

Decision on:	$\chi^2$ value	Response of old for past role			Response of old for present role			Young's response for present role		
		M	F	J	M	F	J	M	F	J
<b>Taru ethnicity</b>										
Buying of land	191(1)***	87.3	NA	12.7	32.7	NA	67.3	7.3	NA	92.7
Selling of land	187(1)***	84.7	NA	15.3	18.7	NA	81.3	6.0	NA	94.0
Household labour allocation	165(2)***	86.0	2.0	12.0	22.7	4.0	73.3	12.0	5.3	82.7
<b>Non-Tharu ethnicity</b>										
Buying of land	129(2)***	77.9	NA	22.1	29.3	NA	70.7	18.2	1.7	80.1
Selling of land	99(1)***	74.0	NA	26.0	22.7	NA	77.3	21.5	NA	78.5
Household labour allocation	68(2)***	69.1	9.9	21.0	32.0	4.4	63.5	28.2	9.4	62.4

Note: M=Involvement of male, F=Female, J=Jointly

$\chi^2$  value calculated by old in the past vs. young at present \*\*\* $P < 0.001$ .

Source: Field Survey, 2007

It is now increasingly evident that land and labour use decisions could be changed as per the generational change. For example, results of the present study revealed that absolute male domination was prevalent in the past (response of old generation respondent about their past experience) compared to relatively joint decisions for such activities at the present context (response of old generation respondents about their present role). This is possibly due to changes in generation overtime (Table 1), as old generation were more preferred to follow the deeply rooted male favored tradition of patriarchal system (Chhetri, 2007; Devkota, 2010; Devkota and Pyakuryal, 2017) in the past, but such scenario have been changing at present day perhaps it is the reflection of several reasons related to the modernity as societal adjustment to match with the modernity is necessary in practice (Giddens, 1984). Education is thought to be one of the crucial factors influencing decision-making, as educated people are more capable of participating freely in household discussion (Subedi, 1997; Devkota, 2011). It is important to note that both male and female young generations are also equally aware of outside activities and opportunities to participate, and hence would develop the capacity in terms of taking decisions on household affairs (Langwe, 1992; Devkota, 2010).

### Crop production and marketing decisions

Nepalese rural households in general depend on agriculture as their main occupation. Therefore, agricultural productions are obviously related to household decisions on use of improved crop varieties and vegetable seeds along with the use of agricultural tools, crop production and marketing decisions (Tables 2).

Study findings revealed the fact that gender roles across the generations among Tharu ethnic group were reported changing towards joint decisions of male and female. Accordingly, the responses of old and young Tharu respondents about changing role of gender in decision-making on crop production, and marketing were significantly different ( $p < 0.001$ ) across the generations which was clearly evident due to strong changes of male alone decisions in the past towards joint decisions at present (Table 2). It was learnt that in a typical rural farm household, as crop production, and marketing decisions at the household level used to be dominated by Tharu male alone (response ranged from 88 % to 97%) as responded by old generation



respondents about their involvement on decisions in the past (when they were young). Those decisions have been mostly found changing from male alone dominating towards joint decisions as responded by the old generation respondent at present (Devkota and Pyakuryal, 2009). Still, decisions related to use of improved crop varieties, agricultural tools and crop marketing were on the domination of male alone among Tharu old generation respondents (Table 2), whereas young Tharus at present are jointly involved for such decisions. This could be the strong evident of changes, such gendered roles in decision-making have been indeed slowly changing even from old generation Tharu people to adjust with the societal changes (Jena and Mohapatra, 1993; Devkota et. al., 2015; Devkota and Pyakuryal, 2017).

**Table 2. Gender roles in crop production and marketing decisions across the ethnicity and generation (percent respondent responded)**

Decisions on:	$\chi^2$ value	Response of old for past role			Response of old for present role			Young's response for present role		
		M	F	J	M	F	J	M	F	J
<b>Tharu ethnicity</b>										
Use of improved crop varieties	189(2)***	93.3	0.7	6.0	44.7	2.0	53.3	14.0	4.7	81.3
Use of improved vegetable seed	191(2)***	90.7	3.3	6.0	38.0	6.0	56.0	12.0	4.7	83.3
Use of agricultural tools	177(2)***	97.3	0.7	2.0	58.7	1.3	40.0	22.0	4.0	74.0
Crop production	183(2)***	88.0	NA	12.0	21.3	1.3	77.4	10.0	5.3	84.7
Crop marketing	157(2)***	94.7	0.7	4.6	58.7	2.0	39.3	23.3	4.0	72.7
<b>Non-Tharu ethnicity</b>										
Use of improved crop varieties	123(2)***	74.6	4.4	21.0	29.6	3.3	67.4	18.2	2.8	79.0
Use of improved vegetable seed	149(2)***	72.9	6.1	21.0	27.6	1.7	70.7	14.4	0.6	85.0
Use of agricultural tools	162(2)***	87.8	3.3	8.9	43.6	NA	56.4	25.4	NA	74.6
Crop production	87(2)***	64.6	3.4	32.0	13.8	7.7	78.5	18.2	1.1	80.7
Crop marketing	111(2)***	75.2	3.3	21.5	34.8	4.4	60.8	23.2	NA	76.8

Note: M=Involvement of male, F=Female, J=Jointly

$\chi^2$  value calculated by old in the past vs. young at present \*\*\*P<0.001.

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Gender roles across the generations among non-Tharus were also found changing towards joint decisions at present as with Tharus. Accordingly, majority of the old and young non-Tharus reported that crop production, and marketing decisions were significantly differed (P<0.001) from male dominating in the past (as responded by the old generation about their past experience) towards joint done at present (as responded by the young generation at present) suggesting visible changes in decisions across the generations among non-Tharus (Table 2). This firmly showed that level of gender involvement for those decisions were strongly in favour of male domination in the past whereas majority of the crop production and marketing decisions at present are towards jointly done by both male and female as responded by old generation non-Tharu respondent at present (Table 2). However, majority of crop production and marketing decisions are found jointly dominated by young non-Tharus.

The study findings also reflected the fact that young generation non-Tharu adults mostly preferred participatory decisions through the joint involvement of male and female (percentage response ranges from 74 to 85) on crop production and marketing activities possibly due to their increased level of education as compared to their old generation (Devkota, 2011). Hence, education could be one of the crucial factors responsible for changes in gender roles, particularly in crop production and marketing decisions.

### Livestock Rearing Decisions

Gender roles were identified for livestock production and marketing decisions across the generations and ethnicity (Tables 3). The responses across the ethnic groups were consistent. However, the level of gender involvement in livestock rearing decisions was found changing across the generations both in Tharus and non-Tharus. Study findings clearly revealed in the past (when old respondents at present were young) male used to be overwhelmingly dominated (nearly 89% respondents response) for livestock production and

marketing decisions as responded by old Tharus. However, when the then young people became older, their response at present is such that gender involvement in livestock rearing has been changing towards distinctly joint decisions (Devkota, et.al., 2015). This trend has been well followed by young generation, as they have absolutely responded jointly done activity (response ranged from 82 % to 84%) for livestock rearing decisions among the Tharus (Table 3).

**Table 3. Gender roles in livestock rearing decisions across the ethnicity and generation (percent respondent responded)**

Decisions on:	$\chi^2$ value	Response of old for past role			Response of old for present role			Young's response for present role		
		M	F	J	M	F	J	M	F	J
<b>Tharu ethnicity</b>										
Livestock production	79(2)***	63.3	4.0	32.7	22.7	10.0	67.3	14.0	4.0	82.0
Livestock marketing	169(2)***	88.7	1.3	10.0	39.3	2.0	58.7	14.0	2.0	84.0
<b>Non-Tharu ethnicity</b>										
Livestock production	81 (2)***	64.6	7.2	28.2	27.6	5.0	67.4	21.5	2.8	75.7
Livestock marketing	143 (2)***	77.3	2.8	19.9	27.6	2.8	69.6	15.5	2.2	82.3

Note: M=Involvement of male, F=Female, J=Jointly

$\chi^2$  value calculated by old in the past vs. young at present \*\*\*P<0.001.

Source: Field Survey, 2007

The differences in response from male dominating in the past as responded by old generations, and joint involvement at present as responded by young generations was significantly differed (P<0.001) supporting the concept statistically for changed gender roles across the generations in the case of livestock production and marketing decisions among Tharus (Table 3). Gender roles among non-Tharus were also consistent to the response of Tharu respondents. Accordingly, in the past, majority of male domination was prominent for livestock rearing decisions (response ranged from 64 % to 77%) as responded by old generation respondent about their past experience on decisions, whereas such role has found changing towards jointly done at present (nearly 70%) as responded by the old generation non-Tharus. Likewise, information also revealed the fact that young generation non-Tharus at present have also supported the concept of joint decision-making for livestock production and marketing activities (Table 3). This reflection of changing roles on livestock rearing decisions could be the clear indication of changing role of gender across the generation also as evident by non-Tharus. The findings of Tulachan and Batsa (1994) also supported the fact that males were exclusively involved in marketing of animals in the rural areas of the Chitwan district in the past, whereas at present joint decisions were practiced by the young generation in production and marketing of animals (Table 3). As revealed from the findings of this study, such activities in the past, used to be heavily male dominated both for Tharus and non-Tharus. The Chi-square value also supported the fact that such domination in the past for livestock production and marketing as responded by the old generation non-Tharu respondents have now significantly changed (p<0.001) towards joint decisions of the same as responded by the young generation respondents at present (Table 3). The findings of this study clearly revealed changing in the pattern and context of gender role in livestock production and management decisions. It is hard to say that both external and internal factors could contribute to have such results as it was beyond of this study, however, social and global environment and their direct as well as indirect impact might contribute even at the household level for such visible changes (Devkota et. al., 2015).

### Family Care and Management Decisions

Gender roles with respect to family care and management decisions such as management of household expenditure, management of expenses for child education, determining children's marriage age and the selection of children' spouse across the generations and ethnic groups (Table 4) were considered in this study.

Statistical analysis for respondents' response as responded by old generation respondents of Tharu ethnic group for their involvement in the past, and young generation respondents' response at present in relation to decisions on household management was significantly (p<0.001) differed. Old generation Tharu

respondents reported that household expenditure management was one of the major decisions for rural household management and was found highly dominated by the old Tharu male as responded for their decisions in the past. Rest of the family care and management related decisions were, however, done jointly even in the past. None of the old Tharu female was reported involved for such decisions in the past possibly due to patriarchal and deep rooted traditional norms and values of the male favored society (Shrestha, 1994; Acharya, 1993, Devkota and Rauniyar, 1998-1999). At the present context most of the decisions were found to be done by the joint involvement of male and female as found for Tharus (Table 4).

**Table 4. Gender roles in family care and management decisions across ethnicity and generation (percent respondent responded)**

Decisions on:	$\chi^2$ value	Response of old for past role			Response of old for present role			Young's response for present role		
		M	F	J	M	F	J	M	F	J
<b>Tharu ethnicity</b>										
Household expenditure	106(2)***	70.7	NA	29.3	43.3	5.3	51.4	12.7	6.0	81.3
Child education expense	42(2)***	52.0	0.7	47.3	6.7	NA	93.3	16.7	3.3	80.0
Children's marriage age	36(2)***	26.0	NA	74.0	12.7	NA	87.3	2.0	0.7	97.3
Children's spouse selection	33(1)***	24.7	NA	75.3	16.0	NA	84.0	2.0	NA	98.0
<b>Non-Tharu ethnicity</b>										
Household expenditure	192(2)***	81.2	5.0	13.8	33.1	3.3	63.6	9.9	5.5	84.6
Child education expense	132(2)***	66.3	2.8	30.9	12.2	NA	87.8	9.9	NA	90.1
Children's marriage age	92(1)***	46.4	NA	53.6	9.4	NA	90.6	2.8	NA	97.2
Children's spouse selection	104(1)***	48.1	NA	51.9	11.0	NA	89.0	1.7	NA	98.3

Note: M=Involvement of male, F=Female, J=Jointly

$\chi^2$  value calculated by old in the past vs. young at present and \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Decisions on family care and management was such that activity such as 'household expenditure' used to be male alone dominated (as responded by more than 70% of old generation respondents for their decision) in the past. Gender role has realized changed at the contemporary society towards joint decision-making as responded by more than half of the old generation respondents, and majority of young generation respondents (more than 80%) for such decisions. On the other hand, a decision for child education expense was of mixed response among Tharus. Old generation respondents thought that they had equal favor for male alone as well as joint decision in the past, for child education expense related decision, whereas at present they thought, such activity overwhelmingly in favor of joint decision. Young generation respondents at present also supported this trend of joint decisions. Decision on determining age of children for marriage and children's spouse selection remained static in terms of decision as all these category of respondents clearly responded their response in favour of joint decision from the past as responded by the old generation about their response on past experience as well as present, equally by the young respondents at present (Table 4).

Statistical analysis on gender roles across the generation among non-Tharu ethnic groups for their response in relation to old respondents' response for their decision on family care and management in the past, and young generation respondents' response at present was also reported highly significant ( $P < 0.001$ ) (Table 4). There was variation in response in terms of household expenditure management decisions across the generation among non-Tharus. Accordingly, male domination was prominent for most of the decisions related to household expenditure, determining marriage age, and spouse selection mainly on the response of old generation respondents for their experience to the past which has, however, changed towards joint decisions as responded by old generation respondents for their response on such activities at present (Table 4). Majority of the non-Tharu young respondents at present were found towards jointly involvement for such decisions (nearly 85%) to most of the parameters. This kind of joint involvement was for almost all activities such as family care and management related decisions (more than 90%), (Table 4). At present days, society has been slowly changing towards modernity, which might have reflected to such finding as found

from this study. Most of the family care and management related decisions are indeed changing towards joint involvement of male and female regardless of ethnic group at present. These indications can be interpreted as evidences of changed gender roles across the generation and ethnic group with its implication to the occupation and society (Devkota and Pyakuryal, 2010-2011, Devkota, 2016).

### Income Generation and Migration Decisions

Changing gender roles with respect to income generation and migration decisions such as involvement in service, business, migration from rural to city and international jobs were studied across the generations and ethnic groups (Table 5). The statistical analysis clearly supports the fact that gender roles changes from old generation respondents' response for their response in the past, and young generation respondents' response at present among Tharus response significantly differed ( $p < 0.001$ ) for migration and involvement in business, whereas decisions on involvement in service was also significant, but with the probability ( $p < 0.01$ ). Findings of this study revealed in the past, decisions on involvement in service and business were dominated by male alone, whereas more than half of the respondents reported that such decisions were made either by old Tharu male alone and or jointly done by both male and female (Table 5). About 60% of the respondent reported joint decision, in the case of young Tharus at present for business related activity, whereas for the migration from rural to city, both male and female used to be jointly involved for decisions as revealed by the response of young Tharus at present (Table 5). However, decisions on migration to international job was observed still male alone dominating domain among old and young Tharus at present as well.

**Table 5. Gender roles in income earning and migration decisions across the ethnicity and generation (percent respondent responded)**

Decision on:	$\chi^2$ value	Response of old for past role			Response of old for present role			Young's response for present role		
		M	F	J	M	F	J	M	F	J
<b>Tharu ethnicity</b>										
Involvement in service	19(2)**	65.3	NA	34.7	50.0	3.0	46.7	40.0	0.7	59.3
Involvement in business	17(1)***	63.3	NA	36.7	47.3	NA	52.7	39.3	NA	60.7
Migration from rural to city	133(1)***	72.7	NA	27.3	38.7	NA	61.3	7.3	NA	92.7
International migration	63(1)***	88.7	NA	11.3	63.3	NA	36.7	45.3	NA	54.7
<b>Non-Tharu ethnicity</b>										
Involvement in service	191(2)***	91.2	NA	8.8	41.4	1.7	56.9	18.8	NA	81.2
Involvement in business	124(2)***	74.0	NA	26.0	30.9	1.7	67.4	16.0	2.8	81.2
Migration from rural to city	169(2)***	78.5	NA	21.5	20.4	NA	79.6	10.5	NA	89.5
International migration	206(2)***	92.8	NA	7.2	44.2	NA	55.8	17.7	NA	82.3

Note: M=Involvement of male, F=Female, J=Jointly

$\chi^2$  value calculated by old in the past vs. young at present \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Gender roles in income generation and migration decisions were studied among non-Tharus. Accordingly, Chi-Square value of gender roles in income generation and migration decisions considering responses of old generation for their decision in the past and young generation response at present was significantly differed ( $p < 0.001$ ). In the past, major decisions related to income generation and migration was in favour of male among non-Tharus, which was obviously changed towards joint efforts of young non-Tharu male and female, at present. This findings well reflects the facts of changes in response and role of gender across the generations

As evident from the household survey findings, the scenario of gendered roles on decision-making thus appears changing as generation changes. The recent trend of decisions on gender roles is such that families not only divide works between their members, but decisions are also jointly made by the members in the family regardless of their age (Table 5). Accordingly, major decisions were found to be done reflecting dominant by old males in the past as reported by old generation respondents, whereas joint decisions represent

the changed scenario in gender roles for those household activities and decisions as reported by the old and young generation at present across the Tharus and non-Tharus.

## DISCUSSION

Decision-making process, which is more reflective in the agricultural activities are also related with the power dynamics at the household and society (Grantham, 1996; UNICEF, 2006; Bennett, 2009; Jelin, 2009). Power dynamics in a simple process covers empowerment as well as decision-making (Sen and Rastogi, 2006; Fox, 2016). Luckes (1974) has summarized three dimensions of power: The 'power to' associated with decision-making issues over which there is observable conflict; the 'power over' where by one group manage to suppress certain conflict by denying their validity; and the third dimension of 'power' recognizes that conflict of interests may be suppressed not only from the decision-making agenda, but also from the consciousness of the parties involved. This formulation of power is concerned with, ideology and with the socio-cultural constructions and patterning of behavior it prevents conflicts between dominant and subordinate groups by shaping attitude wants, needs and preference in such a way that both accept the existing order either because they can imagine no alternative to it or because they value it is divinely ordained or beneficial. Among these all categories of power dynamics, the first power dimension-power associated with decision-making could be more related with the nature and findings of my study.

Power of a family member in the given household and society context could be related with several factors such as practices prevalent in customary rules (Ghale and Pyakuryal, 2016), gender-based social norms (Ghale 2011), patriarchal tradition (Bhadra, 2016) and so on. These discriminatory norms, patriarchal tradition and all the customary practices create stereotypes that reinforce gender related power imbalance and establish differentiated gender roles, behaviors and practices. As a result, women are often victims of internalize oppression, excluding themselves from making use of available spaces to express their needs, opinions and thoughts in the public sphere (Ghale, et.al., 2018). Positions of power are often based upon an interaction of gender and generational factors (Sen and Rastogi, 2006). Accordingly, agricultural activities on household decision that are decided by its family members could be static or dynamic (changing). Obviously change is an inevitable phenomenon, thus person's behavior is also related with the continuous changes. However, change, especially related with decisions could be also related with the underlying power of a person in the household. This power dynamic is obviously related with the status of a family member and a position he/ or she holds at the household that are governed by age, sex, education, personal behavior (Devkota and Rauniyar, 1998-1999). These characteristics are somehow common phenomenon, but what makes variation in the dynamic process of power exercise is underlying power of a person and his or her position at the household that is also related with the overall impression of an individual that he or she earned from the family members. For example, by virtue of the underlying power of a person, decision is taken by a given member of a family. In the Indian context, for example, Sen and Rastogi (2006) described that elder generation people generally have more power of a household decision also related to the agricultural activities when they are relatively active, whereas when they get oldies and sick, their power slowly replaces by the younger generation (Devkota and Pyakuryal, 2010-2011). The decision taking pattern of these influential members in the family could be changed over time, or that may remain static.

Change in gender roles, especially in the case of decision-making process could also be reflective and is related with the power dynamics behavior. Such decisions which are related with the power dynamics could also vary according to the hierarchy of the family members along with gender. For example, Sen and Rastogi (2006) in the Indian context further explained that senior family members in a household where there are two or more married families residing together (case of joint family), the senior female members are likely to take decisive role on family affairs than the female who lives only with her husband (nuclear family). A visible change in gender roles are reported in the study findings of, for example, in Pakistan where gender roles have changed from almost exclusively male only done decisions (mainly with joint family) to the larger extent women's decisions at present (mainly in nuclear family). The changing trend is such that women living in the nuclear family are more empowered and are more likely to play a crucial role in important household decisions (Nazil and Hamid, 1999). Power dynamics related exercises are also varied by the gender. For example, evidences are found in such a way that in most of the extended families, the father-in-law or the husband are more likely to be the primary decision-maker, while in the nucleus family it is overwhelmingly, the husband. Similar cases have also been reported where decision-making process are more with mother-

in-law in the joint family, whereas such decisions are more exercised by the daughter-in-law in the case of nuclear family (Sen and Rastogi, 2006).

Earlier male used to have more power exercise in the decision-making process whereas in the present context single domination in decisions has turned towards the jointly done decisions regardless of caste and ethnicity in the rural Nepal. Similar impression has drawn from this study as well where decision-making power in the family was found to depend on one's gender along with kin position in the family. Major decisions in the respondent's family especially in the economic activities such as buying and selling of property, investing money, financial transaction (borrowing and lending money) and labor allocation decisions were done by male alone in the past. However, all the activities related decisions has turned towards the jointly done work of young male and female at present. Gender role in relation to land and labor allocation decisions has changed from male dominating among old generations reflecting their involvement in the past which was found changing towards joint involvement at present among young and old generation respondents of both Tharus and non-Tharus. Crop production and marketing decisions followed a similar trend of male dominating irrespective of ethnicity among the old male in the past, but varied at present with a trend of still male domination among old Tharus, whereas for old non-Tharus, it is a case of jointly done decisions. Greater degrees of rigidity on gendered decisions was found for Tharus and non-Tharus to their involvement in livestock production and marketing, which was a case of overwhelming male domination irrespective of generations. These all scenarios reflects the indication of changing society where to adjust with the social norms new generation male and female have been realizing the fact that participatory approach in exercising decisions.

### CONCLUSION

Gender roles in relation to the involvement and decisions, especially to the household and agricultural practices in the rural agrarian system of Nepal has found changing as revealed by empirical evidences gathered in this study. Gender roles in most of the household decisions and agricultural activities of rural agrarian system has been changing from either male or female alone dominating as reflected from the study of Tharu and non-Tharu ethnic groups, whereas most of such activities at present were found changing towards overwhelmingly jointly done work in both of the ethnic groups as revealed by the response of both old and young generation respondents. This firmly indicated that as in the case of other aspects, gender roles should also be viewed as of changing process necessitating to consider such changes to adjust with appropriate planning and execution of the related development activities so that gender related issues would be rightly addressed in terms of decisions, participation and implementation.

This study covered agricultural land use and household labour allocation decision; crop production and marketing; livestock rearing; family care and management, and income generation and migration related decisions from generation as well as ethnicity perspective. The major impression of the findings was such that agricultural land use and labour allocation decision was evident by more than four-fifths of the male domination in the past, but at present it is almost exclusively for jointly done among Tharus whereas this scenario equally been reflective in the case of non-Tharus as well. Likewise, crop production and marketing-related decisions in the case of Tharus was also distinctly visible in favor of joint decision which was a remarkable changes in decision from male alone dominating in the past. Indeed, with the less extent, similar changes were observed among non-Tharu for crop production and marketing decisions. The decision on livestock rearing activities well followed the trend of changing gender roles from either male alone or female alone to jointly done with the similar findings for the broad decisions on family care and management and income generation and migration. These reflections could be useful in development related planning and policy formulation.

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