

“We do not like to stay in the villages just cutting grass and looking after the livestock”

– Patterns of change in the rural Ramechhap district of
Nepal

Rebecca Hymnelius



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Rebecca Hymnelius

Supervisor: Kristina Marquardt, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,
Department of Urban and Rural Development

Assistant Supervisor: Dil Khatri, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,
Department of Urban and Rural Development

Examiner: Kjell Hansen, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,
Department of Urban and Rural Development

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Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences
Department of Urban and Rural Development

Abstract

This thesis is about continuity and change in rural Nepal with the purpose of understanding what changes migration has brought about in rural villages in the Ramechhap district. Migration is not a new phenomenon in Nepal, which has a long history of both domestic and foreign migration. However, in Nepal's recent history there has been a considerable rise of foreign migration for labour which has affected the rural households in several ways. This thesis, therefore, explores the social, economical and agricultural changes due to migration, focusing on how these changes have affected the women in different local contexts in the villages. Through the lens of empowerment, feminization of agriculture and lifeworld, the thesis focuses on the stories of the women in the villages and their perceptions of how migration affects them. The field work took place in three rural villages; Chisapani, Farpu and Chasku and the data was collected through semi-structured household interviews, focus group discussions and observations. The results suggest that there are indeed changes which affect women socially, economically and through agricultural aspects. However, the results also suggest that the changes are complex and are depending on many aspects which influence the women's lives such as caste, class, hierarchies and age as well as customs and traditions. Migration has been a significant driver resulting in changes in rural villages of Nepal, however, development and continuity, in the form of traditions, are still key players affecting the lives of household members.

Keywords: changes, empowerment, feminization of agriculture, lifeworld, migration, Nepal, remittance, rural households, women

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1 Introduction

As I walk down the hill, I am encountered by a view ahead of the vast mid-hills of Ramechhap district on display in the clear morning sky. I am on my way towards a small village hut in which a meeting with the village women is about to take place. While I am on the way I come across a group of them, happily chattering, about to attend the meeting. When the meeting is about to commence more women than anticipated have shown up which I interpret as a positive sign. Inside the hut, all of the chairs are filled up, so the women start to pass around pillows for the attending to be seated comfortably. I find myself seated on the floor somewhere in the centre of the big circle, with most eyes on me. A few women have also brought their children along which is a sign that there is, perhaps, no one at home to take care of them whilst the meeting is taking place. Many women in the village are solely running the households since the men have out-migrated either to a bigger town or to another country.

This description is from a focus meeting with a group of women which was conducted during one of my visits to a village in the Ramechhap district of Nepal. The women were asked to share their experiences regarding out-migration in their village. The title of this thesis indicates the effects and changes happening as a result of migration. It represents the general idea of what many women in the Ramechhap district have expressed regarding their situation as remaining household members when the migrants have left. Well over one million, or about 3 %, of the Nepali population is working abroad (Seddon et.al. 2010) and the total proportion of households that receive remittances are 56 %. The value of the remittances in the national economy counts, according to the World Bank, for 28 % of the GDP. Nepal is, subsequently, earning more of its wealth from migration than many other countries and it influences Nepali society in many ways, both on a structural level and individual level.

Migration is not a new phenomenon in Nepal, which has a long history of both domestic and foreign migration. From the 1990s the foreign migration for labour has risen considerably, and Nepal is, due to this, also a country which receives a substantial amount of remittances and ranks third in the world looking at the contribution of remittances to GDP (Sunam & McCarthy 2015). Since migration, the households in villages in the rural areas have become increasingly dependent on off-farm and non-farm income from household members working away from home (Blaikie et.al. 2002). Globalization has allowed the development of an international labour market, hence, making migration an appealing course of action for poor peasants in rural households. As a result of the globalized labour market, incomes in rural areas of Nepal have gradually started to increase and there are signs of how this has contributed to an improved living standard in many rural communities and that the role of subsistence agriculture is gradually shrinking (Blaikie et.al. 2002). Agriculture is no longer the main income source for food security for some households: non-farm and remittances have instead become the main driver in the rural economy (Marquardt et al 2016).

The development which have taken place from the years between the 1970-90s have been shaped by both continuity as well as change. There has not been any deepening of poverty, however there has not been any development in commercialized agriculture either, which could help people out of the poverty. The nature of the rural household and the villages, however, has been altered due to the rise of out-migration of household members. This means that the households are less rural and the family members live more spread out due to longer distances between them. As a result, there has been a shift in family relations, in household responsibilities and demographic re-establishing of men and women within the households (Balikie et.al. 2002). When migrants leave their homes, their family members stay behind and have to deal with the responsibilities which the migrant ordinarily is in charge of. Something which essentially adds to the chores of the women in the households.

Purpose and Research Question

This thesis is about continuity and change in rural Nepal with the purpose of understanding what changes migration has brought about in three rural villages in the Ramechhap district. Changes in rural demography, when particularly young men migrate and leave villages and households, undoubtedly lead to positive and negative consequences for the rural life and household member's responsibilities in agricultural production and in the household (Gartuala et.al. 2010:565). There are challenges for women having to take on increasing work loads as well as gaining more independency compared to before (Blaikie et.al. 2002). In order to address this gap of gender inequality, it is important to understand the ongoing struggle of women and how it is affecting households across different local contexts. The thesis focuses, therefore, on the stories of the women in the villages and their perceptions of how migration affects them. The changes which have occurred have resulted in a feminization of agriculture, hence, this thesis will discuss the women's positions and role in these processes of change. This includes household and life histories of how out-migration has affected the lifeworlds in the households which the women belong to. Lifeworld is in this thesis congruent to everyday life.

In order to understand the changes happening I will use the help of the concepts empowerment, feminization and lifeworld. I will analyse how the changes play out but also try and show how such opportunities and changes highly depend on the belonging to different social groups. Addressing women's empowerment is a fundamental basis in this thesis and is relevant for the research touching on migration and the effects it has on rural communities (Tamang et.al. 2014).

To understand the intricate aspects affecting the changes which are arising, due to migration, I have asked one broad research question and three sub-questions to define different aspects of households and perspectives of the women in the households:

What changes do migration have on the women in rural households?

- What are the social changes?
- What are the economic changes?
- What are changes within the agricultural productive system?

Thesis outline

This thesis is structured into seven chapters and they are structured as following. The first chapter introduces the purpose of the thesis and the research question. The second chapter introduces the background information related to the topic of migration and research question, containing information of societal aspects which are relevant to understand the shifts which have taken place in Nepal since the 1990s. The third chapter covers the theoretical prepectives and concepts which will be applied to discuss the research question. The fourth chapter contains the methodology which describes the research methods employed to carry out research and, in addition, introduces the study area. The fifth chapter describes the findings of the study area. The sixth chapter contains the discussion and the seventh and final chapter contains the summarizing words.

2 Background

Nepal is a country which has suffered from chronic poverty from the past 30-40 years, and the country's economic base is fragile with a history of small-scale farming for subsistence. Nepal always has been, and still is, very dependent on agriculture as a livelihood, with 76 % of the population active as agricultural households and 74 % of the population are agricultural households with land (2010/2011 Nepal Living Standard Survey).

The inhabitants of rural areas of the country cultivate crops and keep livestock providing not only themselves with food subsistence but also for the urban areas (Ojha et.al. 2017). It is a country with a wide altitudinal range composed of three physiographic zones: the high mountains above 2400 meters above sea level, the mid-hills which covers the lower parts of the Himalayas from 1500 to 2400 m.a.s.l, and lastly the lowlands plains called "Terai" which is around 70 m.a.s.l (Fox 2016,). The three physiographic zones accommodate biophysical diversity, which affects the surrounding environment such as the agriculture and the water supply to the inhabitants living in different areas. The lack of water in the drier areas of the mid-hills, has led to that especially the people of this area have moved away from their rural villages in the search of other land and in search for new livelihood possibilities. Migration has become one of the main alternatives for young people, since it is an option for obtaining cash, which can lead to economical development.

High levels of poverty and shortage of land led to dark future prospects in the 1970-90s in Nepal which was suffering from economical decline with decreasing food security, increasing poverty and malnutrition as well as a systematic failure of policies (Blaikie et.al. 2002). However, the catastrophic future prospects of economical decline did not materialise; the factor that was not accounted for in the earlier analysis was the development of the global and national labour market, which have led to an urban growth and has provided livelihood opportunities for many poor rural households. This is a point of departure for the research in this thesis; due to the growth of the global market the foreign labour migration from rural areas to the South East Asia and the Gulf has increased greatly; around 1 700 Nepalis leave the country every day to work in these areas (Sunam & McCarthy 2016).

Three background aspects of the Nepali society are significant in relation to migration: the social groups in society, a description of the women's status in rural Nepal and the history of out-migration. These aspects influence rural society and its people greatly, and are therefore significant factors to the understand the changes which are happening due to migration.

Social Groups

The Nepalese society is highly stratified based on class, caste, gender and social hierarchies (Thoms 2008). The caste system is structured by an ideology in which ritual purity

encompasses power. A Brahmin priest is more ritually pure and, therefore, ranks higher than a king or ruler (Chettri), even though a king has more economical and political power. Power can change throughout one's lifetime, but it is still subordinate to the ritual status which is ascribed at birth and normally does not change. A person or family can change or increase its wealth, education and political position, but can basically never change its caste status (Cameron 1998:11). It is necessary to understand the stratifications in the study villages that have been visited since the households are bound to the stratifications of their society which in turn affects what possibilities they gain to migrate. Examples of the different castes in the study villages are Dalits, Brahmin, Chettri, Janajiti and Bhujel (Ojha et.al. 2017). The Dalits or "untouchables" are historically the lowest caste and the higher castes include Brahmin (priests) and Chettri. Historically the Nepalis have not had the choice of many occupations since their occupation is determined from birth. The people in the villages are accustomed to learn their work from generation to generation and their work is also determined by which caste they belong to. The "pure" and "impure" are separated from each other by their livelihood strategies. The people of the "impure" castes (or Dalits) engage in work such as ploughing, the forging work of a smith, tailoring and playing musical instruments and the members of the higher caste do not engage in this work. A very significant factor which still lives in the villages society today between the high-caste and low-caste is the patron-client system which has been present for generations. An example of this is how the low-caste households provide services and labour in exchange for grains from the high-caste families (Thieme 2007:25-26).

Women in rural Nepal

The women's position in the Nepali society is low and her identity is connected to her closest male figure, to her father, to her husband or to her son (Shrestha & Conway 2001). The position of women is regulated by patricarchy and her family membership is determined by her father's lineage. Marriage is very significant, once a woman is married she, together with her husband, usually move to or near the husband's family. The women traditionally do not have the right to inherit land, which is handed down from father to son and this means that the women do not normally possess land. The rural villages of Nepal are defined as agrarian societies with land property as a basis for living and without it, it makes women very dependent on her husband (Kaspar 2005).

Although a woman has little power, her status changes throughout her life time. Age and caste plays an important role for the amount of status a woman receives within a family. The hierarchies within the households differ in the different caste groups and according to Kaspar (2005) the gender hierarchies are stricter within the Brahmin and the Dalit groups. There are two occasions which can change the status of a woman, marriage and giving birth to a son. When she marries she moves to the husband's family and in many cases has to

work very hard in the household and if she gives birth to a son she confirms her status in the husband's family (Kaspar 2005).

Other aspects in the rural society defining gender differences include schooling and economic participation in the households. Girls usually do not spend the same amount of time in school as the boys, the girls commonly leave school at an earlier age to help out with chores in the household. This means that there is a higher rate of illiteracy among women than men. In the households the men are usually also in control of the income sources and the women have very little chance to make transactions themselves. Women are also paid less than men for performing the same amount of labour in, for example, agriculture. Very few women are participating in non-agricultural employment and in wage employment (Kaspar 2005). It is significant to be aware of these aspects including the women's status in rural Nepali society and the families hierarchical compositions in order to understand how migration affects the women in the rural households and how it can change their daily life.

Migration and the Remittance Economy

In recent years, rural out- migration has led to an expanding remittances economy as well as changing agricultural patterns. The remittances are an important aspect of the national economy, and migration is nowadays the main livelihood choice of young people (Fox 2016). Labour migration to foreign countries has a long history in Nepal going back to when the Nepali travelled to Lahore to join the army of the Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh. It also started before the recruitment of the first Nepali to the British "Gurkhas" in 1815-1816 (Seddon et.al. 2002). Nepal has a history of individuals joining military and police service of the UK, India, Singapore, Malaya, Brunei and Nepal so called *lahures*. In addition, the civil war which took place in Nepal is another factor which has reinforced the tendency to migrate from rural areas (Ojha et.al. 2017:159). Now there is an emergence of the new kind of migration which is labour migration to the Middle East. Migration is also affected by many different factors such as "macro policies, transnational networks, regional conditions, local demands, political and social relations, household options and individual desires." (Hecht et.al. 2015:v). The effects of an increasing global labour market abroad have led to increasing of rural incomes opportunities for people in the mid-hills and even though the role of agriculture in rural livelihoods has been and still is important, it has been reduced (Marquardt et.al. 2016:9).

The proportion of migrants from Nepal going to foreign countries has almost doubled from 1981- 1991, from 7 % to 11 %. Two thirds of those migrating to foreign countries are from hill areas and the central region within Nepal, including the Ramechhap district, is the region which account for the largest fraction to go to countries outside Asia. The authors Seddon et.al. (2010) have identified four major regions where Nepali migrants find employment,

table [1] below shows; the West, East and Southeast Asia, the Gulf region, and India. Only a small portion work outside these regions.

Region	Workers (estimated)	Remittances (Rs) (estimated)	Workers (possible)	Remittances (Rs) (possible)
The West	15,000	4.4 billion	—	—
The Gulf	40,000	1.5 billion	—	—
East/S.E. Asia	44,000	23.0 billion	—	—
India	250,000	6.0 billion*	1.0 million	40 billion
Others	1,000	—	—	—
Total	350,000	35.0 billion	1.1 million	69 billion

Table 1. The table shows estimates of workers working abroad and estimated, as well as possible, sums of remittances sent back to Nepal in 1997. The data is collected by researchers Seddon et.al. from Nepali workers' associations abroad, Nepali embassies and other sources (Seddon et.al. 2010:24).

The estimate for 1997 was that in total of 12 500 Nepali migrant workers lived and worked in Europe and about 2 500 lived and worked in North America. The largest number lives in Britain with 3 600 officially registered and 8 000 unofficial workers. As mentioned earlier, the Gulf has recently been opened up to the Nepali: countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Oman. By the end of 1990s the number of Nepali in the Gulf had increased to 100 000 and in 2001 perhaps as high as 200 000. However, the region which still accounts for the greatest value (not counting India) of remittances back to Nepal is East and Southeast Asia. The region hosts about 44 000 Nepali migrants and at least half work illegally and send money home through informal channels. In Southeast Asia, Nepali workers are known to be employed in Japan, Singapore, Brunei, Saipan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and the Maldives (Seddon et.al. 2010:25). The total amount of remittance in Nepal is estimated at 259 billion NRs (Nepalese Rupees) and 20 % of this amounts from internal sources, Saudi Arabia and Qatar together accounts for 26 % and Malaysia for 8 % (Nepal Living Standard Survey 2010/2011). Though, the country which hosts the highest amount of Nepali migrants is India; hundreds of thousands of Nepali workers are employed in the country and about 250 000 are known to be employed in the public sector. According to the authors (Seddon et.al. 2010) the total amounts of remittances coming from India may be 6 billion NRs and this accounts for about 11 % of the total amount of remittances in Nepal. The figure may, however, be much larger if the workers within the private sector are considered. The remaining percentage of remittance in Nepal is accounted by other countries.

The people in rural areas who migrate all have different backgrounds and originate from differing caste groups, they have differing genders, age and economic status, nonetheless, mostly young men aged below 40 migrate. Of the total population aged five years and above, 37 % have migrated from where they used to live: in a municipality, village or outside the country, to where they currently reside and the migration rates for women and men are 36 % and 38 % respectively. The women who migrate mostly go to Kuwait, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar to work as nannies or housemaids (Nepal Living Standard Survey 2010/2011, Sunam & McCarthy 2016).

Of the people I have interviewed in the Ramechhap district, many say that they migrate to the nearby towns, such as Manthali or to the capital city Kathmandu to secure their livelihoods. However, many also venture outside the borders of Nepal and some have mentioned that they or family members go to South East Asia; to countries such as Malaysia or go to the Gulf; to countries such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Few people mentioned that they have gone to India. Those who had worked in India were primarily older men who had lived and worked there during the Nepalese civil war which took place from 1996-2006. In the Ramechhap district mostly young men migrate and I came across only one household which included a female household member who was living and working abroad.

Another aspect which affects the ability to migrate is which household someone originates from, hence the socio-economical composition of the migrant matters and which caste one belongs to matters. This is one factor out of several that plays into whether someone can go abroad, although it is a major factor because castes determine social connections, which are crucial. However, it is not that someone of the lowest caste is not allowed to migrate, it is simply much harder for them to do so. The destination where the migrant decides to go and work further effects how much money the migrant can earn and send home, this in turn affects which investments can be made back home in the household and village where the money eventually ends up. Hence, what affects and determines whether or not a migrant is successful is complex and there are different factors involved such as class affiliation, the country of destination for migration, salary, remittance, and how the household decides to invest the remittance.

3 Theoretical Perspectives and Concepts

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, Ramechhap district is included in the mid-hills which has experienced a large percentage of its population migrating to different parts of Nepal and which has seen its household members migrate across borders to other countries. This has left the remaining household members – women, children and elders in the village – responsible for all the work in the households, although agriculture is not necessarily included in the household work. How the changes affect the women will be explored with the help of the following theoretical concepts.

Feminization of Agriculture

Feminization is the phenomenon when the roles of men and women are unbalanced at household and community level (Tamang et.al 2014). It refers to women's increased labour participation and role in decision making in agriculture. Male outmigration affects the women's situation in several ways: through the loss of labour in the household but also through the loss of his skills, his decisions, and his status in the village, as well as through the flow of remittances (Slavchevska et.al. 2016:10).

There are various dimensions of feminization of agriculture, in addition to potentially increased participation and authority, it has been described as a serious cause of social exclusion and injustice. It is possible to connect this to migration, the women face disadvantage because they are the ones who have to sacrifice education and skill development opportunities to manage the land and agriculture. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the women's opportunities depends on their family's situation and its social connections, if they are from a really poor family they might not have any chance of education whatsoever. As a result of the male out-migration, women in Nepal have become more involved in the agricultural work and are spotted more frequently handling new tasks in agricultural labour which they prior to out-migration did not perform. At the same time, they are shouldering the responsibilities for the households' continuation (Tamang et.al. 2014). In Europe, according to Saugeres (2002), development has taken a different turn compared to Nepal in which the women have disappeared from the agricultural fields due to the development of technology and machinery, such as tractors. The tractor has become a symbol for masculinity which the women, due to gender roles, are not encouraged to use. In Nepal, though, there has not been an intensification of agriculture to the same extent as in Europe and the use of tractors are not as common. However, now that women in Nepal increasingly are doing the agricultural work of the men, does the agricultural work have the same value as before the men migrated?

In this thesis feminization of agriculture is seen as an empirical categorization which refers to how migration has affected the roles of women in agriculture. Masculinities and femininities are cultural constructs which are specific to a particular time and place and are constantly contested, reworked and reinforced (Saugeres 2002). This thesis will, however, not go further into how gender is created but rather will touch upon if the gender roles of the women in Ramechhap district have changed due to the feminization of agriculture. Feminization of agriculture suggests a change, which is relevant for this thesis because it inquires how migration has changed rural households socially, economically and within agriculture (Slavchevska et.al. 2016:9).

Empowerment

An aspect of women's empowerment is the acquisition of a decision-making role, empowerment is therefore a significant concept in order to understand how changes have effected women. The United Nations Population Fund has developed guidelines for women's empowerment which includes various factors. These include the women's sense of self-worth and their right to have and to determine choices, their right to have access to opportunities and resources, the right to have control over their own lives, and lastly to be able to influence the direction of social change and to create a more just social and economic order (Gartuala et.al. 2010:567).

I will discuss the changes happening in the women's lives in relation to empowerment. Although, I would like to emphasize that this concept is problematic since there is a question of the implication of empowerment. Empowerment implies a shift of power and in this case one group in society might gain more power on someone else's behalf. Empowerment is, in addition, questionable since it can be connected to class, caste and gender and within one group specific social positions can become more empowered than others.

The working definition of empowerment throughout this thesis, though, is by Kabeer (2016), in which power and choice are two main elements. According to Kabeer (2016) power is a form of ability to choose and is, thus, a central concept for defining empowerment. There are two important aspects for understanding choice. Firstly, quite understandably, for choice to be meaningful, other options to choose from must be available. Secondly, the consequences of choice matter, i.e., the more strategic choices are, the stronger the empowerment (Gartuala et.al. 2010:567).

Empowerment is also connected to a process of change, a change of where the power lies in society. There are many aspects involved in this: women's sense of self-worth and social identity, their capacity to question the inferior status assigned to them, their ability to exercise control over their own lives and to negotiate and renegotiate their relationship with others who matter to them. Empowerment should influence the lives and minds of women and men which in turn leads to the ability to be on equal terms in society. It should lead to

the ability to participate and to reshape the societies to broaden the options available to all, which in turn contribute to a more democratic distribution of power and responsibilities (Kabeer 2016). Empowerment is strongly connected to power, in this case a shift of power in society. Even though choice is an important aspect, it can not be seen as the main element of empowerment since the women in the villages do not have much choice in their daily lives.

Changed Lifeworld

This thesis also includes the concept lifeworld which can also be referred to as everyday life. Habermas argues that modernity is split up between two domains: system and lifeworld. The system resembles the institutions of the government and the capitalist market which promotes commodification and bureaucratization. The lifeworld, on the other hand, is made up of the social relations between people. Habermas claims that the problem with modernity is that the state and money, i.e. the system, are increasingly colonizing the lifeworld. His aim is to reverse this pattern allowing the lifeworld to infiltrate the system, leading to a restructuring of the system (Inglis 2012:79).

A lifeworld is, thus, the sphere in which we have our social and personal life and in which we live our concrete and experienced reality. The lifeworld is the everyday world we live in and operate within, we have our social relations, our work, our family and our friends and people's actions are coordinated through communication (Månson 2013). It is what the world looks like from the viewpoint of the existence of an individual as they share the everyday world with other people whom they interact with. The lifeworld is also made up of the culture of a particular group of people and the culture create the common sense ways in which people experience the world. This common sense way of thinking and feeling is usually not subjected to rational reflection and criticism by people who is around them and they are generally accepted without being thought of. This way of thinking, though, can be disrupted and called into question when something different or extraordinary happens (Inglis 2012:89, 90).

The focus in this thesis will lie on the system's colonization of the lifeworld which creates a dependency on the monetary system which affects empowerment and independence of the women in the Ramechhap district.

4 Methodology

This thesis is a qualitative study based on household interviews, focus group discussions and observations. The findings and analysis are based on the household and life histories of the people involved in the interviews and observations, although focusing mainly on the women's stories. The research was influenced by the organization ForestAction which helped obtain material in the Nepali language, which I do not speak. The organization also helped with expertise knowledge concerning the region, such as its culture and its people, in which I conducted the field work. During the field work I had the help of two Nepalese colleagues, one male and the other female, both belonging to the Chettri caste. They assisted me with planning the field visits and helped me a substantial amount in the villages with finding informants. One of them had local connection to the Ramechhap district and particularly to one of the villages we visited. The fact that this connection existed evidently affected the choice of field sites, although it also benefited us since it was easier to be welcomed into the villages and to find household members to interview. It also affected how the informants viewed and interpreted us during the interviews and focus group discussions, since even though we were seen as visitors, there was still a connection to the district. The Nepalese colleagues were continuously present during the interviews and focus group discussions to assist in translating and taking notes on what was said. The fact that I do not speak Nepali means that the information gathered has been interpreted by another source and I have received it second-hand, this means that I may not have gained the full nuance of the reply. Though, at the end of my stay I shared the results with ForestAction to gain a second opinion and to validate the collected material. This was a way to ensure that what I had collected has been interpreted accordingly.

Study Area- Ramechhap district



Figure 1. Map of Nepal with Ramechhap district marked in red.

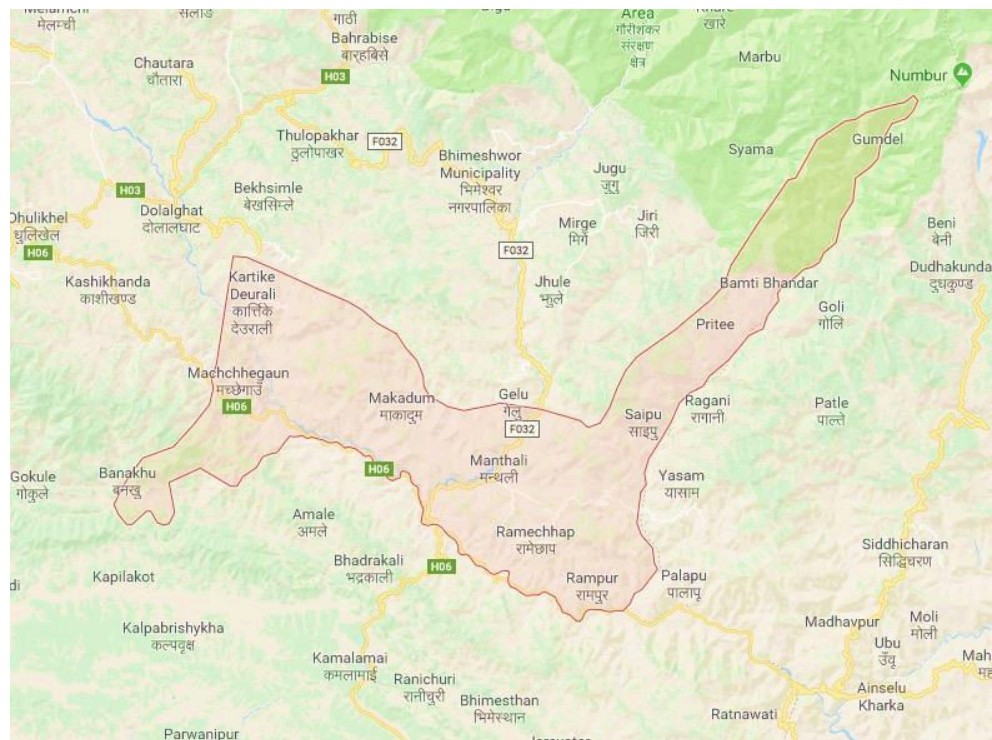


Figure 2. Map of Ramechhap district.

The research conducted for this thesis has been localized to the Ramechhap district in the

mid-hills, approximately 100 km east of Kathmandu and can be reached by a five hour drive. The mid-hills lie between 700 and 4000 m above sea level and include approximately 40 % of the Nepal's total land area and it also contains 68 % of the country's forest cover (Fox

2016). I spent a total of three weeks in field in three villages; Chisapani, Farpu and Chasku between 17 January and 22 March 2018. The three field sites were chosen in order to gain a wide range of households with different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds in villages. The field sites were also chosen due to their contrasting environmental conditions, such as altitude, dryness, the possibility to obtain water, infrastructure and proximity to bigger towns with facilities such as schools and hospitals. The Ramechhap district is one of the 75 districts in the country with Manthali as its district headquarter. The region has significant dry areas in the southern part and the elevation of the area varies from 379-6958 m.a.s.l. The 1564.32 km² region also has a population of about 202 646 people, and out of the total land area, 35 % is covered by forest (DFO Ramechhap 2017).

Within the agriculture three land types are common for growing crops, which include *khet* land (irrigated land), *bari* land (non-irrigated/rain-fed land), and *kharbari* land (grass land for fodder and grazing) (Marquardt et.al. 2016). Within the Ramechhap region, examples of crops which are grown in *khet* land are paddy, maize, mustard and wheat. Examples of crops which are cultivated in *bari* land are maize, millet, what, lentils, beans; such as kidney and soy beans, potatoes and vegetables. As table 1 [below] shows, of the cultivated and agricultural land in the Ramechhap district, bari land is more common than khet land.

Land use description	Total area (hectares)	Total percentage
Agricultural land/ Cultivated land	50908	32.54
<i>Khet</i> (Low land)	14233	27.69
<i>Bari/ Pakho</i> (Up land)	36675	72.31
Grass land (Grazing land)	9272	5.92
Forest land	54102	34.54

Table 2. The table shows data from the 2017 annual progress report of the Ramechhap district prepared by the District Forest Office of Ramechhap.

Chisapani Village

Chisapani was the first village visited for household interviews and was reached by a dusty road winding its way up the mid hills of Ramechhap region. The people of the village arrived there eight to nine generations ago; they were people from the Nuargh ethnic group and also Dalits, the forefathers came for business and settled where the village is located today. Chisapani means cold water in Nepali and it is said by the CFUG (Community Forest User Group) that there is a spring of cold water far up in the village which the name of the village

originates from. Through the years the village has grown by increasing ethnic groups and the village itself is divided into different hamlets; many of the houses are in close vicinity to one another which gives the village a sense of unity. Within the CFUG committee most are from the Newar people and one or two are Dalits (blacksmith). In Chisapani two focus groups were held (one with the CFUG, and one with a female group). Additionally, 14 household interviews were conducted (details of these households can be found in table 5 in the appendix).

Farpu Village

The second village I visited was Farpu. Similar to Chisapani, the village is located in the hills, but in an area that was heavily affected by a flooding in 2016 which destroyed large parts of agricultural land and several houses. The flood brought with it boulders and rocks which also destroyed the previous road, however, a new one has been constructed across the rumble of huge boulders which I passed in order to reach the village. They name Farpu was given to the village because when the forefathers lived in the area there were a lot of walnuts in the area and “Farpu” means walnut in the language of the Sunuwar ethnic group. In the past, the village used to be small and scattered, whereas today it is larger with 89 households joined to the CFUG. Before there were no school and no possibility for education, but today there are four different schools located in the village. Like the previous field site, I had one focus group discussion with the CFUG and one focus group discussion with a women group in the village. Twelve household interviews were conducted (see table 6 in the appendix) of which three were with men who had migrated abroad for foreign labour and then had returned. The remainder of interviews were mainly with households having members in Kathmandu or with family members working for instance in the armed police. The final day was spent in a neighbouring village, Khimti, for one final interview.

Chasku Village

The third and final study village was the Chasku Simal Bhanjang village. The CFUG of the village is called Baudha Nangati. Walking up and down on the paths of the village, Chasku reveals beautiful views of the hills of the Kathmandu Valley. The village is composed of different ethnic groups with different languages, cultures and lifestyles although the majority of people in this village are from the Magar ethnic group. The village name means dancing plain and originates from the language of the Magar.

During my time in the village, as in the previous two village studies, I conducted one focus group discussion with the CFUG and I had one focus group discussion with a women group in the village. During this field site 11 household interviews were conducted (see table 7 in the appendix), and in addition two interviews were held with organisations which work with safer migration (SAMI). The first one is an Information Centre in Manthali, which coordinates SAMI and works with counselling and information regarding migrating for

foreign labour. The second one is called Community Human Resource Development Programmen (CHRDEP), based in Ramenchhap village. CHRDEP conducts classes in villages for the family members who have relatives abroad (see table 3).

Land Size and Ownership in the Ramechhap district

Agriculture is an important aspect of rural livelihoods within the Ramechhap district and common livestock include goats, hens, cattle (cows and bulls) and buffalos. Within the families the farm land is acquired through inheritance through equal division among sons (Marquadt et.al. 2016). The caste component is important within the district when it comes to landownership: the upper castes usually own more land than the Dalits and lower castes, the Dalits are the poorest of the caste groups in terms of income and land. According to Fox (2016:7) in 1990 the average Chettri household owned 24 Ropani (1,2 hectares) of land, the average Newar household owned 17 Ropani (0,85 hectares), and a Dalit household owned five Ropani (0,25 hectares) of land.

Focus Group Discussions

Village	Household interviews	Focus group discussions	NGOs
Chisapani	14	2	
Farpu	12	2	
Chasku	11	2	
Manthali			1
Ramechhap village			1

Table 3. The table shows the number of household interviews and focus grup discussions which were conducted in the study villages In addition interviews with two NGOs were conducted regarding migration.

Two focus group discussions were organized at each site: one with the CFUG (Community Forest User Group) and one with a group of women. The reason for picking these two groups for the focus group discussions was to get an introduction to the site and to get an idea of the dynamics of the village. The CFUG is an important actor within the villages due to being able to provide loans and for being responsible for an important natural resource which affects the livelihoods of the households. The focus group discussion with women was crucial to obtain a perspective of the village, because part of the research question was understanding the social changes in rural households due to migration, of which women's perspectives are important since the outflow of young men has significantly changed women's role in village life. I learned two things which affected the outcome of the focus group discussions. Firstly, it was important to have our female colleague as the translator during the women focus group disussions since it was evident that the women were more willing to speak openly when there were only women present in the meetings. During the second and third focus group discussion, there were only women present and this resulted in more fruitful discussions with more engaged women willing to share their oppinions.

Secondly, the location and surroundings of the focus group discussions were very important since it influenced how comfortable the women were with speaking to me and answering my questions. The focus group discussion in Chisapani was placed in a more open space area which attracted a curious audience and made the women more reserved to speak freely. The women focus group discussions in Farpu and Chasku took place in houses and there were less young teenage-women present. This arrangement for the focus group was more secluded and a quieter spot compared to the open field in Chisapani. This made the women also feel safer.

Household Interviews

The interviews conducted with the households (see tables 5-7 in the appendix) were semi-structured and the informants for the household interviews were chosen with the help of the snowball technique (Teorell & Svensson 2013). The focus group discussions were especially valuable for this reason because the knowledge which the chairperson and other participants of the focus group meetings possessed of the village was utilized in order to select informants for interviews. The result is that the presented interviews found in this thesis are mainly from the village Chasku. This is due to that it was my third visit in the field during which I was more experienced compared to the other two field visits. I knew which questions were most fruitful to ask and in addition, I had learned which was the most favourable way to ask them.

Particular caution was taken to include households belonging to the different caste groups in the interviews. The majority of people living in the villages are old people, children and women (this is based on observations and information from the focus group discussions). The young men have left the village for labour of some kind either within Nepal or abroad, and in the case of the man being married, he usually leaves the wife in the village for long periods of time. Therefore, it is important to interview these women to get their idea of how migration affects their lifeworlds. The women I spoke to during the visits to the study field were not always content with speaking to me. It is hard to make out whether or not they were truthful regarding how they felt about the men being out of the household. A common element was that if a man was at home he would usually take responsibility for answering the question and the woman would step aside to allow the man to speak. The status of the women in the interviewed households differed due to their caste and age. Although, even in the most hierarchical castes the status of women within separate households could differ from each other and the status was instead defined by the individuals of the family.

For this field work I have also focused on households which contain migrants of some sort. I have based the definition of a migrant on the material and answers I have been given from interviews; where the household members have gone when they have migrated. These households include the migrants who move to a nearby big town, for instance Manthali and

Kathmandu, and migrants who leave Nepal for another country, such as Qatar, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia. I managed to interview some young male migrants who have returned to the village after being out for some years as well as one male migrant who was in the village visiting his family for vacation but would go back again soon to work again.

	Bhuzel	Brahmin	Chettri	Dalit	Janajiti
Chisapani	1	1		6	6
Farpu			7		3
Chasku				1	10

Table 4. The table shows the number of households which were interviewed in different caste/ethnic groups in the three study villages.

The household interviews were frequently located in the homes of the families who were interviewed. I was often offered tea in the homes in which I was invited, no matter which caste group the household belonged to I was always met with friendliness and mostly curiosity mixed with an edge of reservation. In most cases while the interviews were taking place I was asked to sit outside on straw mats which myself, the informants and Neaplese colleagues gathered on. On some occasions curious neighbours would join to observe and add a comment or thought on what was being discussed. In all three of the study villages I stayed in one of the households and I tried to interact with the hosts as far as the language barrier allowed. This was an important part of the stay since it allowed me to learn how the people of the villages were living and they had the chance to get to know us. The same refers to the whole village, many knew that there were strangers present in the villages and some were keener to talk to me than others. However, these insights per se were an important aspect of the field work and important for the findings, since it has allowed me to understand the daily life of the women and men left in the villages after the young men migrate out for work and to see the changes which are happening.

Reflexivity and Validity

To ensure validity in my thesis I have used different tools to make sure the results and conclusions are valid. One way of ensuring this is making sure I as a researcher stay reflexive. Reflexivity means “that a researcher reflect about how their biases, values, and personal background, such as gender, history, culture, and socio-economic status, shape their interpretations formed during a study (Creswell 2014:248). The Nepalese society is stratified and based on class, caste, gender and such social hierarchies (Thoms 2008) and this I have considered while being in the field and writing this thesis. I have considered the existing power relations between myself and the household members who have been interviewed and, in addition, how the household members have perceived me which has affected how they answer the interview questions. I have my own cultural origin which

means I have my own assumptions and stereotypes which, in addition, affect the way I reflect and observe surroundings. Nepal is a country with a different language and different culture to my own which means that my understanding of underlying meanings has been different and in some cases limited. However, having an outside perspective may have enhanced my understanding because I'm viewing it in a different way than someone who is themselves part of the culture. To minimize biased effects on the research, steps such as presenting the material to ForestAction, have been taken. By allowing the organization to hear about my experience in field and to see the findings, they have been able to share their thoughts regarding what I have seen and found. This has helped me see the findings from their angle as well as mine and to understand the causes and effects in situations.

In order to receive a sincere answer from the interviewees in the villages regarding their own experience connected to migration, there needs to be an air of trust. In other words, the people in the villages need to feel that I am a trustworthy person. It is hard to gain someone's trust by only meeting once, which was the case for many household members, although some were more eager to share their experiences openly. This means that it is important to keep in mind that while I asked questions they household members may have chosen not to share the whole story or might have withheld information. However, this is also when the translators were very helpful since they could often tell if someone was not completely honest, or in some cases, if they were not willing to tell the whole story.

5 Findings

Each village had its own characteristics with its own hamlets with groups of households and families with women, men and children. Characteristics which caught my attention was the red colour of the powdery sand on the roads and which was thick enough to leave my footprints in as I walked further up or down in the villages. The sand also made one cough as vans drove up and down the one and only road; the roads are a significant infrastructure for the village development to enable access to the villages. The big Banyan trees with their aerial roots reaching for the soil caught my attention which have religious and historical significance and offer shade in the midday sun under which meetings were held. While visiting the households, I noticed the animals living in close vicinity to the household members. The numerous long eared goats, buffalo and cows along with other animals play an important role in agriculture and in the lives of the families in the villages. An important characteristic of the villages are its houses and the effect the 2015 earthquake had on them. Many homes are still in the process of being rebuilt and some families were still living in temporary homes since their houses have not been rebuilt yet. The majority of people I interviewed in the villages were women and some older men since the many of the younger men were outside the village engaged in labour work or had migrated to towns or abroad. As mentioned earlier, the thesis focuses on the stories of the women left in the villages and their perceptions of how migration affects them; the social, economic and agricultural changes. Hence, this chapter will present the effects of migration in the study villages and the changes they may induce. The point of departure for the women in the study villages is that the remittance gained from migration is in first hand used for basic consumption such as food and clothing due to that many of the households are poor. Commodities beyond that are for many a rarity.

The Process of Migrating Abroad

Who Makes the Decision?

When interviewing the households, the household members were asked how the decision in the household to migrate was made and who had made the decision. This was to understand the social structure of the household and to understand who initiated the migration process with the will to leave. I wanted to understand if it was the men who migrated who decided if they wanted to go or if it was any other household member such as the wife or a parent who influenced the decision. The most common reply from the household members was that it was the migrant himself who initiated the idea and that they discussed the matter in the household: in other words, they make the decision together. An exception was that sometimes the wife of the husband who migrated would initiate the process and took action in order to improve the household's standard of living. However, the general impression from the interviews was that the decision was made while including the entire household.

Manpower Agencies

After the decision is made the migrant-to-be make contact with a private sector manpower agency which will help the potential migrant to get in touch with a company abroad. The government in Nepal has a list of countries which the Nepali migrants can be recruited to officially, involving the Ministry of Labour and the registered Kathmandu-based manpower agencies. The Gulf countries include Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait and Iraq, and the Asian countries include Malaysia, Brunei, Hong Kong, Saipan and South Korea (Seddon et.al. 2010). The manpower agency acts as an intermediary between the potential migrant and the would-be employer and manages to achieve the essential papers such as the visa, medical documents and necessary permits. This is tedious and time consuming work for the potential migrant and in addition the migrant has to pay an initial down payment; the agencies will usually charge anything between 50 000 NRs and 80 000 NRs (approx. 450 and 700 USD) (Seddon et.al. 2010). One man who has been to Malaysia but has returned to his village in Nepal has explained from his perspective the process of going abroad in his own brief words. His words also resemble what table 3 bellow shows, which is the recruitment process for potential migrants going abroad.

“There needs to be an agreement letter.

Then the migrant has to have the skill for the job and has to be satisfied with the agreement letter.

If the company is good they come and do the interview themselves, if they are not so good they ask the manpower company to do the interviewing for them.

After signing the agreement paper they do the medical check and they send the document to the company. Within one month they get the visa if the paper is approved.

Then after 20 days they get the stamp visa, only then should they book the flight, and they should pay the agency only after that.

After getting the stamp they should finalize the ticket, and then the manpower agency asks to prepare luggage and then the migrant can leave within a week.” (HH11 Farpu).

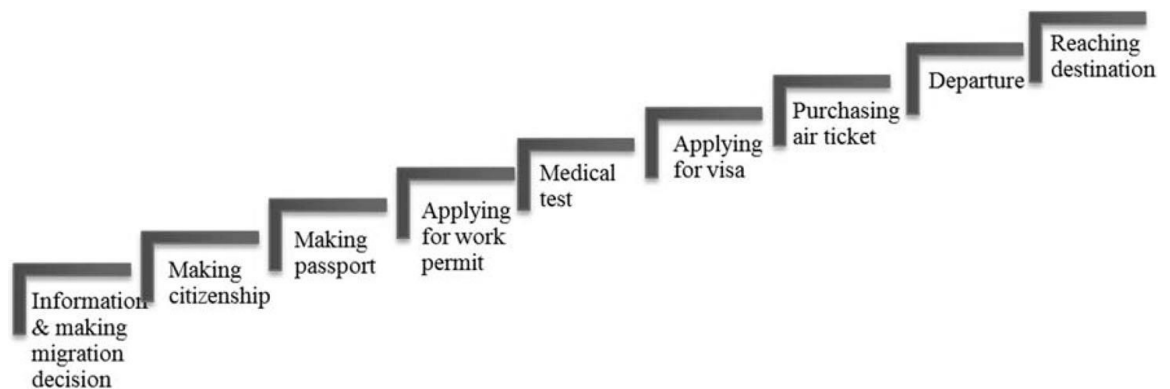


Figure 3. Sunam & McCarthy 2016:15

A “successful” migrant includes managing to attain a long term visa and working for a company who pays you enough to be able to save money and to be able to send remittance home to the family. Having education or a skill and being trained for a job makes this easier. In one of the household interviews a man who works in Dubai explains that if you want to go abroad you should have education.

“I have education of culinary arts and I learned how to prepare food (...) I took the class of culinary arts in a private institution in Kathmandu (...) I have both female and male friends abroad but I only want to encourage choosing to work abroad if you are capable. If you don’t have any patience, idea, knowledge and techniques, then you should not go” (HH4 Chasku).

Dynamics of Migration

Migration occurs on different socio-economic levels; members from both poorer and wealthier households as well as men and women migrate. Wealthier and poorer households exist within the different castes and ethnic groups but some have a higher proportion of poor households compared to other castes and ethnic groups. This includes, for example the Dalit caste. The poorest rural households within the different castes and ethnic groups are usually not able to commence long-term migration, unlike other wealthier households and therefore cannot benefit from the remittances derived from longer term migration.

The majority of the migrants are men, however some of the remittances are also sent from women working away from home, some are employed in the urban areas and in foreign countries. In the study villages I met only one household who had a female household member abroad, she was young and married but with no children. The majority of women are employed in other rural areas within Nepal and possibly as seasonal workers in India. The women working abroad and in towns within Nepal tend to work in the manufacturing sector or as housemaids in households.

By going through the material and by hearing what has been told by the individuals whom have been interviewed, it is clear that there are two groups of men who migrate. It is married

men who go abroad whom eventually come back or stay abroad in the same country for a long time, even years, in order to provide for their families. In some cases, they can come back for a short period for “vacation” and to visit their family. In many of the households the women have explained that if the men are not happy with their job or their pay, they will come back when their visa or contract expire and then apply again to go abroad.

The second category who migrates is the younger unmarried men who go abroad or to a different city/town for labour. The sisters and mothers talking about their brothers or sons have often replied that they do not know if the migrating male will return to the village. If they have a good job with good pay then they will stay in the city or abroad, however they also say that if they get married they might return to the village since they often have the house and the land there.

During the household interviews I have been informed by the household members and migrants themselves about how they leave their home to work somewhere else and through this I have been informed about different kinds of migration. Many household members move from the rural villages to an urban area near by or to Kathmandu in search of work or they move abroad for work or permanently which counts as international migration. These two types of migration also have several dynamics which are characterized as seasonal migration, permanent migration, or migration when the migrant has moved permanently but returns occasionally during festivals or for vacation. The dynamics apply to all the households which have household members outside in varied ways. The seasonal migration occurs in accord with the agricultural season, the migrant leave when there is less work to do within the agriculture in the village and return at the peak and in labour intense period within the agriculture. The permanent migration refers to when a family member moves to a different location, and usually to an urban area. By doing this the household in the rural area receives contributions in the form of remittances sent to the household from the migrant.

Social Changes in Households due to Migration

To understand the women's experiences connected to migration the women focus group discussions in the field were very fruitful. The women were most eager to share their experiences regarding how included or not included they felt in social contexts of the village life. The life stories of the women have shown patterns which point towards changes due to migration and the changes include different aspects which contribute to the empowerment and disempowerment of women.

The women focus group in Chisapani was the first women focus group discussion which was located in a field with several women from the village. During the meeting I was seated on the ground on straw mats or on chairs which were brought forward, on benches of porches or on steps leading up to the houses. It was a fairly small group which consisted of both younger teenage women and older women, this was very rewarding since I was able to ask the women questions how they felt about leaving the village and about their dreams and hopes about the future.

"We have lots of interest to go Kathmandu for further education. If our family supports us, we will go Kathmandu. I am planning to join a bachelor degree after completing grade 12 (...) I think my brother (migrant in the Gulf countries) will help if I continue further education." (Women focus group discussion Chisapani).

Their perspective is important since they gave me a sense of what the younger generation was thinking regarding migration. Whether they wanted to migrate themselves or if they wanted to stay in the village and how much a migrant family member can be a helping hand financially to pay for the education with remittance money.

The point of the focus group discussions was to allow the women to speak freely about how they experience migration in their village and in their own household. I wanted to hear the women's stories in order to understand how migration has changed their daily lives in the long run perspective. Since the men leave the household to find work elsewhere the women are left in the households with new obligations which lead to social changes.

Social Inclusion

As a result of male household members being out of the household some women are experiencing social inclusion in the village, in other words women's increased involvement in the social sphere. One woman tells her story of her husband and son who have migrated to Kathmandu while she stays in the village working as a health assistant and providing for the family:

"My husband works as a sellsman in Kathmandu. My son is also doing the work as sellsman in Kathmandu delivering goods from one place to another place (...) My salary is the main source of income.

From my salary I have to pay (back a loan) in the interval of every 3 months like an installment. The remaining money from my salary I use for home food consumption.” (Chisapani HH 1).

This means that they are to a larger extent allowed or forced into being the head of the house and taking up the husband’s role in representing the household in different context. This can for example include being able to influence agriculture, land issues, economy etc. which can affect the household in the long-run. The women also have to attend the meetings which their husbands originally attended before migrating:

“If there is a meeting we have to attend we have to carry the children and take them with us.” (HH5 Chasku).

Even though the women are included in decision making since the husbands are out, they still have to carry other responsibilities with them which no one else in the household can help them with, such as taking their children with them. This depends on the household structure and who the women live with. In some cases the elderly such as the parents in law will help out with the children in the household. The increased income due to remittances sent to the households from the household members who have migrated allows them to feel less strained in their daily life. They have more access to food and clothes and can also much more easily get access to loans because they are more trusted to be able to pay it back; “Before we had to struggle to get food and now we have no problem with clothes and food, and we can easily take loan.” (HH3 Chasku). The decision making about certain aspects such as economical responsibilities which influence the household is left for the women.

Another significant aspect of social inclusion, which is of great importance for the women, is the possibility for themselves to go to school, or to be able to send their children to school. The remittances which the migrants send enable the household members to pay for the education and school equipment such as books, pencils and notebooks.

“The women have no education and they cannot go and work and that is why they have to stay in the village. Before they were busy with cutting grass and firewood and they couldn’t go to school because of that.” (Women focus group Chasku).

“Now (my husband) is in Saudi Arabia. This is all because we want to change our life and we want to give better education to our children (...)” (Household in Farpu).

Taking over the responsibility

Taking over the majority of responsibilities in the households can lead to social change. This change show shifting power relations because the women in the households are the ones who end up making most of the decisions. When the men in households migrate it means that the

women gain a larger role in managing the household. They for example receive the remittance which is sent to them and in most cases control the spending of that money.

Even though the women in some sense are liberated and becoming more independent by increasing responsibilities and social inclusion in villages by the ability to influence make decisions, they still have to consult the husband or son when it comes to certain issues. When women marry into a man's family the women move into the household of the husband and in-law parents. Land is also inherited by the sons and one son in the family should take care of the aging parents. One woman explains that she has to ask for the son's suggestion (who is working abroad) when it comes to land issues because she is dependent on the remittance money which he sends to her. Another woman, whose husband used to be abroad, explains that they had a mutual agreement for spending money when he was gone; when the husband was away she handled the money in the household and she would inform the husband on the phone how much she would spend of the money.

"We had a mutual agreement for spending money, I would inform my husband on the phone how I spent it. When my husband was away I handled the money. Now my husband makes money and gives it to me, but when I spend it I inform him." (HH6 Chasku).

Some women are more independent and have more responsibility when looking after the household including its' financials and wellbeing:

"I have my salary (from working as a health assistant in the village) and I spend my salary for buying rice, oil, etc. so I am maintaining my food gap. And in Kathmandu (the husband and the son) all do work and manage. Staying alone is more compulsion than common in the village (due to migration). Who loves to stay alone, right? And from society and from relatives I get support. They have a positive perception and are proud of me that I am staying alone and doing job and progressing. Sometimes I feel bad to stay alone but I am very happy with this." (HH1 Chisapani).

Even though the women gain advantages from migration the women remaining are still very tied to the men of the household. The level of empowerment for the women can depend on if the women live in a household with the parents in law or if the women live alone. Through the interviews it has become evident that the women who live alone become more independent through social inclusion and the taking over responsibly since they are the head of the household when the man leaves. This is due to the woman being lower in rank in the families especially when it comes to living in the husband's family. The father in law is the decisional factor in the family and the woman is very dependent on her husband's family. This becomes a lot more pronounced if the husband migrates since his family then becomes the main social and economical social net for the woman. There are stories of women becoming cast out from families with no connections and with very little livelihood options. In the collected material there is evidence of women leaving their husbands and then receiving aid from fathers and brothers. Hence, the women are very vulnerable to the changes

happening due to migration, globalization reaches into the corners of the villages and sets changes into motion which reveals themselves in differing ways. Which type of family the woman belongs to including caste, parents and parent in laws, children and land affects how independent the woman can be when the husband migrate out.

The effects of social inclusion and taking of responsibilities in the household lead to independence and it enables the women to understand and speak about their situation. However, being able to speak about the changes happening in their lives also brings up other aspects of their situation. The women would not only present positive aspects of their situation, in fact the most common aspect which emerged when asked how migration effects them was the increased work burden which engulf the woman as the men move out to find work, which lead to the social inclusion – social exclusion – and there is a fine line between the two.

Social Exclusion

During the focus group discussions and interviews the women have also shared stories about increased work burden and increased risks connected to migration. The material has pointed towards one form the social exclusion which is the stigma of being a single woman. This means that the woman is married but living alone since the husband is working and providing for the family somewhere else. According to women, especially in one of the villages, some people have a hard time to accept the idea of a female head household, and there were cases of back-stabbing these single women in the form of gossiping. However, there were also stories of how the women support each other, welcoming the thought of women being more independent and able to take care on the overall responsibility for the household. During the woman focus group discussion in Chasku as well as during a household interview (HH5) in Chasku the women described how women will take advantage of the fact that a woman is the single adult in the household and the female head of the household, during quarrels they will insult the single woman with the fact that their husband is away.

“Sometimes there is quarrel while in queue for water and then the women say that they do not have husbands at home.” HH5 Chasku.

How a woman is treated in the villages can also depend on which household the woman is from and an important factor can also be which caste the woman originates from. The stories which have been told by the women also show that the women who are the head of the household gain respect and support for being independent and for running the household.

Increased Work Burden and Risks

A main element of change is the increased work load in the daily life of the women. When one woman is alone because her husband is abroad, she has to take care of everything in the household including the responsibilities which the husband originally had the responsibility for:

“I alone have to take all the responsibility of the home. I alone have to finish both indoor and outdoor work (...) If my husband is home then he may earn money for us but now I have to manage money anyhow and alone run the family and fulfil daily needs.” (Woman in Focus Group, Chasku).

The women have shared their experiences regarding this and how they originally have the main responsibility of their children and in addition have to take care of everything else while the husband is gone. This means that the work load has increased greatly. Since the men are going away the women are left alone with the responsibility of the household which includes for instance agriculture, repairing as well as construction:

“Yes, of course, when the men were here, they helped to plough the field but now we have to hire the labour. The pressure of work increases. We need to handle both our and his responsibilities in the home. Before they helped to work in the bari land, and now we should do the indoor and outdoor work and activities ourselves like looking after the children, the livestock and working in the field. Due to the absence of the husband we have to carry big loads on our backs and children in our laps at the same time.” Women (Focus Group Discussion Chasku).

Another women explains that her work load has increased greatly as well and that she is feeling overwhelmed by the forces at work surrounding her which also is controlling her:

“When my husband was here, he used to help and support me in every situation. But now I have lots of work pressure like I have to carry my baby while going for collection of forage and water. People are controlling us. I feel really bad and feel like crying.” (HH2 Chasku).

The amount of chores and work has increased when the husbands are away, and time for keeping up the work in agriculture is not always enough. One solution might be to leave part of the land uncultivated, but such decision was made with the feeling of letting the family down:

“If we do not use land then villagers start to backbite by saying “he/she are unable to cultivate the farm land, they have left their land bare” (...) and so our prestige will go down” (Mother in household HH4, Chasku).

The increased work burden is the main direct and short term change which the women have brought up during the women focus group discussions and during the household interviews. The main effect of this is that the women are becoming aware of their situation and they are seeing a change which they are able to put into words and express to me.

Migration not only increases the work burden for women remaining in the households in the study villages, but it also includes psychological changes. The husbands migrate to a foreign country for a long period of time and when they come back they often try to find new working opportunities in a foreign country to be able to make more money. “When the husbands comes home they will try with different country. When the husband goes abroad we feel

alone and have to work alone.” (HH5 Chasku). This leaves the women alone for a long periods of time. Some women explain that they feel lonely due to this.

“Sometimes we feel bad and sad. This is human life; sometimes we have to face sadness and sometimes happiness. Sometimes we feel scared that someone is going to bring bad news about the husbands (who are away).” (Women Focus Group Chasku).

When the men leave the households and send remittance money the women become very dependent on this income. The households within the study villages are changing and the households are becoming spatially dispersed when the migrants move away. Migration alters and changes the social structure within the families when the husband leaves the household, the traditional social structures of the village disintegrate since the families become more dependent on the remittance money. If the remittances sent from the migrants to the households cease to arrive the women and children left behind become very vulnerable since their social and economical safety in some cases has disappeared. There are examples of successful households with migrants and not so successful households with migrants. In the latter the woman become very vulnerable when the husband for some unknown reason have stopped sending remittance money which the women have become so dependent on.

The effects of the increased social risks connected to migration have direct effects on their well being in different ways, including psychological effects. This affects the women and may have longer term effects since it may determine their future and what type of lives they will be leading.

Changing Lifeworlds

During the focus group meeting I asked questions about how the women felt about the men being out of the villages and I tried to gain an understanding of how they felt regarding this. The purpose of these questions were to understand the lifeworld of these women; their customs, beliefs and ideas about their own lives. I wanted to understand whether or not they felt or wanted changes in their lives, and if yes, which changes.

The migrants who return home from working elsewhere bring experiences with them and teachings which affect the household and society in the villages. This is applicable to all migrants but mainly to the ones who go abroad. This is due to the fact that the migrants who move to another country are faced with new challenges by living in a different culture in a new environment, being away from family and friends for long periods of time. The migrants have to handle new situations with different people from different countries. The migrants who have returned to their families in Nepal explain about being abroad:

“Positive (impacts of migration are that) we can get extra knowledge, we visit new places, we can learn and know multicultural environments, we can learn about positive attitudes and learn what honest and

hardworking means. Also we realized the importance of family. Without family, the job, money, work is nothing.” (HH4 Chasku).

This is in other words called social remittance when the migrants bring not only monetary remittance with them home, but also knowledge acquired through experiences which change their lifeworlds. Social remittances are according to Hetch et.al. (2015) ideas, identities and behaviours which flow to and from the countries with the migrants moving between the countries and their communities. According to the authors the migration is a pathway to new forms of knowledge which also develops into a cultural pattern. The migrants can bring new perspectives into their life and society and have gained new social networks through their colleagues and friends from different countries. Through their work they have learned to gain respect and to respect others which can aid them in their prospective lives.

When the migrants are away in another place, whether it is from rural to urban or international migration, they are away from their village and family. They are not uprooted, they move back and forth between borders. Due to this, according to the author Thieme (2007), social, cultural, political and economic conditions in the country of origin and in the destination region are interconnected giving an international character to the lives and livelihoods of the remaining household members. This means that more permanent settlement in the country of destination does not necessarily mean that the social ties with the family and village are completely ruptured (Thieme 2007). The lifeworld of the migrant is affected by the new impressions and knowledge in the form of social remittance which the migrant brings with him or her when he or she visits the home in the village. The shared meanings which the migrant and the household members have also change since they share different daily lives.

An example of a changing lifeworld is a middle income household in which the son of the household has moved to Dubai and has lived there during five years. The household farm has the capacity to feed the family for 12 months of the year if the weather favours the agriculture. Otherwise they cover the food gap in the household by buying food from a shop and they use remittance which is sent from the son as well as money from the father of family who does labour work in the village. The son decided to migrate because there were no opportunities in the village where they live. Now, the employment abroad results in profit in the form of monetary income which he is able to send some home to the family. In order for the son to migrate, common in many households, the family had to take a loan, however, due to his high salary he was able to repay it very fast. The remittance he sends is used for rebuilding the house which was damaged during the 2015 earthquake, and they also use the remittance money for basic food consumption such as rice, vegetables, festivals and medicines, nonetheless, a large amount of the remittance is being saved.

An additional aspect connected to social and cultural changes is that due to there are men lacking in the village there are no men to help and perform in the cultural and religious

ceremonies, such as weddings and funerals. The main remaining in the village are older and find it more difficult to perform during the ceremonies:

“This is a village so there is not much work here for earning money. also due to migration there are no more youths to participate in the funeral ceremonies and wedding ceremonies. We old people cannot do any work in this village and even cannot participate in any ceremony.”
(Focus Group Discussion Chisapani).

The lifeworlds of the household members involved does not only include the women but it also includes the men who migrate to another town or to another country. The lifeworld is in which we lead our social life and experience it with friends and family, it is what shapes us. The changing lifeworlds of migrants who leave the households to work elsewhere affects the household members remaining in the villages. These changing lifeworlds can be part of the process of enabling empowerment in women's lives. The new perspectives and responsibilities of the household members have long term effects on the household and it changes the responsibilities and work burden of the individuals involved.

For instance, one household in a middle income household has one son in Oman working with disabled people in a hospital and another son working in Dubai. A daughter in law in the household along with her husband worked in the same company in Malaysia and returned to the village. The daughter in law, however, left again to work in Dubai. This is quite rare, a married woman who is abroad and sending back remittances and not the husband, not many women go abroad and especially not married women. In this household there has been a big change in the standard of living, before the family members migrated they had trouble with having sufficient food and clothing. Now the food diet has changed in the family and they can eat pretty much whatever they want due to the remittance which is being injected into the household economy. There has also been a change in the land use in the household; due to the remittance they have been able to buy 31 Ropani (1,55 hectares) of land. The remittance has also enabled the children in the household to gain education. This shows that there have been many changes in the household due to migration and this also shows glimpses of a changed lifeworld.

The Economical Changes in Households due to Migration

Certain patterns are evident from the collected material which lead to economical changes. A key to this are the loans which the families have to obtain. The loans are also the key for enabling migration for many families. The fact that the families often have to take loans places them in debt which in turn means that they have to spend a large portion of the remittance money they receive from their household members for paying back the loans.

To see the patterns of economical changes, the household interviews were more advantageous. During the interviews both women and in some cases the men, such as fathers

and husbands, were able to share their perspective on the subject. The questions asked about topics related to the economical issues of the household were centred around livelihood aspects. The questions asked about the livelihoods was included to gain an understanding of the aspects which has led to the economical changes. The households originated from different castes and this plays an important role since it can determine whether or not the family can afford to migrate. It also plays an important role due to it affecting whether or not the family can raise their standard of living.

In the material from the study villages of Chisapani, Farpu and Chasku the majority of the interviewed households have loans due to differing reasons, including construction, migration, health, basic consumption, health, land investment and ceremonies such as weddings.

Loans as a part of life: now and historically

According to the authors Blaikie et.al. (2002) migration has developed in ways that no one has anticipated. Migration has allowed the sustaining of the rural areas and it has proven to be easier to migrate than previously anticipated and this has led to a remittance economy which has preserved and strengthened the families of the households of villages such as Chisapani, Farpu and Chasku. However, the result of this is a pattern which has emerged due to families having taken loans to go abroad, this leaves the household members in debt. Loans are usually the only way to afford to go abroad, and this has great effects on the rural households.

Historically the people in the villages have for a long time taken loans from village lenders which are wealthier than themselves. The interest rates are high which means that the people become very tied to the village, and if they wish to migrate they can only do so for a short periods of time. The local interest rates charged by the village lenders can be between 16-48 %, which is much higher than bank interest rates which can be at 10-17 %. The local village lenders also charge the poor higher rates than the more well off households, the poor can be charged 36 % compared to the richer households which can be charged 24 %. Accessing loans is not only dependent on collateral but also on social networks and trust (Sunam & McCarthy 2016:49).

According to the data of the authors Blaikie et.al. (2002) from the 1970's to the 1990's, loans has been widespread and as a result of that exposure to debt has also been increasing. The loans are usually informal and are not secured in any way. The proportion of the loans used for investment is low which may lead to further accumulation of more loans as well. This might spiral the household into further debts. Loans are also taken in order to be able to migrate; the loans for migrating are usually taken for the manpower companies which charge a substantial amount for the procedure. The amount the migrant is paid from the company he/she is working for and how rich or poor the migrant household is from the start matters to determine how successful the household is going to be.

The possibility to pay back loans and also saving money from remittance sent back from migrants working outside depends on how well off the household is from the start, and how large their debts are from the start. Hence, if the household is poor, migration might not benefit the households, it might give them greater debts impossible to pay back. The poorer, as mentioned earlier, pay high interest rates, much higher than the more well off households, which increases their debts. Sunam & McCarthy (2016) points out that migrants from poor households struggle during the process of going abroad, especially in securing loans for obtaining airplane tickets to the migrant country after receiving the visa.

The economical changes lead to effects which are very important in the lives of the household members remaining in the villages. Migration is used as a way to diversify livelihoods and the remittance sent to the families is a key resource for the livelihood. An increased income of cash brings more direct changes in the lives, where they have the chance to gain a higher standard of living.

The Effects of Loans

The women who have been interviewed have different stories regarding loans, some have more prosperous stories to tell and this is frequently connected to the fact that they have diverse income sources as livelihoods and connected to which caste they belong to. However, some women who are less wealthy or with less social contacts or have no husband have less successful stories to tell. These women are heavily burdened with loans which they find difficult to pay back, to be able to pay back the loans the sons of the family go abroad. One woman in the village Farpu told the story of her family in which they lost the father in a flooding. Once he was gone the remaining family members found out that they had big debts up to 500 000 Rupees (approximately 4 550 USD). The woman believes that the husband took these loans in order to run the family since they are a very poor family. In order to pay back the loans, the son in the family went abroad to Malaysia, however he returned after a year since the company he worked for closed down and the salary he earned was not good either. The family's daughter lives and works in Kathmandu and helped manage the loan for the son to go abroad and she has also managed to pay back that loan (HH3 Farpu). The story of this household shows that loans are a big part of the families lives and a determining factor in their lives.

Migration has both positive and negative effects on the household economy: on one hand it enhances opportunities by increasing the family's income, but on the other hand it increases their vulnerability because of raising debt level. The households have to take loans in order to migrate and the remittances which are sent back from the migrant are used to pay back the loans taken for migration. Only if the salary is good enough the migrant and the household members will be able to pay the loan back quickly. The remittance is also used for paying back additional loans for construction of houses, medicines, and for basic consumption such as food, clothing and education. *The following section will present how the loans are used.*

a. Construction- the rebuilding of houses after the earthquake

One major reason to take loans is due to the devastating earthquake of 2015 which ruined many homes in the villages. In order to rebuild their homes, the household members have to take loans:

“The older son has contributed 200 000 rupees from his savings to rebuild and the parents have taken a loan of 500 000 rupees to rebuild the house.” (HH8 Farpu).

The interviews have also shown that migration is linked with the 2015 earthquake since many of the households have taken loans in order to rebuild their homes and they have to migrate abroad in order to be able to pay them back:

“The main reason to migrate is to pay back loan. The loan is from the rebuilding.” (HH5 Chasku).

b. Migration abroad- for instance paying manpower companies

According to Sunam & McCarthy (2016) migrants from poor households who were going to the Gulf States or Malaysia invested between 70 000 NRs and 150 000 NRs (between approx. 600 USD and 1 300 USD) for covering the costs to migrate. This includes the fees mentioned earlier. According to the authors migrants from well-off households pay 17 % less than the poorer households who are going to the same destinations. This is due to that migration is affected by social relations and the poorer households generally lack strong social networks and are not as well educated as the richer households. The richer households are able to avoid forms of exploitation (Sunam & McCarthy 2016:48-49).

“Her husband took a loan of 100 000 NRs to go abroad.” (HH2 Chasku).

“They all took loans for going abroad from the village with interest rate. The daughter in law has 225 000 NRs in loan and she has paid back 100 000 now.” (HH3 Chasku).

“His son went to Oman 1 year ago and he is still there. Before he went to Malaysia he took some loans and then came back because the mother died. This time to go abroad he also took some loans.” (HH1 Chasku).

c. Health- medicine

Another major reason for which people take loans was shown in the interviews in the study villages was that they need to take loans in order to pay for medical treatments and for medicines:

“Her husband went abroad to pay back loan because she was in the hospital and he also went abroad to be able to build house.” (HH2 Chasku).

d. Basic consumption- food, education and clothing

The poorest of the households take loans in order to be able to cover their basic consumption such as food, education and clothing. There have been differing results regarding this; different households have answered differently which can be connected to the wealth of the household. If the household was richer they might have improved their standard of living but if the household is poorer they are using the remittance to pay back loans and to cover the basic needs and consumptions such as food, education and clothing. Some of the wealthier households also have several household members outside working in different countries or in different areas of Nepal. They are more diversified and have different strategies to secure their livelihood. The poorer households might have to keep labour on their land in order to secure the agriculture since they cannot only be dependent the migrant to send sufficient amounts of remittance.

Wealthier household: *“My middle son is in Oman and he does the work of helping disordered people in the hospital. My daughter in law is in Dubai and works with helping in a school. My youngest son is also in Dubai and he works as some kind of electrician there.”*
(Magar HH3 Chasku).

Poorer household: *“Our farm is self-sufficient for 4 months and we cover the food gap by doing labour work, carrying stones, working in the field. We have 2 sons who stay in Kathmandu and they send 10 000 rupees per month. The major source of income is agriculture and the sons’ remittance and we earn extra money from labour work.”*
(Dalit HH9 Chisapani).

Institutional Support for Dealing with the Challenges

Institutional support has emerged to deal with the challenges in the villages. The women were thankful for the cooperatives in the villages to which they can turn for economical support in the form of loans. The cooperatives included women groups, the CFUGs (Community Forest User Groups) and other types of initiatives within the villages to support the people:

“There are different saving and credit groups/cooperatives, before there wasn’t ... I am saving money monthly in two cooperatives. I’m saving it for emergencies or for when she gets old. My mother had also saved money in cooperative.” (Farpu HH9).

Even a very small contribution of money due to the cooperatives and women groups can change the trajectories to some households and have strong effect on the households. According to Kabeer (2016) membership of purposely formed women's groups and cooperatives for saving money and access to training of different sorts can have a big impact on women's empowerment. Figure 5 shows an example of how a women saving group in one of the study villages was set up.

The name of this place is Darimboot of Chasku. Before we had lots of pain, sorrow and struggle in this village. So, at that time we had a meeting with committee members. We discussed with them to get permission and decided to form a women saving group. And finally we opened women saving group which is named as Bagan Beli saving centre. At that time, we started to save money from 2 NRs in a month. And slowly we increased the amount of money for saving to 5 NRs after a year, then 10 NRs, and now we save 20 NRs per month. This saving centre was opened with 21 households. There are altogether 21 households that save money in this saving centre. Before in this village there was no school. We did not go to school for even grade one. We did not get the opportunity of education before. But later, some of we took temporary education. So that now we can write our name. (Chasku, Women Focus Group).

Figure 4. The text box includes a story of how a women saving group in Chasku village was initiated.

Remittances can offer a relief in the daily life of the households. They are able to cover basic consumptions such food and clothing. According to the authors Sunam & McCarthy (2016) migration is not enough to bring households out of poverty. Migration is also controlled by social relations and structural conditions, aspects which also effect migration in households are salaries in the foreign country and the costs of migration which includes the loans for going abroad and the interest rates. The combination of these two determine how much remittance a household can receive and put into use in order to reduce poverty.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, male outmigration affects women's decision-making in agriculture in two ways: through the loss of labour in the household, and through the flow of remittances. Both are important aspects of the economic changes happening in households. While the economic changes are mainly recognized through the loans taken by household members to support their living, the remittances also play an important role since they are used to pay back the loans.

Agricultural Changes in Rural Households due to Migration

During each visit to the villages I stayed in one household during the majority of the time I was there. In two of the three villages there were animals close to the households and agricultural land was in the vicinity of the main house. An example household in the Farpu village is a Chettri household (HH4). The household has *khet*, *bari* and *kharbari* land and keep 10 goats and one cow. The mother of the household lives alone in the household at the moment. Due to her livestock and the surrounding agricultural land she has food subsistence for 12 months of the year and she has even given some her land for sharecropping. Her son, who owns a sweet shop in Kathmandu, also helps out by sending her remittance money occasionally.

The patterns which can lead to agricultural changes are significant since they bring another perspective to understand which changes migration has caused. This perspective validates the results and is important since agriculture still is an important livelihood for the household members in the study villages as mentioned in the introduction.

As I walked up and down the hills of the villages I passed different sorts of households from different castes and hamlets. This gave glimpses of what the households looked like including which livestock the household keep. Some of the households were located close to their farm land and to the animals while some households were located further away from their land. Which land the households keep (*khet*, *bari* or *kharbari*) also defines which crops the families can grow and how many months of the year they have food subsistence. If the household does not have a lot of land, then migration and the remittance money which is sent to the family a very important asset. The following section will present how agriculture as an important livelihood has been affected by migration.

Biophysical Factors

The patterns for crops and livestock holding differ from location to location. According to the authors Ojha et.al. (2017:165) land owners treat land differently depending on the environment surrounding the land and the location of the land. Biophysical factors affect the villages due to their location in different areas within the Ramechhap region with different environmental conditions “*Locality and biophysical factors, such as ecological fragility, plot fragmentation, marginality, vulnerability to landslides and erosion*” affect land use (Ojha et.al. 2017:159-160). In Chasku village there is a shortage of water which is also affected by the landscape geography, this means that it is difficult to keep *khet* land since it is irrigated land and need water, hence, *bari* land is the main alternative. The shortage of water affects not only the *khet* land, it affects all vegetation including the *bari* land which means that there are longer dry periods and the harvest is in general low and is also decreasing. This in turn also means that the households turn towards other alternatives for livelihoods.

“The main reason of migrating is water scarcity in the village, due to water scarcity there is no agriculture (...), it becomes insufficient to

feed families and it becomes hard to run our daily life (Focus Group Chasku).

Changes in Livestock

In the Ramechhap district the forests surrounding the villages are maintained by the community and according to the authors Marquardt et.al. (2016), many of the communities have closed the forests from grazing. Keeping the animals instead installed and collecting fodder for them increased the labour demand. However, as labour is a scarce resource for most families the livestock numbers has decreased greatly. The community forestry is, however, still important in order to be able to keep the remaining livestock.

"I think forest plays an important role in our life, we can rear more livestock if the forest provide us with forage." (Chasku HH7)

The research has shown that the farmers keep fewer livestock than in the 1980's and the animals they keep currently have higher economical value. They keep fewer cows and bulls and they have decreased five-fold, in 1980 one household kept 2.38 cattle in average compared to 0.49 in 2010. However, the number of buffalo have been kept stable through the years, this is due to the fact that buffalo provide highly valued milk. The number of goats on the other hand have increased in the households. In 1980 one household owned in average 2.3 goats and in 2010 on household owned 3.56 goats. The farmers prefer keeping goats because they are easier to manage due to the fact that they eat less and drink less water, grow faster and they are easy to sell (Fox 2016:8-9). The change is a strategy to secure investment in an increasingly drier climate and it also means less labour burden for the farmers.

Underutilisation of Land

The findings from the study villages have shown that some households in the villages underutilise, abandon and adapt their agricultural practices of their agricultural land due to, for instance, changing climate conditions, migration and increased pressure from wildlife such as monkeys and deer.

Research have likewise shown similar findings. According to Ojha et.al. (2017) the causes for underutilisation of land is migration, urbanisation, conflict, insecurity of land tenure, increased remittances and pensions and, lastly, diversification of household income and livelihood strategies. Nepal's Ministry of Agricultural Development also showed in 2013/2014 that 25 % of the available arable land has been left uncultivated (Ojha et.al. 2017:159).

Households which have means to diversify and have other sources for livelihoods than agriculture might actually be more food secure; land abandonment does not affect them. It is the poorer households it affects more since they might not have access to land or labour and this deprives them of their livelihood and their traditional entitlements if the agricultural land in villages become abandoned (Ojha et.al. 2017:169).

Another reason for the change of land use is that the land is located far away from villages which means that the land also is more vulnerable and more accessible to monkeys and deer. The wildlife has increased since the Maoist period when guns were kept and the monkeys and deer were shot when spotted on the agricultural land. When peace came the guns were collected leading to the increase of wildlife again:

“(…) Due to the conservation and protection of the community forest, the number of wild animals is increasing and the wild animals like monkey and deer damage 50 % of our crops. So it has become compulsion for everyone to choose alternative ways of earning money so people migrate in search of job.” (Focus group Chasku).

Increased Fodder Production in Agricultural Land Instead of Forest Collection

The forest plays an important role in the livelihood of the households in the study villages. Forest areas have traditionally been used for grazing and for collecting leaves and grass for animal fodder. Many communities have, however, closed the forests for grazing in order to protect the forest plantations and to encourage regrowth of trees (Marquardt et.al. 2016). The households collected fodder from the community forests instead of grazing, and the change now is that many plant fodder trees on their private land in order to have them nearby to save time and labour. The change of increasing trees on agricultural land is connected to the lack of labour, due to the fact that many migrate from the villages. Households have therefore turned their *bari* land into *kharbari* land and planted trees on that land in order to be able to collect leaves and fodder. Fox (2016:8), similarly, mentions that migration is leading to increased land in fallow and number of trees are increasing on private land.

“We have left 3 Ropani of bari land uncultivated and it is now converted into kharbari like the forest. Before we used to bring fodder from that land but now we stopped that too.” (Chisapani HH3).

“Since 5 years I stopped going to the forest, I collect fodder from my own private land. I also get fuel wood from my own private land.” (Chasku HH5).

Blaikie et.al. (2002) mentions change and continuity in their text. The change is connected to the underestimation of the capacity of the global labour market which to a large extent is a driver for migration. The global labour market nowadays provides work and remittances for the rural inhabitants. Even though remittances due to migration have become a significant income for livelihoods, agriculture still remains important to rural society. According to Ojha et.al. (2017), over than 70 % of the population draws livelihoods from agriculture and the arable land remains a key source for the livelihoods, food security and for the national development. Hence, migration and agriculture complement each other, and very few households can do without either of them as livelihoods.

6 Discussion

Continuity and Change

Changes are the effects of migration on structural and individual levels in rural society.

Empowerment permeates these changes to some extent, affecting the lives of the people connected to the migration. The changes, however, are not unceasingly the effect since the findings shows that continuation of certain aspects in the rural life still is important.

Migration is a driver of change, but continuity in the form of, for example, agriculture still plays a critical role. The change, due to migration, lies in the nature of the rural households and the villages, including empowerment of remaining household members.

Other important aspects which plays a role in the interplay is the socio-economic design of the household and which caste the interviewees belong to. The economic situation of the household is essential to determine if the women are to gain any opportunities to make independent choices. The social and economic state of the household plays a role but this also interacts with what occurs after a household member migrates. The flow of remittances from the migrant can, of course, change the dependency on previous binding social structures, but also help one become less dependent on loans from wealthier households (Slavchevska 2016). The empowerment of women is a complex phenomenon to explore, since one may argue that the loss of family labour leads to an increased work burden for the women, as they are obliged to stay in the villages and thus get restricted freedom. At the same time one may observe that, the flow of remittance from the migrants means that women gain an additional source of income and, in consequence, more choices and more space in their lives as well as the possibility to influence village decision making. It is also possible to connect this to Habermas system and lifeworld. Here the system is colonizing the lifeworld giving the women more opportunities.

The findings which have been introduced earlier in the thesis are examples of the changes which have occurred at social, economical and agricultural levels due to migration. They all contribute to the changes of lifeworlds of women in several ways and they show not only fragments of empowerment but also burdens. This is due to a process in which there is a shift of power due to the women shouldering the labour and responsibilities which the men usually have. The following section will discuss this in the context of continuity and change, and in addition how migration changes lifeworlds.

The effects of migration are determined by caste, the structure of the household and the power relations between the household members, and this influences the opportunities for the women in the villages. In some households the wife and husband have a mutual agreement on how the household should be run while the husband is gone and they communicate about

how the remittance should be used. This communication refers especially to the wealthier households which usually belong to the higher casts such as Chettri. The wives can inform the husbands over the phone about expenses regarding food, clothing and land. This means that some women handle all of the households' money while the men are abroad. When the husband return, he might still be making most of the money, but the wife spends it and informs the husband about it, hence it is possible to recognize a mutual agreement between them.

In one of the villages, we visited a middle class household belonging to the Tamang ethnic group and we interviewed the women in the household. During this interview we were seated outside the family's house on the ground and the mother, who was the head of the household, daughter in law and young grandson were present. The women told us that since the sons and one of the daughters in law had migrated, they were in charge of most chores in the household and they cover their food gap mainly through the remittances they receive. In this household the women ran the household and took care of everyday business such as food and labour. I didn't get the impression that the men who had migrated had much influence in the decision making. One of the sons had also allowed his wife to migrate abroad with him. Comparing this middle class Tamang household to a poorer Dalit household which have a lower income, there is in this household not much room for discussion for how the money should be spent. There is not a much room for saving money or decision making for how the remittance should be used since it is mostly used for basics such as food and clothing.

Social Changes and Empowerment

When discussing whether or not empowerment is a change due to migration one needs to reflect upon where power comes from. When certain groups gain more power, other groups may loose or receive less power. After migration the women gain more opportunities to make decisions in the households, feminization of agriculture is an example of this. This in one way proves that women have gained more power which affect the choices that are being made for the household. As a result the women who's husbands are abroad are not always treated nicely by other women. Quarrels between them may arise while, for example, they are queuing for water which can be a scarce resource in some parts of the Ramechhap district. This demonstrates that the women who have access to more cash through migration and remittances rises in hierarchy, hence, jealousy occurs amongst other women. The power seems to lie with the women who have migrated household members, and this is connected to the fact that some of the households have more cash due to the remittance. Where the power lies is therefore not only dependent on gender, age and caste.

New Lifeworlds

International migration contributes with new opportunities and raised standard of living through remittances. However, international migration also reshapes social behaviour

through the spread of secular ideas into more traditional customs of the villages and communities which the migrants originate from (Hadi 2001). In other words, the lifeworlds change due to subjecting households and families to new experiences, as will be shown below.

Different households in the villages have different experiences regarding migration. A few household members have managed to find a good job and are able to save money to send home to the household members. Other household members who migrate have to work harder in order to make a sufficient amount of money to live off themselves and send home to their family members. Some migrants feel lonely while they are abroad and wish to return back home to their village. Other migrants feel that migration is more of an opportunity for them and they wish to stay. There are also cases when they return home to the village due to an expired visa or if the company they work for has gone bankrupt and the migrant then try to find somewhere else to go. All these experiences leave imprints on the migrants themselves and on their family, which affects their lifeworlds. The socio-economic structure, such as the caste and the variations within the caste, of the family also affects the experience of the migrant to a large extent regarding if they are able to pay back loans. Some of the households are forced to migrate to pay back the loans since there are no opportunities for work in the villages. Migration then becomes equivalent to hardship and stagnation instead of development or empowerment.

The new lifeworlds influenced by migration which was encountered included both the women's and men's perspectives, and they include changes in their everyday life which may have a big impacts on their future life. The changing lifeworlds are also due to the social remittance which is gained by the migrants through living in different countries with different cultures. Hetch et.al. (2015) acknowledges the changes due to migration in correlation with social remittance. Impacts of the changing lifeworlds in practice includes, for instance, children being sent to school for education. Without the remittance income the family might not be able to afford assisting utensils which are used for school, such as books and pencils. Many of the women have also indicated that they cannot read and write and so if your children acquires the opportunity to go to school, it can be life-changing. If the households receive enough money regularly from the migrant, the women have the possibility to send their children to private schools, and the family can focus on offering the children a satisfying education which can change the future of children's lives as well as the remaining of the family. The migrant can also bring back new culinary experiences from where they have gone to work such as new foods or food habits. Households in the study villages have indicated that they have changed their food habits, and can for instance now afford to buy rice in addition to what they are growing themselves on their agricultural land. The new experiences of the migrants are connected to having an additional income source, the remittance, which the household members become very dependent on. Here, the lifeworlds of the migrants and the women are being colonized by the system (Inglis 2012). In other

words, the lifeworlds are affected due to the remittance which offers them a better standard of living in the form of food, clothing and education for the women.

There are also changes related to new livelihood systems, meaning that even though the family is dependent on agriculture as a livelihood, remittance money from the migrant has become increasingly important. Some of the migrants send remittance money regularly and others send money when the household is in need of it, for instance when there is little harvest from the fields. Migration also affects young people in other ways such as interest in certain income generating activities. Many young people in the study villages prioritize migration before working with agriculture. In addition, most people have extremely little land and as the land is divided between the sons and for each generation the land becomes less and less. This makes it very hard to live from agriculture, and it is not a real livelihood option in many cases. The young people, therefore, prefer to leave for a bigger town in Nepal or to go abroad to make money and to gain new experiences. This shows that migration influence the young people and that the system is colonizing the lifeworlds, leading the young people to leaving the villages for work and altering how they think about their family, culture and traditions.

Socio-Economic Groups

The relations between the migrants and women in the villages are complex and the reproduction of gender identities and responsibilities may occur instead of a change happening due to migration. The social remittances may not affect the lifeworlds in ways which empower women. The women and migrants are, according to the authors Hetch et.al. (2015), enclosed in strong forces of class, gender and kinship alliances which establish the communities. Even if the women gain more responsibilities and become the representative of the household while the husband is gone, it does not mean that the change will be permanent (Hetch et.al. 2015). When the women in the three study villages were asked about what the biggest change due to migration was, many replied that it was increased work burden and responsibilities in agriculture and in the household, such as taking care of children and representing the household while the husband is gone.

Women from different socio-economic groups are experiencing different situations due to migration and to the fact that their husbands and fathers are absent for long periods of time, sometimes years. Where and with whom the power in the household lies, depends on the household constellation, and this influences the division of responsibilities in the household.

Female headed households may be experiencing a heavier burden of responsibilities when the male leaves the household. If the household includes more household members, there might be a more even distribution of responsibilities, even though situations, such as power struggles, can emerge between the wife and the mother in law. There are cases of women living alone and maintaining their own livelihood without being dependent on a husband, the

husbands can be living elsewhere or there are also rare cases when divorce occurs and the woman remains self-sufficient. These are examples of empowered women who have been given the possibility to be more independent. Then there are, on the other hand, examples of female headed households who belong to a poorer household and who has to run the whole household including the agriculture on her own. This puts her in a difficult situation in which she is dependent on her husband and is not receiving independence, and in this case migration does not necessarily lead to empowerment. This is also an example of the system's colonization of the lifeworld which makes the women vulnerable to the changes happening due to migration. Traditionally, women are very dependent on their husband and if there are changes in their dependence, it might put them at risk as remittance moves beyond their influence compared to the agricultural work which they perform and control themselves.

Economic Changes and Empowerment

The Monetary Economy as the System

Migration and remittances have been a driving factor in the conversion from a subsistence economy into a monetary economy in Nepal. The monetary economy has led to women, having access to cash that they did not previously have, now have opportunities which did not exist before either. The women are given the ability to make more choices when it comes to using cash, such as having more choice in buying different foods, in buying new clothes, using money for assets such as education and constructing a new house and saving for future purposes.

The changes which have occurred in the past 20 years since the end of 1990's are strongly connected to the women's economical empowerment, which is due to that the monetary economy as a system has strongly influenced the women's lives. It is linked to the flow of remittances into the households as well as the loss of labour in the household. In cases when migration has been successful, for instance when a household member has the possibility to send remittance home and the household members remaining in the villages are able to repay loans, it has the potential to contribute to women's empowerment; however this is not always the case. The cost of migration can be higher than the benefits. In certain contexts, the consequences might fall on the women in the households who then have to deal with all issues related to the home and household, including social as well as economic issues. For instance, the lost labour, the costs related to financing the migration, and taking over household responsibilities. When the remittance is not enough, which has in some households been the case in the three study villages, women have increased workloads and financial difficulties, which can be a sign of the women's disempowerment (Gartaula et.al. 2010:7).

However, in order for the households to gain remittances the migrants have to find work abroad and work for a period of time to gain the possibility to send remittance home. This

means that the household in the village, which has enabled the migration due to the taking of loans for this purpose, awaits remittance for several months. During this time the remaining household members have to work to be able to pay back the migration loan. This leaves a lot of stress and pressure on them since they may have to work extra hard in order to repay the loans taken and this may also makes the household very vulnerable. Household members are no longer obliged to pay in kind, but they instead become vulnerable to changes in the monetary economy, and are put at risk as the lack of economical control increases. The monetary economy enables independence from hierarchial structures and some women in households are not as dependent on hierarchies and family as they were before migration. However, help from neighbours and labour exchange is still a central part for the interviewees in the study villages. Women are helping each other out with each others children and poorer female-headed households receive help from neighbours with, for instance, ploughing fields. This shows that the monetary economy has influences but does not permeate the lifeworlds of the households completely. A monetary economy can result in distancing from different kind of cooperations in the villages, but in this case the findings have pointed towards the initiation of saving cooperatives, mainly including women. The access to cash enables the women to put aside money from the migrants which in the future may enhance their empowerment. On the other hand, the access to cash may enable certain cooperations and reinforce independency, but it also puts the women at risk since the remittance the women receive is dependant on the person sending it from somewhere else. If the person stops or does not have the ability to send remittance any more, the remaining household members are very vulnerable since their social connections may not be as strong as before.

The economical changes are very significant since they determine how independent or successful the women can be due to the remittances and the loans connected to migration. The loans can either be the key to enable development and empowerment, or the lock which causes the stagnation of independence and development. The colonization of the lifeworld can make the women independent instead of vulnerable to the monetary system. The monetary system can enable the women to become empowered through a shift of where the power lies, and in this case leaning more towards the women. This in turn, can develop the women's sense of self-worth and social identity, their capacity to question the inferior status assigned to them and enable the ability to exercise control over their own lives (Kabeer 2016).

Loans and Economical Risks

The loans have been a big part of the women's daily life and it is necessary for them to take loans in different contexts with differing intentions. Loan-taking is not anything new, loans have traditionally been an important aspect of dealing with food shortage. The remittance money now received from the migrant can be helpful for the household to pay back loans, for instance, the loans for construction of houses, for health and medicine and for basic consumption such as food and clothing. If migration is successful and the family has the opportunity of receiving enough money to pay back these loans and save money, then there

is potential for empowerment and the women can gain economic freedom and have the opportunity to make more choices due to this. In some cases the migrant of the household does not receive a high salary and is not able to send back a lot of money to the household members in the village. The migrant might then move between different jobs and even come back several times to soon leave again for a new country and a new job. This can become a very stressful situation for the remaining household members since they have to deal with the labour burden related to the household and the economical stress of not being able to repay the loans as well as having additional loans for the migration.

Migration opportunities is an area which is socially differentiated. Several household members may have migrated, in which case the household will gain remittances from several sources. This means that a wealthier households may have more opportunities to save the remittances in addition to using it for basics such as nutritious food, clothes and investing in more land. The poorer households may have to focus the remittances mainly on paying back loans and the remaining remittances is used to basic consumptions, in which case the standard of living may not be raised, and if it is, it is only raised marginally. Institutional support has enabled the financial empowerment of women in villages through the creation of saving cooperatives and women groups. This means that the women are able to take loans with lower interest rates for different purposes.

Currently the wives, mothers or sisters of the migrants are very vulnerable due to the changes which are happening as a result of migration. They are dependent on the remittance sent to them for food and clothing and in addition they are very dependent on the families and social connections as safety nets if anything were to go wrong while the migrant is away. Though, before migration became as wide-spread as it is today, gendered structures existed similarly to today. Women were dependent on men for food and clothing as well and their previous situation, might be defined as vulnerable as well. Today, one risk would be if the migrant were to stop sending remittance or was unable to send any. The household members would then have to rely on additional sources of income to cover the basic every-day consumption and, in addition, they would have to rely on the remaining household members to work in agriculture and with other forms of labour to manage each day. Even though migration is a risk mitigation strategy, it still can put household members at risk if they do not have the social connections and option of secure access to food. Preceding the migration boom in 1990 the household members were dependent on the strong social hierarchies which bound the households to each other as well as its household members. Migration has, in certain households, altered the responsibilities which has changed the traditional structure of the household and this has indicated a change. However, determining whether a change has taken place, is still very dependent on the socio-economic structure of the household. The dilemma of continuity and change is evident since migration on one hand can lead to empowerment but due to the socio-economic circumstances, such as which caste one belongs to and family

connections, it affects the outcome of the social and economic welfare for the individuals of the household.

The location of the agricultural land is a very important aspect to determine how tied the household members are to agriculture and to other forms of labour to pay back loans. If the village is more rural then the household members become more dependent on agriculture. However, if the land is located closer to an urban area, it can then set the condition for other livelihood options which are more semi-urban, for instance working in shops or working as a taxi driver.

Agriculture and Feminization

The majority of village households are dependent on migration and agriculture as livelihoods to cover their subsistence, and agriculture plays a continuously significant role in the lives of the household members. Tamang et.al. (2014) acknowledges that an increasing feminization of agriculture has a deep and wide-ranging impact on the agricultural productivity. The agricultural productivity has decreased since there is less manpower to do the work in the fields. There has also been a change in livestock, a change towards goats which is, in addition, an adapting strategy to the water stress and lack of manpower in the villages. The goats require less work and is therefore an asset which can give the household members the time for other responsibilities in the household. Since there is little manpower to do the agricultural work, the farming system changes and less or different crops are harvested and this makes the women more dependent on remittance for food.

The level of importance agriculture holds in the households is determined on how big or small the land holdings are and in addition which type of land it is: *khet* or *bari* land, and in addition, the physical location of the village plays an important role for the agriculture. If a household owns a lot of agricultural land, the household has more food security, and does not have the need to depend on remittance to obtain food. If the household owns *khet* land, it has the possibility to irrigate the crops and can therefore grow paddy rice. In addition, it results in an opportunity to double or triple a harvest over the year. There is, hence, a correlation between agricultural performance and the need to migrate. In addition, if the village is located close to a bigger town or city, it is also easier for household members to move to work with other labour than agriculture.

The effects on the agricultural production due to migration, are linked to many other aspects such as the environmental changes taking place. These include less water and rain and an increase of wildlife consuming the crops of the fields. When the men leave the villages for migration the women are left and have to handle these changes and the obstacles on their own. Research further points toward similar findings of which the recent trends of climate change, such as the unpredicted rainfall, failure of traditional crops and emergence of new pests and diseases are forcing farmers to look over and change their whole farming systems

which are economically applicable and ecologically sustainable. This is visible in the mid-hills of Nepal which is characterized by its environmental fragility and low productive subsistence agriculture. As the findings in the three study villages point towards, there are also few livelihood alternatives other than migration and agriculture (Tamang et.al. 2014:28). The women themselves in the study villages have indicated that the burden of having to deal with agricultural and environmental changes have not led to independency in a positive way.

The findings point towards more extensive land use and increased fodder production which means that causes combined with migration has resulted in that the work in agriculture has not only shifted owner but has shifted all together. Out-migration pushes the women to take over the agricultural work because the shortage of labour and this, in turn, results in land abandonment (Tamang et.al. 2014:29). The households in the study villages are making strategic choices which includes abandoning the least productive and distant areas, areas which are exposed to wild life damages and instead focusing on the most productive and accessible land. This shifts the production towards more goat livestock, as they are also easier to sell, they need less water than cows, less fodder, and can eat almost anything, they have, in addition, better profitability than grains and crops.

The processes of men leaving the villages has gradually lead to an increased feminization of rural life as well as the agricultural production work. As mentioned earlier in this thesis feminization of agriculture is seen as an empirical categorization which refers to how migration has affected the roles of women in agriculture and if the roles of men and women have changed. Due to migration the women need to take up the responsibilities of the agricultural work which means increased workloads from taking care of livestock, collecting fodder and going to the forest to collect fire wood. The continuity of agriculture as a very significant livelihood activity does not indicate any big changes in women's lives, except the influence of migration as another important livelihood. Hence, from this perspective feminization of agriculture may not lead to the empowerment of women. Again, this to a large degree depends on the surrounding circumstances of the household and where the agricultural land is located and also where the village is located in reference to urban areas. However, feminization of agriculture has to some extent changed the gender roles of the women which can enhance empowerment. In one of the households mentioned earlier in this thesis, the family has allowed one of the daughters in law to migrate to make money and send it back as remittance. The remaining family members in the household are mainly women and they are taking care of the household as well as the agriculture. By allowing the daughter in law to migrate it shows acceptance and by being a source of income, which the men usually are responsible for, it shows that gender roles can be altered. Feminization of agriculture is giving some women who are directly affected by migration a push towards making more choices, having more responsibilities and to exercise more power than before. In this way feminization of agriculture can lead to an empowerment of the women in the Ramechhap district.

When the men move back to the villages after migration the villages have shown to be continuously stratified with the gender roles maintained. However, many of the men might choose not to continue with agriculture, selecting or being pushed towards another line of work. In this way the power which is gained by women through feminization of agriculture may potentially be sustained and developed.

7 Summarizing words

At the start of this thesis I set out to investigate what changes migration have on women in rural households, concentrating on the social, economical and agricultural changes. These changes have been discussed in the light of empowerment to explore if women have been affected by empowerment. I have found that this is a complex question depending on many aspects which influence the women's lives such as caste, class, hierarchies and age as well as customs and traditions. The changes due to migration are many and affects the people in the rural villages on a personal level as well as on a structural level. Some of these changes have shown to empower women, however, this only includes a few. Even though the changes are happening in society, continuity of traditional life still acts as a significant player in the rural households and the changes exists in union with life prior to migration of household members.

Through migration rural households try and change their lives by raising their standard of living. In order to migrate, the rural households have to take loans which enforces the economical changes connected to debts. The loans are taken for various causes and used for various aims, including migration, and affects the everyday lives of women. It affects them in many ways and introduces opportunities as well as difficulties such as the risks of loan taking. Migration has, however, through the monetary economy, given the women cash and the possibility to save money in women groups, enhancing empowerment. The social changes due to migration are extensive, and the women have mentioned this a lot through out the interviews in the study villages. The social changes, on one hand, lead to empowerment and, on the other hand, do not empower the women at all. It leads to social inclusion as well as social exclusion, it results in the women taking over responsibilities while at the same time increasing the work burden and risks due to becoming more independent. The household member's lifeworlds are, moreover, changing due to the migration. The lifeworlds are changing due to the monetary system's colonization of it, changing the traditional way of life. The migrants are also exposed to new experiences and knowledge which they carry with them to the rural villages, and this changes the lives of the remaining household members, especially the women. Agriculture in rural villages is affected by migration due to the loss of manpower leading to increased labour. This means that the responsibility increases for the women and it also changes livestock and the use of land in agriculture. Due to migration women have taken over more of the traditional labour within agriculture and the feminization of agriculture has affected the gender roles of women and men, and in some cases, again depending on family background such as caste and class, it has led to increased power favouring the women.

Finally, Nepal has been dependent on migration for a long time, it is a significant chapter of the country's history and it has had strong influence on its society and people. It is debateable how long migration is going to be the main driver of economic and social change in the

future. In addition, it is also debateable how long it is going to be the main livelihood choice for young men since they have become very dependent on the remittance economy. The global forces, which from the start attracted the rural people to migrate, might instead force the rural people to stay in the country. Migration has been a driver for change in rural Nepal in which tradition and development both are key players. This affects the women who indicate that they are not only sensing the changes, they also want to be active participants;

“We do not like to stay in the villages just cutting grass and looking after the livestock...”

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Appendices

Village of Chisapani	Household members	Number of people out (abroad or within Nepal)	Land size (Ropani and hectares)	Number of livestock
HH1	5	2 (in Kathmandu)	5 (0,25 hectares)	No livestock
HH2	11	2 (in Kathmandu and Manthali)	4 (0,2 hectares)	2-3 goats
HH3	6	2	8 (0,4 hectares)	2 oxen, 18 goats, 4 hens.
HH4	8	2	5 (0,25 hectares)	1 buffalo
HH5	5	1	3 (0,15 hectares)	3 goats and 1 buffalo.
HH6	2	0 (although the one of the sons who is married, lives in India)	3 Ropani and 3 ana (0,15 hectares, 16 ana= 1 Ropani)	1 cow, 2-3 hens, 3 goats.
HH7	3	0	4 (0,2 hectares)	1 buffalo, 4 goats, 4 hens
HH8	5	1 (In Kathmandu)	5 (0,25 hectares)	2 buffalo and 3 goats.
HH9	6	2	4,5 (0,23 hectares)	2 oxen, 1 cow, 1 buffalo, 3 goats, 4 hens.
HH10	2	0	Approx. 5 (0,25 hectares)	1 cow, 6 goats, 1 buffalo, 2 hens.
HH11	5	3 (in Kathmandu)	2 (0,1 hectares)	1 cow, 1 calf, 15 goats, 3 hens.
HH12	5	1	1 Ropani and 4,5 ana (0,05 hectares, 16 ana= 1 Ropani)	7 goats and 2 hens.
HH13	13	3 (in Kathmandu and Manthali)	8 (0,4 hectares)	2 oxen, 1 cow, 1 calf, 7 goats, 3-5 hens.
HH14	6	2	18 (0,9 hectares)	3 goats and 10 hens.

Table 5. The table shows the structure of the interviewed households in Chisapani village, including the number of household members, the number of people out due to migration, the land size of the household's agricultural land and the number of livestock.

Village of Farpu	Household members	Number of people out (abroad or within Nepal)	Land size (Ropani and hectares)	Number of livestock
HH1	7	0	16 Ropani (0,8 hectares)	1 buffalo, 2 oxen, 1 cow.
HH2	5	1	2 Ropani (0,1 hectares)	6 goats, 6 hens, 1 cow and 1 ox.
HH3	3	0 (Returned to village)	1 Ropani (0,05 hectares)	No livestock
HH4	4	1	8 Ropani (0,4 hectares)	10 goats and 1 cow.
HH5	6	1	9 Ropani (0,45 hectares)	1 cow, 2 calves, 4 goats.
HH6	7	1 (in Kathmandu)	15 Ropani (0,75 hectares)	2 buffalo, 2 oxen, 6 goats.
HH7	2	0	13 Ropani (0,65 hectares)	0
HH8	7	1 (in Kathmandu)	19 Ropani (0,95 hectares)	1 cow, 1 ox, 1 buffalo, 5 goats.
HH9	4	0	24 Ropani (1,2 hectares)	2 buffalo, 2 calves, 2 cows, 6 goats, 1 hen.
HH10	5	1	4,5 Ropani (0,2 hectares)	1 cow and 5 goats.
HH11	5	3 (In Kathmandu, Manthali and Kimpti)	14 Ropani (0,7 hectares)	2 oxen, 1 buffalo and 13 goats.
HH12	6	0 (Returned to village from Malaysia)	12 Ropani (0,6 hectares)	200 hens (poultry farming) and 2 pigs.

Table 6. The table shows the structure of the interviewed households in Farpu village, including the number of household members, the number of people out due to migration, the land size of the household's agricultural land and the number of livestock.

Village of Chasku	Household members	Number of people outside (abroad or within Nepal)	Land size (Ropani and hectares)	Number of livestock
HH1	5	1	45-46 Ropani (2,25-2,3 hectares, a lot of it uncultivated)	2 goats, 2 buffalo, 2 oxen, some hens.
HH2	5	1	1 Ropani (the land from the husband's family hasn't been distributed to the husband yet, 0,05 hectares)	10 goats, 1 cow, 1 calf, 2 hens.
HH3	16	4	30 Ropani (1,5 hectares)	2 oxen, 3 buffalo, 13 goats, 10 hens.
HH4	5	1	Approx. 20 Ropani (Approx. 1 hectare)	5 goats, 1 cow, 4 oxen.
HH5	3	1	2,5 Ropani (0,13 hectares)	1 buffalo, 5 goats, 3 hens.
HH6	4	2	12 Ropani (0,6 hectares)	4 goats
HH7	7	0	42 (2,1 hectares)	4 buffalo, 2 oxen, 6 goats, 5-10 hens.
HH8	2	1	5 Ropani (0,25 hectares)	2 oxen and 3 goats.
HH9	14	1	30 Ropani (1,6 hectares)	3 buffalo, 8 hens, 2 ox, 4 goats, 2 rabbits.
HH10	2	0	2 Ropani (0,1 hectares)	4 goats and 7 hens.
HH11	3	1	Approx. 0,5 Ropani or 10 ana (Approx. 0,025 hectares, 16 ana= 1 Ropani)	No livestock

Table 7. The table shows the structure of the interviewed households in Chasku village, including the number of household members, the number of people out due to migration, the land size of the household's agricultural land and the number of livestock.