



Agricultural Transition in the Eastern Hills of Nepal:
The Interlink between Commercial Cardamom Farming, Women's Livelihood and
Empowerment

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

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Commercial Cardamom farming has contributed largely to Nepal's economy since its commercialisation in 1953. In recent years, there has been an increase in the demand for cardamom for export across Nepal. Cultivating large cardamom for export has been able to help alleviate poverty by bolstering the national economy and elevating the livelihoods of the poor and marginalized. Holistically, commercialization of cardamom has largely contributed to the nation's economy. However, there has been a paucity of research on gender and cardamom farming including gender disaggregated data, gender roles, livelihood and empowerment in the front of agrarian change. .

This study has provided evidence on three themes: 1) evolution of commercial cardamom farming in Salakpur, 2) livelihoods of women's engaged in cardamom farming and, 3) factors leading to women's empowerment through their engagement in cardamom sector, covering issues such as incomes and decision making in use or investment of income. Taken together, these three themes evolution in relation to agricultural transition, livelihoods and empowerment, this study has provided a window on the influence of gender norms and structures in regards to export-led agriculture.

The study site, Ilam district of eastern hills of Nepal, has been prominent for large cardamom production since the nineteenth century. Despite being the oldest cardamom producing district, evidences on gender and cardamom farming, livelihoods and empowerment remains scant. Feminist ideology has been applied to understand the

lived experiences of women and delve into the social gender structure of the village. To obtain the lived experience, qualitative methods were applied to meet the objectives along with quantitative data. To obtain quantitative data, a census was conducted in between November and December 2015 in Salakpur covering 349 households.

The agriculture transition in Salakpur shows a profound change from subsistence to commercial farming. From rice and vegetable farming, the households in Salakpur first adapted to commercial ginger farming as their first cash crop. The major reason for transiting from rice to ginger farming had been good income and less labour, less requirement for water for ginger and the trend of cash crops farming in Ilam district. In two decades of ginger farming, farmers shifted to commercial cardamom farming, firstly because they lost their ginger farms to disease. Moreover, while adopting cardamom as an alternative crop, farmers foresaw a fortune in cardamom. Compared to ginger, cardamom has provided higher return with less intensive labour requirement.

Evidences indicate commercial cardamom farming has led to improved livelihoods of farmers, particularly of women from different ethnic groups. The marginalised women have been able to step out of poverty due to their engagement in cardamom farming, as a wage labourer or even as a small quantity producer of cardamom. The results of being able to earn of has been positive in the lives of women in general, in fact in the overall households, because they have been able to invest in their children's education and even save money in the institutions. Also compared to other forms of employment some women take up roles such as tailoring and petty shop running, engagement in commercial cardamom farming has benefitted them more. The presumed idea that when women are able to earn benefits the entire households and allows women to take a stand has been reflected throughout this research.

Findings show, engagement in commercial cardamom farming has empowered women financially and socially through their visible participation in institutions, particularly, women's cooperatives. Institutional participation has led to women's active engagement in decision-making at the household level, regarding use of income, investment in saving groups and in children's education. Evidences also point out that despite institutional association and women's empowerment, the patriarchal structure still deprives women of having access to property and resources, which questions

whether women are fully empowered or not. Few gaps have been identified in the course of conducting this study, for further research. First, there is a need to research on large cardamom farming in relation to sustainable livelihoods. Second, it would be helpful to explore the changes in cardamom production and trading pattern, given that the trademark has been approved from the national government.

APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION

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Title: Agricultural Transition in the Eastern Hills of Nepal: The Interlink between Commercial Cardamom Farming, Women's Livelihood and Empowerment

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DEDICATION

This thesis belongs to the two Dads', who I revere the most in this world.

Dad (**Er. Bal Bahadur Chhetri**), this one is for you. It was your dream. I hope I have made you proud. When everybody else treated us as “daughters”, and told us to act like “daughters,” you stood up alone for us and for our education and our needs. You are our superhero and our inspiration. Thank you for raising four girls with your late night wisdom filled conversation. The four of us are capable of anything today because of you. Thank you sisters, **Joanee, Honey** and **Roanee** for having my back when I was on the verge of giving up.

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This thesis is also for all the women of Salakpur, thank you for teaching me what it means to enter womanhood. Since 2009, I have been engaged in research on women's issues, only under my educational attainment. But I feel fortunate to have understood women more from experience as a wife, a daughter in-law and a mother. There's a saying in Nepali “*Padera haina parera jannu*”, or you not only learn from education but also from experience. It takes a lot to be a woman and be submissive yet empowered at the same time. I salute all these women who have been giving their best to overcome the challenges they face by doing both paid and unpaid work.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree.

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Kathmandu University Library. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

Sony K.C.

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ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADO	Agriculture Development Office
ANSAB	Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bio-resources
APP	Agriculture Perspective Plan
CADP	Commercial Agriculture Development Project
CDC	Cardamom Development Centre
CIDC	Council for International Development Corporation
DADO	District Agriculture Development Officer
DAO	District Agriculture Office
DCCI	District Chamber of Commerce and Industries
DDC	District Development Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DoF	Department of Forest
DPR	Department of Plant Resources
DoI	Department of Industry
EDR	Eastern Development Region
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FNCCI	Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GoN	Government of Nepal
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
LDC	Least Developed Countries
IFAD	Institution for Agriculture Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITC	International Trade Centre
JABAN	Jadibuti Association of Nepal
LCEAN	Large Cardamom Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal
MEDEP	Micro Enterprises Development Programme
MoAC	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative
MoAD	Ministry of Agriculture and Development

MoICS	Ministry of Industry Commerce and Supplies
MoFSC	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation
NAP	Nepal Agriculture Policy
NARDEF	Nepal Agriculture Research and Development Fund
NARSC	Nepal Agriculture Research and Service Centre
NARC	Nepal Agriculture Research Council
NBSM	Nepal Bureau of Standard and Meteorology
NCCR	Nepal Centre for Contemporary Research
NEAT	Nepalese Economy and Trade
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSCDP	National Spices Crops Development Program
NTCDB	National Tea and Coffee Development Board
NTAE	Non Traditional Agricultural Employment
NTIS	Nepal Trade Integration Strategy
PACT	Project for Agriculture Commercialization and Trade
PTA	Preferential Trading Agreement
RNFE	Rural Non Farm Economy
RUPP	Rural-Urban Partnership Programme
SAFTA	South Asian Free Trade Agreement
SDC	Spice Development Centre
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
TEPC	Trade and Export Promotion Centre
UNCATD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VDC	Village Development Committee
VDD	Vegetable Development Directorate
WB	The World Bank
WDR	World Development Report
WTO	World Trade Organization

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CHAPTER ONE

Overview of Agricultural Transition in Nepal

This chapter has set a backdrop on global scenario of agricultural transition, commercialisation and women's position in the commercial agriculture sector. It has then narrowed down to Nepal specific scenario of agricultural transition, commercialisation and the agriculture status in the country. Women's situation and position in the agricultural sector of Nepal has also been discussed in this chapter. This chapter has then built into the problem statement on why this research has been important along with the research objectives and questions explored by this research. Finally, this chapter has provided detailed information about the preceding chapters that puts this thesis together.

1.1. Background – Women's Involvement in Global Agricultural Scenario

Globally, about 78 percent of the world's poor, that is around 800 million people, live in the rural areas and rely on agriculture for living [The World Bank (WB), 2014]. This suggests that agriculture is still a prioritised livelihood option of majority in developing countries or those from poorer regions of the globe. Also, agriculture remains to be the primary domain for development of rural areas, economic growth and a means for the poor to step out of poverty (The World Development Report [WDR], 2013; International Fund for Agriculture Development [IFAD], 2011). This further suggests agriculture sector potentially is the major outsource to creating jobs markets, enhancing economic growth and promoting labour market.

Commercialisation of agriculture is the milestone to economic development and poverty reduction, particularly in developing countries (Kirsten, Mapila, Okello & De, 2012; Wiggins, Argwings-Kodhek, Leavy & Poulton, 2011). After the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were set, it was believed that promoting commercialisation could help achieve the goals by reducing poverty and providing food security (Omiti, Otieno, McCulloch & Nyanamba, 2007). However, less has been

reported on the success and failure regarding this issue. At present the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) prioritises agriculture and principally states the promotion of sustainable agriculture by sustainable use of resources, balanced production and consumption, applying sound measures on trading to achieve food security and to reduce hunger [Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), 2015]. The Goal two on sustainable agriculture and rural development can be improved with embedded, policies and social protection measures in the agricultural sector targeted at the poor and needy (ibid). Hence, the subsistence farming need to be transmuted to commercialisation and export, taking Africa's successful trend (Simmons, 2003). This is because commercial products comparatively provide higher income to the poor and helps the poor step out of poverty (Cadot, Dutoit & Olareagga, 2009; WB, 2008).

Various regions of the world have provided different connotations regarding cash crops and income. From the Nigerian context, evidence suggests that the increasing priorities provided to cash crops have resulted in production of these crops for higher revenues (Olasehinde, 2015). Cash crops are different from subsistence crops in terms that the former is highly marketed while the latter is mostly consumed at the household level. Cash crops, in the form of exports have been able to help households step out of poverty by being able to participate in the wage employment work or production for export (KC, Upreti & Subedi, 2016; Achterbosch, Berkum & Meijerink, 2014). Higher return from cash crops not only help farmers fulfil basic needs but also invest in health, education, assets, savings and shares in companies (KC, et. al., 2016; Thongyou, 2014; Wamalwa, 2011). Evidences from China and South Africa show increased income and household food consumption due to commercialisation (Baylis, Fan & Nogueira, 2012; Hendriks & Msaki, 2009). Also, commercialisation of export led cash crops has enhanced livelihoods of those engaged (Diao, Thurlow, Benin & Fan, 2012). This depicts the paradigm shift led by transition from subsistence farming to commercialisation and its impact in the economy, income and needs at the household, community and the national level.

There is a claim that due to the availability of labour forces in low costs despite requirement of labour intensive work, non-traditional agricultural practice is well fit for developing countries [United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCATD), 2008]. Where employment rate is low, labour intensive work attracts the

unemployed. In many countries there has been an increase in labour intensive works through production of cash crops such as cocoa, rubber, coffee, ginger, cardamom and beans (Kwa, 2001). However, arguments arise on commercial labour market unable to benefit, particularly the small holders since they are unnoticed and marginalised (ibid).

In underlying evidence on women's visibility in the productive agriculture sector, Ester Boserup highlighted women's role and economic activities during the 1970s (Boserup, 1970). Boserup emphasised the involvement of Women in Development (WID) and stressed that women have been the key players in agriculture, without recorded recognition. During Boserup's time, women's active participation in the agriculture sector was paid less attention by the development discourse. Hence, this limited development policies and projects in favour of the active women. This suggests, despite being poor and from poorer regions with lack of skills, women have been able to contribute, visibly or invisibly, in the agriculture sector. Agriculture has been the major employment source for women and marginalised people to step out of poverty (KC, et. al., 2016).

In challenging the idea of WID, the Women and Development (WAD) approach came into existence. The major gist of WAD sets a base that women have been active role players of development and hence they deserve credits for their productive visibility. The WAD also stressed that development projects that only focused on women boycotted women from actively participating with men, which still aggravated the patriarchal structure. Hence, the patriarchal practice would lessen if women participated in the development process equally with men (Barriteau, Connelly & Parpart, 2000).

Post WID and WAD, for the last two decades of the 20th century, women's contribution to the economy, including low-income activity has been recognized (Kalpana, 2016). WID and WAD, however, failed to recognise women's contribution in the reproductive front and only focused on their productive participation. Hence, during the 1980s, the Gender and Development (GAD) perspective emerged to address the social and economic status of both men and women. During this time, the development actors stimulated income-earning activities of women aiming to help women and marginalised step out of poverty and associate the income activity as safety nets to secure their livelihoods (Razavi, 1997). The GAD led to women's economic and social rights

adjustment, which technically gained momentum, since the 2000s. This momentum occurred through realisation that women including the marginalised faced severe poverty, concerning lack of income, poor health and well-being (Cook & Dong, 2011; Razavi, 2011; Kawachi & Wamala, 2007; United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), 2005; Elson, 2002; Kawewe & Dibie, 2000; Cornia, Jolly & Stewart, 1987). Additionally, the international funding agencies and country governments started promoting about women's contribution in the economy, involvement in market-oriented activities and their earnings with aims to provide safety nets during unexpected shocks in their work (Kalpana, 2016). This infers that the GAD has played a prominent role in not only recognising women's ability to contribute to the economy, but also in benchmarking the issues of gender and social differences.

Besides recognition, contemporary researches infer results such as creation of economic spaces for women in cash crops production has resulted in improvement of livelihoods, addressing women's vulnerability and enhancement of social standings (KC, et. al., 2016; Alam, 2012; Kabeer, 2012; WDR, 2008; Barrientos, 2004). Between 1980 and 2009, women's integration into the labour market, rose from 50.2 percent to 51.8 percent on an average (WB, 2012). Also, between 1980 and 2009, employment rate for men fell from 82 percent to 77.7 percent, which led to narrowing of the gender gap from 32 percent to 26 percent (ibid). Data shows, in South Asia alone, of the women employed, about 70 percent rely on agriculture for livelihoods, but the large share of women the agriculture sector is still underperforming (FAO, 2011a). In general, women account for 43 percent of agriculture labour force in the developing countries (Crowley, 2013). In African and Latin American regions, some countries have succeeded in providing recognition to women for their active contribution in high value crop production (FAO, 2012). Also, commercial cash crop (women) farmers in African nations including Guatemala and Kenya have gained economic benefits through their contribution (Hamilton, Barrios & Sullivan, 2002; Omosa, 2002). Nevertheless, study also claims that improvement in livelihoods does not necessarily imply improvement in women's social standings (Bieri, 2011). This suggests existing barriers on women's engagement in the labour market.

In regards to women's engagement in the commercial agriculture and labour market, this phenomenon has occurred due to various reasons, although scantily recorded.

Factual data shows, a huge regional difference in portraying women's role in agriculture production. For example, women's share in agriculture production accounts to 50 percent in East and Southeast Asia, while the figure is 20 percent for Latin America [FAO, International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) & International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2010]. The global data reveals an increased figure, that is, 70 percent of women's involvement in labour has been due to male outmigration (Malapit, et. al., 2013). Increased male out-migration, particularly, for off-farm employment has contributed to increased women's participation, in both household and farm (FAO, 2010; Kelkar, 2010; Cornhiel, 2006). Moving beyond confined domestic chores, towards productive works in various sectors such as agriculture, labour market, migration for work and income have led to emergence of term "feminisation." The feminisation debate simply, connotes women's increased participation in various sectors as an aftermath of existing gender inequalities. This means, in the past, women were confined to only domestic chores but now they have broken the boundaries and placed themselves into various spectrums alongside men. These spectrums are metaphorically termed as "feminisation of agriculture," "feminisation of labour," "feminisation of employment" et cetera. The feminisation debate spurs the idea of equality by questioning the issues of inequality between men and women in various sectors. Hence, addressing the issues of gender equality leads to reduction in poverty (Berik, 2011; Smith & Mpedi, 2011; Kabeer, 2007; Elson, 1999; Standing, 1999; Elson & Pearson, 1981), particularly through women's engagement in economic front. More so, feminisation connotes a trend, which affects both men and women (UNRISD, 2005) in essence to create equal opportunities. This means that feminisation questions patriarchal pervasiveness and opts for gender equality.

This research uses the term "feminisation of agriculture" to address women's participation in agricultural forefront, particularly in commercial cash crop farming. In general, the term "feminisation of agriculture" is propelled by increase in responsibilities for women at the household and the economic opportunities caused by commercial agriculture (Duflo, 2012; Ganguli, Hausmann & Viarengo, 2011). More so, feminisation of agriculture has occurred in various situations across the globe. In Latin America alone, women have set benchmark in acquiring the title of farm managers as they take up entire farm responsibilities, from providing labour to managing, in absence of migrated men (Deere, 2009). In India, women represent the

agriculture sector as men have moved out to become a part of casual agriculture labour force (Jackson & Rao, 2010).

Additionally, there are also examples of occurrence of feminisation of agriculture as an aftermath of insurgency in Nepal (Ghale, 2008). The decade long insurgency that took place between 1996 and 2006 led to male outmigration leaving women to plough and sow the fields. The issue of feminisation of labour market reflects positive and negative impacts on women. On the positive note, there is an increased women's participation in labour force, and on the negative front, there exists insecurity and exploitation for women caused by discrimination in wage and roles (Dina, Baruah, Aw-Hassan, Bentaibi & Kassie, 2018; Kabeer, 2012). On one hand, feminisation in the labour market provides women employment opportunities, empowers women through participation and meet their income needs (Kabeer, 2012; Alam, 2012; FAO, 2012; FAO, 2010; WDR, 2008; Omiti, et. al., 2007; Elson, 2002). While on the other hand, this phenomenon increases burden on women as men benefit more than women due to the latter's visibility in production and marketing (Hardy & Gisella, 2018; Fischer & Qaim, 2012; Nijuki, Kaaria, Chamunorwa & Chiuri, 2011; Li, 2011; UNRISD, 2005). This questions the linkages between feminisation of agriculture and livelihoods of men and women.

Evidences wise, the global gender gap report of 2015, by the World Economic Forum (WEF) suggests, there exists parity between men and women in labour force participation and annual earning and yet significant progress has been made in narrowing the gap (see Table 1.1). In a time span of 10 years, between 2006 and 2015, there has been a noticeable change in income earning of male and female, globally. At the global level, data shows a huge gap in average income earning between men and women in both 2006 and 2015. While male's income rose by US\$ 10,000 in ten years, female's income rose by only US\$5,000 in ten years. However, this data does not indicate the livelihoods activities and income earning. In the global context, gender inequalities, which include unpaid labour, exist in the labour market (Klasen & Lamanna, 2009; Benería, 2003; Seguino, 2000). Despite such disparity, women have progressed in terms of attaining education but inequalities in labour market in discriminatory wage and position exist (Hardy & Gisella, 2018; Razavi, Arza, Braunstein, Cook & Goulding, 2012). This demands for development of potential

indicators to identify the gaps in the labour market (WDR, 2012; Klasen & Lamanna, 2009; Abu-Ghaida & Klasen, 2004).

Table 1.1: Average Global Gender Gap in Earning and Labour Force Participation

	Male	Female
Average Annual Earnings 2006	\$11000	\$ 6000
Average Annual Earnings 2015	\$21000	\$ 11000
Labour Force participation 2006	\$2.25 billion	\$1.5 billion
Labour Force participation 2015	\$2.9 billion	\$1.75 billion

Source: *World Economic Forum, 2015*

Income generation and participation through cash crop farming has been directly linked with women's ability to make decisions and negotiate at greater level in the households. The negotiations have been on use of income, decision-making at the farm level work or making investments through savings (KC, et. al., 2016; Alufohai & Ojogho, 2014; Dimova & Gang, 2013; WDR, 2012; Bomuhangi, Doss & Meinzen-Dick, 2011; Mahon, 2011; Ngome, 2003; Razavi, 1997). Also, women's capability of earning has resulted in their participation in decision-making regarding assets acquisition (Deere, Contreras & Twyman, 2010). Additionally, few research (see Bomuhangi, et. al., 2011; Quisumbing, 2003) claim on men and women having equal participation in household decision-making. For example, in Uganda, despite men having the right to land ownership, men and women's perception reflect they decide jointly on the type of crops to be grown, the type of inputs to be used, type of crops to sell and handling the return from sale (Bomuhangi, et. al., 2011). Likewise, in Ghana, male cocoa producers would transfer some land to their female counterparts, if the latter helped their husbands in the cocoa farms (Quisumbing, 2003). Having access to economic activities and income, women have been able to make decisions independently.

In the agriculture sector, focusing on equity to assets and resources have proved beneficial for the lives of both men and women (Johnson, Kovarik, Meinzen-Dick, Njuki & Quisumbing, 2016; Johnson, Njuki, Waithanji, Nhambeto, Rogers & Kruger, 2015). Studies point out that livelihoods of women have improved since they have been able to earn and engage in decision-making, particularly in the use of income (KC et. al., 2016; Dimova & Gang, 2013). Access to income and resources have satisfied

women because they expend their income to fulfil basic food needs of the household and health needs of the children (Alam, 2012; Duflo, 2012; Morrison, Raju & Sinha, 2007; Quisumbing, 2003; Haddad, Hodinott & Alderman, 1997). As opposed to women, men spend on leisure and personal needs (KC, et. al., 2016; Kalpana, 2016). Also previous research show women indulge into building assets and develop saving habits in the local institutions such as cooperatives as a result of earning through cash crops (KC, et. al., 2016; Deere, 2009). Additionally, saving money in institutions has had a direct impact in decision-making and vice versa (Ashraf, Karlan & Yin, 2009). This means access to income in the cash crop farming has provided women a bargaining position at the household level.

Despite better jobs and improved economic status led by commercialisation, globally, women are still disadvantaged in terms of roles, payment, land ownership and asset accumulation, access to education and knowledge and employment conditions led by marketing of the products (Hardy & Gisella, 2018; KC, et. al., 2016; Razavi, 2012; Li, 2011; WB, FAO & IFAD, 2009; Sikod, 2007). Previous studies reflect increase in the number of women in labour markets as consequences of women's skills and passiveness along with flexibility to work under low wage (Elson & Pearson, 1981). Low wage or unpaid work, for women means men overrule by taking over the income earned from commercial production, thus marginalising women (Dina et. al., 2018; Fischer & Qaim, 2012; WB, et. al., 2009; Doss, 2001; Lilja & Sanders, 1998; von Braun & Webb, 1989). Evidences show men enjoy the benefits from production and marketing of subsistence and commercial products more than women (Fischer & Qaim, 2012; Nijuk, 2011; WB, et. al., 2009). Also few studies report that women's decision making in cash crop production and marketing is still dominated by men (Hardy & Gisella, 2018; Erenstein & Rahut, 2014; Hill & Vigneri, 2011). Such conditions have remained perilous for women (Elder & Schmidt, 2004; Elson, 1999; Pearson, 1998; Chant & McIlwaine, 1995) because of limitation in working conditions such a limited choices of roles in the cash crop sector.

In regards to women's engagement in cash crop sector, there are varied evidences. For example, a report states women engage in seasonal farm and non-farm wage work, home based farming, or cultivation in landlord's farms and paid or unpaid farm works which requires less travelling (FAO, 2013a). Our own study reflects women are actively

engaged in paid farm works during harvesting season and they involve in income generating works and exchange of labour within the households (KC, et. al., 2016). In regards to marketing, findings reflect men's presence in the markets while women's segregation from the markets (KC, et. al., 2016; Raney, Anriquez, Croppenstedt, Gerosa, Lowder, Matuscke, Skoet & Doss, 2011; WB, et. al., 2009). Women still do the kind of work demanded in the subsistence farming despite transition, that is, for example, they are excluded from the markets. This suggests that roles are gendered and there exists gender division of labour by the type of work in the commercial farming. Hence, development sectors and policy tanks lobby on the formation of capital-intensive commercial agriculture practices, which promotes alternative forms of employment that can generate higher returns for workers (WDR, 2008; 2013).

Evidences regarding income through cash crop farming show despite equal contribution, women are underpaid compared to men (FAO, 2011a; Kanji & Menon, 2001). Facts from African and Asian regions reveal men benefit more than women, particularly in marketing of either traditional or non-traditional crops (Fischer & Qaim, 2012; Njuki, 2011; WB, et. al., 2009). These disadvantages for women are because of lack of knowledge and education, which restricts them from bargaining (Ajani & Igbokwe, 2014; FAO, 2011a). Previous studies reflect women deprived of education; access and control over resources, trainings and extension services in comparison to men are seldom active in the process of decision-making (Hill & Vigneri, 2011; FAO, 2010; Morrison, et. al., 2007). This builds onto various factors, depending on the situation, associated with women's economic standing, which could possibly have an impact in their well-being.

Of the present policy discourse, that is, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), goal number 5 of the 17 goals refers to gender equality and women empowerment and emphasises on women's status in agriculture and its importance. The SDGs holds 17 goals and 169 targets with aims to achieve each goal by 2030. The agenda for sustainable development was initiated in 2015 as a result of a conference on sustainable development that took place in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. Hence, goal number five aims to create spaces for women in spectrums such as access to education, health care, employment and political platforms (FAO, 2015). In regards to employment, this goal emphasises on creating safe work places for women with equal platform without

discrimination that exist in many countries across the globe. The SDG stresses rural women as the key agents of change in the agrarian sector. This is because about half of the women in developing countries are engaged in agriculture. Also, women have succeeded in recognising themselves as key players and producers of cash crops (KC, et. al., 2016). However, most rural women are deprived of access to resources and other facilities. Women have different experiences than men in production and marketing in the commercial sector (Adenegan, Adams & Nwauwa, 2013). Apart from segregation, their means to livelihoods through employment in commercial labour market has been fulfilled (Kabeer, 2012; Alam, 2012). The SDGs agenda reflects that engaging rural women in decision-making, including them in capacity building, honing their skills and providing them access to resources could lead to poverty reduction and address food security (FAO, 2015).

Despite studies about specific rural realities regarding women in agriculture, women's roles in the agriculture sector are considerable, visibly or invisibly, however, there is paucity in a proper documentation and strong understanding of this debate (Bieri, 2014). Underlying the women and agriculture debate, particularly in the commercialisation front, there are two dichotomies of evidences (Bieri, 2016). First, commercialisation of agriculture might shove women to the pit of vulnerability given the work burden, inadequate payment, and inadequate skills (Bieri, 2016; Baden, 2013; Prügl, Razavi & Reysoo, 2013; Meinzen-Dick & Quisumbing, 2012; Meinzen-Dick, Johnson, Quisumbing, Njuki, Behrman, Rubin, Peterman & Waitanju, 2011; Zaccaro, 2011; Rahman, 2010; Meinzen-Dick, Quisumbing, Behrman, Biermayr-Jenzano, Wilde, Noordeloos, Ragasa & Beintema, 2010). Second, it might help women move out of poverty if they grasp the ways in commercialisation works and put themselves forward (ibid). The notion that commoditisation of agricultural products could either “construct” or disrupt women's livelihood, is certainly an interesting domain for further documentation.

Based on the arguments above, this research serves a purpose in exploring the linkages between commercialisation and livelihoods of women, alongside understanding women's empowerment status through their engagement in commercial farming. This research also explores the involvement of institutions in shaping commercialisation process and people's overall involvement.

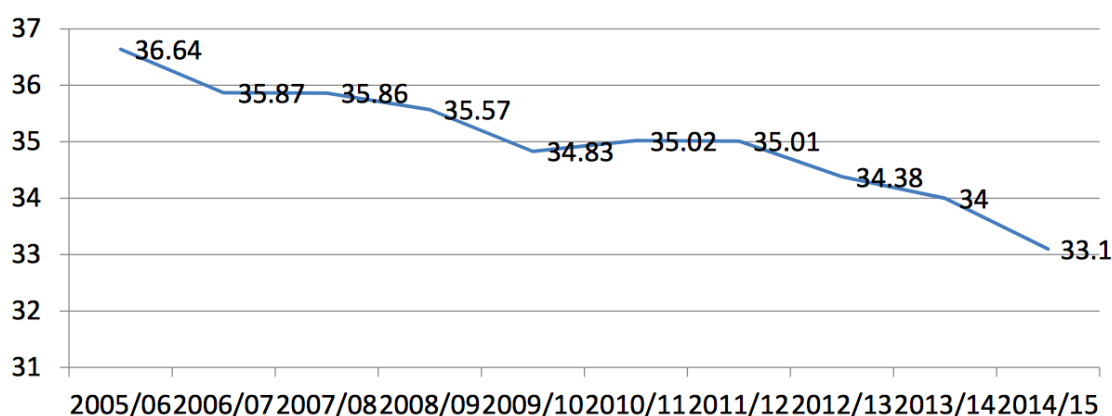
1.2. Nepal's Agricultural Transition and Current Status

Interestingly, Nepal holds a unique position as agrarian nation with only 20 percent of the land being cultivable but more than half of the population depending on agriculture for livelihood (MoAD, 2015). Hence, land emerges as a crucial component for farming. Increased population and demand for land for farming to feed the increased households members, the country witnessed changes in economic development. This development involves changes in livelihoods pattern through diversification and taking up with different job and migration on a larger or smaller scale. Other examples are shift in subsistence farming by commercialising the products, engaging in wage based employment, generational interest in other forms of employments besides farming, engagement in petty shops (Upreti, Uprety, Hagen-Zanker, K.C. & Mallet, 2014). However, various reasons- one being poor economic status of the country – persist, which limits the availability of sufficient non-farm employment activities throughout the country (ibid).

Nepal has undergone paradigm shift in the agriculture sector. More than 90 percent of the population across the country relied on agriculture during the late 1980s and 1990s (Savada, 1991). During that time people's livelihood options were visible through their involvement in subsistence farming particularly grains such as rice and maize, which helped them fulfil their household's food needs. Presently, subsistence and small scale farming is still a prominent livelihood activity in rural Nepal. The recent data portrays agriculture provides livelihoods to 71.3 percent of men and women, still accounting to be a major source of income in Nepal (WB, 2018). The Nepal Labour Market Profile of 2014 states of the employed men and women 82.5 percent of women and 59.1 percent of men are in the agriculture sector (ibid). If, viewed from the gender perspective, this figure tells us that women's contribution in the agriculture sector is significantly higher than men, although details, regarding roles and division of labour, are unrecorded. About 78 percent of the population that are living under poverty line rely on agriculture, as farmers (67%) or as agriculture wage-workers (11%) (CBS, 2012a). The income earned through agriculture either as producers or wageworkers accounts to 60 percent of the total household income of the poor (Ministry of Finance [MoF], 2011). This resonates the importance of agriculture as the main source of livelihood option in rural Nepal.

Agriculture sector highly contributes to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Nepal, despite some changes in contribution over the years (Ghimire & Dahal, 2004). For example, the GDP contribution declined in 2003/04 to 39.2 percent from 47.4 percent in 1990/91 (ibid). Such decline holds multifarious reasons including changes in livelihood trajectories; land fragmentation and urbanisation, insufficient land for production and insufficient irrigation, natural disasters, minimal public and private investment (Ministry of Agricultural Development [MoAD], 2015).

Figure 1.1: Contribution of Agriculture in GDP at Constant Price (%)

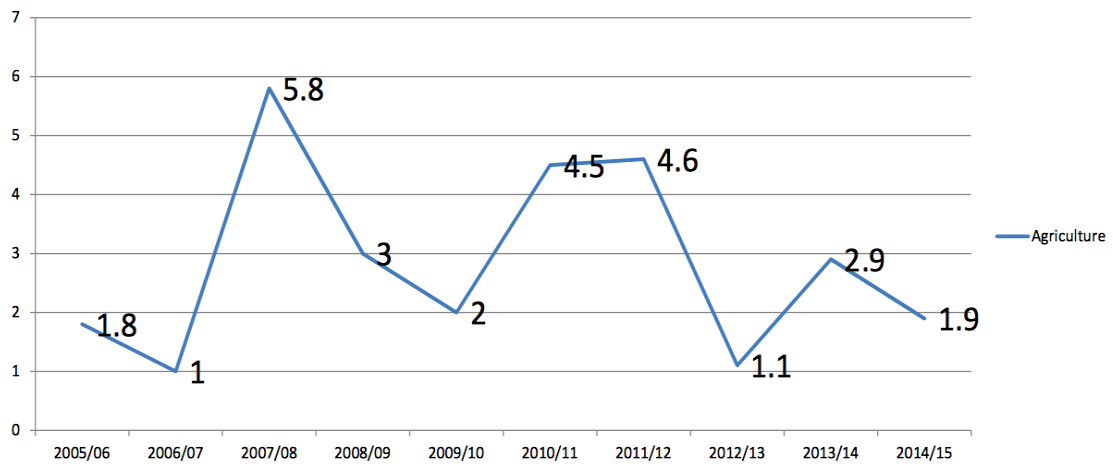


Source: MoAD, 2015

The recent data shows, agriculture accounts 33.1 percent of the country's GDP (Figure 1.1). The decrease in GDP in agriculture also suggests increase in GDP contribution in non-agriculture sector. This is because of industrialisation, job markets and investment on commercial sectors apart from agriculture. Additionally, natural calamities such as draughts, lack of seasonal rainfall and lack of skills about husbandry practise with the change in climatic situations also contribute to decline in agricultural share to GDP. But mostly, one pertinent reason has been due to migration to gulf countries, particularly by the youths who could contribute to agriculture sector. For example, recent data shows the contribution of GDP from non-agriculture sector has rose to 68.3 percent in 2015/2016 from 63.4 percent in 2014/2015 (MoF, 2016). In regards to migration and remittances from migration, Nepal remains the fourth highest remittances recipient, as a share of GDP of all the countries. In 2008/2009, Nepal received 209.7 billion Nepali rupees (NRs.) as remittances, which increased to 699 billion NRs. in 2016/2017

(Ministry of Labour & Employment [MoLE], 2018). In total, remittances contribute to 26.9 percent of country's GDP (ibid, pp. 35). Despite a gradual decrease in GDP contribution over the years, agriculture sector still remains the largest contributors for Nepalese economy.

Figure 1.2: Agriculture Growth Rate in the Last Ten Years (%)



Source: MoAD, 2015

Figure 1.2 shows, the agricultural growth rate in Nepal have varied in a yearly basis. The average growth rate of a decade accounts to 2.9 percent. Besides the agriculture growth rate at its peak in 2007/2008 at 5.8 percent, trend shows a severe decline over the years reaching 1.9 percent in 2014/2015. The fluctuation shows that between 2012/13 and 2014/2015 the agriculture sector has faced a massive change in a short period of time. Rising from 1.1 percent in 2012/13 to 2.9 percent in 2013/14 and then falling to 1.9 percent in 2014/15, meticulously shows the highs and lows faced by agriculture sector in Nepal. The decline in agricultural growth rates might have been due to lack of production caused by natural calamities, disease and infestation in crops, lack of knowledge about husbandry practices or climate variation; lack of private and public sector investment on agriculture, conflict and booming of other sector such as industries and jobs.

Similarly, in the past decade, given that there is fluctuation in the agriculture growth rate, Nepal has experienced severe economic downfall resulting in lack of production. For example, in the past ten years, the economic growth has fluctuated in a yearly basis,

like the agriculture growth rate. The average economic growth rate in ten years accounts to 3.8 percent, given that the rate fell from 2.32 percent in 2014/15 to 0.77 percent in 2015/2016 (see Table 1.2). The decline in production was caused by changes, as aforementioned, in climatic conditions, such as late monsoon; price hikes and inflation, increased population and decreased production.

Table 1.2: Economic Growth of Nepal in Last Ten Years (%)

Fiscal Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Average
Agriculture	1.0	5.8	3.0	2.0	4.5	4.6	1.1	4.5	0.8	1.3	2.9
Non-Agriculture	4.4	5.9	4.3	5.0	3.6	4.5	5.0	6.4	3.1	0.6	4.3
Industry	3.9	1.7	-0.6	4.0	4.3	3.0	2.7	7.1	1.5	-6.3	2.1
Service	4.5	7.3	6.0	5.8	3.4	5.0	5.7	6.2	3.6	2.7	5.0
Economic Growth	2.75	5.8	3.9	4.26	3.85	4.61	3.76	5.72	2.32	0.77	3.8

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2016

Nepalese agricultural production is understood well through its varied topography, the mountains, the hills and the plains. The agricultural production in these topographies depends upon the climatic conditions. For example, potatoes can be produced in the mountains; maize can be produced in the hills and paddy can be produced in the plains. With production of topographically favourable crops across the country, Nepal has managed to create a market-based economy by transmuted subsistence agriculture to export led agriculture. During the 1980s, Nepal was a major exporter of rice and grains. However, the practice has reversed as now the country imports these grains due to lack of sufficient rice production to feed the increasing population. Goods that Nepal exports are carpets, textiles and agricultural products that accounts to 70 percent of the total exports (Adhikari & Adhikari, 2005). Of the 70 percent, 50 percent of the export comes from agriculture (MoAD, 2015).

As aforementioned, there has been noticeable change in practice of subsistence farming to commercial farming in Nepal. The change has been witnessed both in practice and promotion of commercial farming through policies. The agriculture policies were

designed to support market-based economy during the 1990s (ANZDEC, 2003). Also, the government of Nepal have been encouraging commercialisation of farm products for a sustainable economic development. The Fifth Five Year Plan (1975-80) proposed commercialisation of agriculture as a feasible option for economic growth and poverty alleviation. The Agriculture Perspective Plan (APP), 1995, focused on commercialisation of agricultural products, shifting from subsistence farming to modern practices (ibid). At present various policies and plans have been lined up to secure the agriculture sector. For example, the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS), 2014 holds a two decades vision to promote agribusiness and commercialisation of products aimed at poverty reduction (MoAD, 2014b). The ADS was expected to be a guiding framework for agriculture development in Nepal. Hence, within this framework of ADS, there has been an initiation in the Prime Minister Agriculture Modernisation Project (PMAMP) starting 2016. The PMAMP seems to act as a basis and guidance for agriculture even though this process might take a while to start due to federalisation led by the constitution of 2015. Despite this, it is evident that Nepal is gradually gaining its momentum towards market-oriented economy (Adhikari, 2013). That is, production of labour intensive crops such as coffee, large cardamom (*Alaichi*), ginger (*Aduwa*) and tea has created huge markets for export in Nepal. Such diversified agricultural practice has been aiding food security and poverty reduction, creating livelihoods opportunities for the farmers (KC, et. al., 2016). These crops are likely to generate more income in future, for women, men and small farm holders, thus, contributing to the country's economy (Pokharel, 2012).

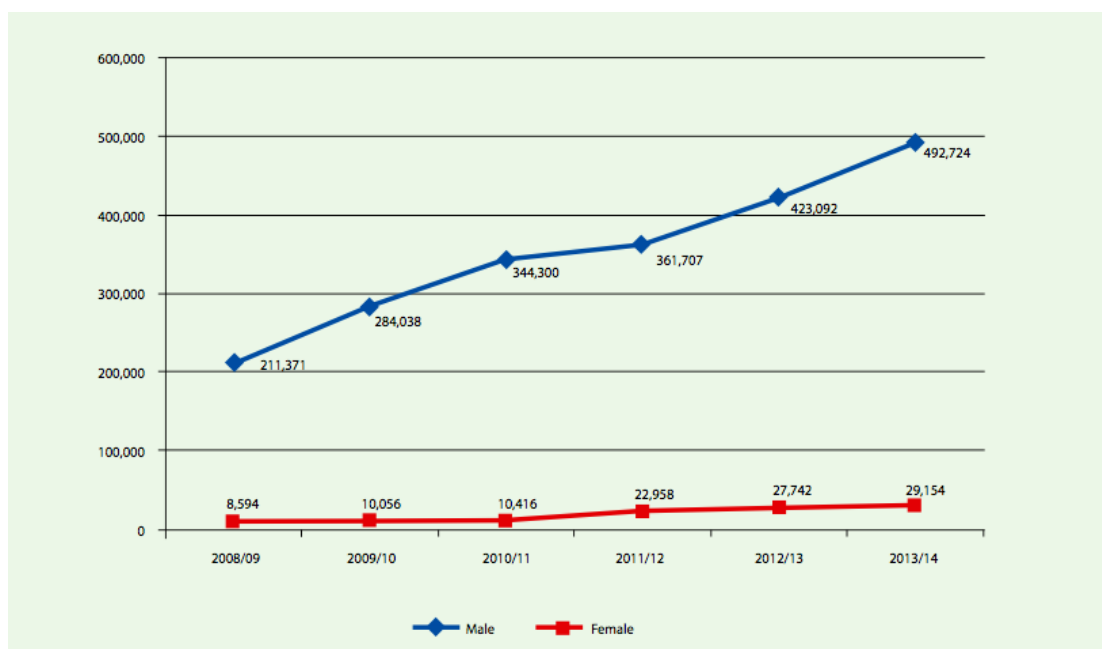
Regarding agriculture transition and commercialisation uptake, Nepal ranks 108 out of 185 countries in terms of degree of market integration (Government of Nepal [GoN] & MoAD, 2013). This degree of integration is based on the assessment of trade liberalization, improved standards of local production, engaged in community groups and membership, labour market deregulation, incentives in agriculture sector, and policies and strategies for export led agriculture (ibid). The major challenge, however, has been moving from subsistence to commercial economy itself. Since majority of Nepalese rely on agriculture for living, there is a less chance of livelihood improvement without proper commercialisation of products. Commercialisation, in this context, means being able to produce, process, manufacture and market the goods, attracting the

youths who are shying away from agriculture work (IFA, 2013). The major challenges also lie in factors such as, geographical topography, poor roads and infrastructure to transport the produced goods. This reflects that the country requires progress and proper implementation of the strategies, such as the ADS and PMAMP to reach milestones in the labour market and commercial agriculture.

Commercialisation has led to creation of job opportunities for men and women across Nepal, but substantial data is scant. Previous research show women in Nepal tend to work approximately 7 times as much as men in the agriculture sector as a result of feminisation (Pravetoni, 2011). About 72.8 percent of economically active girls and women (age 10 and over) contribute to agriculture sector compared to 60.2 percent of boys and men (Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative [MoAC], 2009). In the rural areas, women's contribution in agriculture sector accounts to about 70 percent (Bhadra & Shah, 2007). This suggests women's role in agriculture, whether formal or informal, is significant. This also reflects the most debated issues of feminisation – that is, women taking up with men's role in the farms, with or without presence of men.

Most of the debate about feminisation of agriculture has been raised as consequences of male out migration, which is also a case for Nepal. Over the years, there has been a rapid rise in male and female's migration for labour in Nepal (Figure 1.3). The reason for such increase has been identified particularly as lack of employment opportunities in Nepal (Sharma, Pandey, Pathak & Sijapati-Basnett, 2014). Other reasons could be shifting away from agricultural practices and interest in good return through labour abroad. The major destination countries listed by the Department of Foreign Employment, as of 2013/2014 on permit related labour migration has been India (37.6%), Malaysia (40.6%), Qatar (23.7%), Saudi Arabia (16.4%) and UAE (10.3%) (ILO, 2014, pp. 3). These destination countries demand for labour based on the need.

Figure 1.3: Annual Labour Permits Issued to Male & Female Migrant Workers



Source: MoLE, 2014

The trend of migration for labour has been higher for males compared to females in Nepal like most South Asian and developing countries. Based on the ecological region, majority of labour migrants come from the Terai region (50.47%), compared to the hills (43.9%) or the mountains (5.7%) (MoLE, 2013/2014, pp. 26). While men migrate to work on industrial sectors, as drivers or in companies, women migrate to work as domestic workers (ILO, 2014). This shows women have fewer options for work compared to men. This could also be one pertinent reason for more male outmigration due to demand of labour in the international countries. Alongside, there are issues of safety and exploitation of women abroad, which also contributes to fewer percentage of women migration for labour. However, according to media and reports both men and women have faced exploitation, trafficking, incidents at workplace and forced labour with restriction to return. Additionally, data shows about half of the female labour migrants come from ten districts of which four districts (Jhapa, Ilam, Morang and Sunsari) are from eastern development region and six districts (Kathmandu, Sindhupalchowk, Makwanpur, Kavrepalanchowk, Nuwakot and Dolakha) are from the central development region (MoLE, 2013/2014, pp. 25). Interestingly, these districts are better off than other districts, in terms of access to resources. This tells us that females from these districts might be well informed about the migration issues and employment opportunities outside of the country.

In general, migration for labour has led to increase in remittance flow within the country. Remittances contribute to 28.8 percent of the GDP, and hence is one of the major indicators of economy (ILO, 2014). There has been a tremendous rise in remittances over the years caused by migration for labour. For example, in 2003 the amount of remittances flow was USD 771 million, which rose in 2013 to USD 5.55 billion (ibid).

As Nepal, is highly dependent on agriculture to provide livelihood opportunities to majority, commercialisation of agriculture with a weighted importance to high value cash crops has contributed to the country's economy (KC, et. al., 2016). The result of commercialisation has also had a positive impact on addressing the needs of smallholder farmers who make 60 percent of the total farmers (MoAD, 2014b). The positive impact here means addressing the issues of food security through commercialisation (KC, et. al., 2016; Gautam, 2011; Sharma, 1997). This tells us that the smallholder farmers, who are also known as those with very small amount of land, can get good return despite having less land through cash crop production. This is because cash crops provide high income compared to subsistence production, and it has contributed farmers' socioeconomic development due increased income and graduation from poverty (KC, et. al., 2016; Dahal, Nyborg, Sitaula & Bajracharya, 2009).

Women's increased involvement in the agricultural production also shows an increase in feminisation of agriculture. Evidences show women as active producers of cash crops in Nepal along with their major role in value addition tasks such as cleaning, cutting and grading of the products (KC, et. al., 2016; GoN & Ministry of Commerce & Supplies [MoCS] 2010a; Mercy Corps Nepal, 2010). However, little is known about women as marketers and traders in the cardamom sector, despite this crop being a prominent cash crop (KC, et. al., 2016). This suggests that roles are gendered in production of some cash crops. This suggests further investigation on roles for women caused by feminisation of agriculture, commoditisation and transition of agriculture. Also, in regards to agricultural transition, particularly in cash crop farming the consequences of commercialisation in livelihoods of contributors of agriculture sector, that is majority of women, is unrecorded from a social dimension (KC, et. al., 2016). Despite constraints such as lack of land opportunities and access to land for women,

agriculture commercialisation has created new job markets and opportunities in Nepal, even though substantial data is scant (National Planning Commission [NPC], 2004).

There are few evidences from social dimension, which reveals the engagement of both men and women in commercial cardamom farming sector. And with this, it becomes of an interest to identify and analyse the existing scenario of those contributing to this sector, using a gender lens to unveil the status of Nepal's agricultural transition. Hence, this research has explored the three themes namely; evolution of commercial cardamom farming in Salakpur, livelihoods of women's engaged in cardamom farming and, factors leading to women's empowerment through their engagement in cardamom sector.

1.3. Situation of Nepal's Trade and Exports and Commercial Cardamom Farming

Nepal's trade and export history dates back to 19th century, when India and China were the major dominants of the country's foreign trade. During the mid 1980s, Nepal's trading pattern transited to a liberal and market-oriented trade policy (Pant, 2005). Since 1990s the government of Nepal has welcomed foreign investors to the country and promoted private investment. In 1992, major trade reform shaped trade policies of the country (Thapa, 2012). Nepal was the 147th member, and the first least developed country to become a part of World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2004 (WTO, 2012). According to a *press briefing on Accession of Nepal to WTO*, there are 152 paragraphs in WTO of which paragraph 84 states Nepal would adopt required steps to support export of agricultural commodities such as lentils, large cardamom, ginger and tea. However, paragraph 114 mentions of Nepal not having any subsidies for export (MoICS, 2003). Despite trade and policy reforms, traders and businessmen have faced problems such as quarantine, documentation and transfer of quality goods (Nepal Economic Association [NEA], 2016). This resonates needs for improvement to smoothen the trade facilities in Nepal.

The livelihood option of majority of Nepal's population is dependent on agriculture and farming. Of the total land for production, 82 percent accounts to cultivation of cereal crops while 18 percent accounts to cultivation of cash crops with export values (MoAD, 2014a). The recognition Nepal once held on being a primary producer of cereal crops

like paddy, has been witnessing a paradigm shift through increased production of cash crops and decreased production of cereal crops (GoN & MoAD, 2013). With such paradigm shift, the GoN has mentioned cardamom, coffee, tea, pulses and some fruits as major high value crops with huge demand both at the national and international markets (MoAC, 2012). In the recent practice, cash crops such as large cardamom and ginger have made remarkable progress in the national and international markets making its entry from the mid-hills in the east, Ilam district in particular. The rural areas of Nepal are transmuting their agricultural practice from subsistence to commercial farming. The change has been due to various reasons such as good income from commercial crops compared to subsistence crops, easy cropping systems and less intense labour demands.

Large Cardamom (*Amomum Subulatum Roxb.*), also known as “queen of spices” is a high value cash crop, generating high revenue in the world (MoAD, Agribusiness Promotion & Statistics Division [APSD] & International Trade & Promotion Section [ITPS], 2015; Stanley, Chandrasekaran, Preetha, Kuttalam, & Sheeba, 2014; International Trade Center [ITC], 2017). Cardamom is herbaceous perennial cash crop used as spice and for herbal and medicinal purposes. Large cardamom grows in areas that are sloppy with degraded land. This crop requires moist soil, humid and cool shade to yield the best (Nepal Agricultural Research Council [NARC], 2015). There is wide variety of large cardamom grown in Nepal such as *Ramsai*, *Golsai*, *Chibesai*, *Dambersai*, *Sawney*, *Kantidaar* and the newly added *Salakpurey* or *Pakhe alaichi*. This crop grows in an altitude ranging 600 to 2500 meters above sea level under the temperature of 8-20 degree Celcius, depending on the variety. The planted crop yields fruits after the third year of plantation. The main harvesting season for cardamom is between July and September. Harvesting is done manually with the use of a special knife and the dried cardamom is exported (Pathak, 2014).

Farmers believe that cardamom originated in Sikkim and Darjeeling in India and the eastern hills of Nepal (ITC, 2017). In Nepal farmers cultivated cardamom in four districts of province 1 (as of 2017) Ilam, Taplejung, Panchthar and Bhojpur in 1830. And in 1853, cardamom was commercially grown under the Rana regime in Nepal. During that time the Ranas took up initiatives in production and marketing of

cardamom. The initiatives included setting up cardamom depots in Patna and Mirzapur of India for wholesale trade of large cardamom; tracking the farmers producing large cardamom; allocating land for cardamom production to farmers; providing credits to farmers for cardamom farming under condition that they have someone who can take a guarantee; creating purchasing and collecting depots; setting up a purchase and support pricing in advance; also setting up purchase and collecting areas; buy large cardamom from farmers; payment guarantee within the five days of purchase and punishing smugglers in case of smuggling (ITC, 2017, pp. 13). The targeted depots were Patna and Mirzapur because of the large Muslim community settled in these areas, and they used cardamom in their daily meals. While the depot in Mirzapur was shut down, the one in Patna continued till 1890. With a gap of about 40-50 years in plantation due to lack of market, the Marwari community in Ilam district revived large cardamom as they created depots for purchasing of this cash crop (ITC, 2017).

Moreover, in 1975/76 large cardamoms gained prominence through its commercialisation initiated by the government of Nepal upon the establishment of Cardamom Development Centre (CDC) (MoAD, APSD & ITPS, 2015). Since commercialisation, the Nepalese cardamom has been setting a record of being a viable agro-product for export. Nepal holds recognition as a top producer of cardamom after Sikkim, India (Partap, Sharma, Gurung, Chhetri, & Sharma, 2014; Chapagain, Pathak & Rai, 2014; Durberk & Torstan, 2010). This crop accounts to 7 percent of the total agricultural exports and ranks the second after lentils (29.6%) (MoAD, 2014a). Starting 2009, the exports started increasing and by 2012/2013, Nepal positioned as the world's largest cardamom producer with total production of 5,763 MT of cardamom, worth NRs. 2,528 million or about US\$23.6 million, on about 14,847 hectares (ha) of land in 40 districts (MoAD, 2015). Additionally, in the past three decades, the demand for Nepali large cardamom has increased in the global market due to its taste and preference by the countries importing it (ITC, 2017).

Although the cardamom's export market is pegged by India, there has been demand for this crop from various countries. The NTIS lists top ten potential export destinations for Nepali large cardamom as, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, the UK, the USA, Malaysia, Japan, South Africa, Kuwait and Oman (MoAD, APSD & ITPS, 2015).

However, this commodity has only been exported to less than five countries since 2009. In 2013 alone, the main export destinations of large cardamom was only India and Korea of which majority of production, that is 90 percent, were exported to India. Of the total production of cardamom across the country, less than 2 percent is used for national consumption while about 99 percent is exported internationally (MoAD, APSD & ITPS, 2015; ITC, 2017). Indian market exports Nepal large cardamom to Pakistan and Middle Eastern countries due to easier route between India and these countries and demand for cardamom in these countries.

In Nepal, 84 percent of the total cardamom produced, come from the eastern region, which includes districts from province 1, that are, Ilam, Taplejung, Sankhuwasabha, Dhankuta, Bhojpur, Tehrathum, and Panchthar (MoAD, 2014b; Durbeck & Torstan, 2010). Most of the cash crops produced in Nepal come from the eastern hills. In addition to cardamom, this region produces cash crops such as ginger, broom grass and vegetables, fruits such as mandarin oranges and limes (Munakarmi, Shrestha, Rana, Shrestha, Shrestha, Koirala & Shrestha, 2014), and grains like maize (KC, Karki, Shrestha, & Achhami, 2015). In 2013, Ilam alone produced 45,894 MT of ginger with business of NRs. 3 billion 410 million; cardamom of NRs. 690 million; oranges of NRs 30 million, kiwi of NRs 14.4 million; honey of NRs 13.2 million and chillies of NRs 160.1 million (MoAD, 2014a). Though ginger is highly produced across Ilam, I picked cardamom as my study commodity because of the history cardamom holds in Nepal.

In the past, production of cardamom was only limited to the eastern hills or province 1 of Nepal. However, at present, of the 75 districts in total, 41 produce large cardamom across Nepal (Table 2.2). While some districts, particularly in the eastern hills produce in larger quantity, some districts produce it in smaller quantities. For example, recent data reports, other districts have very little production of cardamom ranging from 56 MT produced in Kavre in the Central region (now province 3) to 50 MT in Lamjung of Western region (now Gandaki province); 10 MT in Rukum in the Mid Western region (now province 5 and partially Karnali province) and 5 MT in Baitadi of Far western region (now Province 7) (MoAD, APSD & ITPS, 2015).

Table 1.3: Large Cardamom Production by Provinces¹

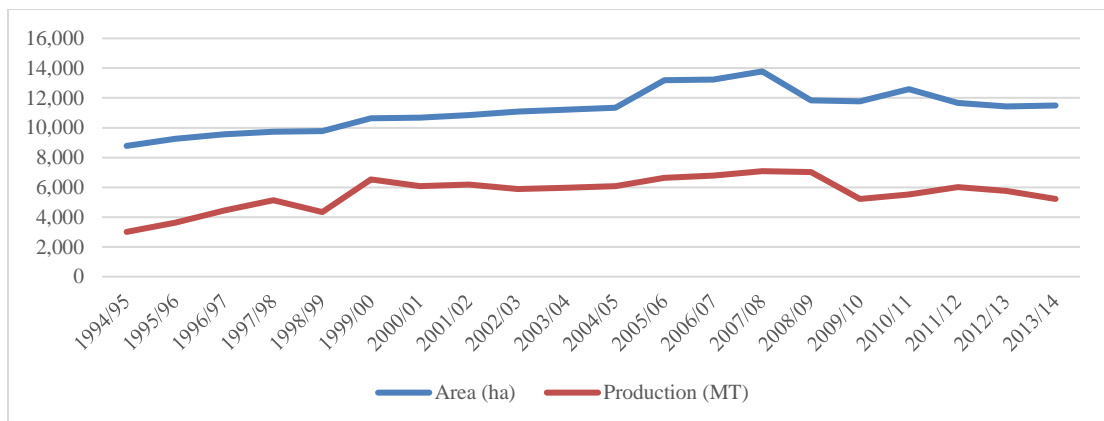
S.N.	Region	Districts, Total	Province as of 2017	Area (ha) in 2013	Production (MT) in 2013
1.	Eastern	Taplejung, Sankhuwasabha Solukhumbu, Panchthar, Ilam, Terathum, Dhankuta, Bhojpur, Khotang, Okhaldhunga, Udaypur, Morang (Total – 12)	Falls under Province 1	13,696	5,398
2.	Central	Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, Ramechhap, Kavre, Lalitpur, Kathmandu, Nuwakot, Dhading (Total – 8)	Falls under Province 3	533	174
3.	Western	Gorkha, Lamjung, Tanahun, Kaski, Parbat, Syangja, Myagdi, Baglung, Gulmi Arghakhachi Total 10	The first 8 districts fall in Province 4 (Gandaki), Gulmi and Argakhanchi fall in Province 5	317	127
4.	Mid Western	Jajarkot, Dailekh, Surkhet, Salyan, Kalikot, Rukum, Rolpa (Total – 7)	The first five districts fall in Province 6 (Karnali); Rolpa falls in province 5; Rukum has been divided into eastern Rukum (Province 5) and western Rukum (Province 6 or Karnali)	119	41
5.	Far Western	Doti, Baitadi, Darchula, Achham (Total – 4)	Falls under Province 7 (Sudurpaschim)	22	13
Total Districts			41		

Source: MoAD, *Statistical Yearbook for Nepalese Agriculture, 2000-2016*

¹ As of 2017, the development regions of Nepal have been administratively divided into provinces. This means the five development regions have now been categorised into seven provinces and the 77 districts have been allocated to the provinces.

From Table 1.3, it is evident that the eastern part of Nepal is a major hub of large cardamom production accounting to more than 80 percent of the total production. Of the produced cardamom across the country, about 90 percent is exported to India through Birtamode city of Jhapa district. Most of these exported cardamom goes to other markets such as Singapore, United Kingdom, and United Arab Emirates (Nepal Trade Intergration Strategy [NTIS], GoN & MoCS, 2010b). Data reports exports of large cardamom has been able to significantly generate revenues of about US \$20 million annually which includes US\$12 million as earning from export (WB, 2013). Despite high revenues, disease infestation has led to decline in cardamom production in Nepal (National Research Programme for Plantation Development [NRPPD], 2012; Khadka, 2011; Stoep, Pokharel, Rajbhandari & Shrestha 2010; SNV Netherlands Development Organisation [SNV], 2008). Disease such as *chirke* (mosaic streak), *furkey* (bushy dwarf), and a fungus (rhizome rot) and climatic conditions are recorded to be the major causes of decline in production (Chapagain et. al.,2014; Maharjan, 2014; Singh & Pothula, 2013; Khadka, 2011; Stoep, et. al., 2010; SNV, 2008). In a span of five to six years, between 2007 and 2013, there was a decline in production of cardamom by 1,000 MT, and the area of production declined by about 2,000 ha (MoAD, 2013). Likewise, disease infestation and consequently decline in production was also witnessed in Sikkim in the farms of indigenous Lepcha community (Bhattarai, Deka, Chhetri, Harsha & Gupta, 2013; Bhasin, 2011). The production of cardamom in Nepal shows an increase and decrease in trend between 3,000 and 7,000 MT from 1994 to 2013 (Figure 1.4). This variation has been attributed to climate change and disease.

Figure 1.4: Large Cardamom Production and Area in Nepal



Source: MoAD, Statistical Yearbook for Nepalese Agriculture, Compiled Time Series 2000-2014.

Yearly trend shows that there has been an increasing and decreasing trend of this cash crop ranging from 3000 to 7000 MT between 1994 and 2013. The slight variation over the years could be due to factors such as changes in weather or disease affliction. For example, in the year 2014 newspaper and media frequently reported of cardamom crops failure due to inevitable diseases called *chirke* or spots. The major cardamom hubs, Ilam, Panchthar, Sankhuwasabha and Taplejung were affected because of this, thus with huge decline in production.

Of the major districts producing cardamom, Ilam was the first to witness disease infestation and loss in production. Some other districts, including Panchthar and Taplejung, experienced similar problems but Ilam faced severe loss before them. Table 1.4 shows cardamom production dropped sharply between 2007/2008 and 2012/2013, and then slightly raised in the following year. The tiny rise in production after huge decline could possibly be due to measures taken to combat disease. However, despite disease infliction and decline in production, the high income has driven the farmers to cultivate this crop.

Table 1.4: Large Cardamom Productions in Ilam, 2006–2014

Year	Area (ha)	Production (MT)	Yield (MT/ha)
2006/07	2837	1427	0.50
2007/08	2837	1727	0.60
2008/09	2000	1784	0.89
2009/10	2106	963	0.46
2010/11	1760	694	0.39
2011/12	1700	694	0.41
2012/13	1450	502	0.35
2013/14	1132	520	0.46
2014/15	1143	535	0.46
2015/16	1163	558	0.47
2016/17	1200	576	0.48

Source: MoAD, *Statistical Yearbook on Nepalese Agriculture, Series 2006–2017*

Every year Ilam produces huge quantity of large cardamom. Realizing the value of this cash crop and the needs of farmers, the GoN has established a Cardamom Development Centre (CDC) in Fikkal, Ilam, emphasising this cash crop as a major commodity. Through the CDC farmers are provided seeds of better quality, knowledge on better cultivation and other forms of information required through trainings or demonstrations

(KC & Upreti, 2017). CDC is also committed to researching on the disease that could afflict cardamom and the ways to prevent them (WTO, 2012). Also, from the government's side, the District Agriculture Development Offices (DADOs) that function under the Department of Agriculture (DoA) supports cardamom farmers by conducting awareness programmes, keeping records of production and total area covered for cultivation and monitoring various activities regarding large cardamom.

Over the years, massive decline on cardamom production in the eastern hills due to disease infestation has negatively impacted the livelihoods of farmers (KC & Upreti, 2017). In Ilam more than 90 percent of the cardamom farms were damaged due to widespread disease. Hence, this district is currently under cardamom revival process. The impact of disease infestation hit unbreakably in the lives of cardamom farmers because the living standard decreased (ibid). Farmers with large land holdings have taken alternative measures such as growing crops like tea and opening dairy farms, but have failed again due to lack of market for the products. Unlike cardamom, these alternative products do not have markets in the rural areas. The problems are also associated with weak roads and networks, lack of transportation and human resources for marketing (Upreti, KC, Mallet & Babajanian, 2012; Yadav & Lian, 2009). Cardamom farmers with small land holdings also facing loss of their crops have adopted measures such as wage labour work within or outside of the community (KC & Upreti, 2017; Gentle & Maraseni, 2012). Such situation has led these farmers to seek for institutional support for revival of cardamom farming.

There are reports on haphazardly planting cardamom with little knowledge amongst the farmers about the species of cardamom and its requirement of climatic conditions. These problems, termed as biotic and abiotic, have led to increased disease infestation in the farms and problems associated with sterility (NARC, 2015). The consequences of such actions have led to decline in production and even degradation of fertile soil. There are varieties of cardamom, which is grown in different climatic conditions and altitude and hence requires proper study before plantation.

1.4. Problem Statement & Rationale of the Study

Literatures evidently claim that commercial cash crop farming has created economic opportunities for women (KC, et. al., 2016; Kabeer, 2012; Alam, 2012). Besides

providing job opportunities, cash crops production has also improved livelihoods (Maharjan, 2014; Thongyou, 2014; Wamalwa, 2011). However, there is also claim that women face economic segregation in the rural market led economy as they are discriminated in the form of wage and work (Raney, et. al., 2011).

Previous evidences in line to this research, reveals that cardamom farming has created income opportunities for women and led to improved livelihoods (KC, et. al., 2016). Previous evidences also show that cardamom farming has provided income opportunities to 67,000 households across Nepal (MoAD, APSD & ITPS, 2015). Despite such claims, this data lacks gender disaggregation. There has been less contribution in the literature about commercial cardamom farming and the livelihoods of people, particularly of women. Less is documented about the evolution of commercial cardamom farming and its importance as a top commodity of export. There is a scant claim about association between women's empowerment and income opportunities in commercial cardamom farming (KC, et. al., 2016).

To narrow the gap that exists in understanding the link between cardamom farming and livelihoods of women, this study has been carried out using a qualitative method for data extraction. Also quantitative method has been used as a complementarity for the qualitative research. First, there was a need to document the evolution of cardamom farming as a result of agricultural transition. This research has attempted to address the evolution issue by conducting a timeline narrative in the study site to provide a chronology of how farming systems have changed over the years. Second, there was a need to assess the engagement of women in cardamom farming and the effect of such engagement and opportunities in their livelihoods. The assessment has been done qualitatively with the use of descriptive quantitative data. This has helped identify the livelihood status of women in the study site, their nature of work and the impact of such work in their daily lives and well-being. Third, this research has explored the factors linked to women's empowerment through their participation in commercial cardamom farming. This has been done using indexes on empowerment such as decision making on income, use of income, participation in institutions, to understand the degree of empowerment women feel.

1.5. Objectives of this Research

The main research question for this research has been:

How has commercial cardamom farming evolved in the face of agrarian change & how has the transition process linked to men and women's livelihoods, wellbeing & empowerment?

Three objectives have been set to answer the main research question:

Objective 1: Document the evolution of commercial cardamom farming in Salakpur.

Objective 2: Assess the linkages between women's engagement in commercial cardamom farming and their livelihoods.

Objective 3: Identify and explore the factors associated with women's empowerment, through participation and earning, in the cardamom-farming sector.

1.6. Organisation of the Thesis

Chapter One is an introductory part of this research, which has provided agricultural scenario and commercialisation of agriculture at the broader level. This chapter has highlighted need for this research by setting the general and specific objectives of the overall research.

Chapter Two, in general, is a review of literature of various themes and elements linked to this research. First, this chapter has given a state of art on the export led agriculture and its history in Nepal linking it to trade, treaties and policies. Alongside, this chapter has also provided a brief on the importance of commercial cardamom farming in Nepal's agrarian forefront and the current production and marketing mechanism of this high value crop. This chapter has marked an explanation for various terms used throughout this thesis. These terms include feminisation of agriculture, livelihoods, women empowerment that is the key elements of this research. This chapter has explored the pertinent and relevant concept and theories underpinning this research. Some of the pertinent concepts used have been the gender and intersectionality theories, empowerment theory, particularly in link to the use of Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) to measure empowerment and concepts and elements of

livelihoods and well-being. This chapter has identified a need for research in understanding women's participation in commercial cardamom farming, particularly, their roles in the cardamom production compared to men, wage and payment. If men and women are by far major role players in commercial cardamom production, both by sharing roles and earning, then there is a need to expand the discussion on impact of commercial farming in the lives of women, empowerment issues through participation and use of income and investment. Thus, this chapter has provided a contextual setting to the research on the issues aforementioned.

Chapter Three has reviewed the relevant approaches and methods used for the research by introducing the study site. A pertinent conceptual framework, designed under this research's paradigm has been outlined and justified to achieve the aims of this research. This chapter has provided an understanding of theories associated with the elements of this research. A description on methods and tools, both qualitative and quantitative has been provided. Also this chapter has covered the steps used in collecting and analysing the data alongside ethical considerations.

Chapter Four has provided a timeline narrative on the evolution of cardamom farming in the study site along with the institutions engaged in cardamom farming. This chapter is a result of expanded hours of interviews, a purely qualitative discussions, with elderly and middle aged locals from the study site, including representatives of cardamom cooperatives, ex-teachers of the schools and farmers. Besides, this timeline history has been portrayed in a poster form. This chapter will also reflect on findings from the quantitative household survey on the current livelihoods activities of people in the study site, including households engaged in agriculture and non-agriculture sector.

Chapter Five reflects findings regarding objective two of this research, covering the elements of women's engagement in cardamom farming their roles, income and earnings, their livelihood and well-being. The results are the outcomes of both qualitative and quantitative data collection. To measure well being, particularly on the levels of satisfaction with traditional or non-traditional farming, an index designed by the global research (FATE) team with lickert scale, has been applied, in both objective and subjective ways. Overall, this chapter portrays how commercial cardamom farming has helped women from different socio-economic background to become economically

active. It also shows what it means to become a part of commercial farming as women, particularly as women from marginalised communities, who in fact have been able to step out of poverty.

Chapter Six details the results of objective three, which covers women's empowerment through participation in the commercial cardamom farming and institutions linked to this farming. This chapter has dug deeper into understanding women's empowerment from the respondent's perspectives. Also, this chapter address issues around women's capabilities to earn through export led farming, the use of income at the household or individual income, decision making on various issues regarding farming, women's bargaining position in the households and institutions, which are also indicators of empowerment for this research.

Chapter Seven serves as a closing of this thesis based on the synthesis of previous chapters and discussions in relation to the objectives of this study. This chapter has probed further into identifying various gaps for further research, which will be a part of the continuing research project.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Feminisation of Agriculture: Overview of Livelihoods, Empowerment and Commercial Farming

This chapter provides series of literature review on themes, concepts, and theories underpinning this overall research. This chapter introduces the concept Feminisation of agriculture, the existence of feminisation in agriculture sector in global and Nepalese setting and the lives of women. One major plunge of this research has been to understand the link between export led agriculture, economic change set by transition from subsistence to commercial farming and its consequences on those engaged in the commercial farming sector, particularly women. As a component of such consequence, this chapter has delved deeper into the issues of women's empowerment through engagement in cash crop farming as results of economic change and shifts in agriculture system. This chapter has also undergone a deep review in the debate of empowerment through engagement in cash crop farming and empowerment through participation in institutions. Overall, this chapter has presented different theories underpinning the elements discussed above, with a justification of how the concepts, either adjusted or unadjusted, has been congruent for this research. This chapter has also identified a need for research in understanding women's participation in commercial cardamom farming, particularly, their roles in the cardamom sector compared to men.

2.1 Understanding “Feminisation” and its Link with Agriculture

During the 1970s Ester Boserup witnessed increased women's participation in household and farm works as men migrated or changed their occupation as a result of industrialization (Boserup, 1970). Boserup's work enquired men and women's role in the agriculture production. Over the years, in the academia and development world, the term feminisation was linked to various elements such as feminisation of labour, feminisation of employment, and feminisation of agriculture. “Feminisation” is understood as a shift in proportion of women in comparison to men in various sectors such as, labour, agriculture and others. Feminisation of labour refers to increased participation of women in paid labour work (Kanji & Menon, 2001), which could be

understood by the number of women involved in labour or the time provided by women (Gartaula, Niehof & Visser, 2010). Feminisation of agriculture refers to women's labour participation in agriculture sector performing various roles including decision-making (ibid, pp. 566). In the past few decades, women's engagement in labour pertaining to agriculture has increased in developing countries (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2006). In regards to agriculture, feminisation of agriculture refers to "women's increased participation in agriculture labour force, whether as independent producers, as unremunerated family workers or as agricultural wage workers" (ibid, pp. 2). In summation, the term feminisation and its link to agriculture reflect women's contribution in agriculture.

Women's contribution in agriculture sector has been traditionally high and was brought into attention post 1970s. Globally, the main cause identified as a consequence of feminisation of labour has been male outmigration for urban jobs (Sharma, et. al., 2014; Abdelali-Martini, 2011; Kelkar, 2010; Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2006; Zuo, 2004; Mtshali, 2002; Song, 1998). For example, in Syria, land fragmentation and reduced household land size and population growth compelled men in rural areas to move to cities or other countries for jobs (Abdelali-Martini, et. al., 2003). In Latin America women managed farms and provided labour when men migrated for labour work (Deere, 2009). In China the shift towards market led economy attracted men to work in urban sectors leaving women to manage farms (Zuo, 2004; Song, 1998). In India men moved out of agriculture making women become a part of large share of agriculture labour force (Jackson & Rao, 2010). Study in the Middle East and North African (MENA) countries highlight that while women produced crops using manual labour, men performed works using machines that could save time (Abdelali-Martini, 2011). Cases from African countries demonstrate women are paid low wages in the labour market despite their strenuous effort in cultivation of cash crops such as tobacco and vanilla (Kanji & Menon, 2001; FAO, 2011b). This tells us that pertinent studies have been conducted regarding feminisation of agriculture and labour in most of the regions across the globe, particularly developing countries. Although the types of participation of women in farms could vary depending on their production, and work type, evidences show that feminisation is an on going process in the rural sector.

Studies globally share that, on one hand feminisation in export led sector has led to economic opportunities for women (KC, et. al., 2016; Kabeer, 2012; Alam, 2012; FAO, 2012; Ghimire, 2010; Omiti, et. al., 2007) while on the other hand has increased work burden (FAO 2011a; Kanji & Menon, 2001; Bellin, 1994; Bouis & Haddad, 1994, 1990; McComb, Finlayson, Hardaker & Heywood, 1994; Peters & Herrera, 1994). Some studies also claim that women's participation has been recognised due to change in roles and opportunities (Kabeer, 2012; FAO, 2012; Omiti, et. al., 2007; Deere, 2009). Women have been empowered through their participation in commercial agriculture (FAO, 2010). They have been able to earn, which has created a positive impact in their household position (Ghimire, 2010). Also, women have been able to increase their social standings (Alam, 2012). There are also claims that women have been able to build assets through their engagement and earning from commercial farming (KC & Upreti, 2017; WDR, 2008). These literatures suggest a significant change in the position of women, regarding their roles as "homemakers", which have been there for decades.

In contrary to the above studies, there are arguments that indicate women are bounded by household chores besides their engagement in labour market (FAO, 2011a; Kanji & Menon, 2001), thus increasing their workload. There has been increment in women's participation in export led agriculture by number but not by secure jobs, equal wages and position (Kabeer, 2012; Kanji & Menon, 2001). Rural women are excluded from the markets (Quisumbing, 2011) and shut out of social capital (FAO, 2005). Thus changes in agriculture, however is not only a driving force to provide economic opportunities and recognition for women as there are complexities caused by these changes. The workload versus economic opportunity debate is crucial in the current labour market that includes women. Most of the literatures presented above, fails to touch on the issue of women's roles in the commercial sector.

Also, the impact of feminisation is seen both on men and women (UNRISD, 2005). For example, during economic crisis, men and women both face the downturn calling for economic opportunities equally set for both (Bettio, Corsi, D'Ippoliti, Lyberaki, Lodovici & Verashchagina, 2012; Gosh, 2010; Seguino, 2010). During crisis, although both men and women face it, the impact is more on women since they have to bear the responsibilities of managing households as well as seek for opportunities to sustain their lives. Chant (2010) coins such situation as feminisation of responsibility where women

are obliged to perform their duties at home and outside of home. This study uses the term feminisation in line to shift in gender relations regarding the changing economic situation pertaining to agriculture labour market and household dimensions.

2.2 Feminisation and its Implication in Nepal

Agriculture plays an important role in Nepal's economy. Despite declining in the percentile, majority of people still are a part of agriculture sector. There has been a decline in share of agriculture in the GDP over the years yet agriculture remains the major contributor to the GDP in Nepal. The traditional agriculture outlook of Nepal is semi-feudal with mostly subsistence farming and unequal distribution of land (Tamang, Paudel & Shrestha, 2014). In the recent years, although, Nepal has been undergoing fundamental changes in the agriculture sector. The country has witnessed transition from subsistence to commercial farming systems through commercialisation of high value cash crops such as ginger, tea, large cardamom, chillies etc (KC et. al., 2016). Along with the transition in agriculture systems women's visibility in the agriculture sector has been noticeable.

Women's engagement in agrarian Nepal is not a new tale. Nepal outstrips other South Asian countries in terms of women's engagement in Agriculture (Bhadra & Shah, 2007). Statistical numbers portray there has been an increase of women's participation in the agriculture sector. The share of women in agriculture employment was 35 percent in 1980, which increased between 50 percent and 70 percent in 2010 (Asian Development Bank [ADB], 2010a). At present in Nepal, about two third of country's labour force is involved in agriculture of which 70 percent of the labour force is women. The Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS) (2010/11) shows percentage of women headed agriculture households to be 25.7 percent in Nepal. This figure is mainly due to male outmigration, which shows that women outstrip men in Nepal's gender disaggregation by agriculture (Malapit, Kadiyala, Quisumbing, Cunningham & Tyagi, 2013). Data shows there are more women (84%) engaged in agricultural work than men (62%) (Council for International Development Corporation [CIDC], 2014).

Literatures show that due to increase in women's participation, Nepal's agriculture is feminised (KC, et. al., 2016; Slavchevska, Kaaria & Taivalmaa, 2016; Tamang, et. al., 2014). There are multifarious factors contributing to feminisation. For example, in the

rural areas people lack employment opportunities and rely on the underperforming subsistence agriculture. Such livelihood does not fulfil their basic needs which ultimately pushes the rural people, mostly men, to migrate seeking employment opportunities for income generation (Upreti, et. al., 2016; Slavchevska, et. al., 2016; Tamang, et. al., 2014). Increased out-migration of men and their engagement in off-farm employment has contributed to increased women involvement in labour force (Malapit, et. al., 2013). Women have taken up with roles and responsibilities in the farms as compensation for the shortage in labour force while also maintaining familial balance (Tamang, et. al., 2014; Kelkar, 2010; FAO, 2010; Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2006).

Also, scholars argue that Nepal has, no doubt, experienced an increase in the trend of feminisation of agriculture through shifts in agricultural practice and production (Paudel, Dahal & Shah, 2012; Adhikari & Hobley, 2011; Tamang, 2012). For example, despite male outmigration, feminisation has happened in the commercial farming sector where women contribute equally as men (KC, et. al., 2016). Such practices have brought changes in the socio-economic status of people including women.

Feminisation was also seen during a decade long conflict. It increased during insurgency when men migrated and left women behind to work in the fields (Ghale, 2008). Conflict led to changes in livelihoods of women as they were engaged in labour related work in absence of men. During conflict, employment rate concerning women rose (Menon & Rodgers, 2011). Noticeable patterns of women's engagement in labour market for income generation were reflected through changes in social dimensions in their society and households (Ghimire, 2010; Pokharel, 2009). Additionally, migration led to increase in remittances flow within the country.

A team (see Gartaula, et. al., 2010) conducted a research in Jhapa district of Nepal to understand the impact of male outmigration on women's work pattern. This research states that feminisation of agriculture showed positive development of women's empowerment. This research mainly puts emphasis on labour feminisation and managerial feminisation. In absence of men, women performed both labour related work such as working in the farms intensively, and performing managerial work such as decision-making and power playing in the households as household heads. This

study, in a nutshell shows that the result of feminisation broadened women's intense engagement in the agricultural sector and increased their responsibilities.

Despite the composition of women in agriculture being relatively high, majority of women in South Asia work for fewer wages compared to men (WB, 2007). This could be because of the time constraints women face, as they have to perform both household and economic activities. This argument can be supported from the report which concludes feminisation of agriculture in Nepal has led to women's increased responsibilities as they carry out 6.3 to 6.6 times the agricultural work than men (Pravetoni, 2011; Lokshin & Glinsakaya, 2008). In retrospect, the issues of gender inequality that existed years back when women worked in the field and maintained their households still exist.

2.3 Theories and Approaches

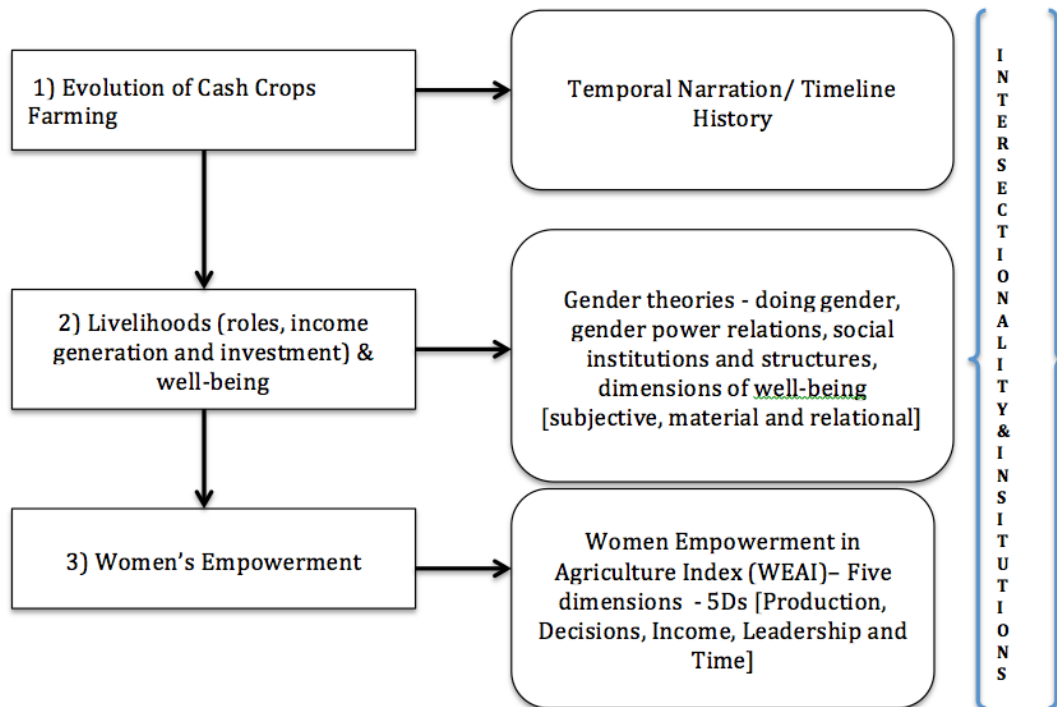
Theories are established interconnected propositions or principles designed to systematize knowledge, create explanation to a particular fact or question (Mooney, Knox & Schacht, 2007). Theories build onto prediction of societal settings to generate new propositions. In the process of times, both social and philosophical elements have intertwined to generate different types of sociological theories, from classical to modern and post-modern, based on the series of changing societal practices (Ritzer, 2000). Numerous sociological theories have emerged over the years, encompassing ideas on how societies have changed and developed in regards to power and social structures, gender and ethnicity, social behaviours and settings (Harrington, 2005). In addition, contemporary sociological theories cover elements of relationships between social institutions and society, relationship between individuals and society and structural settings and social transformation (Elliot, 2008). And in general, sociological theories help meticulously understand and predict the social world from the micro to macro perspectives.

2.3.1 Theoretical Design

This study focuses on three major ideas in relation to large cardamom farming. First idea maps a timeline of agricultural transition, from subsistence to commercial cardamom farming, in Salakpur and institutional innovation in support of the changing agricultural practice. Second, revolves around the engagement of women in commercial

farming and their livelihoods, particularly in relation of men, highlighting the roles, income and well-being. The third component looks into factors associated with women empowerment, as they become part of commercial cardamom farming. My overall theoretical base (Figure 2.1) will rely on the understanding of emerging concept on agricultural transition and the changes experienced by men and women due to such transition.

Figure 2.1: Theoretical Design for the Study in line to Objectives



Source: Author, 2015

In order to take this research forward, understanding the evolution of a crop seemed crucial, particularly because this research builds into gender roles, livelihoods and empowerment issues in relation to cash crop. For example, without knowing the change in cropping systems over the years, it would have been a challenge to uncover how gender roles have changed in transiting from subsistence to commercial agriculture systems, in this case large cardamom farming. It is legit to state that cash crops farming were not the origin of farming systems. That is, subsistence farming was a historical agricultural system that occurred naturally in the first place. Similar has been the case for Salakpur where households practiced subsistence farming, which have been transmuted to cash crop farming in the past few decades. Therefore, it is crucial to

understand why and how farmers adapted to the change in farming systems, why farmers abandoned the traditional farming to take up with commercial farming, how have the change been maintained and how has the system been established in favour of these farmers taking up with commercial farming. Hence, as a first step I have focused on the evolution of farming systems in the study site and the institutions engaged in such process, in order to associate with changes in gender roles, livelihoods and well-being over the years, as a result of agricultural changes.

Following the evolution perspective, and in line to the second objective, I have delved into livelihoods and well-being as a result of women's engagement in cash crop farming. I have measured livelihoods using both qualitative and quantitative indicators, and documented the process of change in livelihoods the households have undergone as they have adapted to the new farming structures. This has been done through documentation of people's lived experience in taking up cardamom farming. By partaking livelihoods I have delved deeper into the gender roles in the agriculture sector and the results it has brought in the lives of women. In putting all these ideas together intersectionality has been used as a cross cutting theme. This is because the theories used in this research are interwoven posturing the debate of agrarian change and women's engagement in agriculture and their visibility, which is a challenge to patriarchal structure of division of labour and power relations. In simplistic terms, gender relations have been studied in the context of rural employment using the lens of intersectionality (McCall, 2005; Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality is a tool to analytically understand the disaggregated view of rural poor (Bernstein, 2010). The reason behind choosing gender theories in representing livelihood and well-being has been detailed in section 2.6.3.

The third aspect of this research is the element on empowerment. I have used the WEAI to measure empowerment of women engaged in cash crop farming. WEAI technically has been used in the subsistence-farming arena and I have adapted this index for use in the commercial agriculture process. More on this has been elaborated throughout the section 2.7.

2.4 Agriculture and Development

Since its inception many centuries ago, agriculture has undergone credible evolutionary transformation in regards to the plantation technique, species and genes (Thrall, Bever & Burdon, 2010; Romano-Armada, Amoroso & Rajal, 2014). In simple terms, evolution refers to the gradual changes occurring in plants and human beings over the period of time. Evolution has been linked to biological aspects, particularly under the work of Charles Darwin, who claimed through his work “Origin of the Species” (Darwin 1896) that organisms from diverse species had a common origin and that these organisms have evolved over the time caused by the nature as a system or natural selection (Ayala, 2019). Prior to Darwin the idea of evolution was mostly attributed to gods creation.

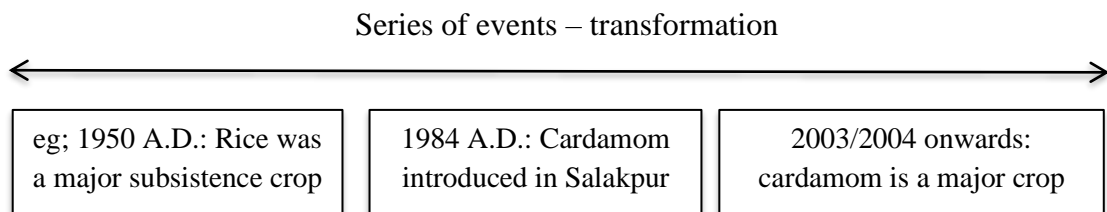
The history of evolution of agriculture might not be exactly traceable as it differs by regions, but it is evident that agriculture has been one of the first means of livelihood concerning human civilisation. Before there were hunters and gatherers and this practice slowly evolved into people depending on subsistence agriculture for living (Thrall, et. al., 2010; Romano-Armada, et. al., 2014). Agriculture revolution, however, took place in different regions in different period of time. But the development in agriculture over the years came through human invention, with systems such as new husbandry practices, seed storage, genetic development of plants and animals, and transformation from subsistence farming into cash crops farming (Johnson, 1961; Thrall, et. al., 2010; Romano-Armada, et. al., 2014). Agricultural evolution in regards to cash crop farming has become phenomenal over the years. This is because production of high value crops such as vegetables and spices, have initiated practice of mono cropping and labour intensive production that have added to economic growth (Barrientos, Kabeer & Hossain, 2004). On contrast, evolution in the agriculture sector also initiated threats to plants due to disease infestation in crops and ways to control the crops through pests and management (Johnson, 1961).

Like other regions across the globe, the history of agricultural transformation of Nepal is not a new tale (detailed in Chapter One of this thesis). The idea of transmuting subsistence to commercial farming came late in terms of initiation but Nepal has been able to produce cash crops such as cardamom, coffee, and ginger across the country. Prior to cash crops, Nepal has gone through series of in the cropping pattern. One major

gist of this research has been delving deeper into people's livelihood trajectories particularly concerning cash crops as substitute to subsistence crops. Hence, it became important to understand a time line of what people produced in the past and present and how their livelihoods changed through change in production.

In line to the above statements, the essence of change in crop production does not happen automatically but happens over the time through households, communities or even institutions. Hence, institution innovation plays a crucial role in this front. Institutional Innovation has been a crucial element to address various issues faced in a particular domain. "Innovation," here means an organised way of interaction between institutions, policies, and stakeholders to frame new processes of social and economic transformation (Edquist, 1997; Lundvall, 1992). Innovation also means a group of people coming together to frame and reframe methods and approaches and research questions (Clark, Hall, Sulaiman, & Naik, 2003; Prasad, 2007). Innovation creates spaces for transformation the ways institutions function through improvement of policies, regulations, and implementation (Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture [IICA], 2014).

Figure 2.2: Evolution from Subsistence to Commercial Farming



Source: Author, 2016

In order to determine that something has evolved over time, a timeline narrative of the subject becomes crucial. Timelines are effective tools for collecting data as it visually lists a series of chronological events with reasons of why those events have taken places over the years (Patterson, Markey & Somers, 2012; Berends, 2011; Bagnoli, 2009). In most cases the use of timelines have been mostly in the field of clinical psychology and health (see Patterson, et. al., 2012; Sheridan, Chamberlian & Dupiuis, 2011; Berends, 2011). I have used a timeline narrative (Figure 2.2.) to create a narration of evolution of cardamom farming in Salakpur, which underlies my first objective. The main idea

on doing this has been to witness what has transformed in the agricultural sector over the years, starting from rice farming (because rice has been considered a staple crop for years in Nepal) to other crops, particularly initiation of cash crops such as ginger and cardamom. In addition to the what factor, the idea around why such changes took place and how this process transformed the economy in Salakpur has been a major gist of this objective.

2.5 Conceptualising Livelihoods and Well Being

The concept of livelihood has emerged concerning debates on making a simple living to fulfilling basic needs, adding assets, reduction of poverty, rural development and social security. Wallmann (1984) defined livelihood as the following as cited by Appendini (2001, pp. 25);

“Livelihood is never just a matter of finding or making shelter, transacting money, getting food to put on the family table or to exchange on the market place. It is equally a matter of ownership and circulation of information, the management of skills and relationships and the affirmation of personal significance . . . and group identity. The tasks of meeting obligations, of security, identity and status, and organizing time are as crucial to livelihood as bread and shelter.”

In simple terms livelihoods is a means of living, where livelihood generation means activities people undertake to meet basic needs (Neihof & Price, 2001). Chambers (1989, pp. 7) defined livelihoods as “adequate stocks and flows of food and cash to meet basic needs”. However, this definition does not provide a multidimensional attribute to livelihoods regarding process and factors that make livelihood, or sustains ones livelihoods. Addressing the sustainability, and somewhat pushing towards a multidimensionality approach, Chambers and Conway (1992, pp. 7) define livelihoods in relation to sustainable livelihoods as;

“...comprising the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and

maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base.”

On contrary, livelihood has been defined with a gist of well-being by Bebbington (1999, pp. 2022) as the definition is put as;

“A person’s assets, such as land, are not merely means with which he or she makes a living: they also give meaning to that person’s world. Assets are not simply resources that people use in building livelihoods: they are assets that give them the capability to be and to act. Assets should not be understood only as things that allow survival, adaptation and poverty alleviation: they are also the basis of agents’ power to act and to reproduce, challenge or change the rules that govern the control, use and transformation of resources.”

This definition provides various dimensions to livelihood. It also relates to the indicators for empowerment, given that assets and capabilities lead to empowerment. Hence, livelihoods, assets and empowerment relate to each other in some ways. In the development discourse and the academia, defining livelihoods has its own complexities, reiterating that it requires various dimensions. Literature states that there can be two understandings of livelihoods; one, as a “materialist” which covers elements such as “development, poverty, risk and vulnerabilities and coping strategies” And the other understanding is termed as “group centred” which holds elements such as social differences and inclusion and identity (Upreti, et. al., 2012, pp. 14).

Along with definitions, various frameworks on livelihoods have emerged over the years. Some prominent frameworks are the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) by DFID (2002) and the Rural Livelihoods System (RLS). The SLF uses five capitals (human, natural, financial, physical and social) to define livelihoods while the RLS takes into account people’s subjective well-being such as household decision making which is a part of livelihood system (Neihof & Price, 2001). With the time, the dimensions of livelihoods have been viewed from both objective and subjective elements. Livelihoods have also been related to the state of people as a result of conflict and fragility (Upreti & Müller-Böker, 2010). For instance, a decade long Maoist insurgency in Nepal resulted in various outcomes such as effect on food security, effects

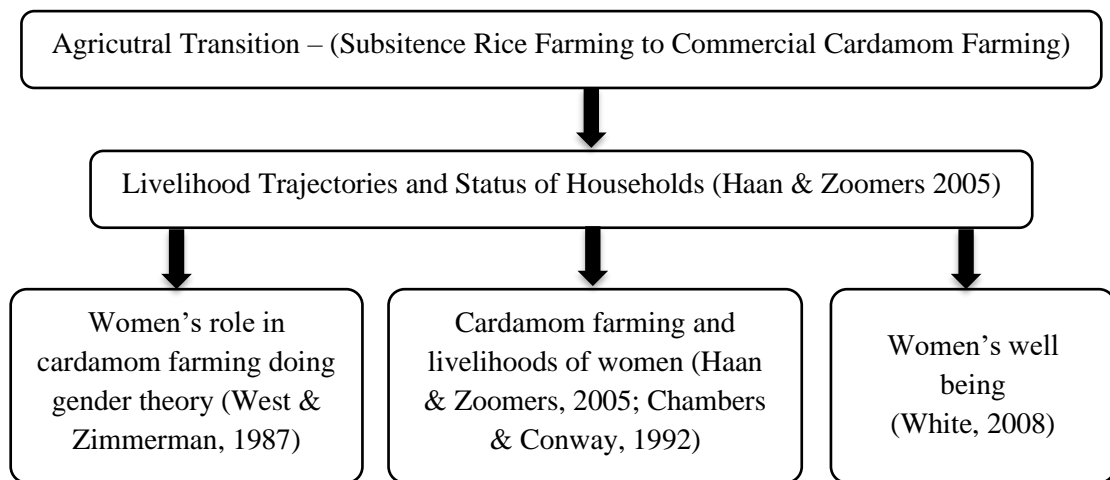
on children's lives and education, caused forced migration, changes in livelihood strategies (Upreti, et. al., 2012).

In a nutshell, the term livelihoods require various indicators to be put into a concept. For example, the DFID's livelihoods framework grabs various elements to capture multidimensionality. This framework states, people's livelihoods can progress if they have access to basic rights, such as education, information, food and nutrition, skills and trainings and health care, driven by policies and regulatory frameworks; access to natural resources with skills on management of these resources; access to conducive social environment; access to better facilities including infrastructures and financial resources; and access to institutions that facilitate various livelihood strategies, promoting equitable access to resources and markets for everyone (DFID, 2002).

Added to the term livelihoods, and over the years, the term "livelihood trajectories" came into light with the work to Haan and Zoomers (2005). Livelihood trajectories is an analytical construct, which reports not only people's income and opportunities but also unravels their situation and status within that livelihood boundary they are engaged in. Analysing livelihood trajectories means penetrating deeper into people's lives covering elements of beliefs, aspirations or overall well-being. Livelihood trajectories are a result of open rapport between researcher and the informant (ibid).

Using the idea of Haan and Zoomers (2005), I have aimed to understand the livelihood trajectories of households engaged in cardamom farming in relation to the gender roles, women's engagement and livelihoods and most importantly well-being. In the process of transitioning from one crop to another, it is important to delve deeper into how such transition has shaped or not shaped livelihood in roles and opportunities and how such opportunities are considered related to gender norms and roles.

Figure 2.3. Agricultural Transition and Livelihoods Analysis

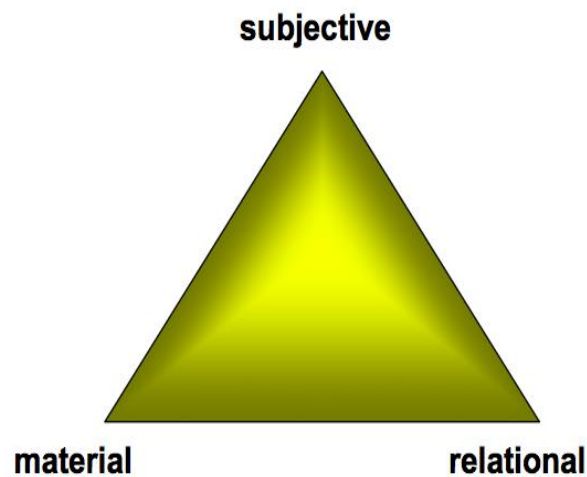


Source: Author, 2016

In most of the studies of livelihood across the world, women's livelihood status has been depicted as vulnerable because they are obliged to many things such as balancing household work and paid and unpaid work, compromising with wages and salaries, dissatisfaction with livelihood option, having less access to education, health and basic services and many more (Okorie & Williams, 2017; Upreti, et. al., 2012; Shively, Gars & Sununtnasuk, 2011; ADB, 2010b; Mammen, Bauer & Lass, 2009). The idea of what happens to the lives of women when they become a part of economic change and how such changes affect their lives has been one of the concerns of this objective. Any economic changes are slightly, partially or fully governed by the institutional existence and hence, institutions and their roles in people's lives as part of change has also been an element of discussion for this research. Also, changes in livelihoods or the way of living leads to certain livelihood outcomes that are shaped by people's lived experiences, which ultimately related to people's well-being.

White (2008, pp. 4) refers to well-being as "living a good life" by using indicators as "doing well" and "feeling good". According to White "doing well" refers to the living standard where material being and economic gains are listed, while "feeling good" refers to the subjective being reflected by how satisfied people are with their living. Well-being is generally an individual assessment of how satisfied they are with their lives. Hence, it is congruent to the concept of livelihoods.

Figure 2.4: Dimensions of Well-being



Source: White, 2008

The three dimensions of well being have been drawn where materials are represented by wealth, assets, income, skills and education and such; subjective reflects norms, values, people's choices and experiences, satisfaction level and such; and relational refers to individual relationship, family relationship, social groups and support, communication with the state and laws, social welfare etc. These three dimensions clearly define how a person's well-being is over the course of time. The three dimensions are congruent with the frameworks of livelihoods as well. Hence measuring livelihoods and well-being, require various dimensions than single indicator.

For this study livelihoods trajectories have been assessed using indicators i) women's roles, ii) women's livelihood, iii) well-being using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In this research, the linkages between commercial cardamom farming and livelihoods of women have been the main elements. In order to measure livelihoods, elements such as livelihood activities, income and earnings as well as the use of income has been assessed. To measure well being, an adapted well being index has been used to assess people's satisfaction level with the various activities of life which includes production of cash crop, a pertinent element of this research; satisfaction with health, personal relationships and more. These elements cover the three dimensions of well being; subjective, relational and material as drawn by White (2008). Understanding well being of people in relation to gender, socio-economic background and such elements has helped identify what it means to feel good and do good or vice versa.

In line to understanding livelihoods and well being of households and women engaged in cardamom farming, I have also used the gender and intersectionality as cross cutting ideas related to roles, power relations and societal structure, which has been elaborated in the following section (see section 2.5.1.).

2.5.1 Gender & Intersectionality Theories: Evolution, Dissonance and Reconstruction

Post Darwin and his contemporaries, prominent sociologist Max Weber brought issues about sex and gender in the rise. Weber's contemporaries, like Darwin and others, claimed that women were inferior and were the homemakers. Weber rebuked that due to the old fated pervasive patriarchal structures women were inferior to men and held less bargaining power within the household. Weber also believed that men were physically and academically powerful than women (Winkler, 2009). However, these sociologists only limit to revealing women's position within the households, therefore failing to explore women's contribution.

Changes in perceptions on the terms sex and gender has become rampant over the years, mainly through emerging feminist theories. Additionally, women's visibility in the economic front, particularly in the western societies was documented since the Great Depression in 1930s. When a mass of unemployment hit the western world, feminists practically set out to create social programs and policies to combat shocks (ibid, pp. 6). Also starting 1960s, post great depression, the second wave of feminism swiped the western world, through both theories and practice such as creating movement for the oppressed and liberating a society where women as mothers were regenerating their identities with various roles such as student, workers etc. The gradual paradigm shifts have brought a whole new swipe in the feminism debate.

Another interesting development in the sociological gender domain is the argument made by West and Zimmerman (1987) through their "doing gender" model. This model resonates that gender is something people do than who they are. While the "something we do" refers to the roles taken by an individual, the "something we are" refers to sex determined by the biological built of individual. West and Zimmerman (1987) emphasise that either male or female by sex, these individuals have to do gender to be recognized as claimed. In the present society the "doing gender" framework can be

associated with the type of activities taken up by the actors. For example, women are seen performing roles in various domains apart from household works and women have become active forces in the economy or have become visible in the labour market. This further demonstrates the idea of gender division of labour either within a household or outside, embracing the changes women have encountered over the years. However, the doing gender framework mutes the issue of intersectionality, which excludes a wide range of actors in the social world.

Judith Butler's theory of gender emphasised on activity of the actors resonating doing gender along with intersectionality (Butler, 1990). Butler resonates intersectionality by dealing with gender in terms of race, class, religion, culture at the micro level and differences associated between countries and regions at the macro level (ibid). This provides a notion that gender theories have evolved to address issues of intersectionality over the years. This has led to institutionalization of human development discourse to provide equal treatment to individuals of different backgrounds.

In line to Butler, another gender theorist Lorber (1994) claims gender to be a constructed social institution with emphasis that this societal institution has to be re-structured for equality so inequality could be fought. Lorber argues that existence of gender as a socially constructed institution initiates inequality, which affects work pattern at domestic and institutional level. This can actually be addressed by creating a gender just world through imposing equal rights and access to resources to all the individuals (Lorber, 2008; 1994). Lorber's idea of granting equal rights to address gender inequality is still a contemporary notion of the 21st century world, where gender has been interconnected with various aspects such as region, background, status, behaviour, institutional support and cultural exchange.

Since the late 1980s, various rebukes against the analysis of men or masculinity and women or femininity have appeared in the literature. The critiques have showered increasing claim that leadership and agencies indicates masculinity while compassion and tenderness indicates femininity (Choi & Fuqua, 2003; Hoffman & Borders, 2001; Gill, Stockard, Johnson & Williams, 1987). And men and women both are viable of showing the masculinity and femininity traits. For example, women from elite societies are exemplified as showing traits of masculinity as they hire poorer women as domestic

labours (Risman & Davis, 2012; Macdonald, 2011; Nakano, 2010). Masculinity in the patriarchal values positions men as the head of the household, the breadwinner of the family, a jobholder and someone absent from domestic work, where femininity is limited to women in the domestic space (Moisio, Arnould & Gentry, 2013; Pellow, 2003; Bourdieu, 1970). Hence, the debate of masculinity and femininity further emphasised that these are the casual constructs by the society and culture than biological instances and hence, are based on how an individual is raised (Haslanger, 1995; Millet, 1970). For example, women are raised under clauses that they act passively generating femininity and emotions as opposed to men who are raised through clauses that they act strong, masculine and unemotional. These behavioural trainings men and women make men less emotional and women less strong. In the contemporary society, these actions might have changed a little, however the practice on teaching women femininity and men masculinity are still ubiquitous, which requires research to understand whether changes have occurred depending on where women stand, particularly in different sectors. My research has built onto the aforementioned theories and ideas about gender roles and doing gender to add onto the contemporary society, which has been detailed in section 2.6.2.

2.5.2 Intersectionality Approach

Intersectionality discussions emerged between the 1980s and 1990s, as part of feminist theories with special attention to women of colour who were not only oppressed because they were women but also because they were of colour (Nakano, 1999). This term occurred as a rebuke to feminists and theorists who were focused on studying gender separately without including sexuality within the domain of gender (Ingraham, 1994). Intersectionality originated from the black feminist debate in the gender discourse (Davis, 2008). Using intersectionality approaches have become prominent as well as relevant in understanding today's development discourse because evidences show minorities particularly women, are deprived of choices (Verdery, 1994). The debate of intersectionality helps include people from different background as a subject matter for precise documentation of particular event and incidents.

Various feminist theorists have theorised gender as an element that intersected with other elements such as race, ethnicity, religion and others (Crenshaw, 1989; King, 1988; Lorde, 1984). Applying intersectionality theory in the gender discussions helps explore

people's experiences of oppression at various levels under various domains (Mohanty, 2003; Collins, 2000; Harris, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989). As of today sociological theorists, social scientists, developmentalists, gender experts and feminists set their discussions about gender and social differences without leaving one or the other. The issue of intersectionality has become a compulsion in identifying individualistic traits within a society or at the broader level. Because one society differs from another in regards to status, geographical locations, language, races, roles and access to resources, delving interconnectedness amongst the people of different sex apart from these differences is the current debate of feminism.

2.5.3 Linking Gender Theories with my Research

Taking the gender theories and intersectionality into consideration, this research has delved into existing gender issues regarding women's position in the household, the power relation women share as opposed to men or other family members within the household and outside in the community. My research which focuses on women's engagement in agriculture sector has fit well with the idea of doing gender by West and Zimmerman (1987) by looking into roles of men and women in the cardamom-farming sector and the reasons for picking such roles. My research has also been associated with roles of women in the commercial large cardamom farming, so I have indulged deeply on the issues of gender division of labour by taking contemporary ideas (see Risman & Davis, 2012; Macdonald, 2011; Nakano, 2010; Choi & Fuqua, 2003; Hoffman & Borders, 2001; Gill, et. al., 1987), on how roles are divided within the households, how are roles similar or different, and if the roles are based on masculinity and femininity basis. In a developing country like Nepal submerged with various ethnicity and background, intersectionality plays a major role, particularly in the rural domain where this study has been based.

I have taken gender as a solvent of social categories such as ethnicity, status of people as rich or poor, regions people come from which are also crucial elements of this study, thus conforming the use of intersectionality base for my research. Studies indicate that the contribution of rural women in the agricultural sector remains undocumented, underestimated, underpaid and invisible despite taking up huge responsibilities (FAO, 2013b; Yadava, 2013; Ahuja, 2013; Shiva, 1988). Although the composition of women in agriculture is relatively high, majority of women in South Asia work for fewer wages

compared to men (WB, 2007). Also, regarding roles women in rural Nepal engaged in agriculture sector have added responsibilities due to their obligations to fulfil both household and farm works (ibid). In the hills of Nepal, it was found that while men work 8 hours, women work 17 hours per day (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development [ICIMOD], 2008). The alarming number of working hours women undertake shows that roles are still gendered, which puts women to work more, carrying works labelled as feminine or household chores. The various roles women undertake are put under a same pot without differentiating because they are unpaid, despite the labour burden, which exceeds if compared to men (Ahuja, 2013). These roles are the impact of masculinity that liberated patriarchal structures of power and inequality where women were tagged as unpaid domestic workers and men were tagged as paid workers in the public domain (Gorman-Murray, 2013; 2008; Pellow, 2003). Hence, gender power relations were the emergence of pervasive patriarchy, which has brought in gender asymmetries; putting masculinity at the top and femininity at the bottom (Moisio, et. al., 2013), particularly by assessing the roles men and women carry within the household, community.

In line to these ideas of division of labour and power, I have interwoven gender theories, particularly the idea of “doing gender” by West and Zimmerman (1987). Digging the issues of women’s position in the household particularly in link to my objective two on livelihoods and well being, the roles women take up in the cardamom production along with their household work, has been a relatively new study matter for Nepal’s commercial agriculture sector. “Doing Gender” theory could help associate the link between women’s roles in agriculture sector, whether masculine or feminine, are based on choices or the pervasiveness of patriarchy. In simpler terms, the idea that gender is not what you are but what you do has been implied in building of this study.

Since one major thrust of adopting the notion of gender and intersectionality has been to understand the gender power relations within the household. Power defines the relationship between male and female in the social, economic, political or cultural spaces. Patriarchal structures have not failed tag men as “powerful” than women, in regards to economic opportunities, political leadership and social settings. The “powerful” here is indicated by economic opportunities, education, income, which if men had less than women would outburst physical or emotional violence causing role

and power-conflict (Logan, Walker, Jordan, & Leukefeld, 2006; Mahalik, Cournoyer, DeFranc, Cherry, & Napolitano, 1998; Blazina & Watkins 1996; Eagly & Karau, 1991; O'Neil, 1981; Goode, 1971). Using this notion, I have assessed women's roles and power relations in the export led agriculture, compared to men. It seemed essential to examine the situation of economically active men and women in the same spectrum, their earnings, power parity and complexities, if any, by deep rooting into in the household and societal structure.

Social institutions and structures also derive this division of labour and power relations, where patriarchal structures have evaded from the historical settings. Over the years, women's visibility in the economic, political and social spectrums has been shaped through institutional innovations and advocacies in support of women. Social institutions and structures are therefore, crucial components to study changes women undergo over the years. West and Zimmerman (1987) pinpoint that social interactions and institutions help reproduce masculine authority and produce changes. In line to these discussions, I have included social institutions as agencies of influential changes interweaving this concept with gender roles and power relations on women from different social backgrounds. I have assumed that roles and power parities can change over the time, given that there are institutions acting as change agencies. Hence, the combination of these elements, reflecting gender and intersectionality has played crucial role to dig out new emerging practices and concept in the gender domain, particularly on women's economic and social conditions in the commercial agriculture sector.

2.6 Women and Empowerment

The term empowerment holds various definitions ever since it was coined during the 1970s (Calvès, 2009). The use of this term originated in line to recognizing the "dominated" groups of people, which every society consists. And Brazilian theorist Paulo Freire (1974) recommended teaching the suppressed about the surroundings so they were alert about their choices and political situation. In the social science debate, Barbara Solomon's book titled "Black Empowerment: Social Work in Oppressed Communities" published in 1976 led to the use of this term widely (ibid). Ever since, the momentum in using this term became ubiquitous in the field of academia and research related to social work, psychology, health, education and community (Wong,

2003; Simon, 1994). Hence, post 1970s the use of term empowerment became highly evident in the development sector.

Sen and Grown (1987) in their book “Development Crises and Alternative Visions: Third World Women’s Perspective, strongly emphasise the situation of poor women and their encounters with poverty, debts, and food insecurity. The authors also emphasise the ways these poor women have been able to step out of poverty with the support of social institutions. Additionally these women have also been able to assemble with productive and progressive activities to prevent self and their families from vulnerabilities (Sen & Grown, 1987). In a nutshell, Sen and Grown (1987) argue during the contemporary time that women in the global south were not welcomed as a part of development process which led them to become more vulnerable. Hence, special attention was needed to provide “power” to these women. They argue that for women to be empowered a grass root approach has to be applied. And for women to be empowered, development methods and structural changes should focus on helping women get out of suppression that are defined by sex, status, race, ethnicity; educate these women to promote awareness regarding social, economic and political processes.

Post Sen and Grown, the 1990s witnessed more feminists and actors engaged in the process of forming and supporting “women’s empowerment.” Taking South Asia’s discourse, Srilatha Batliwala, an Indian researcher resonated women’s empowerment and its implications by challenging the patriarchal structure (Tandon, 2016). Batliwala’s book *Women’s Empowerment in South Asia: Concepts and Practices*, 1993 provides a series of suggestions for organisations working to advocate women’s empowerment in South Asia (Batliwala, 1993). In line with Batliwala, although contending to some extent, Naila Kabeer’s view on empowerment is driven by choices of individual. Kabeer defines empowerment as “the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them” (Kabeer, 1999, pp. 437). Kabeer stresses on three main elements for empowerment and they are resources, agency and achievements, which interweaves with each other. Resources imply wide range of reserves such as natural, physical, social, human resources or capacities of people, while agency imply individual’s stimulus towards carrying daily activities and the power within them (Kabeer, 2001). Kabeer’s ideology about choice originated with the fact that women have less or limited

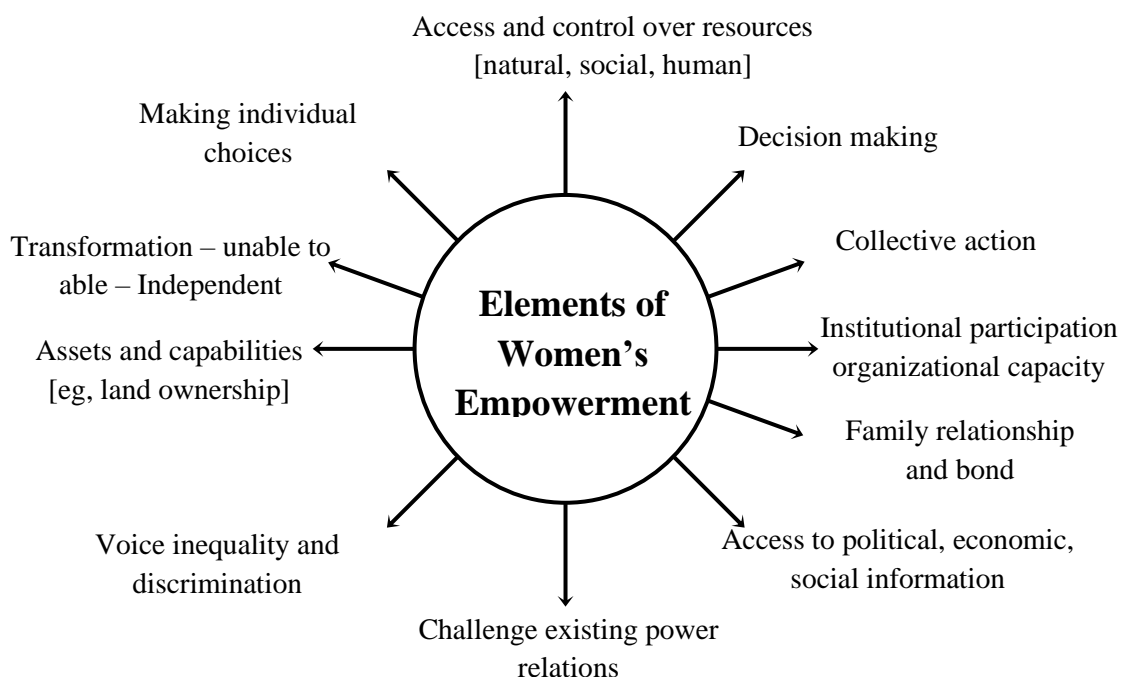
choice than men due to the existing power parity (ibid). Whether choices are governed by individual self or are the reflections of influence from others is a concern.

Likewise, Magdalena Leon (1997) and Jo Rowlands (1995) also initiate their debate on empowerment in the global south by associating power with empowerment. That is, “power” as being able to make individual choices; self-confidence; political power used by organization for the betterment of the individual (Calvès, 2009). Rowlands (1998) relates to power in empowerment as the power for movement caused by self-confidence or from within an individual instead of controlling over other power. Unlike Kabeer’s idea that empowerment acclaims to being able to make choices denied in the past, Rowland challenges this idea by witnessing empowerment as an individual’s enhancement of abilities over the years (Tandon, 2016). Interestingly, Rowland comes up with three levels of empowerment. First, is the individual empowerment, which lies at a personal level and experience of a woman. Second, is the collective or group empowerment, which reflects a group, engaged together to build their capacity and achieve a common goal, either supported through institutions or agencies. Third is the empowerment in close relationship with family members within the household, which derives a woman to either “revolt” or act against the odds in line to maintaining the relationship within the household (Rowlands, 1998). In the context of Nepal in particular, the means of women’s empowerment has been phenomenal and holds various dimensions. In the past the status of women was represented as those with lack of access to education, health care and those deprived of economic and social spaces (Mahat, 2003; Acharya 2001). Since taking care of households is considered one of the most important elements, the patriarchal setting puts women as home makers and isolates them from the formal economy (Acharya 2001). However, over the years, feminists from Nepal have shown concern on women’s rights and empowerment through access to economic opportunities, strengthening women’s capacity and participation through institutions and collective actions, equality and equal opportunities for women in various spectrums, access to credits, encouraging participation in formal sector besides home (Mahat, 2003; Acharya, 2001; Acharya & Acharya, 1997).

Although theorists might differ in setting their arguments, they all overlap elements of empowerment such as power, choices and individuality (see Figure 2.5). With the work

of these pioneering theorists, the definition and understanding of women’s empowerment have emerged vastly over the years, both in academia and development sectors. In the development sector, the World Bank defines empowerment as “enhancing the capacity of poor people to influence the state institutions that affect their lives, by strengthening their participation in political processes and local decision-making” (WB, 2001a, pp. 39). This definition, however, does not mention elements such as access to resources and power dynamics explicitly. Nevertheless, these elements could be overshadowed through the mention of providing assistance to the poor to “influence” agencies and institutions. In this line, Narayan (2002, pp. xviii) refers to empowerment as “the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives”. Narayan’s definition is influenced by Amartya Sen’s (1985) theories on agency and capabilities, which reflects assets and capabilities, along with power; control and institutions are the cores of empowerment. Institutional support and presence helps people or the “beneficiaries of empowerment” to exercise their actions smoothly (Alkire, 2008; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007). Most of the definitions emerged have commonalities in regards to the elements such as choices, power, resources, agencies and capabilities.

Figure 2.5: Elements of Women Empowerment from Literatures



Source: Author, 2015

In the current development discourse, the understanding of women's empowerment holds onto their ability to earn and make use of the earnings at the individual and household level (Rangel, 2005; Duflo, 2003; Thomas & Strauss, 1995; Thomas, 1994; 1990) and make decisions to create an impact at the individual and household level (Tandon, 2016). The fact that women transform to being able, and not just that but also make choices which were already there or not, become the current understanding of empowerment (Kabeer, 2001; Rowlands, 1995; Sen, 1992). Taking all these definitions into consideration, it is crucial to note that these concepts have emerged mostly through the efforts of institutions working towards women's empowerment. However, there are scant information on how rural women actually view empowerment as and how they define empowerment in their own terms. Nevertheless, defining empowerment can be contextual, depending on the rural setting, that is, geographical location and influence of political, social and economic policies – apart from other crucial social categories already mentioned by theorists such as gender, ethnicity and status. Hence, it seemed crucial to delve into these matters to understand the perceptions of rural women about empowerment particularly in association with agriculture, which has been covered by this research.

Evidences show that cash crops farming have empowered women. For example, Alufohai & Ojogho (2014) reveal in the African context that women have been actively engaged in farm level decision-making, which is an indicator of empowerment. Women capable of earning have the high potential to participate in decision-making regarding assets acquisition (Deere et. al., 2010). Increase in women's share of income provides them more power in the household (Johnson et. al., 2016; Johnson et. al., 2015; Deere et. al., 2010; Rangel, 2005; Duflo, 2003), which eventually leads to women investing on their children's education and health and managing households better (Bomuhangi, et. al., 2011; Duflo, 2003; Thomas & Strauss, 1995; Thomas, 1994). The varied evidence on decision-making suggests that women as cash crop decision makers have helped improve their well-being and household's livelihoods (Dimova & Gang, 2013). However, evidences also show that the decisions made by men and women in the commercial agriculture sector are gendered, as there is less visibility of women in decision making on marketing of the products (Erenstein & Rahut, 2014; Hill &

Vigneri, 2011). That is, men and women have different experiences of production and consumption in the commercial agriculture sector (Adenegan, et. al., 2013). Such evidences generates cash crops have high potential in progressing livelihoods of people, yet the issues of empowerment requires more scrutiny.

In Nepal, the production of cash crops such as large cardamom has had direct impact on employment opportunities for people. There are about 67,000 households relying in cardamom farming for livelihoods across Nepal (MoAD, APSD & ITPS, 2015; NTIS, 2010). This shows that the scope of cash crop production is high in Nepal in regards to economic activities of people. In spite of lack of recorded database on gender roles in cash crop farming in Nepal, global literature draws findings about men and women's active engagement, livelihood improvement and empowerment. There are very few researches covering issues around men and women's engagement in on and off farm household decision making, decision making on choosing to work outside of home and control over income relating to cash crop farming in Nepal. For example, previous researches suggest decision-making in agricultural households is different based on ethnicity, education and empowerment in the households (Gurung, 2009; Yadav, 2008; Sattaur, 1996; Acharya & Bennett, 1981). Some studies particularly focused on maternal health reveal factors such as education, employment, economic and social status are directly associated with women's decision making on health care (Adhikari, 2015; Acharya, Bell, Simkhada, Teijlingen & Regmi, 2010). These findings provide various indicators on women's empowerment. I use few indicators for the research, particularly in line to empowerment and agriculture, which will be discussed in detail in section 2.7.1.

2.6.1 Putting Empowerment Theory into Practice: Measuring Empowerment

The World Bank first identified empowerment as one of the key pillars of poverty reduction (WB, 2001b). Hence, measuring poverty was a consequence of measuring empowerment. If an individual is empowered, he or she gathers the ability to make choices, and these choices can be converted to desired goals through actions (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005). As claimed by Kabeer and her contemporaries (see Smulovitz, Walton & Petesch, 2003; Krishna, 2003; Malhotra, Schuler & Boender, 2002; Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1992; 1985), agencies and structure play a bigger role in influencing

empowerment of an individual. Agencies are the “capacity to aspire” or in simpler terms understood by the actor’s ability to express and make significant choices through various options (Appadurai, 2004). Hence, agencies and structures go hand in hand while measuring empowerment. It is agreed that measuring empowerment has been problematic and viewed as contested (Jupp & Ali, 2010), and this might be due to the context-based measurement put into practice.

Over the years various approaches have been used to measure empowerment through design of indicators, either institutionally or individually by researchers and academics from various disciplines globally. For example, Moser (2006) measured empowerment in relation to assets and capabilities of the poor in Columbia during the conflict period. Moser used quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather data on empowerment using indicators for individual, organizational and inter-organisational level. Likewise, Kroeker (1995) measured empowerment in relation to increasing access and control over resources and making decisions for a better life in Nicaragua. There are claims, as well that some of the used indicators are donor led and have to abide by donors framework, which might exclude many components (Pearce & Kay, 2008). The, use of survey based empowerment framework, particularly longitudinal survey, might also prove problematic over the course of time, due to changes that could take place between the years the survey could happen (Malhotra, et. al., 2002). This tells us that measuring empowerment is totally contextual where some might prove effective and some might be criticized.

To understand women’s empowerment, various elements ranging from inter and intra-household power relations, power dynamics within the society, institutional arrangements and innovation at the grassroots level, decision-making within and outside of the households are crucial along with other elements pinpointed by the previous theories. Hence a multidimensional approach is required to understand as stated in the figure.

Looking into the theories, I feel like the previous empowerment theories tools fail to associate working-women with their empowerment conditions at different levels. As women’s contribution in the economic front, with major participation in agriculture

sector is not a new tale, it is crucial to measure empowerment of women contributing to income or unpaid work. Since this research is about women's contribution in the agriculture sector, identifying tools that measure empowerment is pertinent. As a tool to measure empowerment of women in agriculture, one prominent instrument was Gender Empowerment Index (GEM). However, this index failed to methodologically produce disaggregated data on empowerment, excluding information by age, region and social differences (Alkire, Meinzen-Dick, Peterman, Quisumbing, Seymour & Vaz, 2013). In the agriculture backdrop and women's studies, tools covering issues on control over resources and institutions do not exist and that measurement of empowerment are limited in this sector (Alkire, et. al., 2013; Kishor & Subaiya, 2008; Alsop, Bertelsen, & Holland, 2006; Alkire, 2005; Narayan, 2005). Despite women representing 43 percent in agriculture labour force in the developing countries (FAO, 2011a), the lack of multidimensional tools to measure their status and empowerment shows how well development commits to recognising women. Indicators and indexes across the world that are set to measure gender equality and equity does not cover agriculture as a core (Alkire, et. al., 2013; Kishor & Subaiya, 2008; Malhotra & Schuler, 2005). This resonates how gender blind the policies in the agriculture sector is and why women's situation, despite being a part of agriculture sector, are underreported.

However, an attempt has been made to measure women's empowerment in the agriculture sector through the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI). The WEAI is a survey design set to measure women's empowerment, agency and inclusion of women in agriculture sector, including subsistence agriculture sector, labour market (Alkire, et. al., 2013). The one strength of WEAI is that it measures empowerment, agency and inclusion by taking data extrinsically from both men and women. The development of WEAI was an aftermath of Feed the Future Initiatives of the government of United States in the late 2010 and early 2011. The WEAI measures five main domains also called the 5Ds. They are i) decisions about agricultural production, ii) access to and decision-making power about productive resources, iii) control of use of income, iv) leadership in the community, and v) time allocation. Hence, WEAI covers a broad range of (Table 2.1) and adds more to the indicators and elements of empowerment such as agency, capabilities and others (see Narayan, Pritchett & Kapoor, 2009; Ibrahim & Alkire 2007; Alsop, et. al., 2006; Narayan 2005).

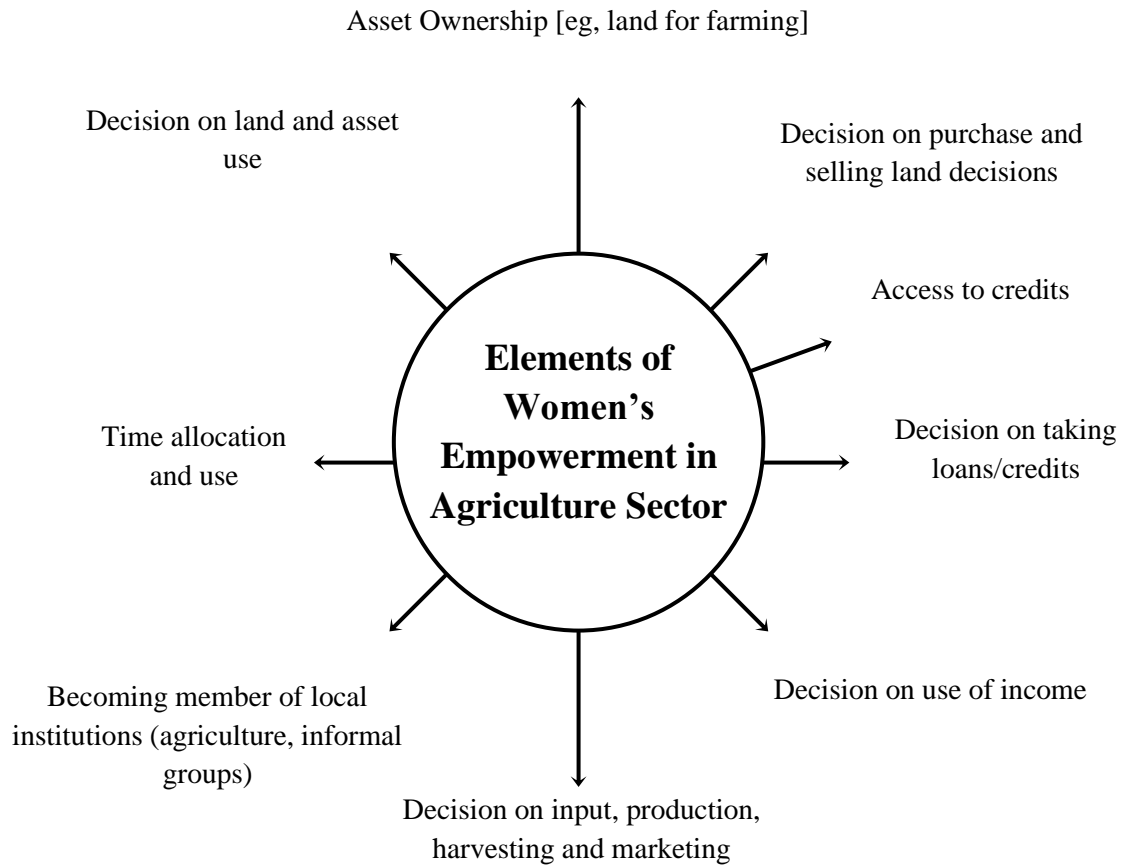
Table 2.1: The 5Ds of Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index

Production	Decisions	Income	Leadership	Time
Ownership of land and assets	Joint decision on food crop farming, cash crop farming, livestock raising, fish farming	Individual decision on the use of income earned	A part of organizations at the local level such as agriculture groups, water users groups, insurance, trading groups, credit and microfinance groups, women's groups, religious groups, charity, forest user groups and others.	Time allocation of the individual (male or female) in domestic and productive tasks – satisfaction with the time available and use
Decisions regarding the purchase, sale, or transfer of land and assets	Individual decisions on agriculture production, buying inputs, choosing crops, marketing harvest, choice to engage in livestock raising	Joint decision on the use of income earned		
Access to and decisions about credit				

Source: Adapted from Alkire, et. al., 2013; pp. 73-75

The multidimensional approach of WEAI helps understanding household's situation related to production, assets, income, leadership and more, further taking into consideration women's empowerment as a core. Hence, understanding the views of both men and women in regards to the 5Ds provides a base for understanding gender issues within the household. WEAI can be moulded contextually and implemented at various levels through adaptation; more so, it does not have to be empowerment issue at the agriculture sector (Alkire & Foster, 2011). This index digs meticulously into assessing women's empowerment as a result of existing household dynamics. The one limitation of WEAI might be that it is aimed at uncovering empowerment issues at the micro level or at the household level.

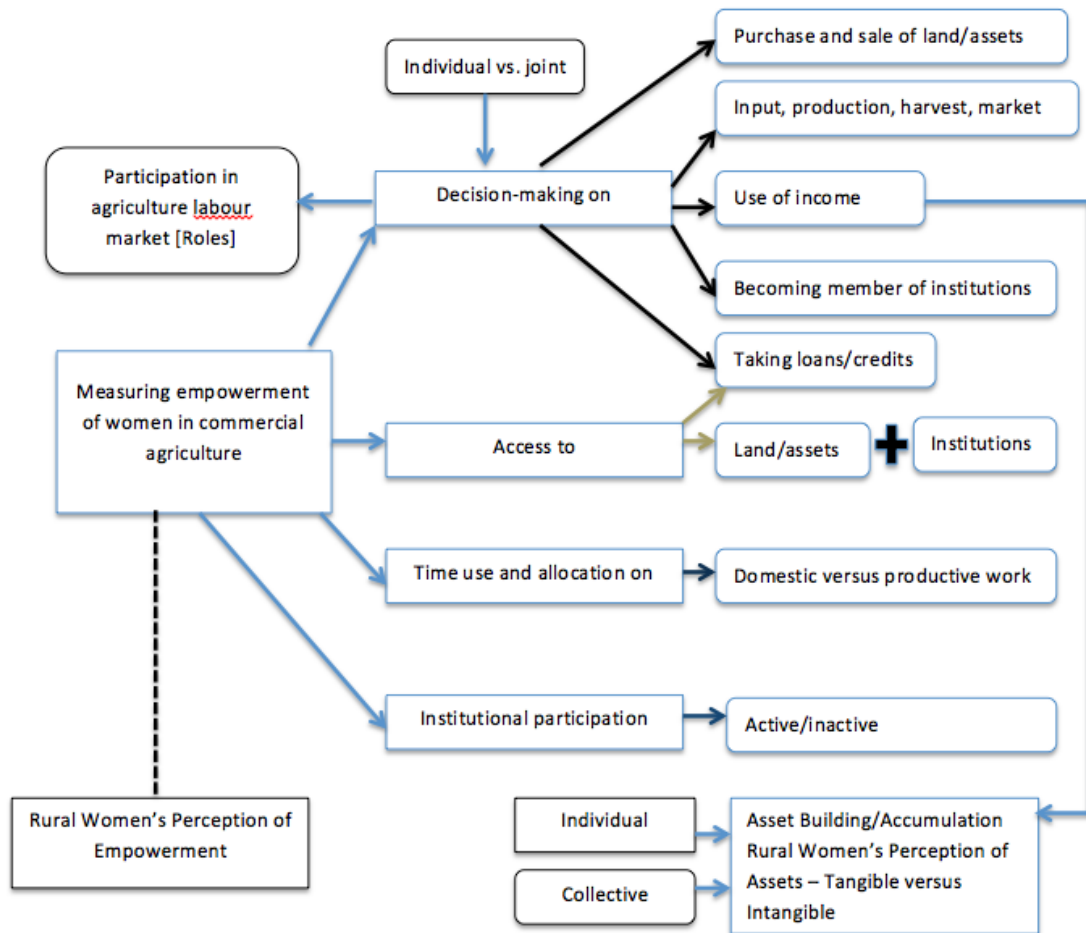
Figure 2.6: Elements of Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Sector by WEAI



Source: Author, 2015

To conduct this research, and in line with the empowerment theories, I have used some of indicators from WEAI, particularly on the decision making aspect by adapting this index to measure women’s empowerment in the commercial cardamom farming sector.

Figure 2.7: Empowerment Tool for this Research



Source: Author, 2015

First, I have attempted to understand the rural women's perception of empowerment to gather ideas on their take on empowerment. The dotted line in the figure represents what empowerment really means to women in a layman's term. I have measured women's empowerment in agriculture sector using indicators such as decision-making, access to resources, time use and allocation and institutional participation (see Figure 2.7). These indicators have been chosen based on the context mapping conducted in 2014 prior to the intense fieldwork. Under decision-making, I have measured individual and joint decisions made by men and women on issues such as purchase and selling of assets. In regards to farm level agriculture, decision on production, harvesting, marketing has been explored. I have also explored the relations between women in agriculture sector, their earnings and use of income.

2.7 Large Cardamom Farming and Livelihoods

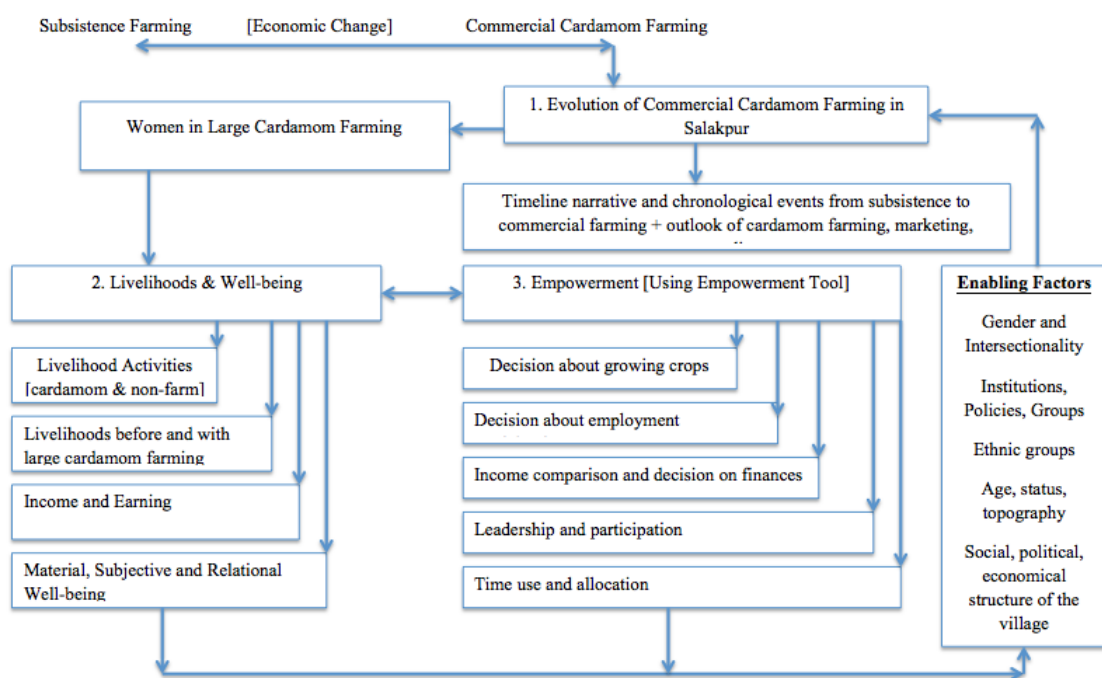
Cardamom production for export has led to improvement of livelihoods of farmers in the eastern hills of Nepal (KC & Upreti, 2017; KC, et. al., 2016). Cardamom farming has created economic spaces for many including women from different ethnic backgrounds, landless and marginalised people. Additionally, in Nepal women from marginalised community have been able to step out of poverty due to cardamom farming (KC, et. al., 2016). These findings resonate with previous studies that claim export led crops help improve livelihoods (Diao, Thurlow, Benin & Shenggen, 2012). The improvement could be due to the high revenue cash crops that can generate more income compared to traditional crops.

Being able to earn is the major determinant of poverty alleviation than other things like resources (Chant, 2010). This is because women tend to have cash in hand without creating dependency on men for living. The notion of cash in hand for women means being able to negotiate and bargain for investment (KC, et. al., 2016; Chant, 2010). Again women's access to income earning opportunities and other resources is directly proportional to their well-being. It leads to their satisfaction with life as they become able to invest on their children's education and health (Alam, 2012; Duflo, 2012; Quisumbing, 2003; Haddad, et. al., 1997). Similar has been the case with cardamom farming associated with women being able to earn through economic change, that is transferring roles from subsistence rice and maize farming to commercial cardamom farming (KC, et. al., 2016). Economic change has, therefore, led to change in livelihoods of the farmers in general. However, a detailed understanding on this debate is a necessity to understand the situation of household's dynamics and impact caused by economic change.

National level studies also suggest that commercial farming has helped address the issue of food security (Gautam, 2011; Sharma, 1997) and improve socio- economic conditions by graduating women from poverty (Dahal, et. al., 2007). Though there are less studies specifically relating commercial cardamom farming and food security, a recent study conducted in line to this broader research reveals that commercial cardamom farming in eastern hills have helped achieve food security of the poorer households and have helped marginalised women step out of poverty (KC, et. al., 2016). The marginalised women and households have been able to graduate from the poorest

level to a better situation. For richer families, the income has become an investment in adding assets, investment in children’s education away from the rural areas, investment in health and more. The notion that cash crops farming cannot only create economic space but a series of effect based impact is worth understanding. This means that being a part of the cardamom farming and being able to earn could directly link to being able to invest, make decisions, save money and contribute visibly to the labour force. Literature suggests that men inexorably take over income by excluding women when products are commercialized (Fischer & Qaim, 2012; WB, et. al., 2009; Doss, 2001; Lilja & Sanders, 1998; von Braun & Webb, 1989). This automatically benefits men against women as women do not have income in hand, neither do they have traditional farming skills, which could, at least address fulfil their food needs. However, in the commercial cardamom farming, men tend to hand over money to women and both men and women make decisions on investment starting from household food needs, children’s education and bigger investment depending on the product and sale (KC, et. al., 2016). In addition to these findings in-depth analysis has been revealed on joint decision making at the cardamom producing households, the use of income and other elements of decision-making through this dissertation.

2.8 Conceptual Framework Showing Interlink Between Commercial Cardamom Farming, Women’s Livelihoods and Empowerment



Source: Author, 2015

As a guide to my research, I have made use of three most important elements; evolution, livelihoods and well-being, and empowerment (Figure 2.8), in relations to transformation from subsistence farming to commercial farming (particularly, cash crops). First, the concept of evolution of agriculture in the research site has been elaborated using a timeline narrative. Second, livelihoods and well-being has been explored by digging deeper into people's engagement in cardamom farming and other livelihood activities, the income they earn and their satisfaction level with cardamom farming. Third, I have used the multidimensional approach of empowerment by using adapted indicators from Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), to measure factors affecting empowerment. Throughout this research, I have also associated agriculture practice, livelihoods and empowerment through commercial cardamom farming in line to resources and existing institutions and their functions.

Gender and Intersectionality has been the core of this framework. Women from various ethnic groups, social structures and status have been the primary agents of this research. Based on the conceptual framework in Figure 2.8, this research has explored the transition from subsistence to commercial farming leading to women's economic opportunities of constraints. First, in association with livelihoods and employment conditions, the roles of women and men in the cardamom farming have been explored. This has been crucial in order to identify where women stand in terms of various roles, such as marketing, receiving income after selling the product, which according to literatures have been solely men's job. Second, women's economic opportunities of constraints have been explored at a larger dimension using empowerment as an element. Referring to the empowerment tool framework (Figure 2.7), decision-making on, for example, use of income, working outside of home and such components have been explored. Also, women's accesses to resources, time use and allocation and institutional participation have been assessed to understand the degree of empowerment. In specific terms, empowerment has been looked into from various angles. First, aspect would be to understand what women think of empowerment through their engagement in export led large cardamom farming. Second, aspect would be to understand whether or not the income earned allows women to build assets and if they do would they think they are empowered.

In regards to livelihoods and well-being, the status of women have been explored based on their and their households economic activities by also comparing to their livelihoods before cardamom farming. This would help understand the livelihood trajectories and changes people have undergone before and after commercial cardamom farming. To measure well-being, a lickert scale on whether people are satisfied with their earnings, commercial farming has been used to see the degree of satisfaction. Additionally, institutions and institutional innovations are also crucial in determining cash crops and their flow.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter serves as a theoretical baseline to achieve the overall goal of this research. More so, since this research focuses on women in commercial agriculture, the concept of feminisation is introduced in line to its link in the Nepali context. The theory of evolution partakes centuries old history and is mostly associated with biological science. This research has used the concept of evolution in social science spectrum to understand evolution of agriculture, using a chronology on agricultural transition in the study site. The concept of evolution in agricultural front has been crucial to understand the what, why's and how's of agricultural transition (for example, subsistence to commercial farming) has taken place in a particular place at a particular event of time. The understanding of agricultural transition in the study site has created a flow in digging deeper into livelihoods, well-being and empowerment of women engaged in the commercial farming. These themes (livelihoods and well-being and empowerment) have been first defined to find a conceptual meaning and linked to this research. In regards to livelihoods and well-being, which is one component of this research, the concept revolves around the situation of women engaged in commercial cardamom farming and the changes they have undergone over the years due to shift in agricultural practices, particularly from subsistence to commercial farming. For well-being, an assessment on satisfaction level (subjective, relational and material) have been explored and put into perspectives of this research. Livelihoods has been measured using indicators such as the types of activities people are engaged in, the incomes they earn and the changes they have undergone over the years (eg, from rice farming to cardamom farming). Livelihoods have also been associated with gender roles and role picking by households engaged in commercial farming and how it differs by gender, ethnic groups and topography et cetera. The doing gender theory comes relevant in associating this

concept of roles and challenges women face in the front of agricultural transition. In regards to women's empowerment, the use of WEAI made it easier to understand the extent to which women have become empowered over the years. In all these elements, the presence of institutions and its importance in either supporting or not supporting the change in agriculture, livelihoods, well-being and empowerment has been discussed using a notion of institutional innovation. In the agricultural front, these concepts and theoretical bases have been related to the real situation of Nepal and proved worthy of use for this study.

There has been a dearth of literature on gender roles in commercial farming and well-being of those engaged in commercial farming from Nepalese perspective. Similar has been the case with understanding women's empowerment caused by commercial farming. The reviews of literature on the global discourse on livelihoods, well-being and empowerment, particularly in relation to commercial farming, have clearly indicated commercial farming has created income opportunities as well as work burden for women in the rural setting. The conceptual and theoretical framework (Figure 2.8) formed through the literature review in developing this research formulates a basis for preceding chapters for analysing the agricultural transition of the study site, women's livelihoods and well-being and women's empowerment in link to institutional innovation which could be a contribution in the commercial agriculture sector of Nepal.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a thorough methodology used to conduct this research. First, it sets a backdrop on the importance of social science research. Since this research applies mixed methods, this chapter sets a background on the use and implications of mixed [qualitative and quantitative] methods and the different paradigms each methods hold. An introduction to research sites with a rationale for choosing the particular site has been provided. Then a thorough research methodology including sampling strategy, unit of analysis, data collection methods and techniques, triangulation and validation, data analysis and ethical considerations have been presented in this research. This has been followed by limitations and drawback of the research and conclusion.

Research methodology refers to the entire process of solving a research problem systematically by following a scientific research pattern. Methodology incorporates issues such as aim of the research, existing knowledge and facts, the subject matter for study, researcher's roles and ways to acquire information of the set research objectives through previous experiences or new ways (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

It is believed that until the 1960s, quantitative approach was widely used research approach while qualitative approach became visible in the research domain post 1960s (Bryman, 2008). Quantitative research refers to data in the form of numeric and it is deductive in nature. This approach helps obtain answers to the questions such as how many? how much? how often? and to what degree? (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2002). Qualitative research provides meanings to people's thoughts, definition and description of events based on their reply and reaction to queries (KC, 2011). Qualitative research is inductive in nature and the use of this approach helps build theories and collect in-depth information to answer the questions that are in line to why things are happening and how are they happening (Oakley, 1999; Punch, 1998). Despite having their own nature, both qualitative and quantitative approaches complement each other in a research.

3.1 Social Science Research and Aim

Research in social sciences cover aspects of social life digging deeper into the human world and to capture the social reality (KC, 2011). In other words, the main aim of social sciences is to obtain social reality, which, unlike natural sciences, extracts human perceptions and thinking to provide meanings to the perception. Social research is an organized way of studying, extracting data, conceptualizing and analysing the social world to further generate evidences, theories and explanation through verification with the systems knowledge and creating interrelationship with the contemporary society (Blaxter, et. al., 2002). This research therefore, is a social research aiming to understand human relations with the social reality by taking commercial cash crop farming and people's engagement as a social reality.

3.2 Aims and Research Questions

The overall objective of this research was to understand the evolution of cardamom farming in line to agricultural transition and using a gender lens understand the linkages between women's engagement in the cardamom farming with their livelihoods, well-being and empowerment.

The main research question in line to this objective is;

How has commercial cardamom farming evolved in the face of agrarian change and how has the transition process linked to men and women's livelihoods, well-being and empowerment?

The specific objectives and related research questions:

Objective 1: Document the evolution of commercial cardamom farming in Salakpur.

- 1) How has commercial cardamom farming emerged in the study site and why has it been an important livelihood option?
- 2) How is the outlook of commercial cardamom farming in the study site and how have institutions (if existing) been facilitating the process?

Objective 2: Assess the linkages between women's engagement in commercial agriculture and their livelihoods.

- 1) What are the roles men and women from different status portray in commercial cardamom farming and how are the roles similar or different?
- 2) How has involvement in cardamom farming supported women from different ethnic backgrounds in fulfilling their daily needs and beyond, leading to their well-being and the well-being of their families?

Objective 3: Identify and explore the factors associated with women's empowerment, through participation and earning, in the cardamom-farming sector.

- 1) How do women engaged in commercial cardamom farming view the term empowerment? What factors empower women as commercial cardamom producers?
- 2) How does participation in cardamom farming and institutions empower or disempower women as contributors in the commercial sector?

3.3 Research Approach & Philosophical Foundation

Research methodology has been defined in various ways from both quantitative and qualitative angles. From the qualitative perspective, one-ideology states, while methodology is the way by which theories are applied in a research and methods are the tools for collecting evidences (Jackson, 2006). Likewise, from the quantitative spectrum research methodology is defined as the general approach adopted by the researcher to conduct their research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, pp. 14). That is, while evidences are generated and linked with theories in qualitative approach, mathematical models and hypothesis are proved or unproved in the quantitative approach. To sum up methodology is more a philosophical gist, which highlights the overall research. Methodologies consist of various elements as supporting factors such as extracting the research purpose; understanding the ways in which knowledge is set; systems knowledge; setting the research hypothesis or questions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Furthermore, methodologies are set by constructivism and positivism approaches, which is totally dependent on the nature of research and the position researcher decides to take.

Since this research has used mixed methods, both constructivist and positivist approaches have been used throughout, though the domination have been more from the former. Constructivist approach, in general, underlies ways to understand human

minds. Constructionists are interpreters of the actions and minds of humans or the study objects. Constructionists stick to the understanding that, “the truth is the most powerful, and sophisticated construction, which is informed and therefore construed out there” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Hence, ontologically constructionists value feelings, perceptions that come out of humans and their behaviours. Constructivism approach adapts to a methodological element called hermeneutics. Hermeneutics means interpreting human actions by delving into deeper conversations to assess their perception, feelings and experiences (Acharya, 2004; KC, 2011). Interpreting human minds, actions and behaviours leads to generating new theories (Neuman, 2003). There is a belief that, unlike positivists who believe in universal reality, there are many realities and every human’s actions and perceptions matter (KC, 2011). Hence, from the methodological instance constructivism, which qualifies qualitative approach, provides a metaphysical theoretical base underpinning matters that can be felt and understood.

Positivists rely on generalizing the objective reality than subjective reality, by defining the universe as a whole to create laws through the gathered evidences (Bryman, 2001). Positivists distance themselves from the object and the world and extract evidences in the form of figures and measurable elements (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Positivists, unlike constructivists, only stick to elements that are seen or that can be proved to conclude that there is only a single reality (KC, 2011). Hence, positivists are more inclined towards factual data, that is, a quantitative approach, further neglecting human minds and perceptions. Over the years, there have been debates and criticisms on methodological instances about whether one should take sides of a constructivist or a positivist. While positivists derive hypothetical testing to prove their universe constructivists use meticulous assessment of their study object to generate theories.

I have taken a feminist approach to conquer the objectives of this research. I wanted to seek attention here by stating that feminism and the revolution did not happen without any reason. It originated because women started experiencing the differences from their counterparts. I do not want to create a bias here by assuming that only women need to be studied, and since I believe in equality, I have brought men and women both, as my subject of study. However, as a woman I also understand the barriers that we are subject to face when we enter the economic sector. Till today, around the world, women have

been still bargaining about breaking the glass ceiling regarding opportunities and payments, in various platforms such as media, movies, business and corporate sectors, schools and agriculture. This shows that women are still backward with the exception of few who have made it to the top place as men. Hence, it seemed important to have women as a subject of study by delving deeper into their lives to bring out the lived experiences. The only way to help create change is by narrating the story of these women to the whole world. I have done this by using by applying a feminist perspective, and also by relying on my own lived experience as a woman. Although I come from an urban setting, the issues that I face as a woman, particularly when patriarchal rules are quite similar. I am a full time paid student, a wife, a mother, daughter from the households of all daughters and a daughter-in-law and if I intend to fail in one of these roles, it would affect my overall well-being. Since my parents have no sons, my sisters and I, are entitled to look after them. And the rest of the roles I have are self-explanatory. I cannot give up one role over the other but I can seek help from family members to maintain these relationships. I believe that patriarchy cannot only be the enemy but it is an obstacle when it tries to undermine the issues of equality. Again, by stating this I do not advocate for matriarchy instead of patriarchy but I advocate for equality between different sexes and their social background. Since one generation can understand another generation better, I believe that a woman can understand another woman better. In addition to this men can be the catalyst of support to make this better.

Hence, to carry out this research, primarily, qualitative approaches has been applied and secondarily quantitative data has been used for analysis, to understand the overall concept of commercialisation of cardamom farming, livelihoods of farmers, women's empowerment and the situation of local and national policies. Both inductive and deductive reasoning have been applied to conduct this research with the use of in-depth qualitative interviews and data collected from the household surveys. The mixture of inductive and deductive approach, or a mix of case studies with numerical data, helped acquire the holistic picture of "social world through the use of multiple lenses and perspectives" (Greene, Krieder & Mayer, 2005, pp. 275). The stories and cases gathered from the field were validated through the quantitative data, particularly numerical issues such as production of cardamom and quantity, the amount earned while the stories provided series of details and analysis. In particular, a specific village called Salakpur of Ilam was the main area of study due to its high-density production of large

cardamom. A series of qualitative field-work using tools such as Key Informant Interviews (KII), In-depth Interviews (IDI), Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Observation and Time Line Narrative were used between 2014 and 2017. The quantitative data has been acquired through a household survey conducted at the project level. A household survey was designed and implemented at the project level in 513 HHs between November and December 2015. However, this PhD research has only analysed the findings on three wards, which consists of 349 households of which 219 were cardamom farmers, as the three wards were the research sites for qualitative approach.

The qualitative interviews consisted of respondents from various categories: i) cardamom farmers, producers or traders within the village of various age, ethnicity, socio-economic status and gender, ii) major cardamom traders from in and outside of the village, iii) government officials.

3.4 Research Methods

3.4.1 Mixed-Methods Approach

Creswell, Shope, Plano Clark and Greene (2007, pp. 5) define mixed methods as follows:

Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems...

Mixed methods have now become a common approach to conduct research under various disciplines such as sociology, education, health and policy (Small, 2011). Over the course of time, scholars from interdisciplinary panels developed and promoted the application of mixed methods for research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). One major reason for adopting mixed methods by merging qualitative and quantitative data is to acquire a full picture of a problem through complementarity, comparisons, validation, triangulation and to capture the context from both grounds (Plano Clark, Garrett & Leslie-Pelecky, 2010). Mixed methods gives importance to both objective and

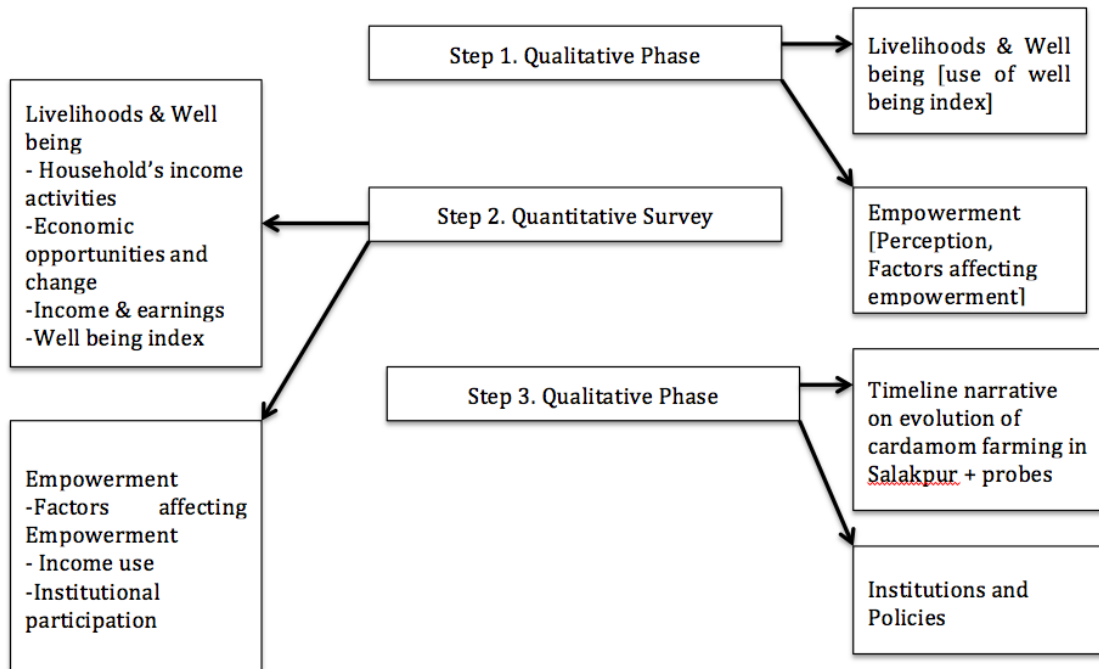
subjective knowledge derived from data (Morgan, 2007). In the sociological debate, instead of using either qualitative or quantitative methods or taking sides, the use of mixed methods limits side taking, thus promoting the application of combined methods (Sieber, 1973). The integration of qualitative fieldwork and quantitative survey would complement the methods.

Since this research explores and analyses elements like livelihoods and empowerment in the economic front, taking gender and intersectionality as the key, it is important to understand both numeric and syllabic aspects of these elements. Complementing qualitative with quantitative data collection methods and analysis is the core methodology used in this research. I have used qualitative approach first to understand women in the export-led agriculture drawing a base on their economic situation, livelihood activities and roles, position in the household, empowerment status and access to resources and overall agricultural transition and its links to livelihoods. This subjective measure is then processed further to create a quantitative survey design, making it context specific. The implementation of survey instrument in the study site has been followed by a qualitative phase, to find out missing elements or probe more on missed elements from the first phase of qualitative data. Hence, the research has a rich qualitative phase followed by quantitative survey as a complementarity approach. For example, in the first phase of the qualitative work, elements on economic transition were not covered. The timeline and history on how the particular research site became an export led cash crop producer from subsistence farming, was missing. This idea came from the survey instrument implementation when actors (respondents) starting expressing about the change. Hence, a qualitative fieldwork was conducted probing these issues and other emerging themes. This is similar to explanation by Plano Clark et. al., (2010) as they state that conducting qualitative research first and following up with quantitative means the researcher sets a background to create a survey instrument or programs. And conducting quantitative phase first and then qualitative would help establish themes to probe with the selective actors engaged within the thematic area.

For this research, specifically, I have used qualitative approach on a larger scale. The qualitative approach has been complemented by quantitative data for analysis. Since this research delves into elements like livelihoods, well-being and empowerment complementing the qualitative data by using the quantitative data added weight to this

research. I have used qualitative approach first to understand women in the export-led agriculture drawing a base on their economic situation, livelihood activities and roles, position in the household, empowerment status caused by the agricultural transition. This subjective measure has been complemented through a quantitative approach, which has incorporated similar themes as the qualitative data.

Figure 3.1: Elements Covered by Qualitative and Quantitative Methods



Source: Author, 2015

Figure 3.1 portrays the major elements covered by qualitative approach as a primary data collection method and quantitative approach as a complementing agent to conduct this research. All these elements have been used in complementarity to provide the subjective and objective analysis to the research. Prior to intense qualitative fieldwork, a context mapping was conducted for rapport building and familiarising with the context. The qualitative fieldwork underwent a rigorous research on the major elements of this research –i) livelihoods and wellbeing and ii) empowerment – of women engaged in commercial cardamom farming.

The livelihood of households has been traced by using quantitative and qualitative data, on livelihood options and trajectories due to agrarian change. With livelihood, the element well-being has been associated with an assumption that a better livelihood

would lead to better well-being. Hence, the assessment of well-being has been done by creating a well-being index and applying it in both qualitative and quantitative data collection phases. This index assessed three major elements of well-being, material, subjective and relational which was introduced by White in 2008. Material well-being refers to materialistic goods such as land, property, income etc. Subjective well-being refers to satisfaction with life, living standard and relational well being refers to relationship within the households and community. A well-being index in a form of likert scale has been applied in both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Similarly, in order to measure women's empowerment the WEAI has been applied for this research. Few indices on women's empowerment such as the Gender Gap Index (GII), Gender Development Index (GDI), Gender Inequality Index (GII) are limited to gathering data on gender equality rather than women's empowerment. Moreover, these indices only focus on women and exclude men (Yount, VanderEnde, Dodell & Cheong, 2016; Alkire et al. 2013; Kishor and Subaiya 2008; Alsop, Bertelsen, and Holland 2006; Alkire 2005). But the WEAI allows generating data from both men and women for which direct comparisons could be made after receiving the respondent's views.

3.4.2 Conceptual Framework

This study has investigated the evolution of cardamom farming, livelihoods and wellbeing and women's empowerment through cardamom farming (see Figure 2.8 in Chapter Two). To assess livelihoods, various livelihoods activities, income and earnings through cardamom farming were explored. Empowerment has been measured using various domain of WEAI, particularly linked to cash crop farming and earnings such as decision about growing crops, employment participation, leadership. Finally, and based on the final objective of this research, policies on cardamom and institutions were reviewed.

3.4.3 Research Site

This study has explored the eastern hills of Nepal to conduct this research. The eastern hill of Nepal is prominent for its production of various cash crops for export. In particular, for this research, Ilam district in the eastern hills has been chosen as the main study site. Ilam district is tagged as *queen of nature and mine of cash crops*, which falls

in province 1², by administrative division. Ilam is located 600 kilometres (km) towards the East of Kathmandu. This district has an area of 1,703 square kilometres (kms) with 64,502 households and population totalling 290,254 (CBS [Central Bureau of Statistics], 2012a). The main ethnic groups of Ilam are Rai followed by the Brahmin, Limbu, Tamang, Chhetri, and Dalit (CBS, 2012a).

Figure 3.2: Map of Nepal showing Ilam District



Source: Adapted from Googlemaps, 2015

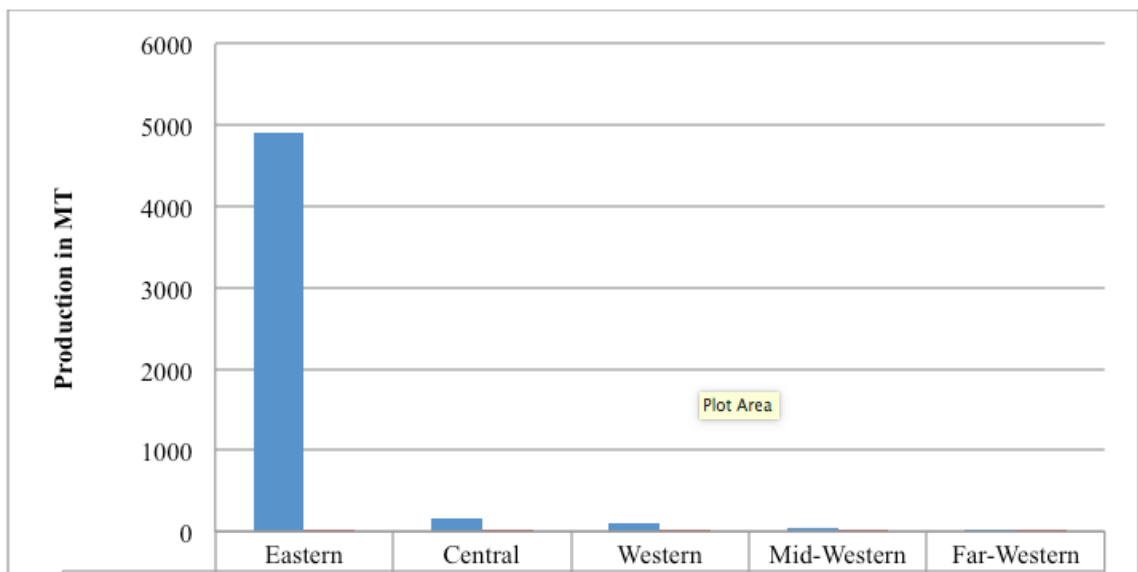
Ilam lies in the majestic hills in the eastern Nepal sharing borders with India. This district is a famous tourist destination attracting local, national and international tourists. This district holds a unique climatic condition, as it is foggy and misty all year round. Some VDCs in the northern heights of Ilam experience snowfall in winter.

Ilam was chosen for this study because this district is famous for production of varieties of cash crops and is well known for its most fertile soil (CBS, 2011a). The fertility of Ilam's soil is determined by its pH ranging from 4.5 to 5.5. The district has an altitude

² It is important to note that the new constitution of Nepal (2015) has replaced the five development regions into seven provinces brought effective from 2017. In the past there were 75 districts that have been replaced with 77 districts. Also there were municipalities and village development committees, which have been re-structured into 753 metropolitan cities, sub-metropolitan cities, municipalities and rural municipalities. Ilam lies in the eastern hills and falls in province 1 of the 7 provinces. According to this administrative arrangement, Ilam has been divided into four urban municipalities and six rural municipalities. Prior to this, according to the latest census of 2011, there were 46 Village Development Committees (VDCs) and three municipalities in Ilam.

ranging from 140 meters to 3636 meters from sea level. Cash crops such as ginger, red chillies, broom grass, large cardamom, potatoes, tea; fruit crops such as limes, oranges, kiwi; wide variety of vegetables and dairy products are produced in Ilam. Also Ilam district was the first ever district to introduce large cardamom for commercial farming during the nineteenth century, that is about one and half centuries back. The establishment of Cardamom Development Centre (CDC) in Fikkal of Suryodaya municipality in Ilam, during the 1975 promoted commercial cardamom farming across Ilam and its peripheral districts (NRPPD, 2012). Additionally, CDC initiated the establishment of nurseries for distribution of cardamom plants and providing extension and technical support.

Figure 3.3: Production of Large Cardamom by Region in Nepal³



Source: MoAD, 2015

Large cardamom has been the product of study of this research because Ilam’s production history of large cardamom for export led business has remained noticeable across Nepal, particularly in line with eastern region (see Figure 3.3). For instance, latest data records Nepal produces more than 4000 MT of large cardamom was produced in 2013 of which 95 percent is exported to Pakistan through Indian traders

³ Based on this administrative division, the researched district, Ilam falls under Province 1. A clear picture of this division has been provided in Table 1.3. in Chapter One.

(ITC, 2017; MoAD, 2014a). Of the total produce, Ilam’s share accounts to about 500 MT alone (ibid). Moreover, there have been no studies on linkages between commercial large cardamom production and livelihoods of people in Ilam, even though this district was the first to introduce cardamom. Women’s roles in the farms are visible, if we go to Ilam as tourists, particularly in the tea estates. Hence, this research found it crucial to understand the gender dynamics of commercial farming in Ilam.

The main research was conducted in Jirmale village (then VDC) of Rong Rural municipality (as of 2017) of Ilam district. Jirmale covers an area of 37.78 square kilometres and borders Darjeeling, India, which lies in the east (see Figure 3.4). The elevation of Jirmale ranges from 275 to 1,625 m. There are 1,074 households with total population of 5,191 in Jirmale with 2,681 men and 2,510 women according to the census of 2011 (CBS, 2012b)

Figure 3.4: Map showing Jirmale VDC of Ilam District



Source: Adapted from Googlemaps, 2015

Jirmale was purposively selected because of its high production of large cardamom. At the moment a village in Jirmale called Salakpur [also the main study site] has been producing large cardamom by substituting their subsistence crops like maize, rice and even vegetable farms. This trend of transition from subsistence to commercial farming in a span of ten to fifteen years has been prominent in Salakpur (KC, et al., 2016). The VDC profile of Jirmale (2010-2012) records production of 11.5 MT of large cardamom per annum in this VDC (CBS, 2012b). Also, Salakpur provides a deep-rooted picture

on the consequences of feminisation of agriculture caused by transition from subsistence to commercial farming. Salakpur is a majestic hill of Jirmale, Ilam bordered by Jhapa district and Mirik in India. There are about 349 households in Salakpur among which more than 300 households are engaged in cash crop production, particularly cardamom (KC, et. al., 2016). The elevation of Salakpur ranges from 300-1000 meters, which is lower compared to other villages of Ilam. This village was the major field station to conduct this research because of prominence cash crop production, women's active engagement as men, and changes in agricultural practices over the course of time and very low figure of out-migration for labour work.

Identifying Jirmale as a Study Site

Identifying Jirmale as a study area was not an easy task in the beginning. This is because since Ilam is well known for cardamom production, there was a pre-assumption that most of the rural and urban municipalities in Ilam produce cardamom in bigger volume. During the context mapping, when I had to identify areas producing higher density of cardamom, to understand the export led channels, many areas (then VDCs) were listed through an interaction with stakeholders and officials in Ilam. Hence, villages such as Chameta, Pyang, Nayabazar and Jirmale were the major sites identified. Apart from Jirmale, the three other villages once used to be largest producers of cardamom but completely lost their cardamom farms to disease and impacts of climatic conditions and hence, farmers were in the process of revival. Only Jirmale had been producing higher density of new species of cardamom without any infestation of disease. The old species of cardamom produced by other areas of Ilam are not planted in Jirmale due to its lower elevation and climatic variations. This journey led the researcher to pick Jirmale as the main study site, despite meticulously examining and reporting about the disease infestation and farmer's struggle for securing livelihoods.

Since this research delved into exploring different elements of employment and opportunities linked with commercial cardamom farming, Birtamode in Jhapa district was other study site. This is because Birtamode is the main market for large cardamom. This has been the only place where cardamom trading for export takes place. Birtamode is a municipality located in Jhapa district (see Figure 3.4). Jhapa district is a neighbouring district to Ilam and hence most of the produced goods in the eastern regions are exported or marketed through Birtamode.

Birtamode is a municipality in Jhapa district and also considered a major educational, health and industrial hub of eastern Nepal. The total area of Birtamode is 35.9 square kilometres with a population of 60,177 in total (CBS, 2012 a). Birtamode is a flat land in the Terai with extremely hot and humid weather in summer and dry and cool weather during winter. Also considered to have fertile soil, this area is famous for growing rice, mustard, tea and wheat. This is where most of the processing of harvested crops such as cleaning or ginger and cutting tails of cardamom take place. Hence, this site was important to collaborate and communicate with the stakeholder, particularly major traders, cardamom associations and leaders, people running and working in the processing centres.

Even though Ilam and Birtamode were the main study sites, Sikkim in India was a tertiary field for this research. Sikkim is a state in the northern part of India with Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet as its borders. From Salakpur in Ilam, it takes six hours to reach Gangtok. It is reflected that cardamom farming in Nepal was an influence of Sikkim, which is a major cardamom producer in India. In order to understand the linkages between cardamom trading and production between Sikkim and Nepal, a field visit was conducted in Sikkim. Two major places, Gangtok, the capital and Gezing district in the west of Sikkim were visited to seek information on cardamom farming, trade and export.

3.5 Sampling Strategy

Sampling strategies are the techniques used to generate data through designs and various approaches. Teddlie and Yu (2007) list four types of sampling procedures in behavioural and social sciences. They are probability sampling technique, purposive sampling technique, convenience sampling technique and mixed methods sampling technique. Probability samplings are mostly used during quantitative designs and surveys to seek representation or the extent to which the given sample represents the larger group. Purposive sampling is used mostly for qualitative research. Convenience sampling refers to samplings that can be drawn based on accessibility and sample's willingness to participate. A mixed method sampling uses both probability and purposive samplings as it uses both quantitative and qualitative research (ibid, pp. 77). For this research, a purposive sampling technique has been used for both qualitative and quantitative data collection approach. In the current research discourse purposive

sampling does not only imply qualitative but also implies a sampling representation in quantitative research (Patton, 2015, 2002, 1990; Chein, 1981). For this research, I used purposive sampling to identify the village producing high density of cardamom, which fulfilled the quantitative data collection front. Similarly, a purposive sampling was drawn to pick respondents based on various caste, ethnic groups and status engaged in cardamom farming in the qualitative front.

3.5.1 Sampling Frame – Qualitative Sampling and Participant Selection

A sample is a characteristic of larger population, which is selected to build inferences on the entire population. In qualitative research, sampling can be taken as the sources of data extraction to meet the objectives of the research (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg & McKibbin, 2015). Some researches have highlighted the use and importance of purposive sampling in conducting qualitative research (Patton, 2015, 2002; Kuzel, 1999; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Chein, 1981). According to Patton's clarification on purposeful sampling "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study" (pp. 264). Acquiring in-depth and rich information is a trait of qualitative research, which leads to delving deeper into the data to fulfil the purpose of this study.

To conduct a qualitative research, wards 1, 2 and 3, collectively called Salakpur were approached after a context mapping in Ilam. Through informal conversations with key people and leaders of village, a mapping of households producing cardamom in higher density, mediocre and smaller quantity was done. This was done by first making a list of all the households producing cardamom based on the quantity. The first priority of the qualitative research was reaching out to as many respondents (cardamom grower and non-grower), particularly women to draw as much information and attain the objectives of the research. Additionally, men producing cardamom were also approached to understand their views about cardamom farming and its role in their livelihoods; and explore the issues of gender and intersectionality in the export led cardamom farming. Furthermore, officials and stakeholders engaged in export led commercial farming were a part of this qualitative research.

Since there were two main phases of qualitative data collection, the process and type of actors (respondents) are illustrated in Table 3.1

Table 3.1: Sample Participants for Qualitative Research

Phases	1 st phase qualitative field [Year 2014/15] – In-depth data collection	2 nd Phase qualitative field [Year 2015/16] – Cross Check and Probing on the findings from previous field work
1.	Small holder cardamom cultivators [Male, Female of different ethnic backgrounds] in Salakpur	Small holder cardamom cultivators for additional information and probing
2.	Cardamom wage workers [could be both cultivators and non-cultivators without land]	Stakeholders meeting, Birtamode including Federation of large cardamom entrepreneurs association, cardamom traders association, owners of processing centre
3.	Local cardamom collectors [rural municipality level]	Women engaged in cardamom processing centre in Birtamode
4.	Regional cardamom traders in Birtamode	Individual interviews with president of large cardamom association and national traders of large cardamom and national level stakeholders
5.	Local level government officials in Ilam municipality, cardamom development centre and Salakpur	Leaders and members of cooperatives to identify the results of being a part of institutions
6.	Leaders of cardamom cooperative, agriculture cooperative and women's group, Dalit women's group	Additional small holder cardamom farmers with contemporary updates about cardamom in Salakpur
7.	Cardamom nursery owners in Salakpur of Rong rural municipality	Time Line Narrative with different generations on History of agricultural transition in Jirmale and development [infrastructure and
8.	Local cardamom farmer and political leaders in Gezing, Sikkim	Key information from the cardamom farmers
9.	Government officials in Gangtok, Sikkim	Key information from officials/ cardamom experts

Source: Field Survey, 2015

It was known from the context mapping that cardamom cultivators in Salakpur were smallholder farmers. This means that on average farmers had less than 1.5 ha of land for cultivation. The minimum land average was less than 0.25 ha. Hence, the stakeholders and government officials tagged these farmers as small holders. These farmers produced their own cardamom with a majority without formal trainings. Both men and women from different ethnic groups were smallholder farmers.

3.5.2 Sampling Frame – Quantitative Sampling and Participant Selection

For the quantitative research, as part of the project, a purposive sampling was applied in Jirmale because of its high density of cardamom production. There are 1069 households in Jirmale based on the VDC profile (CBS, 2012b). Since the aim of the overall research project were to explore and assess women's engagement in commercial farming compared with alternative forms of employment, if any, it became crucial to identify households growing cardamom as an export led cash crop. There is absence of a clear household list of cardamom grower and non-grower at the local level. The national statistical data only lists the number of household and population of Jirmale. Hence, during the first round of major qualitative research, it was identified that a village called Salakpur in Jirmale have been producing cardamom in high intensity while other villages had less or no cardamom.

Applying a purposive sampling technique, a census was conducted in Salakpur village that consisted of wards 1, 2, and 3. Salakpur produces high density of cardamom and holds 349 HHs, where a census was carried out. I took 349 HH, firstly to understand basic demographic situation of the village, identify the actual number of cardamom producers, major occupation of the households, status etc. Since the research was designed with a qualitative lead it became crucial to select fewer locations and discover indepth realities of the link between commercial cardamom farming, livelihoods and empowerment.

3.6 Unit of Analysis

To carry out objective one on evolution of cardamom farming, the households producing large cardamom have been the unit of analysis. Since this research delved into understanding the change process that took place in the agriculture front, analysing household's status of agriculture and process of change was the key.

For objective two and three, on livelihoods and empowerment, women and men as individuals were the unit of analysis. This is because this research aimed to understand women's role in the cardamom-farming sector and the status of their livelihoods and empowerment as an aftermath of economic change.

3.7 Data Collection Techniques

For this research, qualitative designs with quantitative survey were applied for data collection approaches were applied. The quantitative design was prepared by designing a survey instrument to gather data and maintain database on the subject. Furthermore, various techniques were employed to gather required data from the qualitative instance along with a quantitative survey. Apart from collecting primary data, secondary data sources were also reviewed for this research. The sources of secondary and primary data gathering techniques have been illustrated as follows;

3.7.1 Secondary Data Collection and Techniques

For both qualitative and quantitative approaches, secondary data collection was important to seek clarity on the subject matter, identify the gaps and add onto the previous researches. The following techniques were used to collect secondary sources of data collection.

Literature Review

A series of literatures were reviewed covering the broader elements of this research. Previous and contemporary researches and concepts built on feminisation, agricultural transition, commercialisation of agriculture, cash crops farming and livelihoods, rural labour markets, empowerment and assets; gender and intersectionality were reviewed to understand the context, gather loopholes and critically analyse the status. The literature review started at a very early phase of proposal writing. A wide range of national, regional and international peer reviewed journals, working papers, background studies and reports, academic research works, policy documents and policy briefs and dissertations were valuable source of literature for this research. Literatures were arranged based on the degree of their importance for the research to make the analysis process easier. This type of secondary data analysis paved pathways towards understanding the debate of feminisation of agriculture worldwide, comparing such understanding with the regional and local context. Literature reviews complemented the primary data collected throughout this research and helped add more information and complementary or critically analyse the previous findings.

Content Analysis of Newspapers and Magazines

Although most of the elements for this research were captured through wide range of literatures and reviews, a series of content analysis had to be done to seek information on large cardamom farming in Nepal. This has been done particularly in essence to its situation of farmers, production and yield, pricing, market, and cardamom farming, income and lives of the farmers. Such information was collected openly by following series of national newspapers such as The Kathmandu Post, The Himalayan Times between 2014 and 2016. Also, magazines produced by the local organizations dealing with cardamom production, promotion and marketing were reviewed. Since there are dearth of literature showing links between commercial cardamom farming and lives of producers, such information is frequently reported by newspapers in Nepal. Despite undergoing challenges to acquire ample information on the link between large cardamom farming and the lives of farmers, as the sources were limited to newspapers, this research has taken this notion as a gap to extract evidences on this issue.

Trade and Policy Review and Statistical Reports at the Government Level

Agricultural trade and policy documents from the national and local government levels were reviewed to understand the strategies around commercial farming in Nepal. Also trade and export channels and strategies were also reviewed to identify and assess how cash crops trading operate in Nepal. To gather information on large cardamom production and yield across Nepal and in the eastern hills, statistical reports on agriculture and production produced by the government and ministries were reviewed. A database was created after excerpting and compiling cardamom production and yield data from yearly reports. This was a crucial step since it would help identify the policy gaps reported and observed during the fieldwork and reviewing the policy and practice itself.

3.7.2 Primary Data Collection Techniques

Primary data collection was done using qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative approach covered and extracted thick data on the issue of evolution, livelihoods and well-being, and empowerment. The quantitative data was used to complement the qualitative findings, particularly on certain themes such as livelihoods, well-being and empowerment for the research.

i) Qualitative Data Collection Methods

During the three years of research phase, two major qualitative fieldworks were done prior to and in complementarity to the quantitative work. The first phase of qualitative work included techniques such as Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), In-depth Interviews (IDIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and informal individual and group conversations with wide range of actors, particularly cardamom producers, collectors, traders, nursery owners and few officials. The second qualitative fieldwork also included some in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and most importantly the timeline narrative of the study site on the issue of agricultural transition. The timeline narrative covered the changes agrarian transition has brought in the village. The timeline narrative also included the patterns of overall development including roads and infrastructure, schools, migration, security, electricity and water facilities in the study site.

Table 3.2: Qualitative Data Collection

Data Collection Tools	Number of Respondents
Key Informant Interviews	10
In-depth Interviews	36
Focus Group Discussions	7 FGDs [54 respondents]
Timeline Narrative	1 [5 respondents]

Source: Field Survey, 2015, 2016

Key Informant Interviews [KIIs]

KIIs were conducted with stakeholders from different disciplines to understand their viewpoint on the commercial cardamom farming in the study site. A list of potential informants was prepared during the context mapping and interviews were conducted during the first phase of the field. KII was done based on purposive sampling after marking experts with knowledge under the domain of cardamom labour market.

The key informants were from various backgrounds including officials in the cardamom sectors, traders, and local farmers witnessing various during cardamom farming from within the study site. These informants were selected based on the judgment of their roles in either promotion, production or support in the large cardamom sector.

In-depth Interviews [IDIs]

Interviews are not just tools but “a drill to screw deeper into the discursive structures that frame the worlds of subjects” (Barbour & Schostak, 2005, pp. 43). Interviews provide multifarious views of people through interaction to understand the social reality. Furthermore, interviews provide two major functions; description and exploration (ibid.). This means that interviews can pull out rich information through the respondents description of events and allows the researcher to explore deeper into the prospects. For this research, a total of 36 in-depth, face-to-face, interviews were conducted in Salakpur. The respondents were in majority women from different ethnic backgrounds engaged in cardamom farming as producers, nursery owners or wagers followed by male cardamom producers. The respondents were also cardamom non-growers engaged as wage workers in cardamom sector. In particular, the in-depth interview explored issues on the link between commercial cardamom farming and women’s livelihoods; factors affecting women’s empowerment and situation of women’s empowerment through their participation in commercial farming and their participation in institutions.

Through a purposive sampling method informants were selected based on their engagement in commercial cardamom farming and experiences in cardamom labour market. Of the 36 interviews conducted, 4 were men and the remaining were women. The reason for such difference in figure was since this research looks at women in particular the major targets were women. Most of the KIIs were males who were also cardamom farmers or promoters and they were key sources of information about various issues covered. Hence, for the IDIs women were the main source of information. The number 36 for interviews was not pre-determined but was a result of degree of information gathered.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

A total of 7 FGDs were conducted using purposive sampling informants were selected based on their gender, ethnicity, and their experience with cardamom farming (see Table 3.3).

The focus group presents a more natural environment than that of the individual interview because participants are influencing and influenced by others - just as they are in real life. (Casey & Kreuger, 2000, pp. 11).

FGDs also known by group interview do not dig as deep when generating information (Bryman, 2008) but what it does is create a group interaction on the subject matter, in which one gets reference from the other (Finch & Lewis, 2003). The group insights and interaction has been openly applied in data generation. In FGDs data generation takes place through interaction and opinions between people participating in the groups.

For this study, the discussions were carried out using semi-structured and open-ended questions set for the process. The main aim of FGDs for this research was to generate a larger portion and concentrated data driven by observational data to understand the subjective reality of the subject matter. FGDs covered elements of the research at a broader level representing larger policy debates on commercial cardamom farming, trading and exports; livelihood through economic opportunities and women's empowerment.

Table 3.3: Focus Group Discussions Sample⁴

Sampling	Number of FGDs
1) Women representing various ethnicity, age and status engaged in cardamom farming as producers or wagers	1
2) Both men and women involved in cash crop farming in Salakpur also representing various ethnicity, age, status and background	1
3) Men and women working in the cardamom nursery in the cardamom development centre in Fikkal VDC	1
4) Stakeholders in Salakpur including the representatives of cooperatives, women's groups, teachers and organizations	1
5) Groups of stakeholders, officials from the cardamom trading level based in Jhapa district	1
6) Women's group in Salakpur from different ethnic backgrounds [Institutional level]	1
7) Men and women engaged in harvesting of cardamom in Salakpur	1
Total	7

Source: Field Survey, 2015

⁴ The sampling was maintained by keeping into considerations the heterogeneity of respondents in terms of gender, ethnicity, age and backgrounds

Observation

For this research, unstructured observation was followed. Unstructured observation refers to the process in which the researcher has prior knowledge of the subject matter (Jones & Somekh, 2005, pp. 140) through exploration, previous interviews and records. The entire qualitative fieldwork initiated observation and field note taking in different time, place and situation. Observations were done at the household level while living with the families, during the harvest season. This helped understand the degree of involvement of men and women in taking up roles and compare the response of the participants with their practices. Observation helped triangulate the notion between information provided by people and their practices.

Timeline Narrative

This research also included timeline narrative. Timeline narrative is similar to conducting a life history of the informant. Life history is “an analysis of the social, historical, political and economic contexts of a life story...” (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995, pp. 125). Likewise, timeline narrative is also related to analysis of events in chronological order to understand a temporal situation in the given context. The only difference between life history and timeline narrative could be that one person narrates the former while the latter could be a narration from two or more people (Adriansen, 2012). For this research, timeline narrative was crucial to understand the time period from which agriculture transition began in the study site, Salakpur. The narrative also covered the issues of agricultural transition and economic change, to meet the objectives of the research. This process delved deeper into understanding political scenario, development of schools, shops, roads, electricity and water facilities; social dimensions in relation to migration, marriage, gender and education.

ii) Quantitative Data Collection Method - Questionnaire Survey

To cover the quantitative part, a census was run in 349 households, that is, the total households of Salakpur to deploy a quantitative survey. The survey questionnaire had two parts: Part A and Part B (see Table 3.4).

Part A consisted of information on household basic information, livelihoods activities, assets, education etc. Part A was administered to either male or female head of the

household present during the time of the survey. In this survey household head has been known by a self-acclaimed individual's response to "who is the household head". Likewise, Part B of the questionnaire was meant to interview both male and female of the household, whether they are spouses, which was the first priority, mother and son (able to respond to the questions) or any male or female members. Part B consisted of information on time use and daily work between men and women, decision making at the household level on various matters such as working outside of home, making use of income, having influence on decision making on harvesting, choosing labours, planting crops etc.

In households that were single headed, questionnaire (part A and B) was administered to the respondent available. Furthermore, some households had either male or female respondents present during the time of the survey, due to temporary migration, permanent migration and disabilities such as speech and hearing issues.

Table 3.4: Major Elements Covered in Part A and Part B of the Survey Questionnaire

Part A	Part B
Basic Household Information/Demographics	Well Being and Capabilities
Employment Conditions (production & wage employment, self-employment –farm & off farm, employment creation)	Decision Making within the Household (cash crop production & harvest, use of income etc)
Agricultural Production & Land; Livestock Farming	Gender & Empowerment (ownership of assets, purchase of assets)
Assets (vehicle & energy, household assets, wash & water, financial capital, credits & access to loans/remittances)	Time Use and Availability
Food Security	Participation and Leadership Voices
**Administered on either male or female respondent of the household	**Administered on both male or female respondent of the household

Source: Field Survey, 2015

3.8 Triangulation for Accuracy and Validation

Triangulation and validation of research findings are crucial parts of social science research to ascertain the types of information collected for further analysis. The use of quantitative data to support the dense qualitative information has occurred as triangulation within the methods. For instance, conducting qualitative research using

in-depth interviews followed by survey provided a base to see how certain the data obtained was. In addition few other techniques were applied in line to the above stated methods. For instance, taking the evidences back to the respondent also was a prominent validation technique. This helped confirm the interpretation of the data by using the respondents.

Attending conferences, workshops and events with the project team leader and the entire team, presenting at the university after fieldwork were also some process for triangulation through feedbacks and comments. Three major events were held for validation and triangulation throughout this process. One was with the stakeholders in Ilam Municipality, another, with stakeholders in Birtamode and the final one with stakeholders in study site Salakpur. Data collected at the field were verified also by using the national data, where applicable.

3.9 Data Analysis

First for the primary qualitative approach, the data was categorised and thematised in line to the objectives using excel. The data was coded manually using Mac. Quantitative data collected using tablets were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). After thematising tables were extracted from the data.

Although the data collection method has been mixed, the analysis for this research has been by large qualitative. That is, the quantitative data has been used to complement the qualitative information. This research aimed to attain the answers to “why”, “how” and “in what ways” to help construct the in-depth truth and subjective reality (Oakley, 1999) following a qualitative pattern. The evidences collected through quantitative data have helped provided answers to questions such as “how much,” “how many”, “what” (Blaxter, et. al., 2002) thus complementing the qualitative aspects of this research.

3.10 Research Ethics

Ethics in research refers to the principles that are based on protecting participants' identity, sensitivity and confidential matters. Ethics are the fundamental actions to be taken mandatorily into consideration. The major elements that require ethical considerations are that a research does not cause any harm to participants; consents are presented to the participants and they are informed about the research and if private and

sensitive issues are discussed, they are kept confidential (Bryman, 2008). Hence, ethical considerations are crucial in social sciences as it deals with understanding social life. Social life, includes human's perceptions, sensitive issues and behaviours which when revealed requires some form of protection.

For this research, strict guidelines on ethical considerations were followed throughout the study. A consent prepared was read to the participants before conducting the interview. A briefing was done on the objective of the research and the importance of participant's response. People's identities were given pseudonyms in first place in qualitative research. For quantitative data, codes were given for households and individuals. The participants were not forced to participate and were given prior notice that they could withdraw from the interview if they wished to. In sum, strict ethical standards were followed to conduct this research, particularly focusing on privacy and confidentiality, consents, honesty and integrity, positionality and politeness, time and space and respect of respondent's words and intellectuality. These elements were focused by being sensitive to gender and intersectionality as well.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed methodology used for this study. The research sites are Ilam as the main study site, followed by Birtamode and Sikkim. These sites were selected to meet the objectives of the research, mainly tracking the roles of cardamom farmers from farm level to the market and export. A mixed method was used for data collection. The research strategy held both desk based work and fieldwork. The qualitative work primarily included tools such as KIIs, IDIs, FGDs and Timeline Narrative. The quantitative work included a census survey Salakpur in Ilam producing large cardamom for export. Validation and triangulation of data has been done applying various techniques into both qualitative and quantitative research. Data analysis was done using cross over analysis to complement both the approaches of the research. Also ethical considerations have been set as a principle tool for this research to maintain a balance between quality data and overall research.

CHAPTER FOUR

Agricultural Transition from Subsistence to Commercial Farming– Evolution & Status of Cardamom Production in Salakpur

“If warriors like Balabhadra Kunwar and Bhimsen Thapa had let the British enter our country, our country would also be shining resplendently like the neighbouring India today. Look at us, we have no roads, no electricity till now.”

-Elderly Respondent, Salakpur

This chapter sets a backdrop of agricultural evolution in Salakpur starting from subsistence rice farming to commercial cardamom farming. The evolutionary perspective has been explained through the use of timeline narrative to seek answers to what transformed in the agriculture sector, how it transformed, and why and how households accepted and entered the transformation stage. This chapter acts as a prelude for the proceeding chapters on livelihoods (Chapter Five) and empowerment (Chapter Six). After setting a backdrop on evolution of cardamom farming, this chapter has provided an outlook of cardamom farming in Salakpur in relation to input, production and marketing. Additionally, this chapter has also explored on the policies and institutions governing large cardamom at the national and local level that are obtained through both literatures and respondent’s reflection.

4.1 Evolution of Cardamom Farming in Salakpur: A Timeline Narrative

The study site, Salakpur that is a part of Jirmale, has undergone a profound but gradual transition from subsistence to commercial farming systems in the past few centuries. It is also crucial to note that as of 2017, Jirmale VDC has been listed under Rong Rural Municipality. At the point of the research, there were 349 households in Salakpur as illustrated in Table 4.1.

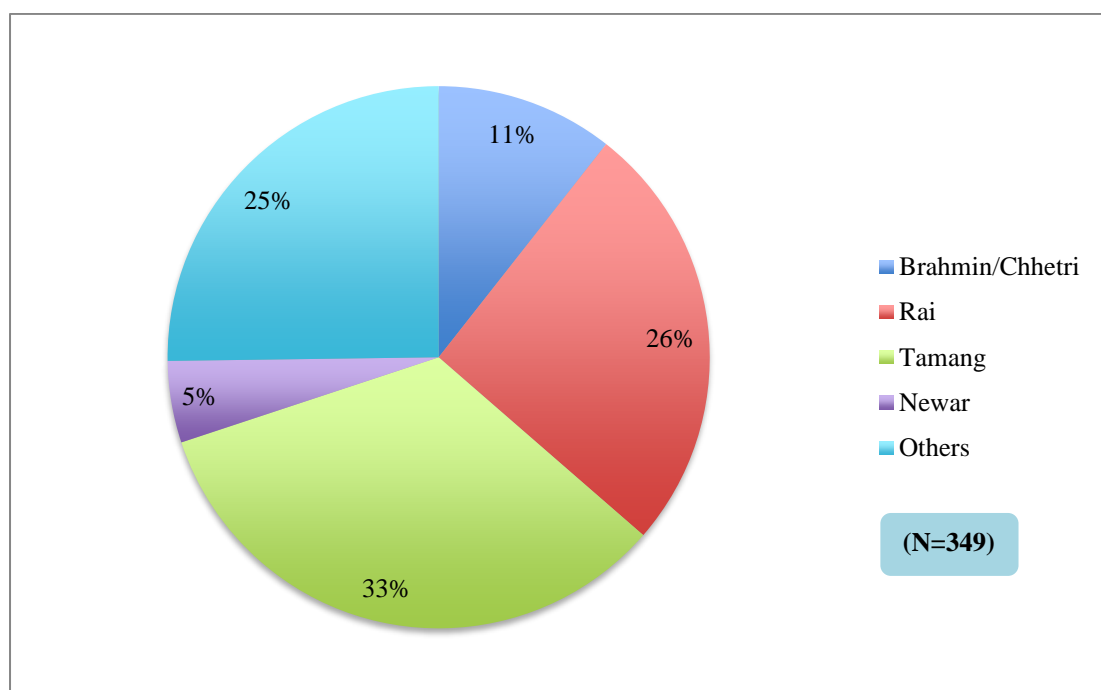
Table 4.1: Number of Households in each Ward

Wards	Number of Households
1	87
2	104
3	158
Total	349

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Since this research has delved into gender and intersectionality issues in relation to livelihood, understanding various ethnic groups residing in Salakpur was crucial. This is because it would help clarify the status of people from different ethnic groups in relation to cardamom farming. Ethnicity wise, the major group residing in Salakpur is Tamang followed by Rai and others (which include Dalits, Magars, Gurungs), Brahmin/Chhetris and Newars (See Figure 4.1). Salakpur has been known for Tamang inhabitants as original people while other ethnic groups migrated from different areas across Nepal and some from India.

Figure 4.1: Ethnic Status of the Households



Source: Field Survey, 2015

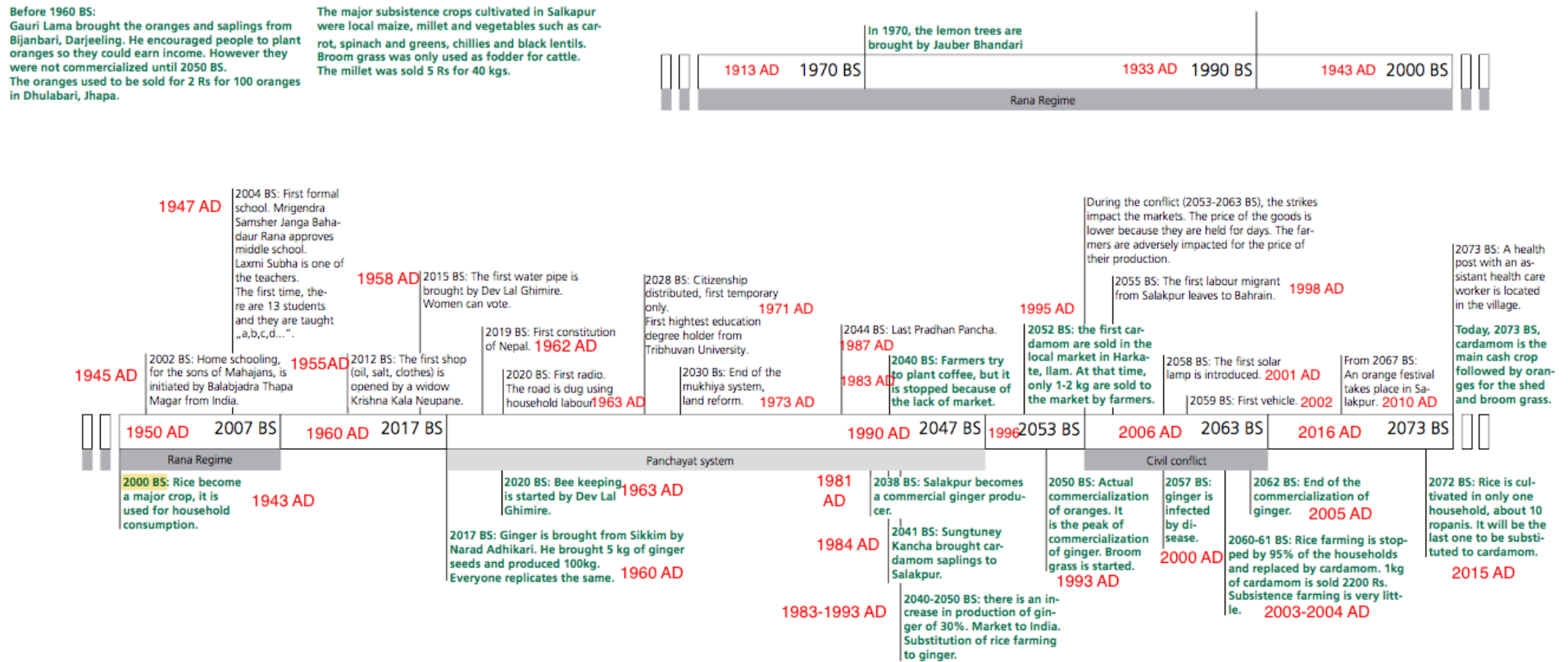
Also generally, based on the quantitative survey, a significant number of households were headed by women of different ethnic groups as reported by the respondents

themselves. Of the 349 households, respondents reported that 181 (15.9%) were male and female headed, 48 (13.7%) were female headed only and 120 (34%) were male headed⁵. A total of 1406 household members reside in 349 households of which 695 were female and 711 were males.

The evolution of agriculture, pertaining to cardamom farming in Salakpur shows an incredible shift over the years. The timeline narrative (Figure 4.2) depicts a series of events on crop introduction, plantation and marketing in Salakpur between 1945 and 2015 A.D. I could only extract information between the 70 years of time frame because I wanted to reach the cash crop farming trend, taking rice farming as the base. And since rice farming started around 1940s, this timeline has been chosen for research. Before 1903, when Nepal was still under the Rana regime (which ended in 1950), the major subsistence crop cultivated in Salakpur was local maize and millet. Households cultivated maize and millet in their fields or *khet* (farmland that requires intense and continuous irrigation). In the past, maize or millet were consumed for lunch, snack or dinner and also fed to cattle. Very few Indian and Nepali buyers crossing the border travelled to Salakpur to buy maize and millet. Each item were sold for NRs. 5 per 40 kgs. Millet was considered as a grain that would never go old or get damaged. People used to consume millet pudding (*dhedo*) with black lentils grown in their farms.

⁵The respondents were asked who headed the households and this data is based on their responses. Male headed refers to households that are mostly run by men in terms of decision-making, using income etc. Female headed refers to households that are mostly run by females. Both male and female headed households refers to households where men and women share equal powers within the households.

Figure 4.2: Agricultural Transition and Evolution of Large Cardamom Farming in Salakpur



Source: Field Survey, 2015

The timeline (Figure 4.2), in general, reveals history of agricultural change from subsistence rice and maize farms to commercial ginger and cardamom farms. The story of agriculture and crops in Salakpur shows that transition has been a gradual process. During the 1900s rice was a major subsistence crop. Alongside, households produced vegetables such as carrot, spinach, chillies and black lentils for subsistence consumption. Also, fruits such as oranges and limes were and still are produced in smaller or larger quantity in Salakpur. Oranges were introduced in 1903, when rice farming was gaining prominence. Today, oranges are considered one of the top crops after large cardamom. Additionally, limes were introduced in 1913. People planted the aforementioned fruits and vegetables in their *bari* (vegetable garden requiring less water where the land is mostly rain fed).

In 1903 oranges was brought by a farmer named Gauri Lama from Bijanbari, Darjeeling, India. Mr. Lama distributed the oranges saplings to other households in Salakpur without taking any profit. He encouraged people to plant oranges so they could earn by selling it. Also it took time for people to understand the benefits of producing oranges, actual commercialisation of oranges began only around 1993. As an elderly farmer reflected,

“The delay in this process [of orange commercialisation] was because people were not educated and they were not informed about market. They had no means of information such as radio...Nepal was still under strict Rana regime, which forbade right to education and right to information. Only the Rana’s made benefits out of everything.” [Timeline Narrative, Elderly Male, 76]

During that time, farmers loaded their oranges in horses or donkeys to sell it in Dhulabari town of Jhapa district. At that time, households sold 100 oranges for NRs. 2. The market was local and hence the products did not reach India. It would take four hours to reach Dhulabari during that time. At this time, it takes less than two hours by local transportation to reach Dhulabari. Also, Salakpur’s oranges are already sold to traders from Nepal and India on the basis of number of trees in the orchards. For the past six years, people have been organizing a one day orange festival in Salakpur inviting more than thousand tourists from across the border and within Nepal in a day. Additionally, in the past one decade, the production of oranges has been declining in

Salakpur. This has been due to disease and pests and climatic conditions such as hail storms and excessive rain. In 2015, there was no orange festival due to massive decline in production.

Another major product sold by households in Salakpur at present is broom grass. During the 1900s broom grass was not considered for selling and was used as fodder for cattle. It was around the same time when farmers started making brooms out of broom grass and started selling it along with oranges for very cheap price. Farmers in Salakpur realised the value of broom grass only around 1993, when ginger was at its peak of commercialisation.

Besides oranges and broom grass, rice farming became a major crop for households in 1943. Prior to that few households produced rice. The one reason has been due to lack of irrigation sources for rice fields. As Salakpur falls in the hilly area with tropical climate, scarcity of water is evident in most of the households. Rice was consumed by households but mostly stored for use during festivals such as *Dashain, Tihar and Lhosar*.

“We used to harvest rice and store it in a basket made up of bamboo. Some households used to buy rice from us during festivals like Dashain to feed their guests. Rice was valuable then so we stored it to be consumed during special occasions. Other days we ate maize, porridge and vegetables.” [Timeline Narrative, Elderly Male, 87]

More than 90 percent of households stopped rice farming in 2003/2004 to substitute with cardamom farming. And by 2015, rice farming no longer existed in Salakpur. For people in Salakpur, giving up rice farming was not easy in the first place. This is because rice being a staple crop, they would have to rely on buying rice once they practice growing other crops. But there were also difficulties associated with rice farming such as requirement for intense labour and excessive amount of water for irrigation. People in Salakpur did not give up rice farming at once but the process was gradual. For instance, when rice farming was still the major crop, *Narad Adhikari*, a popular figure introduced ginger during the 1960s. Mr. Adhikari brought 5 kgs of ginger seed from Sikkim, India and produced 100 kgs after sowing the seeds. Since then, every

household replicated ginger plantation in their farms without knowing that Salakpur would be producing ginger as a commercial crop. In the beginning, the return from ginger was not satisfactory. Household producing this crop had to travel to the nearby market to sell their product. Since there were no roads for vehicles, the main means of transportation were horses and donkeys.

By 1981 Salakpur became a commercial ginger producer where the ratio between ginger and rice production reached 5:2. The production increased by 30 percent between 1983 and 1993, which has been considered high in percentage by the villagers.

“People planted rice in this village because they had no alternatives in the past. But planting rice was difficult. Only my generation knows it better. We had to struggle for water to irrigate the rice farms. Also compared to ginger, rice required intensive work both during plantation and harvest. People made good money by selling ginger.” [Timeline Narrative, Elderly Male, 90]

The value of ginger was high and the export market India generated huge demand for this commodity. This pushed the farmers to cultivate more ginger for three main reasons; i) it was a sole competition among the households to make money than rely on subsistence rice farming, ii) ginger was easy to plant and harvest compared to rice as it required no excessive irrigation and labour need like rice, iii) ginger was easily sellable due to its demand in India and the Nepal government listed this commodity as a top crop for export. For example, while adoption ginger farming, people showed less interest in rice and vegetable farming. People’s livelihoods changed as they took up with cash crops against subsistence rice farming. Their working pattern changed, as they did not have to rely on water and rainfall for rice plantation. Also, households became more aware of markets and export related crops through their relationship with local/regional ginger traders. There was a whole wave of economic change in Salakpur as households started earning money by selling their product.

Ginger was produced commercially between 1981 and 2005 but farmers noticed decline in production due to disease infliction during the early 2000. By 2005, most households had very less or no ginger. During the time of the research (in 2016), few households, particularly the Rai community plant ginger in a very small area for religious purpose.

Also, in the past, in official and legal terms, farmers sold ginger to Siliguri, India through the Nepal-India border, Kakadvitta, Jhapa by paying taxes. However, there were also unofficial pathways to enter India to avoid paying taxes.

Between 1981 and 2005, when ginger was considered the main commercial cash crop in Salakpur, crops such as coffee and cardamom was introduced in 1983 and 1984 respectively. Although farmers saw good harvest of coffee due to proper climatic conditions of Salakpur, they realised within few years coffee did not have a market. Indian and Nepali traders in Birtamode, Jhapa did not show much interest in buying coffee from the locals due to lack of demand. The actual coffee traders were based in Kavre district near Kathmandu. Therefore, trading process with them was technically and logistically challenging. During the time of the research, very few households had one or two coffee plants in their garden. These households, however, lack knowledge about coffee and ways to consume it. Hence, coffee did not progress as a cash crop despite having a high potential in terms of production.

While ginger was the main livelihood option of people of Salakpur, in 1984, a villager called *Sungtuney Kancha*, brought cardamom sapling from Darjeeling. Of the many variety of cardamom found in Nepal, this one was named *Salakpurey* after its introduction in Salakpur. During that time, Darjeeling was going through political unrest and Nepalese in Darjeeling migrated back to Nepal. In that process, the villager who settled in Salakpur planted cardamom in their vegetable garden. After few years, locals started replicating cardamom plantation for trial and error. In 1995, the first batch of cardamom from Salakpur was sold in a local market in Harkate village of Ilam district. Harkate is 2 to 3 hours away from Salakpur. During this time farmers produced on an average of 1-2 kgs of cardamom for selling. Before this cardamom was used for household consumption or was gifted to relatives during festivals.

By 2003, cardamom commercialisation had taken over Salakpur. By this time more than 95 percent of farmers had substituted their rice farms (*khet*), vegetable farms or farms where they produced ginger in the past (*bari*), with cardamom and oranges as shed for cardamom. Farmers had less knowledge on whether cardamom variety they planted in the rice farms would also bear fruits. It took about 3 to 4 years for the farmers to realise and experiment this process. Growing ginger would reduce the quality of soil.

After cardamom started, there was less ploughing and digging of the farms. In comparison to cardamom, ginger required twice and thrice as much labour and time.

This experimentation and transition took place when farmers foresaw ginger farming was not sustainable. They had to find alternatives to explore new ways to maintain and sustain their livelihoods. For these farmers, going back to rice farming was not a willing option. This was because rice plantation was labour intensive with less return compared to cash crops such as ginger. Post ginger, for the past 13 years, Salakpur has been producing cardamom in a mass production gaining high revenue. Interestingly, the transition has become so intense that there are very few households who have a vegetable garden of their own. Almost all the households in Salakpur changed their livelihood status to cardamom (and oranges in some cases) farmers from ginger farmers. Majority of households have given up with subsistence vegetable farming for cardamom. The major reasons for such transition as reflected by the respondents have been; i) disease infliction in ginger farms and need for alternative livelihood strategy (also taken as replication from other households practicing cardamom farming), ii) cardamom farming being easier than ginger farming with one harvest per season, iii) good revenue from cardamom compared to rice or ginger. For example, (at the time of the research, the year 2016), 1 kg of cardamom cost NRs. 2200. The return from cardamom has been higher than the return from ginger.

“If ginger did not become extinct due to disease, who knows you could have seen us producing ginger instead of cardamom today. It is all about fate and what god wants. Cardamom came after ginger and it is better than ginger. If it is not one thing, it is another.” [Timeline Narrative, Elderly Male, 90]

Transiting from major rice farming to ginger and then to cardamom has been viewed as destiny of the farmers. If ginger had not become extinct there were possibilities that Salakpur would still be producing this crop as their livelihood option. Since ginger did not survive long, the transition had to happen and cardamom became a favourable crop during the time of crisis in ginger.

In regards to cardamom, the villages in other parts of Ilam have experienced massive diseases infestation in cardamom farms. But Salakpur has set an example of production

without disease with its new variety of cardamom called “*Pakhe or Salakpurey Alaichi*”. This particular variety of cardamom does not require sheds of tall trees such as *utis* or *Alnus Nepalensis*. Oranges, which were already a part of Salakpur since 1903, has become the most prominent shed for cardamom. Additionally, oranges have also become a commercial product along with cardamom. Along with the production of cardamom as cash crop, farmers in Salakpur have also set a benchmark in selling their nursery saplings across Nepal.

In selling the cardamom, the local traders, also cardamom farmers, in Salakpur collect the cardamom from the farmers who produce less than 10 kgs dry or raw cardamom. Those producing more than 10 kgs go to the market themselves. The one and only market for these farmers and local traders is Birtamode in Jhapa district, which is three hours away from Salakpur by vehicle. In Birtamode, the Indian origin traders and few Nepali traders buy cardamom from the farmers or local traders. Price is determined on a daily basis and the means of communication takes place every day with Indian traders based in Delhi and Calcutta.

Salakpur at present is known as a production hub of large cardamom or “black gold” across Nepal and in India. Besides large cardamom being a major crop for livelihoods, at present people in Salakpur produce other crops such as broom grass and oranges. Also, people’s narrations reveal that the transition has led to significant economic and social changes in the lives of people. More on livelihoods and has been elaborated in upcoming chapter (Chapter Five).

4.2 Outlook of Cardamom Production in Salakpur

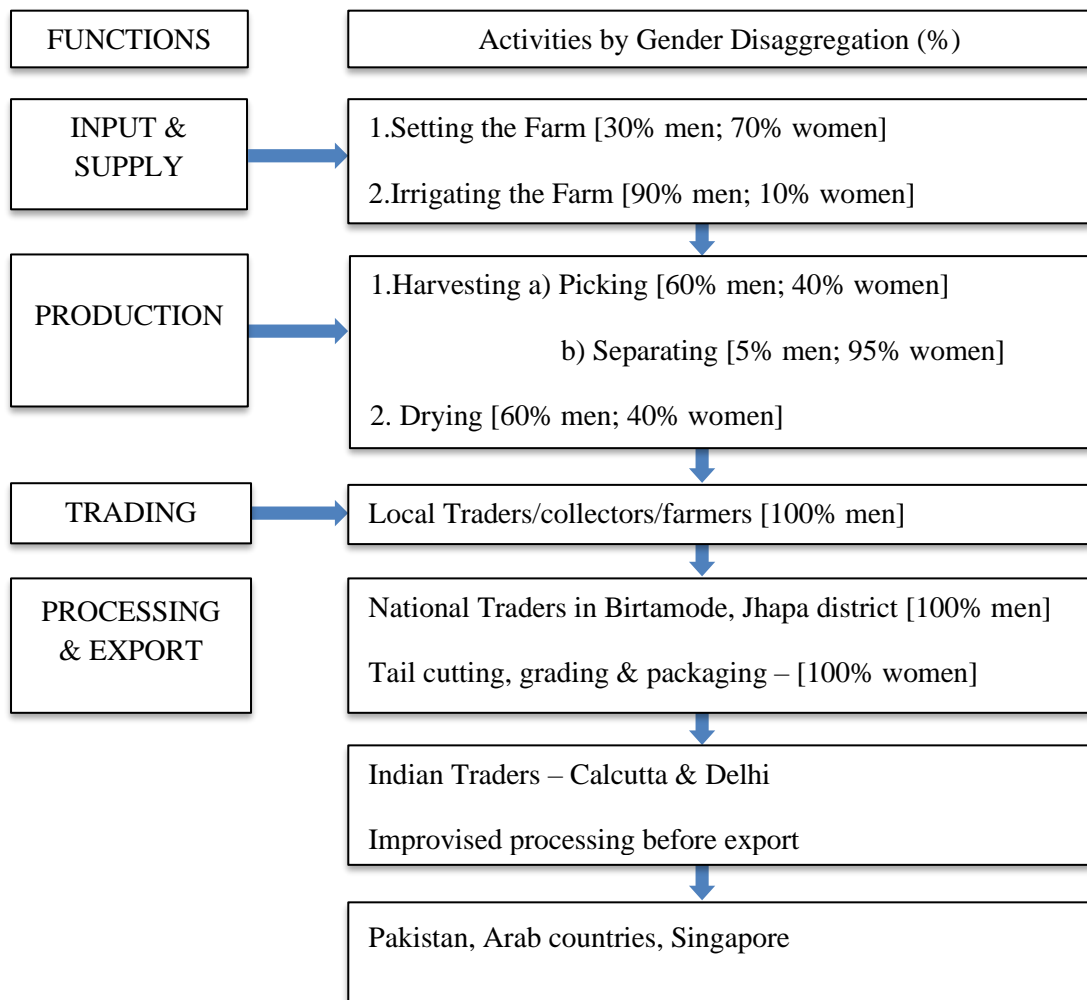
Today Salakpur is a major hub for large cardamom production. This variety of cardamom called “Salakpurey” has reached many villages across Nepal.

“The demand for Salakpurey cardamom saplings has gone high in the past five years. Farmers from across Nepal have come to buy saplings from us...trucks and pickups are loaded with cardamom plants to be taken to other villages...” [KII, Nursery Owner, Male, Salakpur]

Large cardamom production in Salakpur goes from field level work or input to production, processing, trading and export. Various actors, both men and women, are engaged in each step to complete tasks in the production (see Figure 4.3).

In line to the roles of different actors in production of large cardamom, a recent study, also a part of this broader PhD research, points out that both men and women reported of having equal roles in cardamom farming (KC, et. al., 2016). However, the type of work could be similar or different. For example, before cardamom gets to the market, a series of work has to be done. The work pattern is seen as “setting the farms for plantation, planting the saplings and weeding the farm; watering or irrigating the farms; harvesting--picking the flower-bearing cardamom fruits and separating the fruits from the flowers; drying the cardamom by putting the separated flower into the traditional dryer; cutting the tail of the dried cardamom when required and marketing of the product with traders” (ibid, pp. 192). And in line to these works, applying qualitative approach, it came that roles were gendered for the type of work, even though people generally reported that both men and women did same work and equally. To begin with, qualitative study reported that the ratio for men and women in farm setting, planting saplings and weeding was 3:7; irrigating farms was 9:1; harvesting-picking was 3:2; harvesting-separating was 1:9; drying the cardamom was 3:2 and marketing was 1:0, respectively.

Figure 4.3: Large Cardamom Production Mapping of Salakpurey Cardamom



Source: Field Survey, 2015

4.1.1 Input and Supply

In this initial phase of cardamom production, plantation and irrigation are the major tasks. There are two ways in which farmers have been producing cardamom in Salakpur. First, keeping the previous seeds of cardamom and maintaining a nursery before planting. Second, buying cardamom saplings from the nursery owners and planting it. Once planted, the saplings start bearing fruits in the third year. The plant would last for 8-10 years if managed well through proper weeding and irrigating.

Both men and women are a part of input and supply where women are mostly engaged in setting the farms such as digging the farm for plantation and weeding the surroundings of the farms. Likewise, men mostly engage in irrigating the farms because

most of the cardamom farms are located in the cliffs, which is said to be unreachable by women or tagged as a difficult task.

“Women irrigate the farms that are close to the houses but they cannot go to the cliffs to irrigate... It is a difficult task. So men take up with such task.”
[KII, Cardamom Farmer, Male, Salakpur]

The testimony above reveals that difficulties exist for women to irrigate some parts of their lands, particularly the ones that are located in the cliffs. Few reasons identified in relation to this context were the clothes women wear which could get caught in the bushy farms and could lead to accidents. Also, the cliffs are slippery and require much attention while watering. People tend to wear long rain boots while going to the cliffs.

Additionally, there is lack of water in Salakpur and most households tend to buy water pipes privately to irrigate their farms using sprinklers. This again adds to the tasks for men who tend to carry the water pipes to their farms and fix the sprinklers for irrigation.

... The problem is related to irrigation. We try to get as much water, and preserve as much water as we can. For example, we have dug plastic pond, we try to store water to the best of our abilities. But even still, it is hard. Suppose, in my 6 ropanis, I have managed to get about 50 to 60 percent of the irrigation on my crops. And we are managing with that because of water issues. This is the problem people in wards 1 and 2 are facing mostly. In ward 3, the people have their own private source of water, but even they have not managed to get as much irrigation as they would like for their crops. Because of this irrigation problem, we have to be content with 40 to 50 percent below the income that we could be getting... [FGD, Males]

The testimony above, in line to irrigation, reflects problems associated with water and farmer's effort in collecting water for their crops. In the higher hills, that cover wards 1 and 2, the problem with water is much severe than in ward 3. Ward 3 is close to Mechi river flowing in between Salakpur and Mirik in India. As alternative measures to have access to water, people who could afford have bought private pipes till their households. Some households have dug ponds with plastic sheets to collect rain water. However,

not all households could manage to do this due to lack of ample land to dig ponds or lack of finances to buy and set their own pipelines. This also reflects the struggle of the farmers when they were engaged in rice farming and required irrigation. Since the geographical location of Salakpur is hilly, taking water pipes to households has become logistically difficult. People have been striving to seek water sources for irrigation through various means such as digging plastic ponds for water storage.

Despite having a major challenge in regards to crop irrigation, the production of cardamom, as a main crop is still a livelihood options for those in Salakpur. The return this crop yields in the lives of farmers motivates them to pursue cardamom farming as their main source of income.

4.1.2 Production and Processes

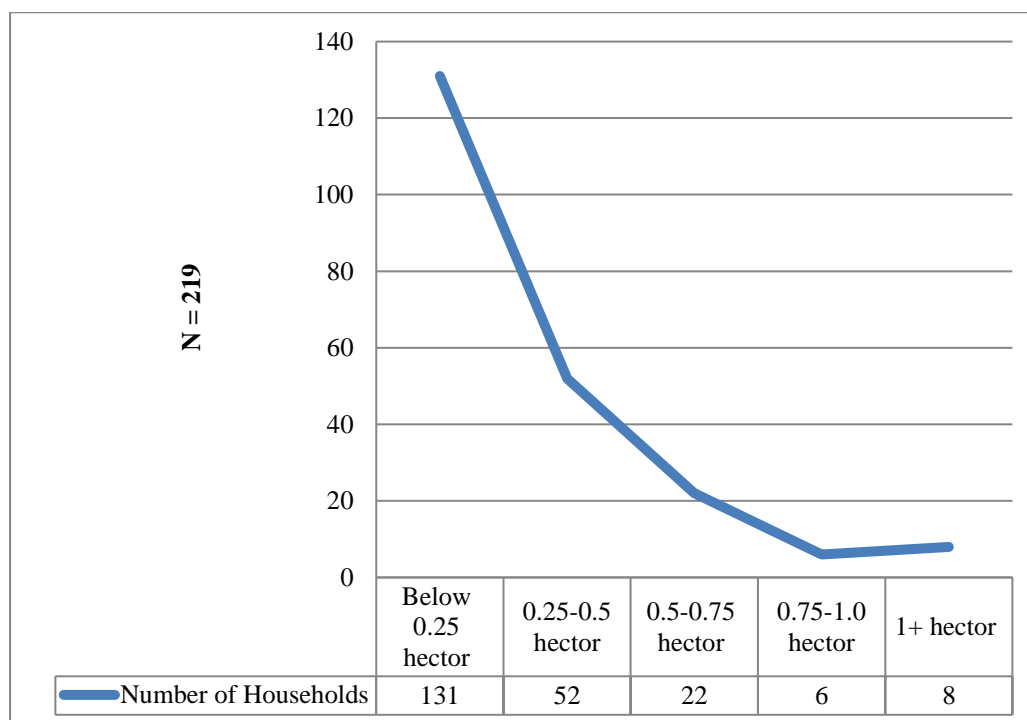
Production of large cardamom in Salakpur is based on the amount of land people own. Of 349 households surveyed, 219 produced cardamom in their farms while the remaining households were engaged in cardamom production as seasonal or non-seasonal⁶ wage labourers. Out of the total 219 households, majority of households own less than 0.25 hectares while very few own more than a hectare (see Figure 4.4). Households with more than a hectare of land are actual inhabitants of Salakpur and represent Rai, Tamang and Brahmin ethnicity. Those representing less than 0.25 hectare come from various ethnic groups including the Dalits.

Evidences show the production of cardamom ranged from 2kgs to 1000 kgs dry in 2015. The production varies every year.

“Last year [2015] the highest production was 25 Maund (1000 kgs)... and the lowest, I think was 10 kg raw [equal to 2 kgs dry]....” [KII, Cardamom Producer, Male, Salakpur]

⁶ Seasonal means the time of harvest of cardamom and non-seasonal means works that includes setting the farm, weeding the farms, cleaning, irrigating etc.

Figure 4.4: Households Producing Large Cardamom by Land Size



Source: Field Survey, 2015

In the production phase, the major tasks are harvesting and drying of the product. Two different tasks are performed during harvesting: i) picking the cardamom and ii) separating cardamom capsules from the picked flower. Picking is done using special knife by men and women of the household. The ratio for men and women in picking is 3:2. About 95 percent of women are seen separating the cardamom pods from the flowers. While most men pick the cardamom, women set up the area where the picked load of cardamom can be dumped for separating process. More has been elaborated on the roles in chapter five on livelihoods. During the separating process, tails of cardamom pods are also taken off manually. Sometimes tails come off during the drying phase.

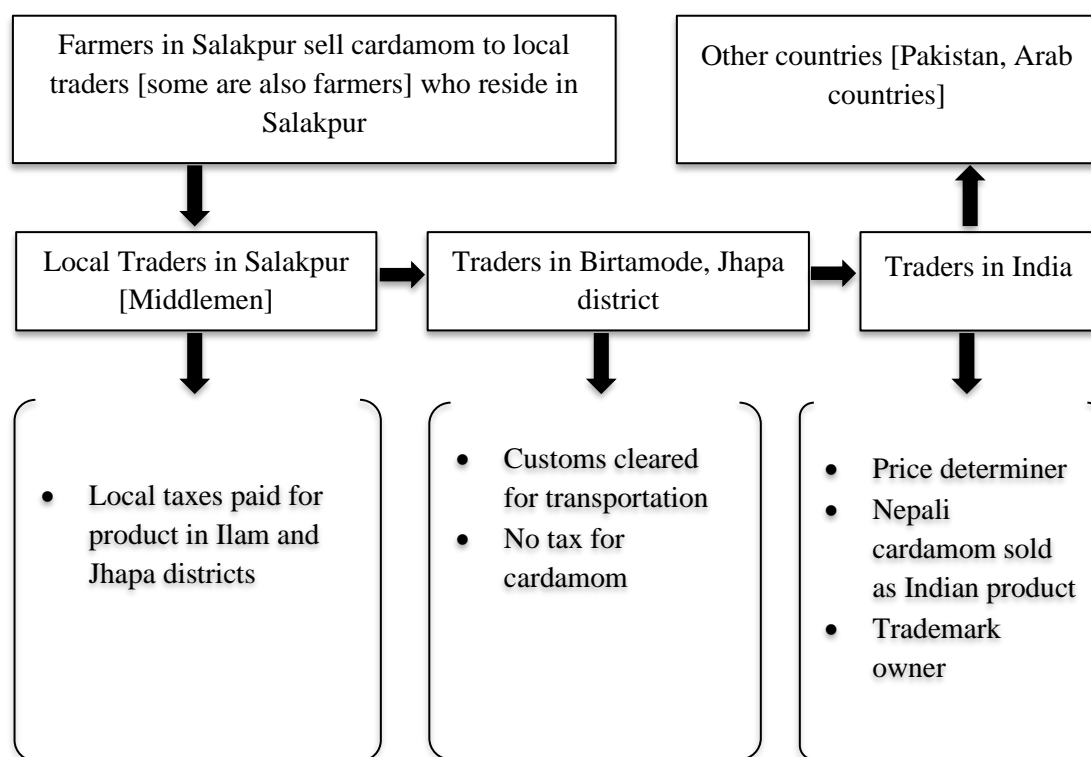
Drying of large cardamom is done using traditional dryer owned by some households in Salakpur. Households without dryer use their neighbour's dryer or sell raw cardamom to the local collectors. The evidences on use of traditional dryer as opposed to modern dryer are controversial in Salakpur. As some point out that the cardamom has to be dried through smoke and hence traditional dryer is the best to get the smoky flavour. While other argue modern dryer dries cardamom well and provides freshness

in the smell of the product. In Salakpur, almost all households have been using the traditional dryer although some farmers wished the government granted them modern dryers through subsidy.

4.1.3 Trading, Processing and Export

Almost all the cardamom sold from Salakpur is traded in Biratmode city of Jhapa district. Once dried, the cardamom is packed in sacks with capacity of 40 kgs and prepared for trading. Farmers with less than 40 kgs either sell the cardamom to the other farmers who are also local collectors or take it to the regional traders themselves. Farmers producing very little such as less than 10 kgs dry sell their cardamom to the local collectors within Salakpur.

Figure 4.5: Cardamom Trading in Salakpur



Source: Author, 2016

Cardamom trading is done in a linear way (see Figure 4.5). The village level traders are farmers themselves who produce huge quantity of cardamom and have the ability to buy cardamom from farmers producing less amount of cardamom. It is noticed that farmers producing less than 30 kgs are willing to sell cardamom in the village level

traders since they do not have to go through hurdles of trading. The hurdles are defined by lack of time to go to the market, tax payment issues and lack of proper roads and transportation. The village level traders or collectors take their dried cardamom to traders in Birtamode by bus or available pickups in Salakpur. These traders pay taxes upon entry in Jhapa district. Traders in Birtamode, or the national traders weigh and examine the 40 kg sacks filled with cardamom before paying the village level traders. The traders in Birtamode trade the collected cardamom with traders in India. In terms of taxation, the local traders only have to bear transportation cost for the goods. There is no taxation for cardamom in the border. Siliguri is one of the borders to Nepal and India in the eastern region of Nepal. Before trading, the traders in Birtamode grade the product by its size and categorize it, cut tails of the cardamom if needed by hiring women wage-workers. Also packaging of the cardamom is done in sacks with capacities between 10 kgs and 25 kgs. The products reach cities like Calcutta and Delhi in India through Siliguri.

Table 4.2: Prices and Payments (2015)

Price for Quantity	Nepali Rupees	US dollars ⁷
1 Maund ⁸ cardamom	87000-90000	851.2-880.5
1 kg raw cardamom	200	1.95
District/Municipality tax for 1 kg cardamom [paid at the district ports]	8 + 13% Value Added Tax on the total product	0.078 + 13% VAT
Customs clearance [Transport charge] to be paid by regional traders in Birtamode	24 per kg of cardamom	0.23

Source: Field Survey, 2015

From Calcutta and Delhi cardamom is then traded to other countries like Pakistan, gulf countries and Singapore. Before trading, the Indian traders package the cardamom in smaller packets and provide trademark of India. Hence, Nepali cardamom reaches other countries with an Indian trademark.

In regards to taxation of cardamom, the local farmers pay taxes when leaving Salakpur, which is called the district tax (see Table 4.2). Then they also pay taxes in Jhapa district.

⁷ Dollar conversion rate of August 16, 2015; USD 1 = NRs.102.206

⁸ A Maund is a unit of weight used to measure agricultural output. 1 Maund is equivalent to 37 Kilograms of the product but in the study site farmers scale 1 Maund equivalent to 40 Kgs of cardamom due to the practice of measurement.

It is believed that paying taxes in two ports are illegal and the local collectors are facing problems of paying too many taxes in different ports for the same product.

...That is why it is illegal. One [the district council] cannot collect taxes for something that is not grown in the district. That is our understanding... [KII, Cardamom Trader, Male, Birtamode]

The evidence above shares that charging taxes for products not grown in the area is totally illegal. This means that farmers are burdened with taxes they are not supposed to pay. This action has left many farmers in despair. However, despite having receipts of paid taxes and raising concerns with the concerned institutions, nothing has been done to monitor such actions in the ports.

...They [Indians] are declaring cardamom as an Indian product and somewhere cheating on tax. They are doing illegal work there. Otherwise they have to pay heavy tax if they say the product is from Nepal. From Nepal, whatever quantity of cardamom crosses the Indian border has gone after customs have been cleared and hence there is no cheating... We load the trucks in Birtamode and send it to India...But as the product goes to India there are cases of cheating tax there... [KII, Cardamom Trader, Male Birtamode]

Evidences also show that the traders clear their customs in Birtamode after loading their products and are cleared off customs, which includes transportation charge. However, in India the cardamom is labelled as Indian product and hence the Indian traders do not pay taxes. This is somehow illegally dealt with by bribing the security in the ports.

The price of cardamom is determined by India on a daily basis. Farmers in Salakpur get to know the price from the traders in Birtamode. These traders in Birtamode are constantly in communication with the traders in Calcutta and Delhi. Prices for large cardamom fluctuates every day and the traders pay after keeping their margin.

“Price [of cardamom] is different every day so we are not aware of what the actual price for our hard work is. Farmers always suffer the loss but there is

no other option. At least we get more money from this crop than other crops.”
[IDI, Male Respondent, 56, Tamang]

.... we have been totally dependent on India. And we are compelled to send our products to India. And that is why the cardamom media is based in India. Also, we have to stay under the rules of India, in regards to value and pricing of the cardamom...[KII, Cardamom Trader, Male, Birtamode]

The testimonies show that the prices of cardamom are totally pegged by India and farmers have nothing to do with it. Farmers are aware that they have to bear the loss from the action of the traders in cheating taxes and making them pay. But they are also content that there is more income from cardamom compared to other crops they have grown in the past. This also tells us how strong the Indian side is in dominating Nepal's economy. India has always dominated the Nepalese economy in regards to various sectors of which agriculture has been one. In this process, the major reason for price fluctuation is based on the demand of cardamom in India from various countries. Hence, the price Nepali farmers and traders get in return, are influenced by Indian traders. Their dependency of Nepali cardamom producers and marketers are entirely upon India.

4.3 Large Cardamom, Institutional Sources & Policies

Empirical evidences show, at the local level, in Ilam there are few institutions working directly to support the cardamom sector. From the structural level the CDC and DADO based in Ilam have been major role players. These institutions work under the support of MoAD at the national level. These institutions have been responsible in providing technical support to farmers; generate programs on cultivation, harvest, local processing and trading in the cardamom sector (Pathak, 2014). The CDC in Ilam was established under the Ministry of Agriculture in 1975 to boost commercialisation of cardamom (Maharjan, 2014, pp. 35).

When asked about the three major institutional arrangements supporting cardamom sector, respondents referred to the institutions as shown in Table 4.3. This response came in line to the respondent's knowledge and closer association with these institutions.

Table 4.3: Major Institutions Functioning at the Local Level

Institution	Activities	Type
District Agriculture Development Office (DADO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund and conduct trainings in collaboration with the CDC in direct connection with the Ministry of Agriculture and Development • Inform about disease and measures to tackle them 	Government
Cardamom Development Centre (CDC), Ilam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy cardamom saplings from the nurseries maintained by farmers across Ilam and other districts in the eastern hills • Distribute cardamom saplings to the concerned farmers in subsidy • Conduct trainings and workshop regarding crop disease • Provide information brochure to farmers about planting methods for new species of cardamom, disease and measures to tackle them 	Government
Cooperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness about cardamom disease and measures to tackle them • Organise livelihoods related trainings occasionally • Facilitate monthly savings for members • Provide loans to members on interest basis 	Government

Source: Field Survey, 2015

According to an official, from the implementation level, the CDC and DADO under a joint venture aims at providing technical support, training and saplings of new species of cardamom to the farmers. The implementation runs in two fold. One, the institutions call for participants to attend training free of cost on a first application first serve basis. For cardamom related issues, trainings include activities such as planting and informing about new variety of cardamom and applying preventive measures on disease infestation in the crop. These trainings take place at the CDC or ADO in Ilam. Another is that the officials make trips to villages to conduct trainings.

Officials reported of assessment on cardamom farming requiring much effort in the plantation and management process than before. They reflected that farmers have to apply new methods to plant the new variety, irrigate the farms compulsorily and apply fertilisers. These were not the strict requirements years ago. Besides the ADO and CDC,

at the local level, there are nine cardamom cooperatives across Ilam. One of the cooperatives is in Salakpur. According to the farmers and officials these cooperatives are relatively new entities established with aims to provide support to the farmers on issues regarding crop management and savings and credits.

Although relatively new in the study site, cooperatives in Nepal have a long history. In the past people practiced informal community type cooperatives called *dhikuti*. In this practice, people saved grains, managed labour and used it when needed. It was only during the 1960s the first cooperative was introduced in Nepal. The Agriculture Cooperative Act was also formed then (NEFSCUN, 2015). The cooperative society was re-established as Cooperative bank in 1963, which was converted to the Agriculture Development Bank of Nepal (ADB) in 1968. Again, in 1975, the Cooperative Act was revised and put into practice. In the 1980s the Cooperative Act was amended again by the government in favour of practice of community based savings and credits. As the practice gained momentum across Nepal, the Nepal Federation of Savings and Credit Cooperative Unions (NEFSCUN) was established in 1988. Hence, the official practice of cooperatives came into existence.

Till date, there has been no policy specifically designed to support the production of large cardamom alone. But there are certain policies that include cardamom as a potential sector requiring support. These policies have either ended or are in its initial stage. Prior to the establishment of Cardamom Development Centre (CDC) in 1976, the government brought policy of granting loans to the farmers. This loan policy came in 1964 from the Agriculture Development Bank (ADB) in line to the Mechi Development Fund. During 1965, large cardamom was sold in the market for NRs. 2 per kg (ITC, 2017). Since then, gradually, the price of this commodity has escalated to about NRs. 2,500 per kg, although there has been price fluctuation depending on the supply and demand chain. As commercialisation for cardamom peaked, the CDC was formed with aims to support farmers. In 1976 when the CDC was established, the Nepal government celebrated Agricultural Year 2032/33. The same year, Nepal government received 40,000 large cardamom saplings from Sikkim, which was then distributed to the farmers of Panchthar, Ilam and Taplejung districts of province 1, from the CDC, Fikkal (ibid). Also the government allocated about 19 ha of land under the CDC to establish a nursery for cardamom saplings.

At present few plans and policies are prominent in supporting and recognising this sector. In regards to the national plan and agriculture policy, the recent policy focusing on cardamom is still under review, which might be implemented in the coming years. The National Economic Plan (NEP) such as the 13th Plan focused on supporting the expansion of high value cash crops such as large cardamom and tea. Although this plan ended in 2016, the upcoming or the 14th National Economic Plan is under formulation and set to have similar vision to promote export of crops such as large cardamom and tea.

Of these plans and policies, the 14th National Economic Plan consists of several programmes for agriculture promotion. Of these programmes, the trade promotion programmes; trade, information and private sector support programmes; Nepal trade integration strategy programmes and trade infrastructure, logistics and procedural development are the major programmes (ITC, 2017).

Table 4.4: 14th National Economic Plan Highlights

Programmes	Activities
1. Trade Promotion Programmes	Information dissemination, promote marketing, research and development of products for export, capacity development and policy uptake and support
2. Trade, Information and Private Sector Support Programmes	Promoting production for export by improving quality, design development and technology use in line with private sectors
3. Nepal Trade Integration Strategy Programmes	Coordinating and implementing programmes for that are planned under the NTIS which includes works such as branding and promoting of the product, facilitating trademark, providing inputs and support on knowledge about Nepali products and locating markets
4. Trade Infrastructure, Logistics and Procedural Development	Developing ports for departing containers with products, constructing portals for trade, single window systems and managing roads to clear the products

Source: ITC, 2017

Similarly, with the end of the twenty years Agriculture Perspective Plan (APP 1995 – 2015), which has been considered a failure in the agriculture sector, the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) has been designed. The ADS, has large cardamom as a

top priority cash crop for its growth and export. The ADS aims to create an inclusive and sustainable agriculture sector for economic growth with a long-term vision to improve livelihoods and address food insecurity. The ADS aims to strengthen the agricultural sector by focusing on a products commercialisation and profit, productivity, competitiveness and governance. ADS focuses on farmers from different categories such as subsistence, commercial and landless. The ADS also has a provision that farmers could be a part of this strategy starting from its planning, decision-making, implementing and monitoring phases.

Likewise, from the national level, one of the prominent policies has been the NTIS 2010 and NTIS 2016. The Ministry of Commerce formed the first NTIS in 2010, which identified 19 products as the top priority products in Nepal. Of the 19 products, large cardamom is one prominent product for promotion.

In order to promote trade of various products, the government under the NTIS 2010 has implemented various programmes. In specifically supporting processing of large cardamom, the NTIS, 2010 allocated a fund of NRs 13.50 million to buy modern dryers to dry cardamom for better quality. For centuries, the harvested cardamom has been dried in traditional dryers (KC, et. al., 2016). These traditional dryers are simple pit dug in the ground with a netted iron set flat on the top to spread the cardamom capsules. The fire is lit in the pit and the smoke outlets to the netted iron, which dries the cardamom overnight. Modern dryers, however, are better in terms of sending off sufficient smoke to dry the cardamom. The NTIS initiates to promote modern dryers to form standardised quality of large cardamom and ensure better quality for promotion of this crop. Also such initiative suggests Nepal's advancement in technology and its commitment towards promoting improved and better quality cash crops. NTIS 2010 also focused on strengthening Nepal's trade capacity by promoting the top listed commodities and creating competitive markets to export the goods in an efficient manner.

As the NTIS ended, the government formulated NTIS 2016 giving special mention to large cardamom as an export led high value cash crop. This strategy highlights the importance of large cardamom for Nepal's export and production as well as for the producers, and farmers from different household level. NTIS 2016 specifies large

cardamom as one of the crops with high potential in the global market and hence sets its importance to expand the production of this crop especially in the hilly areas (NTIS, 2016). This export strategy also focuses on improving productivity, creating processing centres and producing seeds free from disease. Additionally, this strategy targets to produce about 6,500 MT of large cardamom on an annual basis between 2016 and 2021.

It is understood that Nepal's potential in the agricultural sector particularly in terms of export, is quite high. However, foreign direct investment seems very low in this sector (WB, 2016). The one reason has been due to low quality of goods being produced. Keeping this into consideration, and understanding the need for foreign investment policy, the Nepal Industrial Enterprise Act (NIEA) 2016 has been formulated. This Act has also amended the Labour Act with aims to create a business friendly environment by adapting a "no work no pay" regulation. This Act is all set to creating a friendly business environment for Nepal's trade and exchange platform.

Also the government has come up with a policy on exports of cardamom to provide cash incentive of 1 percent against the convertible currency earned (ITC, 2017, pp. 24). Such incentives has been created to promote the export led market and provide compensation in the transaction cost required in doing business with countries apart from India.

In regards to branding, Nepal's cardamom did not have a trademark until mid-2014. Nevertheless, in the export and trademarking, the Nepal government has finally shown commitment in promoting large cardamom under the Nepali banner. This initiation was thrived by the Federation of Cardamom Entrepreneurs Association located in Jhapa district, whose institutional innovation and struggle helped acquire the trademark.

In 2014, the government registered a trademark for large cardamom under the title "Everest Big Cardamom" in collaboration with the Department of Industries (DoI) (My Republica, July 22, 2014). The main aim for this initiative has been to export large cardamom under Nepali banner in the international market. This initiative is also supported by the TEPC under the Department of Industry (ITC, 2017).

... In June 2016 we received this trademark under Everest Big Cardamom. The registration has been done. And under this trademark, we have been collaborating with the Nepal government to connect with three main countries, India, Pakistan and Dubai, to join hands of trading cardamom directly. We have also hired an international lawyer. The process will take some time... [President of Federation of Large Cardamom Entrepreneurs of Nepal, Birtamode]

The statement above shows that the cardamom trademark has been passed under the banner of Everest Big Cardamom in 2016. Since then, the Federation of Large Cardamom Entrepreneurs of Nepal (FLCEN) has been collaborating with the Nepal government and the Trade and Export Promotion Centre (TEPC) in taking this action forward. At present the trademark has already been registered and action plan has been developed to take the implementation forward (ITC, 2017).

It is expected that through the implementation of the trademark cardamom could be sent off to destination countries like India, Pakistan and Dubai with a label of Everest Big Cardamom. This would mean India might not be able to change the label to Indian product and the Nepali product would gain its recognition. The results are yet to be seen with such changes, which are positive towards strengthening the Nepal's cardamom production. Additionally, for this to happen, there has to be a good diplomatic relations with the countries with whom Nepal is trading cardamom directly with.

...we know some brothers studying in Australia and they say they can find Nepali cardamom there which is labelled as a product of India. And this gives us new perspective because the cardamom going to Australia from India is Nepali cardamom, dried mostly in traditional dryer. This means that it is possible to export to other countries without adopting modern techniques. But again improving does not do any harm...[President of Cardamom Entrepreneurs Association, Birtamode]

There have reports from the respondents that Nepalese large cardamom have been found in Australia under Indian label. Since most of the large cardamom exported to India has been dried in traditional driers, this shows that there is potential for cardamom

in the markets abroad. Moreover, the quality could be upgraded with the use of modern techniques and driers to make the product more appealing and better to reach out to wider consumers across the globe.

However, in spite of such initiatives from the government, farmers continue to face crisis due to lack of knowledge about policies, weak supporting capacity of local institutions and the overall rural background (Singh & Pothula, 2013, pp. 460). Therefore, sometimes the issues are not only inclined towards institutions incapability but also those seeking institutional support. Moreover, a recent study reflects that cash crops like cardamom has failed to grab the government's attention, particularly in studying disease and farmers facing crisis in production due to lack of irrigation facilities (Gurung, 2016). The government's attention in these issues could help address the crisis faced by farmers and stop production decrease. Moreover, it can also be inferred that farmers rely on institutions to emerge with sound programs so they could benefit.

4.4 Networks and Institutions Supporting Large Cardamom Production and Trading

There are various networks related to creating policy dialogues, trade and support services for large cardamom apart from the institutional innovation of research related support led by the NARC. From the policy level there are institutions such as the MoAD and the MoC at the national level and DADO at the local level. Since large cardamom is an export-oriented crop and ranks on the top 19 products for export under NTIS 2016, the MoC prioritizes this crop by putting it in its export strategy and directly collaborating for trade and promotion (NTIS, 2016). Likewise, being an agricultural product, the policies and services for various departments consider large cardamom as a priority crop. These departments are formed under the MoAD. The DoA is one such institution under the MoAD, which aims to increase the production of agricultural products; work on reaching the domestic and international markets; create programmes that are agricultural related for small holder farmers, women and disadvantaged groups. The DoA has 12 functioning sections with 184 offices across Nepal. Of these sectors, the most active ones are Regional Agriculture Directorate (RAD), Regional Agricultural Training Directorate (RATD), Regional Soil Test Laboratories (RSTL), Regional Plant Protection Directorate (RPPD), Agricultural Development Farms

(ADF), Plant Quarantine Office (PQO) and Check Posts. (ITC, 2017). These sectors are engaged in formulating plans and policies at the national level and implementing them when needed.

According to a report by International Trade Centre (ITC), the major institutions currently functioning under the DoA are the Cardamom Development Centre (CDC) in Fikkal of Ilam district, the Plant Protection Directorate and the National Spice Crop Development Programme.

Table 4.5. Prominent Institutions Functioning under DoA

S.N.	Institutions	Functions
1	Cardamom Development Centre	The CDC functions by conducting research and development to develop large cardamom farming. Currently, the government has allocated 19 ha of land to produce seedlings for cardamom that are free of disease to distribute the produce to the farmers of various districts. This CDC also conducts trainings for the farmers on crop plantation and methods required.
2	Plant Protection Directorate	The Plant Protection Directorate is based in Kathmandu. This directorate is responsible for diagnosis of plant diseases and set plant quarantine checks.
3	National Spice and Crop Development Programme	This institution helps formulate plans and policies on subsidies management, provision of trainings and technological assistance for spice crops including large cardamom and ginger.

Source: Adapted from ITC, 2017

The DADO functions under the MoA. The DADO acts as a coordinating medium at the district level by creating policy dialogues and framing pertinent policies, creating effective mechanism for production improvement, The DADO is responsible for increasing production of crops such as large cardamom; helping with nursery establishment for large cardamom, distributing seedlings, and providing trainings to farmers and managing the crop including harvesting and processing. Other functions of the DADO are also managing modern dryer distribution to farmers in allocated areas, setting up a product collection center, providing seedlings and ideas on proper packaging methods to the farmers.

In regards to trade and services there are few networks actively engaged in promoting large cardamom production and business. These networks are the TEPC, AEC and

Nepal Bureau of Standards and Metrology (NBSM) (ITC, 2017). The TEPC was established in 1971 under the MoC. TEPC aims at promoting trade at the national level, provides assistance to the various stakeholders engaged in export led products, engages in research and marketing of the products, providing information on markets and facilities, being a part of trade fair in the international level and helps promotion of products by establishing a connection with the buyers and sellers. Everything that happens with foreign trade is set under the TEPC. Likewise, the AEC is engaged in lobbying for farmers who are engaged in production of cash crops. This institution collects data about pricing, quality and production of various agro products and passes the information to various stakeholders engaged in it. In regards to cardamom production, the AEC has played a fundamental role in advocating for large cardamom. This institution has also provided about 135 modern dryers to the farmers taking up with cardamom farming in other districts apart from the eastern hills of Nepal. The AEC has collaborated with UNNATI project recently on promoting large cardamom sector and development (ibid, pp. 25). The NBSM is department acting under the Ministry of Industry (MoI). This bureau investigates the product standards and approves of the products based on the Nepal standards.

A report by ITC (2017) also reveals business service network that support large cardamom production and marketing. One prominent network is the Nepal Freight Forwarders' Association (NFFA). The NFFA provides support in delivering goods smoothly to the destination. Moreover, this institution provides technical and consultancy support when needed, represents the cargo delivering community in the national and international arena by also maintaining goods relations with these institutions, provides services such as agents and transports (air and road), collect and manage data on the cargo and provide feedbacks and suggestions to the government and the members of this association.

From the financial level of services, there are a network of banks, financial institutions and cooperatives engaged in providing financial loans to the farmers and traders of cardamom in about all the districts producing this cash crop (ITC, 2017). The credits are provided on the basis of the need, the loan seekers associations with the institution. But not much is known about the smooth availability and distribution of such loans in a higher degree.

It is evident that there are various networks and institutions engaged in facilitating trade and support to the cardamom farmers. However, these policies and institutions and their functions tells us that there is still a nuanced direct support in promoting large cardamom from the ministries and other institutions. A recent study by ITC (2017) on large cardamom also agrees to this fact. It points out that the trade support for large cardamom is almost non-existent and the support is stated to be of poor standards. At the top level, the major missing element in the large cardamom sector along with the policies are the technical support. For instance, disease and pests management requires technical assistance, which lack at a greater level in this sector.

4.5 Large Cardamom and Functional Institutions in Salakpur

In Salakpur, during the phase of this study, the only institution engaged in supporting cardamom sector is a cooperative named SUMADUWA. SU refers to *Suntala* (oranges), MA refers to *Maha* (Honey), DU refers to *Aduwa* (ginger) and A refers to *Alainchi* (Cardamom). Hence, SUMADUWA represents a cooperative for oranges, honey, ginger and cardamom. This cooperative has been running smoothly since its establishment in 2011/2012. SUMADUWA was established with an aim towards sustainable farming of the products in Salakpur.

“...We wanted to build a sustainable agriculture system. For example, our ancestors planted oranges and we still have them. So we want to continue with orange plantation and make sure it is sustainable...” [Stakeholder’s meeting, President of SUMADUWA]

The statement reveals that people are keen on taking up with their agriculture and sustain what has been introduced in the village from the past. For example, oranges have been the oldest fruit enterprise in Salakpur, introduced generations ago. Oranges have been in Salakpur for many decades and people value this crop not only for money but also because they hold respect for their ancestors.

The president of this cooperative in Salakpur is a male and the board members comprises of a mix of men and women. One household member producing cardamom, either male or female, can become a part of this cooperative. At present there are 60 members, 18 women and 42 men, in this cooperative and the members include farmers

from Salakpur and other villages of Jirmale rural municipality. There are fewer women than men because most women are a part of women's groups and they devote more time in that organisation. Also, the women's group was established earlier than the cooperative.

This cooperative has various functions set by the board members apart from promoting sustainable agriculture. One major function is that the cooperative acts as a saving and credit entity. Every month the members deposit their savings from NRs 100 and above. This amount is collected and used as loans for those in need with low interest. Doing this has helped few farmers from poorer households obtain loans to pursue agricultural work.

"...It is because of the cooperative, I have been able to save money... I was able to take loans with low interest. Otherwise I would have had to go to the money lenders and they charge high interest..." [Stakeholders Meeting, Cardamom Farmer, Male]

Based on the testimony above, institutions such as cooperatives have helped people learn about savings and take savings as part of their future security. Also, cooperatives have helped women to take loans with low interest and not delve into the hands of moneylenders who charge relatively high interest. Apart from acting as a savings entity, this cooperative also calls for meeting every month to discuss about agricultural issues. The discussions are based on disease infestation in the farms, production, irrigation facilities and preparation and participation on events such as the orange festival. Moreover, as a team the members also take part in proposal writing for competitive grants called by various agriculture related programs across Ilam. Sometimes, trainings are also organised through the cooperatives on how to use fertilisers or pesticides and other crop related work. Such works are carried out in collaboration with other organisations such as the CDC or DADO. In line to the interim constitution 2017, the Nepal Federation of Savings and Credit Cooperative Unions (NEFSCUN) pledges to have a separate act for the cooperatives running as financial entity for a better monitoring of the services (Voinea, 2016). Hence, the cooperative running in Salakpur might undergo transformation in terms of its roles in the upcoming years due to this new change.

Ever since the establishment, this cooperative has been able to achieve some goals. First, it has been able to link with various government organisations at the district level. For instance, the officials from CDC and DADO have been able to provide trainings on crop management in the village. Also, facilitating savings within the cooperative has been one major achievement for the members since they have acquired financial literacy. Additionally, attending meetings and discussing about issues related to crops have helped people share their concerns and come up with solutions institutionally.

Despite running for few years, the cooperatives have also faced some challenges. First, the cooperative is not smoothly run due to infrastructure challenges. There is a lack space, which could occupy all the members during events and meetings. The awareness level about cooperative and its functions among people has been very low. People do not have the understanding of cooperative. Also, collectively, the cooperative has not been able to run any business or set up ventures to sell their products under their own banner.

“...We fail to sell our products such as cardamom giving it our names and we sell it to the traders in Jhapa district. This has been a challenge since we do not know how take an initiative...” [Stakeholders meeting, President of SUMADUWA Cooperative]

This testimony reflects every farmer’s bleak situation in claiming the good to be their own or having a patent to their products. Additionally, from the institutional level, the locals seem helpless in working towards recognising cardamom as their own. This is also a national concern since the cardamom produced in Nepal goes to other countries through India under Indian banner. This makes the Nepalese product and its identity invisible despite hard work from the cardamom producers. The caveat in regards to cooperative in Salakpur is that so far the cooperative has mainly been functioning as a savings and credits entity. Hence, the challenge persists in understanding a cooperative model where the farmers could jointly label and add value to their products before selling them. In some cases disease infestation in cardamom and oranges have been reported. Farmers, who have witnessed disease in their crops, tend to have less knowledge about the disease. As part of the cooperative some initiations have been

taken such as visiting the local authorities and offices. However, addressing issues of disease has been an individual action rather than collective action. This is because of lack of coordination between the stakeholders. The panacea to such situation is an interaction between the concerned stakeholders, which has not happened yet. Moreover, the issue of disease in Salakpur is relatively new than the other parts of Ilam district where much attention has been provided based on priority.

Additionally, challenges persist as people lack ideas on how values can be added to their products such as cardamom. The lack of space for cooperative also determines how people cannot store their products and thus have to sell the products immediately. A broader vision of cooperative and its functions seems to be lacking in Salakpur. However, the board members have been motivated to take the cooperative to a bigger level in the coming years. This has been planned through collaboration with the local government and formulation of effective plans.

In line to the testimonies above, evidence shows from the national level there has been identification of loopholes in the cooperative sector. Few problem identified have been the lack of education and training facilities for those operating cooperatives, lack of action plan to run cooperatives smoothly in the current and newly formed governmental status, lack of government and business strategy and lack of proper direction set towards product diversification through cooperatives (NEFSCUN, 2015). Hence, there is a need to create a palpable strategic plan to ensure proper functioning of cooperatives at different levels. Also, since there has been a change in the system of the government as Federal, Provincial and Local, an interaction between these three tiers of government should be ensured for the smooth functioning of the cooperatives.

4.6 Institutional Analysis of Large Cardamom Farming in Salakpur

In Salakpur, particularly in the commercial cardamom-farming sector, farmers reported of facing problems such as lack of irrigation facilities, disease infestation in crops and illegal tax charges in the districts. Majority of cardamom farmers faced irrigation problems because of lack of water. First, the geographical location of Salakpur makes it difficult to channel water pipes. This is because from the government's side, the pipes have to come through Ilam Municipality. But Salakpur is located near Jhapa district. Hence, bringing pipes from Jhapa requires a lot of administrative work and is time

consuming. Connecting water pipes from Ilam Municipality is also challenging because the process has to cross various VDCs to reach Salakpur. This accounts to more financial and technical input. Hence, this has been one of the biggest challenges for the farmers.

“...I could have produced 100 kgs more cardamom last year but due to lack of irrigation facilities, I failed...There are many households who can do the same but what can we do? We struggle to water our farms...We are still waiting for the local government to find a solution for us...” [IDI, Male Respondent, 56, Tamang]

The testimonies reveal that lack of water for irrigation of farms has been a major challenge for farmers who could produce more if this problem is solved. Few rich farmers have been able to buy big water pipes to fulfil their irrigation need. However, this is also time consuming and highly expensive. Hence, not everyone can afford to take this step.

Another problem the farmers have been noticing is disease in crops including cardamom and oranges. In sum, of the many cardamom-producing districts, Ilam was the first to face severe loss in production. Many farmers in other VDCs lost their entire cardamom farms to disease. However, in Salakpur the rate of disease infestation has just begun and is about five percent (KC & Upreti, 2017). Moreover, farmers from other villages of Ilam district and other districts travel to Salakpur to buy “Salakpurey” species of cardamom saplings. In Salakpur, the issue of disease has just emerged and farmers have been conscious about combating or preventing the disease. These issues have been discussed in the cooperatives where the representatives have passed the information to local bodies such as CDCs and agriculture office in Ilam municipality. However, less action has been taken regarding disease in Salakpur because of the degree of infestation, which is way lower than infestation in other areas of Ilam.

In regards to marketing of cardamom, there have been reports of charges of illegal taxes. Some farmers, also local traders, reported they have to pay taxes when coming out of Salakpur and when entering Jhapa district.

“...usually taxes should be charged only in one point. Jhapa does not produce cardamom so there is no need to pay taxes in Jhapa but people are still paying. What can they do even if they report? Who would listen?...” [KII, Cardamom Trader, Male, Birtamode]

The issue regarding taxes is crucial because people paying taxes are usually the local collectors who deduct tax money from the farmers to keep their margin for profit. This reflects poor institutional capacity in addressing issues of taxes, which could possibly be done through cooperatives given that the members have ability to drive for changes.

Moreover, findings suggest that there is a need for institutional innovation including a sound interaction between stakeholders for a better transformation in the cardamom-farming sector. A fruitful interaction between various actors leads to an accomplished transformation (Prasad, 2007; Clark, et. al., 2003; Edquist, 1997; Lundvall, 1992). From the findings it has been clear that there is weak interaction between key actors including policy makers, farmers and implementing organisations. Moreover, poor institutional capacity can have an adverse impact on changes because poor institutional capacity means poor interaction. In order to address these issues a systematic approach is required as this approach includes stakeholders from various disciplines including farmers, officials, technical experts and policy makers (Schut, Rodenburg, Klerkx, van Ast and Bastiaans, 2014; Schut, van Paassen, Leeuwis & Klerkx, 2014; Klerkx, Mierlo & Leeuwis, 2012; Pautasso & Pautasso, 2010).

Moreover, apart from interaction between key stakeholders there is a need for sound policies in the cardamom sector as there is no policy especially designated for cardamom (ITC, 2017). There are claims (see Schut, Rodenburg, Klerkx, van Ast and Bastiaans, 2014; Schut, van Paassen, Leeuwis & Klerkx, 2014; Pautasso & Pautasso, 2010; Sharma, Sharma and Sharma, 2009) and it is evident that sound policies and institutions are required to protect crops including cardamom. At the local level, most cardamom farmers were not aware of the policies while some did not care much revealing that the actions and policies would “do no good”. This finding resonates to Singh and Pothula’s (2013, pp. 460) argument that besides having policies on improvement of cardamom as a commercial crop, farmers face problems because of rural orientation and lack of knowledge about these policies. Moreover, there were

opinions about distrust on policies in the overall agriculture sector. Farmers and other stakeholders reflected the agriculture sector as the most neglected one despite representing majority of population. Additionally, officials at the local institutions were aware of the ADS, 2015 and its implications. However, these officials were not confident on whether the ADS would be implemented well.

The ADS was initiated in 2015 and is called ADS 2015-2035, with a 20 years vision to manage the agriculture sector of Nepal (MoAD, 2014b). Particularly in regards to cardamom farming, the ADS reflect on special programs to produce virus free plants for production and promotion. Moreover, the ADS also hold a provision on creating corrective measures for the value chain of large cardamom. This is only the third year of ADS and its success or failure cannot be measured at this point of time. However, the approval for trademark for cardamom and provision of virus free saplings to the affected farmers shed some light in the positive front.

This reflects the central government's concern and awareness about crop disease and related issues. However, the plan fails to map the interaction process between farmers and officials at the national and local level, thus questioning the issue of innovation. Moreover, the ADS aim to increase the productivity of cardamom by reducing risks caused by disease. But this strategy does not have inclusive policies regarding provision of safety nets during crop failure. For instance, the ADS only mentions of providing cardamom saplings to the farmers whose crops are affected by disease. This raises concerns around targeting farmers in need, moreover, initiating problems with supply and demand. For example, the CDC is aimed at providing cardamom saplings to farmers whose cardamom farms have been inflicted by disease. This institution has to meet demands of farmers from various villages and hence, officials reported that they fall short of reaching out to every needy farmers.

In such cases, crop insurance could act as a safety net. Insurances, a form of safety net, could act as defence for farmers to stabilise their income and allows them to invest in agriculture and decreases their requirement during crop failure (Swain, 2014). Crop insurances can help reduce vulnerability and it can provide farmers time to think about alternative measures. The grassroots level institutions such as the cooperatives could be used as a service delivery entity by strengthening the capacities of those involved.

This is because institutions formed at the community level can strengthen capacities of the members, particularly of the farmers with easy access to services (Salau, Onuk and Ibrahim, 2012).

Additionally, in the commercial cardamom farming debate, apart from policies, it is important to assess the institutions as key players in formulating and implementing policies at the grass root level. Assessing the work can help improve institutional management, operation, effectiveness and overall function (Babu, 2013). In the study site, respondents revealed that the functions of cooperatives were limited to activities such as savings and credits and occasional trainings about crop plantation, sewing, livestock farming etc. Less has been done regarding strengthening the value chain of cardamom, supporting irrigation facilities, lobbying against illegal taxes and applying preventive measures for disease in cardamom farms. Using the cooperatives as a main functioning institution, various activities can be undertaken by framing possible action plans. Again, with the two cooperative congresses and their vision such issues could be tackled in a long run if put in the action plan. However, before that and based on the evidences, building capacity and infrastructure of the cooperative is a must. Through cooperatives information on crop disease and measure to combat it, information on harvesting rainwater for irrigation, as Salakpur has good amount of rainfall every year and forming coalition to raise issues on taxation can be carried out.

4.7 Conclusion

Salakpur is a unique destination for study on large cardamom of its species along with its picturesque geographical location and favourable climatic conditions. This village has undergone substantial transition in agriculture development despite having delayed infrastructure and basic services development. From subsistence millet, maize and rice farming to commercial ginger, broom grass, oranges and cardamom farming, people of Salakpur have set their own benchmark in producing and selling Salakpurey species of cardamom.

It has only been about fifteen years since large cardamom has been produced commercially in Salakpur but the demand for Salakpurey variety of cardamom has been high over the years. Farmers from across Nepal have had attraction towards Salakpurey variety of cardamom and have managed to buy saplings from Salakpur. The prominence

of this variety of cardamom is also high amongst the traders in both national and international markets. Interestingly, the attraction on commercial cardamom farming has also been amongst the migrant group. Even though the migration rate from Salakpur has been lesser compared to other villages, migrated people have returned from gulf countries to work as cardamom farmers. This is because these returnees have become aware of the return commercial cardamom could provide.

Listing cardamom as a top commodity for export and having high revenue for the country, the national government lack appointment of cardamom experts and technicians at different levels. Hence, farmers facing crisis such as disease become desperate to acquire help and more often survive without any help. Additionally, since cardamom entered Nepal from Sikkim, the government of Nepal could initiate a cross interaction and exchange between stakeholders in Sikkim and Nepal to further stress on sustainable cardamom farming and promotion.

Since the Nepal Constitution 2015 lists cooperative as a pillar of development, with the change in the government system, it would be crucial to set plan of action for the development of cash crops such as large cardamom. The plan of action could cover issues such as managing production and marketing, setting up trademark, managing flow of goods from one portal to another without any problem, creating a system which benefits the farmers both in production and management of crops free of diseases.

From the empirical evidences it is clear that policies should be made in such ways that helps overcome geographical, infrastructure, institutional capacity and marketing challenges. Therefore, crops like cardamom, identified as a high value crop can positively ensure economic growth of the country if given special attention towards production and crop management. The ADS, which is the current reliable strategy, could thus be moulded in terms of need-based approach for its successful 20 years journey.

CHAPTER FIVE

Link between Women's Engagement in Large Cardamom Farming and their Livelihoods and Well-Being

This chapter analyses the link between commercial cardamom farming and livelihoods of women and their well-being. Taking a feminist ideology, both qualitative and quantitative approaches have been deployed in meeting the objectives. A series of findings have been described and narrated in this chapter, first by providing a scenario of livelihood activities in the study site. Then livelihood trajectories of households engaged in cardamom farming would be elaborated analysing what has led people choose cardamom as their basic crop as they become parts of agricultural transition, that is, drawing a temporal context. For this Haan and Zoomers (2005) idea of livelihood trajectories seems congruent, particularly in understanding the household dynamics as they undergo change in livelihood activities (eg, from subsistence farming to commercial farming) in the face of time. Under the livelihood trajectories three main elements has been discussed and analysed. i) The first component delves deeper into roles of women in comparison to men, and explores how and why the roles have changed or not changed and what makes men and women pick the roles they perform. This adds to understanding the power dynamics within the roles chosen by men and women in the cardamom sector. Moreover, this chapter also challenges the notion that feminisation of agriculture does not only take place in the absence of men caused by migration, war and other factors. Feminisation in agriculture, particularly in an agrarian setting could take place when men are present and women are equally a part of the agrarian change. To analyse this part, a “doing gender” model by West and Zimmerman (1987) has been applied. The doing gender concept states that gender is something people do than who they are. The idea of “something we do” means tasks performed by individual. And the idea of “something we are” means the representation of being male or female as part of ones own identity. This model has been used for this research because roles are gendered in the commercial cardamom farming (KC, et. al., 2016). This means that men and women take up with various types of activities based on the societal structure and practices. Additionally, along with the “doing gender” model, which does not take intersectionality as a crucial factor, this chapter includes intersectionality as a crucial element for analysis. Taking intersectionality approach has

been crucial in understanding the situation of women from different backgrounds, particularly the livelihood status of poorer women. ii) The second component would be to dig into women's livelihood and understand how transiting to commercial farming from other types of farming in the past has changed or unchanged women's status in relation to economic opportunities, production of crops and income and use. In order to analyse livelihoods, women's livelihood activities and capabilities in regards to sustainability issues have been documented in this research. This analysis fits into Chambers and Conway's (1992) idea of livelihoods. The linkages between cardamom farming and livelihoods of people have been explored by assessing income, production of cardamom as a commercial crop compared to subsistence crops in the past. iii) The third component investigates women's well-being as they become a part of cardamom farming to understand whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied with the change they have been facing in their livelihood. White's (2008) three dimensions; i) subjective, ii) material and, iii) relational has been used. Subjective reflects norms, values, people's choices and experiences, satisfaction level and such; and relational refers to individual relationship, family relationship, social groups and support, communication with the state and laws, social welfare etc and materials are represented by wealth, assets, income, skills and education. These three indicators clearly define how a person's well-being is over the course of time. The three dimensions are congruent with the frameworks of livelihoods as well.

The chapter finds that women of different ethnic background engaged in commercial cardamom farming have been able to improve their livelihoods as a result of economic opportunity. They have been able to spend on their children's education or household needs and have fair rankings on their satisfaction level. Engagement in commercial cardamom farming has proved even more fruitful for women from marginalized community since they have been able to step out of poverty. And the high return from cardamom farming has changed livelihood trajectories of these women and added to their positive well-being (KC & Upreti, 2017).

5.1 Current Employment Activities in Salakpur

Empirical evidences show agriculture is the mainstay of people of Salakpur where large cardamom farming is a major crop for income. There are total of 349 households in Salakpur, a village where a census survey was conducted.

Table 5.1: Main Occupation of Households

Main occupation	Households	Percent
Agriculture	192	55
Labour activities	73	21
Foreign employment	43	12
Non-farm self employment	41	11
Total	349	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 5.1 depicts, of the 349 households, more than 50 percent report their main occupation is agriculture, which means the household's main source of income has been agriculture. Besides, 21 percent of the households are engaged in labour activities in areas such as construction and carpentry, 12 percent in foreign employment and 11 percent are self-employed in non-farm activities. This means that agriculture still is the major source of income and livelihood option for majority of households. The national data shows agriculture engagement of Nepalese people in 2018 is about 71 percent of the total population (WB, 2018). In case of both national status and Salakpur, this may also depict that the engagement of people in agriculture has lowered over the years and taken up by other activities such as labour within the community, country and abroad and non-farm activities. The Labour Force Survey depicts that agriculture still employs most workers in Nepal where women's participation is higher than that of men. Also, in regards to employment, the national figure shows, 16.9 percent of the total population rely on wage employment in agriculture, 83.1 percent of population rely on self-employment in agriculture sector. And the data also shows 69.7 percent population rely on employment in non-agriculture sector (ILO, 2017).

“If we look at the village itself, we can say agriculture is the main occupation of majority of people...at present large cardamom farming is the mainstay. People have planted cardamom in small or large amounts, depending on their land size, for survival.” [FGD, Males]

This evidence reveals that households have been dependent on agriculture for centuries starting from subsistence rice and maize farming to commercial ginger and cardamom farming. This suggests that people have transited from one crop to another, finally

making large cardamom as their mainstay for the past 15 years. Moreover, this also suggests the good return from large cardamom has motivated the households with both large and small amount of land to depend on cardamom farming for living.

The findings also reflect, while majority of people are self employed, other income generating activities people are engaged in are casual labour in farm and off farm, formal jobs and family labour.

Table 5.2: Economic Activities of the Sampled HH Members

Occupation	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Self-employed (Farming)	404 (56.8)	411(59.1)	815 (58.0)
Trade	3(0.5)	2(0.3)	5 (0.4)
Handcraft	1(0.1)	2(0.2)	3(0.2)
Construction	2(0.3)	1(0.1)	3(0.2)
Casual labor (Farm)	5(0.7)	5 (0.7)	10(0.7)
Casual labor (Off-farm)	6 (0.8)	2 (0.3)	8(0.6)
Formal job	9(1.3)	6 (0.9)	15(1.1)
Family labor	6 (0.8)	7 (1.0)	13(0.9)
Others	39 (5.5)	28(4.0)	67(4.7)
Students + children below 5 years	236 (33.3)	231 (33.2)	467 (33.2)
Total	711(100.0)	695 (100.0)	1406 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Evidence (Table 5.2) shows that majority of men and women are self-employed in agriculture, particularly, large cardamom farming. Compared to other types of work, people are engaged in cardamom farming since they report that it is easy to farm and this crop yearns good return. Besides, there are few men and women engaged in formal jobs such as teaching; few are engaged in casual farm and off-farm activities and family labour. Also, very few are engaged in activities such trade, construction and handicraft. The “others” category reveals work such as tailoring, household helper, vendors, shopkeepers etc. These households also consist of those without land to produce enough to sustain their livelihoods. This data reflects Salakpur’s status of a major cardamom producing area across Ilam district (KC & Upreti, 2017). The data also suggests there is very little variation among male and female in regards to their engagement in the

given economic activities. This suggests both men and women have been equally engaged in various economic activities without one dominating the other.

5.2 Livelihoods Trajectories & Households Status Producing Large Cardamom

Majority of households take large cardamom farming as their main livelihood and income source. Although households with less land evidently produce less amount of cardamom, the return has been higher compared to other crops.

Table 5.3: Main Crops Cultivated by the Household in 2015

Crops	Amount of Land (ha)					HH Number N = 349
	Below 0.25	0.25 -0.5	0.5- 0.75	0.75 – 1.0	1+	
Broom grass	114(41.5)	78(28.4)	48(17.5)	19(6.9)	16(5.8)	275 (78.8)
Cardamom	131(59.8)	52(23.7)	22(10.0)	6(2.7)	8(3.6)	219 (62.7)
Oranges	38(53.5)	25(35.3)	4(5.6)	4(5.6)	-	71(20.3)
Beetle nuts	43(81.1)	9(17.0)	1(1.9)	-	-	53(15.2)
Vegetable farming	30 (81.1)	6(16.2)	1(2.7)	-	-	37(10.6)
Ginger	9(90.0)	1(10.0)	-	-	-	10(2.8)
Tea	3(75.0)	1(25.0)	-	-	-	4(1.1)
Maize	2(100.0)	-	-	-	-	2(0.6)

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Of the 349 households, the major crops reported were broom grass, cardamom and oranges. Few households also reported of growing crops such as beetle nuts, vegetables, ginger, tea and maize. Although the figure shows that majority of households produced broom grass (78.8%) as opposed to cardamom (62.7%), people still reported cardamom as their major crop and major source of income. Few reasons compile by this. First, the land that people own are mostly situated in the cliffs and steep areas where planting cardamom is not feasible and hence people plant broom grass. Second, the return from cardamom is much higher than broom grass, which makes the former crop the main source of income and livelihood. For example, in 2016, one kg of cardamom would cost NRs. 2500 while one kg of broom grass would cost NRs. 45. This variation makes it evident that the major livelihood options of people would be cardamom.

In regards to cardamom, of the 349 households, 219 produced large cardamom in small or large quantity. It is evident that most of the crops were produced in less than 0.25

hectars of land (Table 5.3). Very few households owned more than a hector of land. Households with more than a hector of land were richer households tagged as knowledgeable, elites and moneylenders. These households had at least one or more member with occupation of a teacher or had business outside of Salakpur. These households came from Brahmin, Tamang and Rai ethnicities. The amount of land possessed by households determined their status in the village. Households with less amount of land still practiced cardamom farming as it generate good income.

Evidence in line to this research, show that the production of large cardamom has improved the livelihood status of households in Salakpur (KC & Upreti, 2016). The livelihood trajectories have changed for people of Salakpur through cardamom farming. The improvement in livelihoods has been two- fold. First, production of large cardamom has provided high revenues for households compared to production of other crops. Second, people have been able to hire other people for labour work by providing daily wage.

“...In the past, we had rice, maize and millet. We did not have enough money. But now I see my sons play with money in their hands I had never seen in my younger days. It is all because of cardamom farming...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 71, Tamang]

... Our life would have been different without cardamom farming. We can save money after fulfilling our basic needs because of the return from cardamom trading...People used to produce rice before... Rice harvesting is difficult and it requires so much water... We lack irrigation facilities here and we have to buy our own pipes and manage water. Imagine that situation with rice. It must have been difficult. Also for cardamom there is a market but for rice, people consumed at home mostly. So there is a difference. Life is good because of cardamom farming. [IDI, Female Respondent, 38, Rai]

The testimonies above reveal that replacing subsistence crops like rice, maize and millet with cash crops such as cardamom has changed the lifestyle of people in Salakpur. The lifestyle changes have not only been in terms of increased income but also in terms of work pattern. For instance, rice farming had been labour intensive with requirement of

plenty of water for irrigation. Additionally, going through intense labour work and producing rice for subsistence purpose would mean lack of time for people in the households to engage in other activities. This further means that women were a part of the labour intensive rice farming with no income due to subsistence production and were also bound to perform household chores, which deprived them of income and leisure time. Although with the cardamom farming, women still are a part of household chores and labour work, the difference has been that they have been able to earn income, become part of institutions and save money for future. This has led to their well-being as they “feel good” due to experiences with income earning and being able to spend.

Moreover, the economic changes caused by substitution of cash crops with subsistence farming have changed the livelihood trajectory in the village. In comparison to other crops such as rice and maize that were farmed during the 1940s, large cardamom farming which came as a result of transition in Salakpur, has proved beneficial for people’s lives. First, cash crops such as large cardamom have been easy to farm, while crops such as rice required excessive amount of water and labour. Second, the return generated from cardamom has increased the income of households adding to satisfaction level of the farmers. This is because in many households, the returns have not only fulfilled basic needs but also other wants and encouraged investments.

Also, there is an emergence of understanding of the term livelihoods in these testimonies. Livelihood in general is understood as the means of living. The statements above comply with what Chambers and Conway (1992) define livelihoods;

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base. (Chambers & Conway, 1991)

Households in Salakpur have been able to benefit well from cardamom farming because of the return from this crop. While some have been able to secure their livelihoods through investment, others have been able to meet their daily needs. For example,

poorer households, categorised as households with no land or those dependant on daily wage, have been able to benefit by being able to move out of poverty. This is because these households have been able to produce little cardamom for better return. Additionally, poorer households without land have been able to participate as wage labourers during cardamom harvest season. This creates a lower risk of not having work in the village.

“...I do seasonal wage work and same is the case with my husband. We do not have enough land to produce much. After we are home from work, we put the money together and decide on what to buy. Our earnings are just enough to fulfil our family’s food needs. This happens on a daily basis...” [IDI, Cardamom non-grower, Female Respondent, 36, Dalit]

The above testimony reveals that in the households without land, working, as a wage labourer in farm or off farm activities remains to be a top priority. In such situation, men and women tend to keep their earnings together to fulfil their household needs. Women revealed that the males in their households would share the income on a daily basis. Keeping the earned money together for expenses remains to be a trend in most of the households. Also, there are no spaces for bargaining as the amount of money is spent daily to fulfil the household needs. There are also households who do not have land and are engaged in works such as tailoring and providing domestic help.

Likewise, richer households have been able to invest on their children’s education by sending their children to good schools with hopes of securing their children’s future.

“...Every time [we] sell cardamom, I think about our son’s education. We want him to be a doctor and we want to keep producing cardamom so we make enough money to invest in his education...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 34, Newar]

This statement reflects a mother’s concern about her child’s education in link to the income of the household. This household produces cardamom in a high density compared to other households and hence could make enough money. The income made by such households is used to fulfil household expenses and make bigger investments

such as buying shares in companies, saving and mostly investing on children's education. Evidences from the past shows that rural women tend to spend their money on their children if they have access to income (Hagen-Zanker, Pellerano, Bastagli, Harman, Barca, Sturge, Schmidt & Laing, 2017; Pandey, Dev & Jayachandran, 2016; Yoong, Rabinovich & Diepeveen, 2012; Kabeer, 1999). From the empirical evidences, it can be stated that both richer and poorer households tend to prioritise children's education and are willing to spend on children's education after fulfilling their basis needs.

In line to the findings above, previous studies demonstrate that commercialisation of agriculture is the key to economic development and poverty reduction, particularly in developing countries (Kirsten, et. al., 2012; Wiggins, et. al., 2011). Cash crops produced for export contribute to livelihood improvement (Diao, et. al., 2012). Commercial products comparatively provide higher income to the poor (Cadot, Dutoit & Olareagga, 2009), addresses food insecurity and helps the rural poor to step out of poverty (WB, 2008; Omiti, et. al., 2007). Studies from China and South Africa reveal commercialisation has led to increased income and fulfilment of household food needs (see Baylis, et. al., 2012; Hendriks & Msaki, 2009). This resonates with the findings of this research and reveals commercial cardamom farming in Salakpur has proved positive for people's enhanced livelihoods.

Apart for generating good return and adding positively to people's livelihoods, commercial cardamom farming has also led to economic opportunities for people through labour work. The economic opportunities are derived from the economic change over the years in Salakpur transmuted from subsistence to commercial farming. Most households have been able to provide labour-based work to other households. Labour happens in two ways. One, there is exchange of labour between the households producing high density of cardamom during cardamom plantation and harvest seasons. The exchange of labour is locally termed as *parma*. *Parma* or exchange of labour is common in rural setting where households help each other to harvest the crops by taking turns and using their human resource. People working as *parma* labourers are provided with food in return as they work from 10 am to 4 pm in the cardamom farms. Second, there is wage based labour work where people are paid on a daily basis. The wage-based labour mostly takes place during harvesting season by households producing high

volume of cardamom. These households typically have both *parma* workers and wage based workers. This depends on the size of their cardamom farms and the time and number of people required for harvesting.

Findings (Table 5.4) show, of the 349 households, 216 reported of employing agricultural workers when needed. These households come from various characteristics and demand labour. Some of these households have bigger amount of land and require labour during harvesting. Some households under this have fewer household members and hence, require labour. Some households produce in higher density and demand labour. The remaining 133 households did not employ any workers. This is because these households tend to have smaller amount of land and their labour came from the household members.

Table 5.4: Households Employing Agricultural Workers

Situation	HH Number
Employs agricultural workers	216
Does not employ any workers	133
Total	349

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Qualitative information reveals that households engaged in labour-based work in cardamom sector have been able to benefit through extra income. Typically people from poorer households have been able to fully commit to seasonal labour during harvest season. This is because they have very little land to produce cardamom in high density. In Nepal landlessness defines the level of poverty among people. People with less land or no land at all lie in the lower spectrum of having assets and are considered poor. These are the people who engage in labour based work to make their living.

“...My family has very little piece of land and we only have cardamom nursery. So during harvest season me and my family participate in wage work like this...It is extra money for us and I can spend on what I want...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 19, Dalit]

“...We hire labourers during season. We have both parma workers and wage based workers during the season. Wage workers are paid based on the work they do. For those picking cardamom from the farms, we pay NRs. 250 per day and for those separating, we pay NRs. 200 per day. For people carrying loads from farms to households, they are paid between NRs. 300-400 per day, depending on how difficult the task is. That is the rate everyone pays...” [IDI, Male Respondent, 51, Rai]

“...Yes. I do parma during harvesting time and also call for parma when it is time to harvest in our farms. We also have to hire wage labourers sometimes when people are not available for parma...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 38, Dalit]

“I hire both men and women during harvest season... It depends upon the capability to perform certain task, like we have picking cardamom and separating cardamom from the picked flowers... Women mostly prefer separating and men prefer picking as it requires a use of special knife...whoever is capable gets the work.” [IDI, Male Respondent, 66, Tamang]

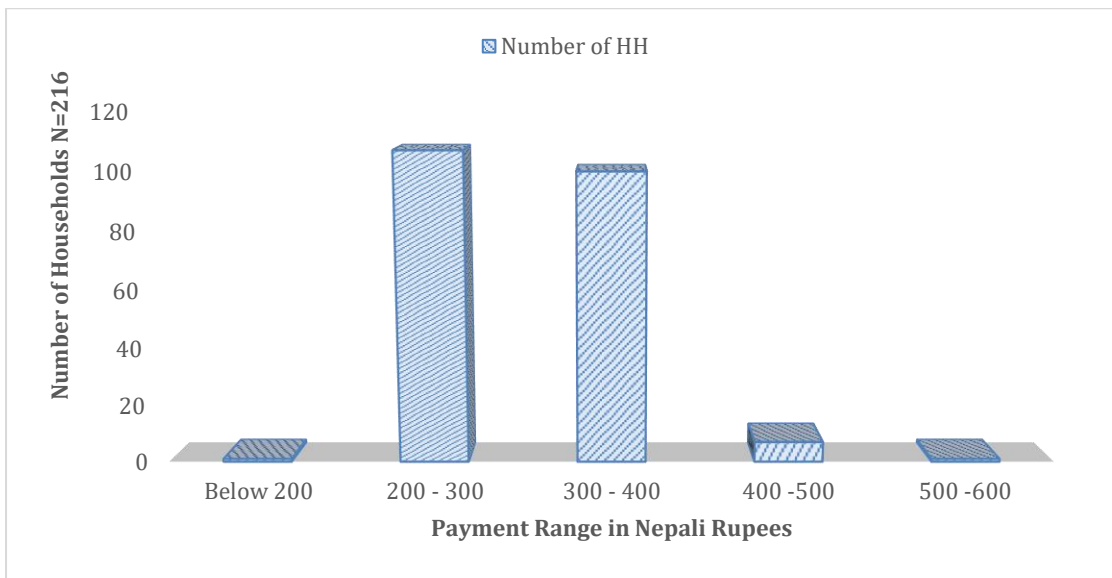
According to the statements above, it is evident that the labourers come from different backgrounds and status, which includes mostly cardamom non-growers and growers. Both men and women contribute to labour in agriculture. For example, there are households with no land that are dependent on wage labour such as cardamom farming for income. There are households with bigger piece of land who hire labourers from other households either under wage payment or as labour exchange or *parma*. The labourers are hired based on the need of the household, which is determined by the density of cardamom production of each household. Households producing high volume of cardamom create space for more labourers while households producing less volume of cardamom or those without land supply labour to the other households. The testimony above also suggests, that seasonal work or *parma* is done mostly by poorer households but it does not exclude other households from participating. This does not imply all the employed agricultural workers are poor. Taking advantage of economic activities is choice-based for richer households in which the members can participate

and earn extra money. For the poorer households, wage labour could be the means of living and source of income to run their livelihoods. Hence, they have been able to utilise their time by taking part in such activities.

As aforementioned wages are based on the type of work performed. The wage rate ranges from NRs. 200-400 in Salakpur (See Figure 5.1). Of the 216 households, majority of households provide a daily payment ranging between NRs. 200-300 and NRs. 300-400. The payments are based on the type of work but it is evident that women are mostly engaged in works that pay lesser while men are mostly engaged in work that pay higher. In the cardamom-farming sector, people performing roles such as setting the farms, separating the picked cardamom pods from the flowers pay between NRs 200 and NRs. 300. Likewise, roles such as picking the cardamom from the farms during the harvest season and performing labour intensive works such as carrying loads (jute sack with cardamom) from one place to another if required, pay between NRs. 300 and NRs. 400. While the type of work is what determines the payment, the access to different types of work is gendered and is thus potentially discriminatory because women tend to perform roles that pay less.

And such roles performed by women associates with the doing gender framework by West and Zimmerman (1987). Women perform such roles reflecting on what they have been doing in the cardamom farms since the evolution of cardamom farming. This means women take up the roles that are subdued as something women do or something women have been doing as part of customary practice. However, this situation tells us that women are assigned roles such as separating cardamom pods from the flowers, which is a home-based work and technically labelled easy jobs. This means that roles for women are set in such ways that they could also fulfil the household chores such as cooking for labourers in the farms while doing their work of separating. This automatically leaves men from not doing household work.

Figure 5.1: Per Day Payment for the Employee by the HH in Nepali Rupees



Source: Field Survey, 2015.

The evidences suggest that a proper livelihood consists of components such as a good income base to fulfil basic needs and beyond, being able to invest on children's education and other investments and being able to share the economic space with community members. Moreover, the findings also suggest having these components add to people's degree of contentment.

Overall, these evidences do not only limit to the idea of livelihood as a means of living to meet basic needs as put by few theorists (Neihof & Price, 2001). But it spreads a multidimensional understanding of livelihoods that are far beyond income, assets and opportunities (see Bebbington 1999; Chambers & Conway 1992). That is, livelihoods comprises of well-being, contentment and security in addition to the existing parameters. That is, these situations relates to Haan and Zoomers (2005) idea of livelihood trajectories. As Haan and Zoomers (2005) explain the changes in livelihood pattern not only in terms of income and opportunities but also the situation and status within the livelihood boundary people are engaged in. For the cardamom farmers in Salakpur, the degree of livelihood trajectories has not been limited to household's income and livelihood activities. But there are also issues regarding creation of employment for others as they welcome labourers, built in sense of happiness and contentment through the return from their cardamom, upgraded educational status of

the younger generations, and aspirations to raise living standard. Households producing cardamom in Salakpur have not failed to compare their life styles as rice or other subsistence crop farmers as opposed to cash crops such as cardamom farmers, relating to the latter being more fruitful for livelihoods. This suggests that in the process of transiting from one agricultural space to another, people's livelihood trajectories are built, not only in terms of money, food and shelter but also their level of happiness and satisfaction.

5.2.1 Feminisation and Cardamom Farming

The debate on feminisation reflects that “feminisation of agriculture” happens when women take control of the farmlands while men are away due to factors such as migration (Deere, 2009; UNRISD, 2005) and insurgency (Ghale, 2008). In this research, I have used feminisation as a concept, which addresses shifts in gender roles and relations and other dimensions of the society in relation to change in agricultural labour market and the household. My research findings reveals feminisation has existed in Salakpur from the ancient rice-farming era till today where commercial cardamom is the main livelihood activity. But mainly, the practice of feminisation pattern in Salakpur has spurred through commercial ginger farming followed by large cardamom. The new idea that this research spurs is that feminisation of agriculture takes place without absence of men. This means that men and women both contribute to the process of economic change with women having to play major role in the process. The trend of feminisation is visible when farming systems gets transmuted from subsistence to commercial farming. In this research, for example, women's visibility in commercial cardamom farming has set an example of looking into the process of feminisation from a new directive. In the cardamom-farming sector, men and women perform designated roles from farm levels to markets. More on roles has been elaborated in the immediate section.

5.2.2 Roles of Women Engaged in Cardamom Farming

The research findings show, from farm level and producing and processing to trading, roles are gendered. For example, almost all the traders and exporters trading their produces, at the time of this research, were males. This means the return from cardamom goes directly into the hands of men. Additionally, a study by KC & Upreti

(2017), pointed out the reasons for roles being set in such ways. The research states roles are gendered because of patriarchal pervasiveness and the tradition of taking up with what the practice has been from the past. All the roles falling in the chain of cardamom production depicts engagement of men and women in smaller or bigger number, except for marketing, which is highly dominated by men. Roles such as irrigating, harvesting cardamom from the farms, drying and marketing were mostly male dominated while roles such as setting the farms and separating were mostly female dominated. This has been the practice because women have never questioned the differences in such roles. Women were also engaged in processing or cutting tails of cardamom, but this happened with the traders, at the trading level, rather than the local producers or collectors. Also other roles women portrayed were preparing food for labourers during the harvesting season as households with larger number of land hired wage labourers or exchanged labourers (KC, et. al., 2016).

“...Women have been separating cardamom capsules from the flowers than picking because it has been set that way since I was born...I do not know who created this but we [women] took up with what was happening around in the neighbourhood... Some tasks like carrying harvested cardamom from the farms are difficult and men do it...” [FGD, Females]

“Women do not go to the market because they do not show interest. The trend has been that men go to the market to trade cardamom in a group and they buy rations needed for households...it is not that women cannot do such work...women just do not take the lead. They leave it up to men...” [FGD, Males]

“The trend has been like that...women do household work, feed the cattle, take care of children and men go to the market...It is difficult for both men and women to go to the market because we do not have enough seats in the vehicles and who would do the household work if women go to the market with men?...” [FGD, Males and Females]

The testimonies reveal that the respondents are not aware of who sets the roles for men. The practice has been kept alive by women taking up with roles performed by other female members in the households or community. And since the practice has been set this way, men and women have started thinking that certain roles applies to women and certain roles applies to men. There is a blind assumption made by men on women's inability to perform roles such as marketing. Likewise there is a blind assumption made by women on men not being able to perform jobs such as cooking, cleaning and other household chores. This is because neither men nor women have witnessed the older generations men and women performing all the tasks equally. Also, there have been no challenges set against the gendered roles and masculinity by women for a long time, especially in a rural agricultural setting (Haugen & Brandth, 1994). Although women tend to become parts of institutions, trainings and seminars, their responsibility on domestic work sets them behind. Also roles are gendered because of the use of technologies, which automatically reduces women's engagement (FAO, 2011a; Negin, Remans, Karuti & Franzo, 2009; Doss, 2001; von Braun & Webb, 1989).

As reported there were no hard and fast rule on picking roles for men and women. But the practice has been more inclined towards keeping up with the traditional ways of working within the households, than excluding women or men from performing particular roles. This, however, reflects transferring patriarchal system in the modern times in agriculture sector, as men and women in the household tend to carry out the work done by the older generations men and women. This also resonates to the "doing gender" theory by West and Zimmerman (1987) where women and men do what they have been doing to represent their "sex" as females or males respectively. Therefore, separating cardamom pods from the picked flowers, for example is looked upon as a feminine task as it goes along with household work. Some people relate this with the fact that women are the only beings that can give birth while men cannot. Hence, they associate this natural and biological phenomenon to socially constructed norms such as gender roles.

Table 5.5: Series of Tasks Performed in Cardamom Farming by Gender⁹

Series of Tasks	Males (%)	Females (%)
Input and supply –setting and preparing the farms	30	70
Irrigating the farms	90	10
Harvesting – Picking Cardamom flowers from plants	60	40
Harvesting – Separating cardamom pods from the picked flowers	5	95
Harvest season – preparing food for labourer + doing the dishes and cleaning up after the labourers	0	100
Drying	60	40
Trading and Marketing	100	0
Processing [Tail cutting] organised by traders	0	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 5.5 clearly provides a percentile of men and women engaged in various tasks in cardamom production. The figure reveals that before cardamom is sold in the markets, men and women in Salakpur perform series of tasks. It was observed that both men and women prepare the land for cardamom farming and plant the saplings once the farms are ready. But women dominate these tasks making the men to women ratio as 7:3. Likewise, men dominate women in irrigating the farms with a ratio of 9:1. Similarly, during the harvest time, men usually pick the fruit using special knives, although the majority reported that men and women performed this role equally. The ratio of men and women for picking cardamom during the harvest season is 3:2. After the harvest, it is mostly women (95%) who separate the fruits while men carry the fruit to the dryer. Finally, when cardamom is dried and ready to be sold, men take it to the market with null participation of women as traders or marketers. After the products reach the traders, processing work such as tail cutting is done. For this the traders hire labourers and it represents all women. Overall, in the series of tasks performed it is evident that roles are gendered. Studies conducted in different time span point out various reasons for roles being gendered such as women’s inability to question masculinity and work in the agriculture sector such as questioning marketing and trading (Masamha, Vusilizwe I & Uzokwe, 2018; Haugen & Brandth, 1994) patriarchal pervasiveness and taking up with the conventional practice within the households (KC & Upreti, 2016; Jost, et. al., 2016); technology and know-hows that reduces women’s role (Jost, Kyazze, Naab, Neelormi,

⁹ This information was gathered based on the respondents views through qualitative information which includes IDIs, KIIs and FGDs.

Kinyangi, Zougmore, Aggrawal, Bhatta, Chaudhary Tapio-Bistrom, Nelson & Kristjanson, 2016; Justus, Ouma & Birachi, 2014; FAO, 2011a; Negin, et. al., 2009; Doss, 2001; von Braun & Webb, 1989). Moreover, this could also lead us to understanding that women's needs are different than men, they perform different roles, encounter different challenges and hence, their experiences are different than that of men.

Findings also show that the position of women in the cardamom production is gendered despite their significant contribution. Empirical findings emerge with the notion that women perform tasks that are easier and that do not require much strength.

“...During the season, men mostly do works like irrigating, picking, drying and marketing. Women have to do household works first and then they go to separate cardamom...Picking cardamom during harvest seasons is difficult. First of all picking requires a use of special knife and we have to be trained to use it. Second, picking is done during rainy season and going to the cliffs to harvest is life threatening. Men are stronger and they know how to do it well...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 41, Tamang]

“...I prefer separating the cardamom against picking despite the wage rate being low for the former because picking is difficult. I tried using the knife once; it hurts my wrist very bad. Picking also requires a lot of time to be dedicated. Sometimes people have to travel far in the cliffs where the farms are, which is very difficult...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 36, Newar]

The testimonies above reveal that, being a part of cardamom farming women have other roles such as cooking for labourers during harvest season. This is one reason why they are also seen separating cardamom capsules because this task is home based. The testimonies above represent the idea that roles chosen are divided as easy and challenging tasks taken by women and men respectively. Also the idea that men do not excel in household chores represents various connotations. First that patriarchy restricts men to perform household chores and they lack the ability to understand household management. Second since patriarchy allows women to do household chores, performing these tasks for men would be difficult as they would be “messy”. It might

also be that men find household work such as cooking and cleaning difficult like women find using knives to pick cardamom difficult. Hence, it is the customary practice that pushes individual to perform the task they choose to perform. However, it can be argued that both men and women can perform these tasks if they make an attempt. I personally think that women could use knives, and in some household women were doing so, if trained. And men could do household chores if they give special attention to it.

The difference in roles implies the patriarchal pervasiveness of labelling gender roles is embedded in peoples' associations of masculinity and femininity. Even though it is evident from this research that an individual is not forced or restricted to perform any roles, the existence of such practice has emerged over the years. In the commercial cardamom farming, particularly, roles have emerged with the economic change and opportunities. The idea that in majority men take over with masculine tasks and females take over with feminine tasks is palpable. Men and women tend to "do gender" by associating their "sexes". This means works that men and women do are associated with either masculine or feminine characteristics given that patriarchal set roles are evident. In other words, the idea of masculinity is associated with leadership and difficult tasks and femininity with tenderness and easier tasks, as represented by previous researches (Choi & Fuqua, 2003; Hoffman & Borders, 2001; Gill, et. al., 1987) is revealed from this research. This finding also resonates, particularly in link to marketing of the products that masculinity positions man as the breadwinner of the family while femininity positions woman as household managers (Moisio, et. al., 2013; Pellow, 2003). However, the direct answers to "who sets the roles" are rather invisible. Yet, the answers can be derived from the debate of masculinity and femininity, which is the causal construct of society, further denoted by patriarchal pervasiveness.

Roles such as marketing and trading are highly dominated by men's participation while roles such as cooking for labours are highly dominated by female's participation. In regards to gender division of labour in cash crops, evidences show, rise in cash crop production across the world has led to rise in women's participation, although there is no reliable database (Barrientos, et. al., 2004). Women's roles have been limited to cultivation of their household's land holdings or landlord's lands, paid or unpaid farm works and wage based labour in and off farms (FAO, 2013b). This further reflects men's presence in the markets and women's segregation from the markets (Raney, et

al., 2011; WB, et. al., 2009). One reason for women not being able to be a part of market is because of their lack of mobility. Women are less mobile than men, particularly because they lack leadership abilities, motivation and encouragement. Moreover, lack of proper roads and means of transportation also restricts mobility in the study site. Men are mostly seen traveling to the market to sell products as well as buy necessities for households. This not only shows patriarchal pervasiveness and cultural barriers as aforementioned, but also lack of leadership capacity of women about marketing and financial literacy.

“...If women go to the market to sell the products like cardamom, they will not be able to bargain well. So, men are better in marketing. I have not gone to school and I do not know anything...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 43, Dalit]

The idea this statement provides, once again, refers to the conventional notion that women are not entitled to do certain jobs due to their weakness in certain abilities. On contrary to the notion that men can do certain jobs because they have the ability to take up with such work with ease. It is as if the roles are marked off by sexes. This reflects the power dynamics between men and women. The power relations in determining roles, once again are derived by patriarchal structure. The practices and cultural barriers in division of labour based on gender contribute to lack of capacity and financial literacy. Male domination of certain roles compels women to pick other roles, mostly easy roles rather than taking stands to learn new skills. This results in women's own marginalisation as they concur to certain roles as masculine or men's roles. This on the other hand concurs to men taking up with tasks that are termed as “difficult to do” by female counterparts. This already draws a line between men and women in regards to division of labour, which are a part of social construct. This also resonates with previous findings, which reflects men with lesser power than women could fall preys of mental illness due to inferiority complex (Hayes & Mahalik, 2000; Mahalik, et. al., 1998).

In regards to roles for women from marginalised community, the scenario is slightly different. First, they are already poor with no access to land and resources. Having no land in an agrarian country reflects a weaker means of livelihood. Second, these women have lesser option in picking roles.

“...My family does not have any land. I am a tailor and during [cardamom] harvest season I work for wage. I separate cardamom....I do not know how to pick and I am afraid I might ruin someone else’s farms...I also have a child so I can be with my child and separate cardamom at the same time...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 27, Dalit]

“...Who would train us to use a knife at this age?... I am better off doing separating work, at least we have this work so we can earn some money... During [harvest] season, after finishing work, I will have to go home and cook...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 42, Dalit]

The understanding that can be derived from the testimony above is that on one hand women claim that they work but on the other hand they lack skills to carry out certain types of work. This might be because these women are deprived of trainings to build or hone their skills. The lack of skills denotes need for local institutions to support these women. Since, these women are ostracised from taking up with certain roles, it makes their status poorer. Even though there are institutions at the local level such as cooperatives and women’s group, these institutions lack provisions on capacity building. Despite being part of institutions and acquiring a platform for participation in various activities including financial literacy, women themselves lack the ability to reach out for training opportunities at the local and national platform. This is caused by the lack of access to information regarding opportunities available.

The evidences are in line to women’s role in cardamom farming against men, relates to the idea that gender, as it is a social construct, could be restructured to create equal bases for men and women as claimed by prominent feminists (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Butler 1990; Lorber 1994). For instance, in regards to roles, the cardamom sector in regards to roles also raises a question on why women or men do not question the gender roles and capability they have or could have when policies today have been gender focused and women specific?. The answer to this might be simple or complex. In simple terms, it could be because the platform is agricultural as opposed to higher corporate sectors or sectors that demands educational attainment. And since this is agriculture sector, men and women compromise to make a living by taking up roles without questioning the current practice. They do not have platform to share their

concerns or that agricultural policies do not focus on equal roles. In complex terms, as a revolution takes years, and such has been the case in the agriculture sector. Women have progressed and come far from what they were in terms of being limited to household work. Cash crops sector has provided platform for women of different ethnic groups to earn and make use of their own income. This is a change for those who did not have access to financial resources to spend on their own. These were not practice in the past in case of Salakpur and many other parts of Nepal. Hence, questioning the “masculine” and “feminine” work and bringing equilibrium to these is a matter of time and change, which could take months, years or longer.

5.2.3 Cardamom Farming and Livelihoods of Women

Women have experienced economic changes as a result of transition in the agricultural practice over the years. The high return from commercial farming has fascinated people in Salakpur to be a part of agricultural transition. Moreover, women have become a part of this transition as they are influenced by the practice caused by agricultural transition. Prior to cardamom farming, women were engaged in ginger farming, also a prominent cash crop in Salakpur. Since ginger farming could not sustain due to disease infestation, moving to cardamom farming which came as an alternative across the village, provided women with livelihood options. While ginger still provided women economic opportunities, the income they made were quite low compared to the income they have been making from cardamom farming.

Empirical evidence shows that women have been able to benefit from the returns they acquire by engaging in cardamom farming. Women, thus invest in household needs, their children’s education and savings. Women also opined about expending their income on household food needs and health treatment of their family members.

“...Because of the return from cardamom, last year, I could pay the loans I had taken for my son’s treatment. He has been seriously ill for years. I am credit free and I save some money in the co-operative...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 35, Rai]

The above testimony of a mother reveals how income from cardamom farming set her free from debt. Not only this but she also developed the habit of savings in institutions.

Cardamom farming has had a big impact in the lives of households with loans. Also, the fact that there is an existence of institutions like the co-operative which functions as a savings entity, has also proved beneficial for women as they are aware of savings and financial management.

In general, women have been able to spend their earnings from cardamom on household food needs, children's education, health care, loan payment and even adding assets such as jewellery. In contrast, men tend to invest on land and property, vehicles, mobile phones and such items, which are usually under their names. Majority of women's first priority has been fulfilling basic food needs. For example, they would buy rice, oil, salt and vegetables for the household consumption. Opinions were also generated on prioritising needs and expenses based on the needs of the households. For example, some invested on water tanks or sprinklers to irrigate the farms, depending on remaining amount after fulfilling their household needs. In households with school going children, women have succeeded in influencing their husbands to invest on their children's education.

"...I told my husband that we should send our son to a good school in Kathmandu since we have been getting better income from cardamom. What is the point of earning money, if our children cannot be educated? My son is in a good school in Kathmandu today..." [IDI, Female Respondent, 38, Brahmin]

"...Last time when my husband and I received money by selling cardamom, I insisted him we buy a motorbike for our son. My son has completed his high school. He is 24 now and does not show interest in continuing his studies. . If he wanted to go to college, we would blindly invest in his education. He wants to do business and he is helping us with cardamom production. So, we bought him a motorbike recently..." [IDI, Female Respondent, 41, Tamang]

Like aforementioned, this testimony again reveals people's interest in investing on their children's future by providing them quality education. Also, people have invested on children's luxury needs like motorbike in the village as well. Having luxury items like motorbikes shows status of the households and define them as richer households

compared to others. In Salakpur, most of the households with good earning possess assets such as motorbike, which is also an investment.

These evidences reveal that cardamom farming has proved positive in the lives of women and their families. It was reported, and noticed during observation that most men handed the income to women after trading cardamom in the market. Hence, both men and women jointly expended the money for household. These findings resonates with previous studies which implies having access to income and resources have proved positive in providing women satisfaction with life, encouraging them to invest on children's education, nutrition and health (Alam, 2012; Duflo, 2012; Morrison, et. al., 2007; Quisumbing, 2003; Haddad, et. al., 1997). These findings also defy the idea that men marginalise women when it comes to taking over income earned from commercial production (Fischer & Qaim, 2012; WB, et. al., 2009; Doss, 2001; Lilja & Sanders, 1998; von Braun & Webb, 1989). Furthermore, this also challenges the idea that men benefit in larger instances than women through commercial production and marketing of the products (Fisher & Qaim, 2012; Njuki, et. al., 2011; WB, et. al., 2009). The idea that men have more benefits than women from commercial cardamom farming, particularly in production and marketing, might be true in other cases.

Evidently, although it is clear that the roles are gendered in the cardamom production, majority of women have reflected on having access to income opportunities and handling income with the guidance and support from men or other family members. Such practice did not exist in the past when households produced rice and vegetables, as subsistence crops. Women, then, did not have bargaining capacity and power to claim the income brought by men. Power relations existed due to customary practices of men being superior than women. However, with the economic change from subsistence to commercial farming, the paradigm shift caused massive changes in the lives of men and women. First, the change in economic structure invited more women to participate in the labour market. This is when women and marginalised communities gained their space and freedom to work outside of their households. Second, being a part of the labour market women made their own income and contributed to their households. Third, women also joined institutions such as cooperatives and started saving money. Institutions have stood as support mechanisms for these women who could voice their concerns and hone their skills on financial literacy. This, in Haan and

Zoomer's (2005) theoretical idea, refers to the change in livelihood trajectories of women as they exit from the incapable force and enter the being capable forces in terms of earning. This also reflects the idea of livelihood by Chambers and Conway (1992), which mirrors livelihood in terms of capabilities, assets, and ability to recover from stress and shocks and creating a secured future. In relation to this concept, in the cardamom-farming sector in Salakpur, women have been able to create a security base for themselves and their households by adding assets, being part of institutions to generate skills, participate in events, raise awareness about social and economic issues and saving money in institutions for their future use.

This idea is also similar to Chant's observation that women face discrimination regarding roles and lack negotiating and bargaining capacities for investments. These discrimination leads to feminisation of poverty. Feminisation of poverty is term coined by Pearce in 1978 highlighting the idea that there are differences in poverty level between men and women in developed world. Previous substantiations show women are poorer than men (Medeiros & Costa, 2008; Bradshaw, Finch, Kemp, Mayhew & Williams, 2003; Casper, McLanahan & Garfinkel, 1994) due to difference in poverty levels between men and women or the difference in poverty levels between male-headed households and female-headed households (Medeiros & Costa, 2008, pp. 4). Therefore, having access to income would allow both men and women to step out of poverty by being able to spend on their needs. Also, participation of women in the labour market that are derived by economic changes such as commercial cardamom farming, can lead to changes in poverty levels. Being able to earn income is more positive among the women from marginalised community who are poorer by status, land and resources. As income opportunities rise, the poverty level decreases, hence making women capable of fulfilling needs. Additionally, the shift in poverty levels, from the very poor to less poor, in an upward direction, are the results of various factors besides change in economic development. In Salakpur, this phenomenon has taken place with the help of institutions. Institutions have played a major role in uplifting women's status.

"...Many women are a part of cooperative today. They earn and save money, small amount or big, it is for their own good and future..." [IDI, Female Respondent, 41, Tamang]

“...Everything has changed with cardamom farming. Women did not get to see money in the past. Now they are paid for their effort...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 65, Rai]

Women’s statement on becoming a part of institutions and being able to save money shows changes in their lifestyle. When, officially, savings was not a part of practice, established institutions have generated saving habit in these women. Most of all women have revealed about changes they have undergone after becoming a part of cardamom farming. Institutions such as cooperatives, therefore exist as a backbone to encourage women’s participation and savings. Through institutions women have been able to acquire knowledge on financial literacy including savings and credits and financial management.

Evidences also show that women, mostly from Tamang and Rai ethnicities are prominent in managing finances in the households as they have higher influences on decision making. These ethnic groups are regarded as matrilineal groups as women head the households jointly with men and have influence as key decision makers.

“We are “matwalis” and this is what happens in matwali community. Even if men earn, women handle the earnings. That has been the way for a long time, I think.” [IDI, Female Respondent, 41, Tamang]

Traditionally, ethnic groups such as the Tamangs and the Rais are often called *matwalis* in Nepal. *Matwalis* are the liquor drinkers and the alcohol makers. Even though the practice has changed now, castes such as Chhetris and Brahmins were considered clever and non -drinkers. Majority of households in Salakpur fall into the Tamang and Rai ethnic groups and these households have visibility of women handling financial returns and managing households.

Additionally, poorer households tend to spend the return from cardamom immediately. Hence, in most cases men and women or other family members of the households make joint decision on the use of income.

“...I do seasonal wage work and same is the case with my husband. We do not have land to produce anything. After we are home from work, we put the money together and decide on what to buy. Our earnings are just enough to fulfil our family’s food needs. This happens on a daily basis...”[IDI, Female Respondent, 36, Dalit]

“...There is no way I can use the money I earn on my own. Neither can my husband do this. We have to think through it and spend carefully in the market. I also save NRs. 100 per month in the saving cooperative and we have to decide on the budget...”[IDI, Female Respondent, 58, Dalit]

Based on the statements above, most of the poorest households in Salakpur have been the Dalits. Despite knowing that their earnings are just enough to fulfil their basic food needs, women in these households manage to save little or bigger amount in the institutions. Institutional encouragement has led to investment and savings of these groups of women. Women have been able to raise their concerns through these institutions and this has worked as a source of empowerment for them. More on empowerment and institutional support has been elaborated in chapter six.

In regards to marginalised groups, such as Dalit households, commercial cardamom farming has proved different among the marginalised or the Dalit households. The Dalit households (N=23) had no or less land compared to other households and their status was poor. Among the women of different ethnic groups, were Dalits contributing to cardamom farming. Households with small amount of land produced cardamom in smaller quantities and worked mostly as seasonal labours. As seasonal labours, the daily amount these people earned was between NRs. 200 and NRs. 300 depending on the type of work. Women of these households worked in the farms with their husbands or worked as wage-workers during harvest season.

Women from this group revealed that cardamom farming has proved to be one of the most reliable sources of income and better means to their livelihoods and well-being. Some women, particularly those without any land worked as tailors for living. Hence, during the season they would contribute as wage labourers in the households requiring

workers. Thus these women would play many roles depending on the time and availability of work.

“...[We] are tailors and [we] do not have land. I sew clothes and during the cardamom season I go to my neighbours’ to harvest cardamom. The money I earn from cardamom is more than what I make as a tailor. I do not have many customers for my tailoring job. Sometimes, it is hard to fulfil household food needs if my tailoring does not go well. With the money from cardamom, I can feed my daughter well and fulfil household expenses during the season. If I had land I would produce my own cardamom. I am at least content that I can fulfil my household need because of cardamom...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 25, Dalit]

Dalit women opined the importance of land for their households alongside importance of cardamom farming. Generally, land is a valuable asset and an indicator of poverty. Lack of land means no farming for a village setting like Salakpur. Owning land would mean production of crops such as cardamom. Few Dalit respondents reflected,

“...My family has a very small piece of land. Once we started cardamom farming in that small area, we could eat better food and wear better clothes. I am a student today, and I also do wage work during cardamom season. I buy good food for my family and also save some money...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 19, Dalit]

“...If we did not have this piece of land for cardamom farming, we could have gone hungry for days. We produced vegetables in the past, but what could we get selling the vegetables? A penny that does not even buy salt! There is no market for vegetables here. Today we know the taste of sugar because of cardamom production. The value has risen and that is very good for us. We hope the value does not go down...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 42, Dalit]

In case of the Dalit households with very little land, having that piece of land has helped them fulfil their daily household needs. These women take the land they own as the greatest asset they could ever have.

The demand for labourers in the cardamom farms by the households with large land holdings has also shown positive results by breaking stereotypes about Dalits considered untouchables. In the past, marginalised women faced discrimination and were ostracised from the communities for being Dalits and women. For example, these women were not allowed in the households of other ethnic groups until cardamom farming started. With the change in economic situation, they have been welcomed to participate as labourers in households of higher castes. Such changes in social standings might have been due to labour requirement for harvests.

“...The situation for [us] has improved a lot. In the past we had different treatment. We could not enter other people’s households. These days we are treated well. Only very few older generations still practice “untouchable” things but others welcome us. We go to houses with cardamom farms and work there for wage. We are provided food and daily wage. There has been no evidence of direct hatred unless people say something without us knowing...”
[FGD, Dalit Females]

These testimonies reflect that commercial cardamom farming has been the most reliable sector for marginalised communities’ livelihoods. There has been a graduation of the Dalit communities from poorest strata to less poor. In the past these marginalised households suffered from fulfilling their basic needs. However, economic opportunities in the commercial cardamom sector have helped these communities gain access to income. Apart from eliminating caste-based discrimination, there has been no wage-based discrimination. This is because every labourer is paid depending upon the type of work. Therefore, it can be inferred that the marginalised groups have been able to create a space for themselves in the labour market derived by economic change and opportunities. Many women’s food needs have been addressed through their engagement in cash crop farming. These findings correlates to previous ones, which state that commercial cardamom farming has helped, addressed food insecurity (Gautam, 2011; Sharma, 1997) and improve the socio-economic conditions of women by graduating them from poverty (Dahal, et. al., 2009). Moreover, it is also vivid that discrimination against the Dalits also comes from other caste strata such as the Tamangs and Rais who are the major caste representation of Salakpur.

Previous studies also reflect that reduction of poverty is directly linked to gender equality (Smith & Mpedi, 2011; Smith, Auret, Barrientos, Dolan, Kleinbool & Njobyu, 2004; Kabeer, 2007; Elson, 1999). Hence, reduction of poverty can potentially happen if opportunities are provided to the poor and the marginalised. Of the poor and marginalised, vulnerability is evident on marginalised women. These groups of women are deprived not only due to gender discrimination but also due to persisting social inequality. Findings are also evident that the marginalised communities without access to land and resources could benefit through commercial farming. This is because it provides them higher return compared to other forms of jobs such as tailoring and shop keeping.

In sum engagement in commercial cardamom farming has proved highly positive for women in Salakpur. The findings above reflect that commercial cash crops farming has generated income opportunities for women and improved their livelihoods (see Alam, 2012; Kabeer, 2012; Hamilton et. al, 2002). Women have been able to gain access to financial resources through income and earning, through their husbands to invest on their children and family members. The results of women being able to earn has proved positive on the overall family members, particularly children regarding investment on children's education.

5.2.4 Cardamom Farming and Women's Well-being

In order to measure well-being for this research, a well-being index, in the form of likert scale, was developed and used both qualitatively and quantitatively. On the qualitative front respondents were asked about their satisfaction level on various elements and probed further for an in-depth understanding on why they choose the ratings. In the quantitative front, of the 349 households, 312 females and 249 males¹⁰ provided their responses on well-being. For analysis, the well-being index has been categorised into three parts based on White's (2008) three dimensions of well being (see Table 5.6).

¹⁰ Well-being index was a part B of the questionnaire, which was implemented on both male and female respondents of the households. However, we could not reach all 349 men and women because of absence of male or female respondent during the time of the survey, disabled male or female in the household without ability to provide answers etc.

According to White (2008), the three dimensions of well-being are material, subjective and relational (also see well-being framework listed in Chapter Two, Figure 2.4). The material as a dimension of well-being refers to elements such as standard of living, income, livelihood activities, education and knowledge. Likewise, the subjective aspect of well-being relates to elements such as values, perception and experience. The final aspect relational well-being concerns elements such as personal and social relations, networks, relationships with family and community. White reveals that having a good satisfaction level on these three aspects leads to better well-being.

Table 5.6. Dimensions of Well-being

S.N	Dimensions of well-being by White (2008)	Index used during the research [Rated 1-10; 1 being the least satisfied and 10 being the most satisfied]
1	Material	Satisfaction with standard of living Satisfaction with current living standard compared to five years ago Future security Satisfaction with cash crop [cardamom] farming Satisfaction with non-traditional crops
2	Subjective	Satisfaction with life as a whole Satisfaction with achievement in life
3	Relational	Satisfaction with personal health Satisfaction with personal relationship Satisfaction with feeling part of community Satisfaction with safety for life

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Empirical evidences show that women generated high level of satisfaction with all the dimensions of well-being, particularly on the material well-being. Since the indexes of material well-being has been directly linked to cardamom farming, the satisfaction levels were quite high.

“I would give 8 on satisfaction on current standard of living because the money has fulfilled my basic needs and my family’s needs. It has made us happy...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 23, Tamang]

“I say 10 if I have to compare my life now with five years ago. Life has changed a lot. If my son was ill five years ago, I and my husband would be in debt...”
[IDI, Female Respondent, 35, Rai]

“8. We are not rich not even close to ok families. But since we got into cardamom wage work, we are happier. That is good money...” [IDI, Female Respondent, cardamom non-grower, 25, Dalit]

The ratings given by the respondents above reveal that they have experienced change in lifestyle at some point due to cardamom farming. Overall, commercial cardamom farming has led to satisfaction with standard of living of many women in Salakpur. The satisfaction has been on the basis of being able to fulfil household food needs and invest on children’s education and health. Very few people generated their satisfaction on being able to add assets such as buying motorbikes for their family members, investing on savings and other business. Poorer women, particularly Dalits, however, were satisfied because they could be a part of labour force during harvest season. Non-traditional cash crops like cardamom provides instant money when harvested, which has led people to fulfil their needs without relying on credits or loans. Such situation has added to people’s improved well-being through better living.

Findings also suggest that fulfilment of material well-being particularly food needs and investments have been the first priority of many women. Being able to use income for household food consumption and invest in savings satisfies women as a whole.

In regards to the subjective dimension of well-being, issues on satisfaction with life, as a whole and achievement in life were the major thrust for this research. There were mixed responses regarding this;

“7. I have to say happy for this too [achieving in life] but I want to do more, produce more and make more money so I can add land, save money so I can have a good wedding for my children.” [IDI, Female Respondent, 58, Dalit]

“8 to that [achieving in life]. I am happy more for my sons. I am old now so I want them to earn more and save.” [IDI, Female Respondent, 65, Rai]

“I for what I am achieving in life. I have not achieved anything yet. I have big hopes. I rely on others for work. We do not have any land to produce so I work as a wage labour during harvest season. How can I be satisfied?” [IDI, cardamom non-grower, female Respondent, 25, Dalit]

The testimonies suggest, women’s perception on their satisfaction level with achievement in life is based on their status, social difference and background, that is, subjective well-being. For the poor and Dalit women and households with no land, achievement is beyond their capabilities. Hence, they aspire to work hard to achieve more. Women from other households with land have generated high level of satisfaction on their achievement because they can save money, particularly by selling cash crops. Being able to achieve something in life such as savings adds to people’s well-being. These findings also suggest that people relate to a successful fulfilment of material well-being to generate satisfaction with subjective well-being. This means in order to be satisfied with life as a whole, people aspire to have more money or other goods. This reflects that subjective well-being and material well-being are interconnected to make an individual satisfied.

In assessing the relational dimension of well-being, empirical evidences show respondent’s high level of satisfaction with personal health, relationships with family members, feeling part of community and safety in community. Since Salakpur is a small village, people tend to know each other’s households very well and the village is tagged as relatively safe.

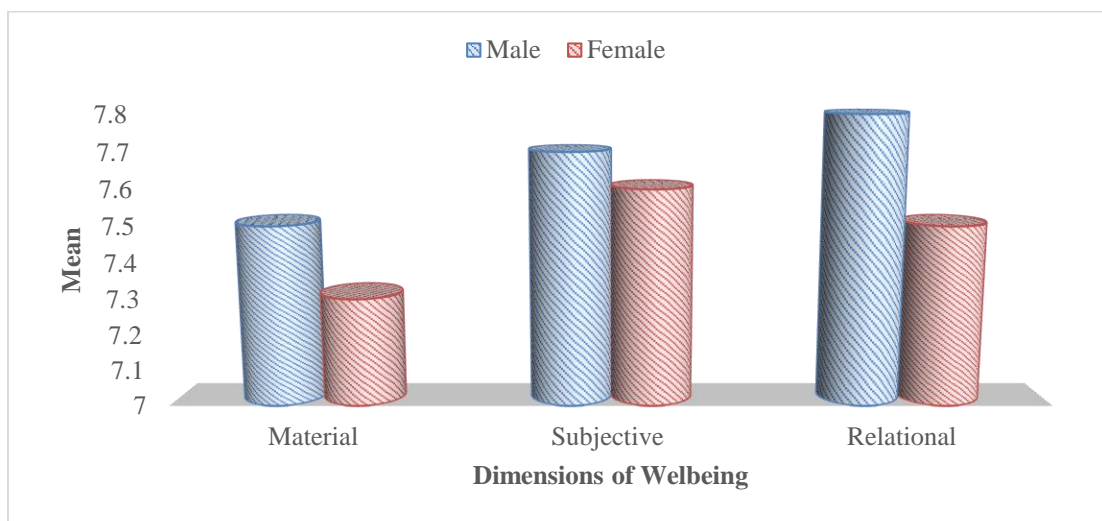
10 for personal relationship. Without my husband I would be nothing. He supports me in anything I do because we do it for our children. We want our children to be known by others as good children, we want them to study well and show that Dalit children from Dalit community can also do something. [IDI, Female Respondent, 24, Dalit]

I say 10 for feeling part of community....very happy to be where I am. Because of organisation, my life has changed as well. I have met sisters who are poor and unhappy because of their personal family issues and I am there to give them suggestions, good ones. It is a good feeling. [IDI, Female Respondent, 35, Tamang]

According to the ratings above, women generated relatively high level of satisfaction in regards to the relational dimension of well-being. Although in some cases women did not reveal much information, particularly on personal relationships, their overall satisfaction has been generated through feelings of attachment with the community and institutional participation. For example, most of the women were a part of savings group where they not only saved money but also discussed their personal issues and other concerns. A social cohesion can be seen in the relational well-being from the above testimonies, where women support each other in need. Once again this suggests that the relational well-being is linked with material well being. Being able to become a part of saving institution has generated sense of security in the lives of women.

Likewise, quantitative evidences show that both men and women were relatively satisfied with their well-being. Of the 1-10 rating, in which 1 stated “not satisfied at all” and 10 stated “highly satisfied”, both men and women’s satisfaction rate reflects above 7 (See Figure 5.2 and for detailed well-being ratings refer to Annex 1, Table 1 and Table 2). Figure 5.2 shows in all the three dimensions of well-being, material, subjective and relational the satisfaction level of males was little higher than the satisfaction level of females. The material well-being looked into five different categories, i) satisfaction with standard of living, ii) satisfaction with current living standard compared to five years ago, iii) future security, iv) satisfaction with cash crops (cardamom), v) satisfaction with non traditional crops. The Mean of this shows a very small variation between men’s satisfaction (7.5) and women’s satisfaction (7.3). Both men and women opined that they witnessed a massive change in their lives since cash crops farming. But more than this, men were more satisfied because they have been the ones initiating production and marketing of the cardamom. Moreover, men have legal properties under their names, which would satisfy them automatically in terms of material well-being.

Figure 5.2: Mean of Material, Subjective and Relational Well-being by Gender



Source: Field Survey, 2015

Likewise, the subjective well-being looked into two major components; i) satisfaction with life as a whole, and ii) satisfaction with achievement in life. Again, figure shows a fraction of difference between men's satisfaction (7.7) and women's satisfaction (7.6) relating to subjective well-being. This shows that cardamom farming has helped men and women to achieve more than what they have achieved from other farming in the past.

Similarly, relational well-being was measured using four parameters; i) satisfaction with personal health, ii) satisfaction with personal relationship, iii) satisfaction with feeling part of community, and iv) satisfaction with safety for life. The Mean of relational well-being shows men's satisfaction being 7.8 and women's satisfaction being 7.5. This variation is also not too huge showing that men and women tend to feel safe in their communities and have good relation with their community.

Although small in number, the difference in reflection of well-being between male and female might have been due to the fact that women earn lesser money than men, women do not have much exposure in the markets, women's achievement has been less than men's and mostly women's perception of overall achievement and standard of living is different than men. However, such difference does not seem to be large.

Overall, using White's (2008) dimensions to measure well-being helped acquire data on how good men and women feel with their standard of living, daily life and their surroundings. Women feel good with their living style post cardamom production due to economic gains and benefits they have been able to acquire. A good measure of well-being have been reflected through associations with institutions. This is because they have been able to voice their concerns regarding family issues, personal matters and financial issues, acquire financial literacy and livelihood benefits.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter provides a scenario of the livelihood activities of the households of Salakpur. It highlights people's engagement in cardamom and other crops farming to set a backdrop on the status of the village to emerge into the livelihood trajectories of the households engaged in cardamom farming.

In understanding the livelihood trajectories, this research points out that over the years, people have undergone subsistence rice farming and moved gradually towards commercial farming. The journey of commercial farming did not start with cardamom but it started with ginger farming and its commercialisation. However, as ginger became extinct due to disease infestation after serving livelihoods for a little more than a decade, large cardamom came as an alternative. Eventually, this crop became the major source of livelihood and farmers became small holders representing cardamom. Additionally, people's livelihoods improved due to large cardamom farming and changed the livelihood trajectories of the entire village engaged in cardamom farming, from farm level labourers to land owners and producers. The combination of factors such as income opportunities, good return and being able to invest through commercial cardamom farming has satisfied the people of Salakpur. This suggests that being able to fulfil basic needs first and then being able to invest and be a part of society equally adds to happiness and well-being of people.

Women's role in cardamom farming compared to men is different. That is, from input to trading, the roles are gendered. While majority of men irrigate the farms and harvest cardamom using special knives, majority of women tend to separate cardamom capsules from the flowers and do household chores such as cooking for labourers and

family members. The idea that men do masculine work and women do feminine work, which has been put into place conventionally, exists. Patriarchy and customary practices restricts men from performing jobs women perform despite them being able to perform it. Moreover, no one has challenged the masculinity way of farming based on different roles that are gendered, not naturally but by society. Women have been able to make a good living, relatively, as equally as men. However, it is also evident, regarding roles that women do not exist in trading and marketing of cardamom. These shows the existing cultural barriers derived by patriarchal pervasiveness. Men rule over women in markets of the products creating bias that women cannot bargain well. This questions women's ability as well as equal opportunities women are subjected to when it comes to performing certain roles. Why cannot women bargain? Why is it difficult for women to bargain? This is because women are submissive towards men and they accept whatever is practiced in their society without questioning. The socially constructed norms have been translated to a theorem and a rule of law. When men do not take care of children and household chores, the theorem tends to be proved because it becomes a time issue. Women become short of time and hence, are automatically restricted from taking up chores such as marketing of the products. For instance, when a mother in law or older generation family member, starts questioning a woman's ability in bearing a son or take care of a baby and household chores, this is when things fall apart for women. They are bound to prove they are good daughter in laws like men are bound to prove they are responsible sons who can earn and take care of family. The difference is socially constructed and it automatically demeans women. This questions the issue of equality in regards to roles. When men opt out of unpaid work, women by nature take it up to maintain a familial balance.

The livelihood conditions of women has improved livelihood due to economic opportunities through commercial cardamom farming. Despite these implications of cultural barriers, women have been able to at least participate in the cardamom labour market as producers and wage based workers to make a living. Through the income earned, they have been able to invest on household food needs, children's educational needs and savings through institutions. This chapter also reflects upon the livelihoods of marginalised women or the Dalits. For the Dalits cultural barriers have changed, as they are freely able to participate in the labour without facing any discrimination. With the economic change caused by commercial cardamom farming, the Dalits have been

able contribute to labour. Nevertheless, this finding requires more research on whether the social standings of these Dalits really improve by making them a part of labour market in a broader level.

Additionally, in regards to well-being, women have generated their satisfaction in life through cardamom farming claiming that it has improved their livelihoods and well-being. They have compared their lives with cardamom farming against lives in the past without cardamom farming. The satisfaction level is visible through their positive opinion about being able to upgrade their living standard through cardamom farming compared to other farming techniques in the past. Overall, poorer women, with no land, have been able to step out of poverty because they have been able to earn through wage labour if not through cardamom production.

Also, institutions, mainly cooperatives, have played a major role in shaping livelihoods of women, as they have been able to voice their concerns through institutions and save money by becoming members. This applies to women who come from households with land and are cardamom growers and households without land who are cardamom non-growers. The cardamom non-growers are seasonal wage workers. The reason these institutions have been established, particularly targeting women, is to provide a platform for these women to gather under the same roof and participate in various activities. As many women reflected on the importance of savings in their lives, it is evident how community organisations function well and how they can be used as a source to shape livelihoods of people.

CHAPTER SIX

Nexus between Women's Empowerment and Commercial Cardamom Farming

This chapter has underlined findings about factors associated with women's empowerment through their engagement in commercial cardamom farming. This chapter has begun with a reflection of rural women's perception of empowerment in relation to their daily lives in the first place. Then the factors contributing to women's empowerment has been enlisted and analysed using the five domains (5Ds) of Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI). The WEAI index was adapted to make it context specific at the village level. Before using this index, a mapping was done to understand various domains that could fit into measuring empowerment. The 5Ds are i) decisions about agricultural production, ii) decision making about employment participation, iii) income comparison and decision making on finances, iv) leadership in the community, and v) time allocation. Findings show women's perception of empowerment has been shaped by being able to participate in income generating activities, being able to earn and being able to participate in institutions. Decision-making in various activities within the household has added to empowerment. Additionally, institutional participation has broadened women's mind-sets about being able to raise voice and concerns, learn more about financial literacy and show leadership skills. In regards to time allocation women have been over performing their chores by doing both unpaid household chores and taking part in income earning opportunities.

6.1 Rural Women's Perception of Empowerment

Findings show women from different ethnic backgrounds have their own understanding of empowerment. Most understanding covered elements such as earning by self, being able to live independently without relying on others, being able to make decisions and having good education.

“For me empowerment means to be able to remain healthy and live a life with own choice. To be able to talk and live with dignity without depending on others is to be empowered.” [IDI, Female Respondent, 34, Newar]

“Empowerment means to be able to earn and make money and not rely on others. The ones who do not work and ask only are beggars and I do not like that. I would rather eat little but work.” [IDI, Female Respondent, 36, Dalit]

“To be able to raise voice when needed, make decisions by self and not rely on husband or others, to be able to send children to good school and give them proper future...Save money, buy things needed for household, add assets if one can and participate in institutions to learn more.” [IDI, Female Respondent, 38, Brahmin]

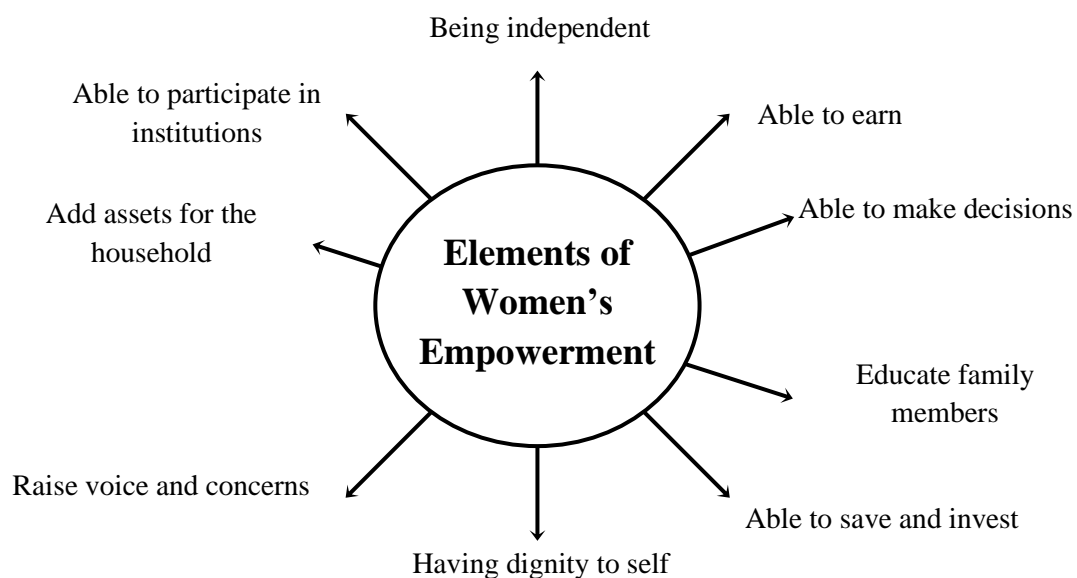
The testimonies provide various implications of empowerment from women of different background. For some women, empowerment is being able to raise voices and share concerns while for some women, empowerment is being able to earn without relying on others. Moreover, for the respondents empowerment also refers to being able to make choice for self in the households, community or institutions.

The above testimonies also reflect an important notion of empowerment derived by previous theories. For instance, Kabeer’s (1999) three elements of empowerment; resources, agency and achievements are reflected in the above definitions. In this context, phrases such as “being able to earn” reflects resources in the form of economic opportunities; “being able to raise voice” reflects agency in the form of supporting institutions and “being independent” reflects achievement derived by income opportunities. Like Kabeer’s ideology of empowerment as “people’s ability to make choices” women in Salakpur also reflect similar understanding on element of empowerment where “choice” is a crucial element. This suggests that women in Salakpur view empowerment based on their daily experience and are well aware of the concept.

Two forms of empowerment emerge from the testimonies above. One is the women’s economic empowerment and another is the women’s social empowerment. Economic empowerment reflects elements such as being able to earn more and become independent. While social empowerment reflects elements such as being able to raise voices and concerns, being a part in the saving entity and having access to education. The definitions also differed based on people’s economic status, age and ethnic

background. For elderly women, being empowered also meant sending girl child to school since these women themselves were deprived of education. For the poorer households and marginalised women, empowerment meant being able to earn through hard work to run livelihoods. For households with good income, elements of empowerment were associated with being a part of institution for saving, being able to raise voices and being independent. This further tells us that empowerment, as a concept is very broad and is directly linked to people’s experiences and situation.

Figure 6.1: Elements of Empowerment Based on Opinions by Respondents



Source: Author, 2016

Based on the various definitions of empowerment by the respondents the major elements that have emerged are shown in Figure 6.1. According to the respondents, being independent from family members was one of the crucial elements of empowerment. Independence in this context means living freely without being under other family members. Also, independence also denoted being able to make choice for self without relying on others. Other elements of empowerment that were mentioned frequently were being able to earn, make decisions on household management and finances and invest money to educate family members. Having dignity to self by being recognised as a member of the community without discrimination was also referred to as an element of empowerment. This reveals that people want to live a respectable life

by being welcomed within their community. Also, being able to save money and raise voice and concerns by being a part of institutions was also revealed as major elements of empowerment. Institutions have played a major role in shaping people's life, as they have been able to raise their concerns when required and save money in a monthly basis. These elements have occurred in previous concepts of women's empowerment as stated by women's ability to earn and use the income individually or for the household (Rangel, 2005; Duflo, 2003; Thomas & Strauss, 1995; Thomas, 1994; 1990). Being able to make decisions at the household level or individual level (KC, et. al., 2016; Tandon, 2016) and being able to make choices as part of transformation (Kabeer, 2001; Rowlands, 1995; Sen, 1992) are all associated with women's empowerment.

6.2 Factors Underlying Empowerment of Women: The 5 D's

In order to measure the factors underlying women's empowerment, the WEAI was applied. Since the WEAI is a survey designed to measure women's empowerment at various level of agricultural work, the index was adapted in the country context and used during the survey. WEAI sets to measure women's empowerment in the agriculture sector taking in account inclusion of women, agency and capabilities to shape their status (see Alkire, et. al., 2013; Narayan et. al., 2009; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Alsop, et. al., 2006; Narayan, 2005). As multidimensional this indicator seems it helps uncover situation of household regarding production, income, decision-making and leadership, which are the crucial elements that determine empowerment.

The findings and analysis have been based on; i) decision about growing crops (input, production and marketing); ii) decision-making on employment participation; iii) decision-making on finances; iv) decisions on being a part of institutions and, v) time allocation for household work.

Also, in order to measure men and women's input on decision-making, a code was set for all the questions. The code comprised of seven different scales; "No influence-1", "Limited influence-2", "Influence in some decisions-3", "Influence in most decisions-4", "Important influence on decision-5", "decision not made/not applicable-88" and "I do not know-99." The influence on decision making were asked mainly on two major crops grown in the households, as reported by the respondents. This part of the survey

was administered on both male and female of the households to assess the gender differences in the issues based on their perception and experiences.

6.2.1 Decision about Growing Crops (Input, Production and Marketing)

In order to understand men and women's situation on decision-making on growing crops, six elements of decision-making were covered. These seven elements were, decision on; i) land acquisition, ii) which plot to plant, iii) use of technologies, iv) applying fertilisers, v) labour and, vi) harvesting of crops.

Overall, the results about decision-making on growing crops vary by qualitative and quantitative approaches. From the qualitative interviews, women's perception about decision-making shows existence of gender differences. Such differences are marked by traditional practices, access to resources and property, sense of ownership and lack of exposure of women in the markets, lack of trainings for fertiliser application and use of technologies.

“The decision-making has always been done by men from the past. Why would I say what to plant and what to do in the land when the property is under my husband and his brother's name?. They know everything because they have lived here more than me. This is his birth place.” [IDI, Female Respondent, 38, Brahmin]

“They say if women go to the market to sell the products like cardamom, they will not be able to bargain well. So, men are better in marketing. I have not gone to school and I do not know anything.” [IDI, Female Respondent, 65, Rai]

“If we have to hire labour, harvest or decide on which plot to plant, we do everything together. But in the end I agree with what my husband says because has been doing this for a long time and he is good at it.” [IDI, Female Respondent, 34, Newar]

The testimonies above reveal that decision-making about growing crops have been influenced by patriarchal pervasiveness. Men taking responsibilities on roles, such as,

marketing where women are not visible, derive this pervasiveness. The feelings in women that the property belongs to men, passed by their ancestors reflects women's situation of resource ownership. Most women in the study site did not have land or resources under their names legally. This status is true for regions like Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa as the sex-disaggregated data reports women's land ownership is substantially very low (Kieran, Sproule, Doss, Quisumbing & Kim, 2015; Doss, Kovarik, Peterman, Quisumbing & Bold, 2013; Doss, Meinzen-Dick & Bomuhangi, 2011). This is because the ancestors pass the properties unto the male member of the household. This, therefore, is a reflection of patriarchal setting. It is also evident that women have not been able to claim properties for themselves with their understanding that the properties belonged to the male members of their family. And women in the households only become entitled to properties after the death of their husbands or in absence of the male counterparts in the household. However, in most cases the properties are passed onto sons of the households once they become eligible.

This shows that women are deprived of properties and direct access to resources in the households, which is the result of patriarchal setting in the village. This is also a reflection of lack of knowledge about property ownership and importance, lack of education and lack of empowerment on claiming properties as a family member. This further questions the labelling of empowerment by women who claim they are empowered to certain extent. Moreover, women tend to be submissive in this matter and comply with the situation. Also, despite claiming that women are empowered, they do not mention rights to property as a crucial element of empowerment. This is given by the notion that the property belongs to men as passed by their ancestors which leaves women behind in making a claim. This also means that men have full power in having access to property and they do not practice power sharing in regards to their properties with women in their households.

Power sharing, in the context of land and property ownership in Nepal has mostly been a stagnant issue completely given to men. Men have openly exercised power in not only having access to property but also making decisions on the use of it. All the household respondents approached during the research revealed that the properties were under the male members of the households. There have been change in policies regarding property rights, which can be now given to women but there seems to be no practice of

this policy change, particularly in regards to having more rights over the land. This means that joint ownership that are facilitated through policies does not necessarily mean equal land rights as men often have more rights over the land than their female counterparts (Doss et. al., 2013; Jacobs & Kes, 2014). This could mean that men do not want to give up their position easily or share their power with other members in the households.

Decision-making on various aspects of growing crops is male dominated particularly in the use of technologies, harvesting, hiring labour and marketing of the products. Even though women are a part of this, men tend to overrule the decisions. This has been because women lack skills on use of technologies. For instance, in case of cardamom farming taking irrigation tools to the farms that are not in the periphery of the households is time consuming as well as it requires hard labour. Hence, men tend to take up with such responsibilities leaving women to perform the household chores. This trend is visible because there is no training facilities in the village and men tend to learn from each other on the use of technologies. Women on the other hand, lack time, as they are obliged to do household work.

Another facet to this is that women are not seen in the market. This has been marked by lack of women's ability to bargain and women voluntarily bailing out from entering the market. This shows women's own prejudices about certain type of work without showing any interest in it. Moreover, this also shows women's lack of ability in performing certain tasks to which they leave it to men.

“Women do not want to take responsibility of going to the market. They are dependent on men from the past. But it is also a community practice. Men team up together to sell the products. Also, the market is far from here and there is also chances that women could get less money from the traders since they cannot bargain.” [IDI, Male Respondent, 42, Tamang]

This reveals a contradictory idea on how men perceive women in regards to taking up roles of marketing. The scenario in Salakpur is that men team up to take their products to the market. The lack of transportation facilities in the village limits only one member of the household to take part in marketing. This automatically engages men to go to the

market leaving women to perform household work.

Likewise, quantitative findings show significant gender differences in decision-making on various issues such as decision about growing crops, decision on choosing livelihood activities and decision on finances. The decision-making analysis has been made based on the information provided by 312 female and 282 male respondents on two main crops grown in their households. Of the major crops grown, large cardamom was reported as a primary crop in contributing to people's livelihood.

Survey results show, 39.4 percent of males reported of having important influence on decision-making in land acquisition for their first crop. Only 12.2 percent of female respondents reported of having some influence on decision-making in land acquisition for crop I. For crop II males outstripped women in having influence on decision-making on land acquisition for the household. For decision-making about selecting plots to grow the two main crops, majority of males, 39.7 percent for crop I and 31.9 percent for crop II, reported of having important influence on decision, while majority of females reported of having influence on some decisions for both the crops. For the use of technology in the crops, again male outcast females in decision-making with very nominal percentage for both crop I and crop II (see Annex 1, Table 3 about decisions on growing crops).

In actions such as applying fertilisers and hiring labours, once again data shows men are ahead in terms of having high influence on decision-making compared to women. Additionally, evidences show for harvesting 39.0 percent and 32.6 percent of male respondents reported of having important influence on decision-making for crop I and crop II respectively. This figure for women was 17.9 percent for crop I and 13.8 percent for crop II, showing high variation. Finally, on selling products to the market, once again males reported of having most important influence on decision-making on both the crops. There was a huge variation between men and women's decision-making for marketing of the goods. Overall, men's engagement in decision-making on growing crops tends to be higher than women in the study site.

Overall, evidences show men are mostly active in decision-making in land acquisition, plots selection, technology use, fertilisers' application, labour hire, harvest and market.

This could be a reflection of men having direct link to the land and property as the sole owners. In addition, this deprives women automatically from making decision on the land owned by men. This tells us having direct link to property, influences higher level of decision-making. This also tells us women have not been able to claim properties directly with their male counterparts in the household. The tradition of men having legal access to property under their names, therefore, is still visible in the study site.

Our findings coincides with previous studies that reflect women deprived of education, access and control over resources, trainings and extension services in comparison to men are seldom active in the process of decision-making (Slavchevska, et. al., 2016; Hill & Vigneri, 2011; FAO, 2010; Morrison, et. al., 2007). Despite contributing equally as men in the agriculture sector women's visibility in control on farm inputs and decision-making is nuanced (Urdinola & Wodon, 2010).

A study based in Nepal shows married women's access to land ownership is directly related to their ability to make final decision in their households (Allendorf, 2007). Nevertheless, a study conducted in Uganda regarding men and women's right to land and decision-making in agriculture show that despite women having less right to land, both men and women tend to have equal decision-making regarding selecting crops, applying fertilisers, selling crops and keeping income (Bomuhangi, Doss & Meinzen-Dick, 2011).

These findings are incongruent with studies from African context on women's engagement in cash crop farming. As the studies reveal active participation of women can result in farm decision-making (Alufohai & Ojogho, 2014). Also, women engaged in decision-making as cash crop producers can bring positive results in their households given that they make own decisions on their income (Dimova & Gang, 2013).

In our context, even though there is active participation of women in cash crop farming, their engagement in decision-making is rather small. Observing the practice of African countries, it can be inferred that women's decision-making can reach the level of men, given that there are provision of services, trainings and plans and policies that focuses on women's active participating for decision-making. Also, this reflects that despite

high degree of engagement women's take on production and management in the agriculture sector is low, which is also a counter-reflection on findings by Bomuhangi, et. al. (2011).

6.2.2 Decision-Making on Employment Participation

This section covered two main elements; input on decision-making to work outside of home and input on decision about labour of other family members. Qualitative evidences reveal both men and women have equal influence on decision-making to work outside of home as well as on decision making about labour of other family members. However, for younger males or females, the elderly men and women of the households involved in decision-making on whether the former can work outside of home or not.

“I am allowed to work in nearby households during harvest season. I cannot go to other villages. My father and mother decide for me. Other villages are far away and it might be unsafe to travel.” [IDI, Female Respondent, Dalit, 19]

Decision-making to work outside of home depended on the distance to work. Men mostly travelled further and took up with roles requiring much effort such as harvesting in the farms located away from home and in the cliffs. Women took up with roles such as separating cardamom in neighbouring households or performing household chores such as cooking for labourers. The decision to pick such roles comes from a mutual understanding between the family members. This suggests that decisions on employment are based on the roles. Also, the roles are gendered which is the reflection of existing patriarchal structures. This means that men and women take up with roles passed onto them by their parents and ancestors.

When asked about the degree of input on decision to work outside of the house (see Table 6.1) of the 282 males, 33 percent reported of having important influence and 26.6 percent reported of having influence on most decisions. None of the males reported of having no influence at all while few reported of having limited influence in decision-making.

Table 6.1: Participation in Employment / Livelihoods

Inputs on decision to work...	Participants													
	Male (%)							Female (%)						
	1	2	3	4	5	88	99	1	2	3	4	5	88	99
Outside of home	-	3.9	15.6	26.6	33.0	18.4	2.5	6.1	10.5	21.5	21.0	21.1	21.5	4.2

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Of the 312 females, 21.1 percent had important influence in decision-making when asked about their input on decisions to work outside home. Also, 6.1 percent of women reported of having no influence at all while 10.5 percent reported of having limited influence. Overall, both qualitatively and quantitatively, there is a difference in decision-making among men and women. There were reports that the decision-making on choosing to work outside of home is made based on distance to work, type of work, time taken for work and confidence level. This means that travelling further for work has been considered men's job in the village. This has been linked to issues of safety when travelling as well as need for women's presence to do household work which men are not good at. For example, many female expressed that their husband or male members in the households supported their decisions to work as wage labourers within the community during the cardamom-harvesting season. However, no women travelled outside of the community or other villages to carry out paid work.

Additionally, decision making to work outside of home is also associated with the age of women (Acharya, et. al., 2010). Younger men and women shared their concerns with their family members about their interest to work outside of home. In some cases the final decision has been made by elderly in the household and in case of children, women were also final decision makers. In a community, age refers to an individual status and is directly related to the ability to make decisions (Oduro, Boakye-Yiadom & Baah-Boateng, 2012).

Men, women and other stakeholders expressed that there has been a massive change in women being able to raise their concerns and voices in their households. Such changes are noticed through women's active participation in institutions, cooperatives and savings groups. In these institutions, women are engaged in decision-making, supporting other women in need and raising concerns. This has become a practice in the study site, as more women have been able to understand through experience about

the importance of becoming a part of institution for building social leadership and establishing financial security. Being a part of institutions have helped women acquire the confidence they have never had before in regards to voicing their concerns and encouraging other women to stand for themselves. This situation in the village reflects that institutions play a huge role in implanting the sense of empowerment in women. And such implantation lasts for long term as women become able to make decisions in the households and provide their share of opinion when needed. This reflects the concepts by Agarwal (1997) pinpointing inclusion of women in decision-making outside of home can have a direct link to women’s decision-making inside of home.

When it came to working outside of community, for either construction or other type of work, which would require long walking and working hours, men took up with these jobs. Hence, one concrete reason for lower percentage of females influencing in decision-making to work outside of community, could have been due to the nature of work. This according to the respondents was mostly associated with women’s safety while travelling and men’s inability to handle household chores in absence of women.

In the input on decision about labour of other family members which was rated between 1 to 5 of which 1 refers to having no influence; 2 being limited influence; 3 being influence in some decisions; 4 being influence in most decisions and 5 being important influence in decision making, 88 referring to “decisions not made/not applicable” and 99 referring to “I do not know”. Data shows, 25.2 percent males and 10.8 percent females reported of having important influence on decisions. In terms of having influence in most decisions, the figure was 29.8 percent for males and 19.2 percent for females (see Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Participation in Employment / Livelihoods

Decision about	Participants													
	Male (%)							Female (%)						
	1	2	3	4	5	88	99	1	2	3	4	5	88	99
Labour of family members	-	3.2	20.2	29.8	25.2	20.9	0.7	5.1	7.8	10.2	19.2	10.8	20.8	1.9

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Again, from the in-depth perception of men and women, household members engaged

in cash crop farming jointly made decisions on wage work. Men and women perceived that there is a high level of cooperation between the household members and spouses when it comes to cash crop farming, production, harvesting, working for some other households during harvesting season and even hiring or sending household labours. This is because not all the household members can participate at once or not all the available labours can work in one household during the season. Hence, decision has to be made carefully and jointly, with both men and women's engagement. Also, there were exceptional cases of decision-making in households with single male or female as heads. The single headed households, made their own decisions. Hence, the input on decisions about labour of other family members is associated with the type of households and need.

There are few studies, which supports claim of joint decision-making based on complementarity and requirements. For example, a study from Ethiopia reveals a mutual cooperation and decision-making between male and female of the households in issues such as farm level work division (Berkett, Tarazona, Alistair & Verschoor, 2013). That is, men complement women in the farm level work by ploughing if women engaged in weeding the farms. Women working and earning from cash crops farming do participate in decision-making on various issues (Deere, et. al., 2010) compared to their engagement in other forms of cash crops production (Dimova & Gang, 2013).

Quantitative data shows women have less decision-making power than men in regards to working outside of home and picking household labour. However, qualitative evidences suggest that there have been changes in the study site on women's engagement from being highly inactive to somewhat or more active. Such changes have occurred due to the formation of institutions where women learn to raise their voices and concerns, make decisions at the household level, save money and engage in welfare related activities.

6.2.3 Income Comparison and Decision-Making on Finances

This research reflects both men and women earn income through their engagement in cash crop farming. However, there is difference in earnings between male and female. The difference is due to the type of work both men and women perform.

In regards to men earning more than women, qualitative evidences reveal few reasons. One being that in these households, men tend to do other jobs such as teaching, store-keeping, trading of goods, driving and working for wage in construction. While women actually do home based work that does not require travelling. Works such as tailoring and seasonal wage based work in cash crop harvesting reflects women's roles are limited. Similar findings have been generated previously in the context of Nepal (FAO, 2013a). Hence, in this context roles determine wages. And the variation in roles between men and women are resonated by the pre existing practices. Nevertheless, there are few women who perform roles similar to men and earn similar wages like men but these cases are minimal. These women have challenged the notion of existing gendered roles and the societal scenario of "doing gender".

Apart from differences in roles and wage based on roles, women's unpaid work is shadowed. The unpaid works are denoted by household work such as cooking for households and cleaning and cooking for labourers during harvest season. Also, doing both paid and unpaid work increases the working hours and women tend to make less income (Sikod, 2007). Most men and women perceived that whoever earned more contributed for the household, rather than keeping it all for personal use. Perceptions also revealed that women did not feel inferior for not being able to earn more money than their partners. There were women, who agreed,

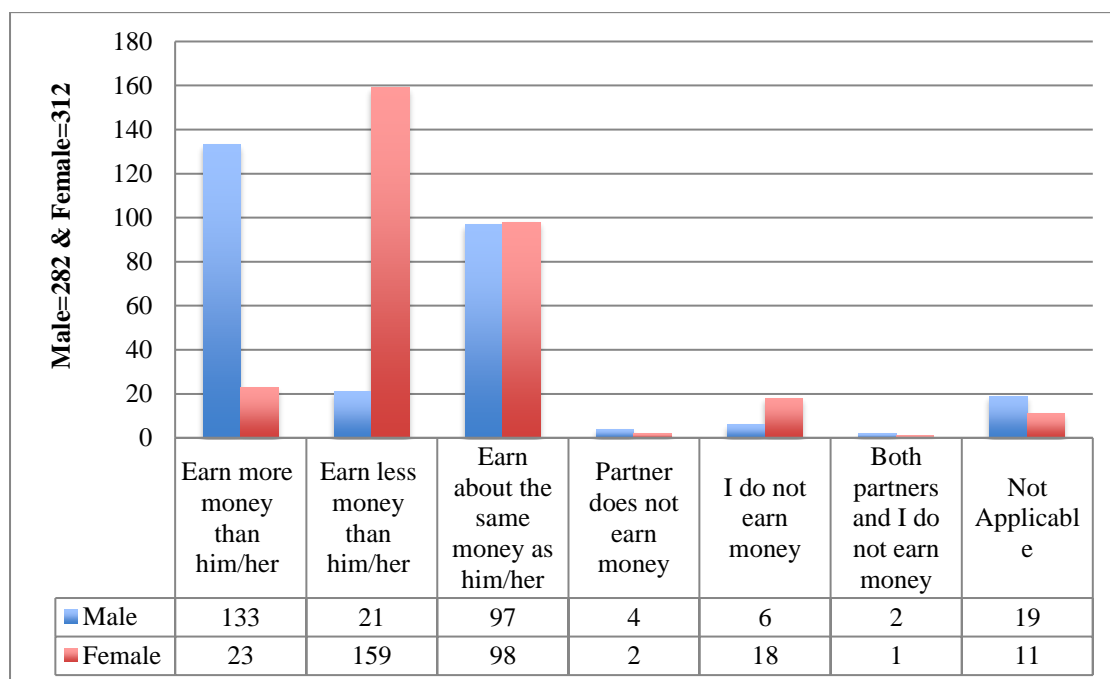
"...[we] cook for the entire households, work in the farms with [our] husband to produce our cash crop, earn money when we can and save, while men sell the products in the market and bring it home so we can buy food..." [FGD, Females]

This statement suggests a mutual understanding in a household producing cash crops starting from labour division to earning and utilising the income in the household. However, this also draws attention on the number of hours women tend to work compared to men. This further leads us to understanding that women are poor of time since they commit more hours for, both paid and unpaid work. This also reflects women's own prejudices and beliefs that restrict them from entering the outside world (Kabeer, 1994). This means that women accept the differences imposed on them without revolting and pass the same practices onto their succeeding generations. This

then results in women doing the work “women are supposed to do” and men doing the work “men are supposed to do”.

The quantitative records show, 133 (47.2%) males reported of earning more money than female in the household (particularly spouses), while 159 (50.9%) females reported of earning less than males in the households (see Figure 6.2). The earnings, here is understood by the totalled income including income from cash crop farming and income from other sources. There are sole evidences of income from cash crop farming that women are paid less than men despite equal contribution (FAO, 2011a; Kanji & Menon, 2001). Past evidences do not fail to reflect that women have been paid less in other sectors than farming along with nuanced record of their contribution.

Figure 6.2: Income Comparison with Partners



Source: Field Survey, 2015

Figure 6.2 reveals, 34.4 percent males and 31.4 percent females reported of earning equal money as their partners. This might have been due to the fact that men and women of these households are engaged in same type of work and do not have alternative jobs. Also, few male and female also reported that their partner does not earn money; few reported of not earning any money and very small number denoted that both the partners do not earn any money. These men and women fall in the category of elderly people who relied on old age pensions, few were disabled and could not work while some were

students and were not earning.

However, when it comes to the number of working hours, which includes both paid and unpaid work, women tend to work more hours. This means that the household chores women do are labelled as unpaid work, which requires a lot of time and work without payment. Men, however, are less visible in performing such chores with very few exceptions in the village.

In regards to decision-making on finances, men and women perceived that the decision-making have been joint since both men and women have been equally engaged in cash crop production. For this few respondents reflected;

“I cannot let my husband make any decision alone. I contribute as much. Look at him! He spends his personal money while I put it in my cooperative. He is more educated and mature than me. We, women are thoughtful. The decision has always been joint, otherwise we would not be happy.” [IDI, Female Respondent, 38, Rai]

“We keep what we earn together. He earns more than me but still we keep it together. I am also a part of savings groups and I save NRs 500 per month, thinking it would be worthy for future. We have to send our children to school. We are both not educated but we know that we cannot say this is yours and this is mine, what is his is mine and what is mine is his.” [IDI, Female Respondent, 35, Magar]

Interestingly, based on the testimonies above, the perception about joint decision-making came from women and men of different status, education background and age. This reflects that decision-making is mostly mutual where women have been able to voice up regarding their children’s education and use of income for savings. For this to happen, institutions have played a major role. The existence of institutions has encouraged women to save, speak their concerns and negotiate when needed at the household. In addition to institutions has been the economic change caused by cardamom farming which generates higher income compared to other crops. The economic change has brought income opportunities. Being able to earn means being able to save in institutions. These institutions allow women to save money and actively

participate in activities thus empowering them. Hence, income opportunities and institutions have encouraged women to make decisions on finances along with their partners.

The quantitative data shows, both male (81.6%) and female (79.8%), reported of keeping their income together (see Table 6.3). In rural areas in developing countries, putting income together and making decisions on expenses has been a common trend. Hence, keeping income together meant joint decision-making on the use of it.

Also, significant percentile of male (68.1%) and female (59.3%) respondents reported of having personal money to spend. While males reported of spending their personal money on items such as alcohol, clothes, phone and cigarettes, females reported of spending their money on items such as clothes for themselves or their children, snacks, cigarettes and savings in institutions. Women also reflected that having access to personal income was not a trend in their community till they started earning and claiming for personal expenses. This means that having access to income does relate to decision-making among women (Ngome, 2003) and saving money in institutions can add to decision-making (Ashraf et. al., 2009)

Table 6.3: Decision on Finances

Decisions about...		Participants	
		Male (%)	Female (%)
Keeping	Put everything together	81.6	79.8
Earning	Keep the money earned	11.3	15.1
	Keep some & give some to spouse	7.1	5.1
Personal Money	Yes	68.1	59.3
	No	31.9	40.7
Children's Education	No influence	1.1	0.3
	Limited influence	3.5	8.0
	Influence in some decisions	11.0	23.7
	Influence in most decisions	29.8	29.2
	Important influence	38.7	22.4
	Not applicable	35.8	15.1
	I do not know	1.1	1.3

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Interestingly, 31.9 percent of males and 40.7 percent of females reported of not having personal money to spend. From the qualitative aspects, those who do not have personal money either come from marginalised groups or are younger enough for the family members to provide them personal money. For example, a Dalit household reported they could not afford to have personal money to buy things they wish to buy because their expenses were limited to fulfilling basic needs of the households. This reflects that expenditure of the household depend on the status and type of the household.

In regards to making decision about spending on children's education, 38.7 percent of males and 22.4 percent of females reported of having important influence. Although the qualitative data shows women are more concerned about their children's education, it seems that men are equally concerned about this matter. Since the study site is closer to Darjeeling, India, it was reported that most children were sent across the border or to nearest city and even Kathmandu for further studies. Most men and women from households making good money from cardamom reported of giving first priority to children's education when it came to spending their income. Men and women of households making smaller amount through cash crops reported of first fulfilling their food needs. These households sent their children to schools in affordable and less expensive areas. This suggests that decision on finances is based on household's status and earning capacity. More earnings meant deciding on bigger investment while less earnings meant deciding for household needs and smaller investment.

Various forms of assets were also revealed in regards to decision on finances and use of income. The discussions revealed both tangible and intangible forms of assets. Women from various background perceived of assets as,

"...Land, money and such which runs the households and also investment in children's education as well. It [assets] is also gold and jewelleryes. There are many. But for me this house, land, work and money I earn are assets. Even my children's education..." [IDI, Female Respondent, 24, Dalit]

"Asset means land, houses and property. These can be converted into cash when needed." [IDI, Female Respondent, 27, Rai]

“Asset means happiness. If I can earn, spend and save, I am happy.” [IDI, Female Respondent, 34, Tamang]

The statements above reveal understanding the different forms of assets; tangible and intangible. Almost all the respondents stated their value for tangible assets such as income, jewellery, house and property. Some respondents also stated their value for intangible assets such as happiness. Since all the female respondents were a part of institutions, savings was their main asset. Savings satisfied women because they associated it with future security. Other types of assets revealed were investment on children’s education, having or adding property and investing on jewellery. In addition to these, happiness was also tagged as assets, a form of intangible asset by few respondents. Happiness in such context has been derived as a result of good earnings and savings. This means that people are happy because they have found a crop that has enhanced their livelihoods. This reflects an association between tangible and intangible assets.

Adding assets such as vehicles and land were common in some households. These were the household’s producing cardamom in higher density with more return.

“...Last time when my husband and I received money by selling cardamom, I insisted him we buy a motorbike for our son...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 41, Tamang]

“...I bought a gold chain for myself with the money I earned from wage work last year. I was very happy to add jewellery...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 27, Rai]

“...Our brother here has added land in Jhapa and bought a house too by selling cardamom last year...” [FGD, Males]

According to the statements above, being able to add tangible assets have motivated people to do cardamom farming, and have also added in women’s empowerment. The

intangible assets such as happiness mentioned by these women reflect to be an aftermath of cardamom farming. With the help of cardamom farming women have been able to earn, save and invest in their children's education, which has added to their happiness and well-being.

Overall, it was also noticeable that education of male and female mattered less when it came to decision-making on finances. Rather women have been able to influence decision through their engagement in saving groups and institutions that have been able to provide them financial literacy. It is also noticeable that the decision-making in this context is unbiased towards husband or wife. This finding resonates with the findings by Oduro, et. al. (2012), which suggests education does not have significant relation with joint decision-making. These findings are incongruent with previous findings that reflect women with higher education and income in comparison to men are active in joint-decision-making (Urdinola & Wodon, 2010).

This suggests that despite women earning less than men in the commercial cash crop sector, their perceptions of decision-making are shaped by joint effort. It is also interesting and noteworthy for the context of rural Nepal that women's decision-making on finances and savings are influenced by two major things. One is through the support from men or other family members of the households. And another is the encouragement of institutions on savings and participation.

6.2.4 Leadership and Participation in the Community

During the study, women of various ethnic groups reported on their economic status and social participation through their engagement in cardamom farming. Women have been able to participate in social groups, particularly cardamom co-operatives, and savings group like the Dalit women's savings group and women's saving groups.

Both men and women were involved in various social groups such as cooperatives, agricultural groups and community forest user groups (see Table 6.4). Few groups such as the mothers' groups and women unions were only for women.

Table 6.4: Institutional Involvement of Men and Women

Groups	Male (%)	Female (%)
Cooperatives	9.6	25.3
Mother Groups	-	17.9
Agriculture Group	10.6	5.1
Community Forestry User Group	1.8	3.5
Women's Union	-	2.9
Total	22.3	54.7

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 6.4 shows more women's engagement in various institutions such as cooperatives, agriculture groups and community forestry user groups compared to men. Women's active participation is seen through involvement in savings and trainings provided by the government. Acquiring trainings have proved positive in regards to improved women's livelihoods and well-being.

It is also evident that cooperatives have played a major role in shaping women's lives. In Salakpur there are two major cooperatives; Jirmale Women Agriculture Cooperative established in 2007 and Jirmale SUMADUWA (oranges, honey, ginger and cardamom) cooperative established in 2011. The former is all women cooperative which has played a huge role in adding to women's empowerment. In the women's cooperative, there are 561 members including women from across Jirmale VDC. Of the 561 members, 32 are Dalits, 442 are Janjatis, 62 are from other ethnic groups such as Chhetris and Brahmins and 25 are from close to extinct groups such as Lepchas. This cooperative functions as a saving entity with provision of loans in low interest to the members. Women have also been provided skills based trainings such as sewing and bee keeping. They have also been provided other forms of support on poverty reduction such as goats and oxen to improve livelihoods. These supports are need based and are provided to women who apply for it and who are considered eligible.

The constitution of Nepal of 2015 stated cooperative as one of the three pillars of economic policy after public and private sectors. And the recent amendment made by the interim constitution has formulated a New Cooperative Act 2017, which is recently being put into effect against the Cooperative Act of 1992. The highlights of the recent cooperative Act are as follows:

Box 1: The New Cooperative Act, 2017

1. Any cooperatives should be operated after registration
2. The members of cooperatives should be Nepali citizenship holders and the following would be the required number of members to run a cooperative
3. Single or multipurpose entity: 30
4. Labour based institution: 15
5. Saving and credit providing institution inside municipality: 100
6. Educational institution employees run by the government: 30 if the total number of employee in the office is less than 100 and 100 if more.
7. Cooperative unions or federations could also be registered under district/provincial or central level
8. Cooperatives banks with aim to provide banking services could be registered after approval from the Nepal Rastra Bank
9. Certain rules for application registration have to be followed:
 - Report of feasibility, Proposed bylaws, Subscription details & Other requirements as needed
10. Application for registration could be accepted on the following grounds;
 - Laws are in accordance with the Act and regulations
 - Cooperatives to be operated under the cooperative principles
 - Cooperatives to be focused on community
 - Subject to other requirements based on the situation
11. Cooperatives to be autonomous and independent body with a vision of sustainable functioning
12. To become a member of the cooperative the following has to be taken into consideration:
 - Citizens to have completed 16 years of age
 - Member should be a part of the community of the cooperative location
 - Member should have purchased a share
 - Member to comply by the laws set by the cooperative
 - Member should not be a part of any business that competes with the cooperative
13. General meeting of the cooperative should be held within 3 months of establishment of the cooperative and then within 6 months from the end of fiscal year
14. The Board of Directors must be elected by calling for a general meeting consisting of 1/3rd of female members. Any director might be removed if he or she fails to comply with the rules and regulations set for the director.

Source: Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives & Poverty Alleviation (MoLCPA), 2017

The New Cooperative Act, 2017 holds specific requirements for the cooperative to be established in a particular community or region across Nepal. Apart from being recognised as an entity for savings and credits, the constitution of Nepal now recognises cooperative as a fundamental institution for socio-economic development. There are 34,512 cooperatives across Nepal and 60,517 people are directly employed in this sector (MoLCPA, 2017). The various kinds of cooperatives are Savings and Credit, Dairy and Agriculture, Fruits and Vegetables, Tea, Coffee, Consumers Science and Technology and Energy. This National Planning Commission of Nepal puts cooperatives in its plan with aim of reaching Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs).

In making cooperatives more systematic, two cooperative congresses have been held in Nepal as listed by the New Cooperative Act 2017. The first congress was held in March of 2014 while the second was held in April of 2018. The first cooperative congress had the following objectives:

- 1) To analyse the status and achievement of the Nepali cooperative movement
- 2) To examine the situation of cooperative sector in the constitution of Nepal
- 3) To create a strong relationship between the government, cooperatives and institutions involved in running cooperatives
- 4) To cultivate a common ground for cooperative unions
- 5) To detect the problems associated with the cooperative sector for a better management for future
- 6) To overall strengthen the cooperative sector

Similarly, the second cooperative congress held the following objectives:

- 1) To review the consequences of Nepalese Cooperative Movement since the inception phase
- 2) To upsurge the cooperative contribution and engagement towards achieving the 2030 agendas of sustainable development goals
- 3) To maintain and strengthen a relationship between the government, cooperatives and concerned stakeholders
- 4) To find a common ground of the challenges faced by the cooperatives and create a ground to overcome the challenges
- 5) To make the cooperative business strong in 10 years in line with the International Cooperative Alliance

6) To find a common ground in the aims of cooperatives for further uptake

Both the cooperative congresses hold vision of creating a significant momentum in the cooperative management across Nepal. This would delve deeper into the issues strengthening cooperatives through engagement of three tiers of government across Nepal and with the international alliance. The vision also sets to identify the challenges, which means that problems faced by cooperatives could be listed with identification of solutions in a long run. Although new, the two cooperative congresses provide a green flag towards management of the thousands of cooperative that exists across Nepal by taking in consideration the New Cooperative Act, 2017.

Based on the findings from my study and in line to cooperatives and institutions, women have noticed changes in their lives since being a part of institutions. On being acquainted with social institutions, women have gained financial literacy through savings and taking credits for low interest. Saving small or bigger amount of money has motivated women to engage in institutional activities and have encouraged them to indulge in savings for future. Additionally, most of these institutions are relatively new in the study site. Hence, women's experience of being part of institutions is new as well.

Few women opined about the benefits through their association with institutions.

"...I became a part of the cardamom, ginger and orange cooperative because I wanted to save some money by working in cardamom sector. Being a part of this cooperative helps women to take credit or loans when needed for farming. I also attend meetings everyday..." [IDI, Female Respondent, 27, Rai]

"...Once I became a member of Dalit women's group, I learned about the importance of saving and financial management. I feel better because I can raise my voice during the meetings which I could not years ago..." [IDI, Female Respondent, 28, Dalit]

The statements above reveal that women choose to become part of institutions not only to gain social leadership skills but also to be able to secure their financial needs. These women include both cardamom growers and non-growers who perform seasonal wage

work. Also, there are various reasons for women choosing to be part of institutions. Being a part of institutions has proved positive for these women. Women have become a part of institutions after being aware about the importance of savings. Before institutions they knew less about the importance of savings and credits. With the establishment of institutions women have been able to encourage other women to save little or bigger amount by becoming a member of the group. This has led to women's understanding of savings, its importance and future security. Also, as a member of the institutions, women have been able to take loans in low interest to engage in livelihood activities such as buying cardamom saplings for cardamom farming.

“...Without institutions, we could not have learned about savings and credit. There are many of us who have taken loans from the cardamom cooperative when needed. The cooperative charges much less interest when loans are taken. Also, cooperatives provide training for women especially regarding crop plantation. Being a part of the institutions has made many women open up in the society. Things have changed because of these institutions...” [FGD, Females]

The above testimony reveals the vital role institutions have played in making women aware of financial issues. Women have witnessed pivotal changes in their lives after getting acquainted with institutions. Through institutional engagement, women have been able to acquire agricultural related trainings such as techniques to plant crops with the use of appropriate mixture of organic fertilisers required by the crop. Despite institutions representing as saving and credit entities, trainings are offered occasionally, depending on the programs brought by institutions at the local or national level. However, trainings are limited to certain aspects and lacks programs that are important such as techniques to harvest using special knives as reported by the respondents. This suggests that need based training are crucial for women in the study site. The lack of programs could also be due to the fact that the institutions are relatively new and more focused on savings and credits.

Moreover, through institutions women have been able to raise their voices, share ideas and encourage other women to become members and organise community-based events.

“...If you came here five or six years ago, you would see very few women in this cooperative. Women would shy away and would not want to become a part of any institutions. Things have changed now and we have worked hard to provide awareness about financial savings and importance of institutions to women...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 35, Tamang]

In a nutshell, from the above testimonies and evidences, institutions in Salakpur such as cooperatives have been serving as a platform for women to voice their concerns and engage in savings. Women have been able to actively take part in financial management and savings, which are crucial components of empowerment. Institutions for women, in this context, have acted as entities that facilitate human interaction through exchanges in social, political and economic debates. Institutions contain set of policies that shape human behaviours. In the agricultural sector institutions are viewed as channels to transfer knowledge (Akanda & Howlander, 2015; Coulibaly, Gbetibouo, Kundhlande, Sileshi & Beedy, 2015; Oluwatusin, 2014; Okonya, Syndikus & Kroschel, 2013; Codjoe, Ocansey, Boateng & Ofori, 2013; Oyekale & Oladele, 2012). When established at the local level, institutions prove to be effective, particularly in the agriculture sector, as farmers’ situation can be analysed meticulously to provide support (IICA, 2014; Ekboir, 2012; Barret, Bachke, Bellemare, Michelson, Narayanan & Waker, 2012). Also, Pathak (2014) points out that institutional innovation acts as a channel beneficial to the poor; the findings reveal it has acted beneficial to the poor and women of different ethnic groups. Being able to save has a direct relation with being able to earn through commercial cardamom farming for women. Hence, being able to save and invest are positive indicators of women’s overall development. Being involved in institutions has proved beneficial for women’s financial security. And women have been able to transform their roles by being a part of institutions since they tend to enter larger spaces.

In contrary to these evidences and arguments regarding institutions and its support on women, it can also be argued men do not necessarily become part of institutions like women do since they already have power in their hands. They might not feel the need for institution in order to be empowered like women do. Men do not want to organise themselves like women do since they have the power to choose what they want to do.

6.2.5 Time Use and Allocation

Men and women revealed an average timing by hours spent on the kind of work they performed in a day (see Annex 1, Table 4). The time and hours for certain activities ranged between less than 1 hour, 1 to 2 hours, 2 to 3 hours, 3 to 4 hours, 4 to 5 hours and more than 5 hours. The one-day work description was based on the following elements.

- i) Agricultural production for the household
- ii) Off farm employment/other salaried activities
- iii) Taking care of the livestock in the household
- iv) Cooking and preparing meals
- v) Purchasing foods or other goods for household
- vi) Cleaning and taking care of dwelling
- vii) Washing clothes
- viii) Taking care of children
- ix) Collecting firewood and water for household
- x) Community service including attending meetings

Evidences show the number of hours worked by men and women depend on the type of roles they perform. Women tend to perform both household and outside of household work. This makes women's working hours more than men in summation. Moreover, men and women both decide on the type of work and activities they are carrying out on a particular day. Also, the type of work chosen is carried out by default as women do what other women have been doing and men do what other men have been doing within the households or community.

"...Men go to work in the morning during harvest season. They are already in the farms. Women participate in harvest season but before that they prepare meals, feed the cattle, feed the children and go to other households to work. It is difficult but women are used to it. After they are done for the day in harvesting they come home and prepare meals again. Men usually have time in the evening for themselves... You will see in very few households men also cook but it is very rare..." [IDI, Female Respondent, 41, Tamang]

This testimony reveals that women work more hours than men on a daily basis given that the unpaid household works are added. Although being able to go outside of the house is empowering for women since they are able to earn and make use of income (Kabeer, 2012; Scoones, 1998; Sen, 1975), the analysis on the amount of working hours women engage in suggests that women are short of time. The lack of time women have during the day suggests that despite economic opportunities caused by commercial cardamom farming, women are obliged to do unpaid work such as cooking and cleaning. This once again reflects customary practices of households where women are bound to cook and clean despite having to do other kinds of work (Chang, MacPhail & Dong, 2011). Men, however, tend to have rest time in between fulfilling their daily work.

“...I have to go home after work and cook. My husband cannot cook. What can I say? I have to feed him and other family members...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 27, Rai]

“...Women usually do the cooking and cleaning. Men are not good in cooking and they do not know how to handle the kitchen well. Women also earn during cardamom harvest season. Women are all over the place...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 38, Brahmin]

“...Working during the season is tough sometimes because we have to manage household work and this work. We have to balance...” [IDI, Female Respondent, 19, Dalit]

Based on the above statements, in most cases the unpaid works are tagged by household chores such as cooking and cleaning. Women feel the onus of working many hours because of their struggle to balance between paid and unpaid work. Women admit that men usually lack skills on cooking and cleaning. If men handled the kitchen, it would not satisfy women. However, women feel the burden of performing different roles. This may suggest that if men are entitled to do household chores like women are from the beginning, the working hours between the two could be balanced. This also suggests traditional practices where men are not asked or trained to perform work that are tagged as “feminine”. The existence of such scenario has been completely gendered because

of societal practice where men tend to do “masculine” work and women tend to do “feminine” work.

Descriptive statistics show about 43.8 percent males and 25.7 percent females spent about 5 hours or more in agriculture production of the household. 53.8 percent of males and 41.5 percent females spent more than 5 hours on off farm employment. About 38.7 percent males and 36.3 percent females spent about 1 to 2 hours in taking care of livestock in the household (see Annex 1, Table 4 on time use and availability). In sum more women were engaged in cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, taking care of children and doing community service while more men were engaged in purchasing food and other household items and collecting firewood. Apart from this, both men and women were a part of cardamom farming and hence, in total women worked more hours a day than men. These findings relate to previous studies on women’s working hours being more than men despite economic gains (Alkire & Foster, 2013; Agbodgi, Batana & Ouedraogo, 2013; WB, 2012; FAO, 2011b; Chant, 2010). This suggests that women are negotiating the time factor through balance between household chores and working outside of the house. Kabeer (2012) points out that empowerment in women increases with their degree of choice in employment decisions. On one hand women are exposed to the outside world by being able to earn and make choices, which are the dimensions of empowerment. While on the other hand the work burden can prove negative for women’s well-being. Hence, this has been the case in the study site where women have been trying to balance between work and household chores, particularly during the cardamom harvest season.

There are reasons for men not performing household chores, which adds burden to the women in the household. First, the customary structure restricts men to take part in chores such as cooking and cleaning. Men are not trained for such work from the beginning. The lack of ability of men automatically compels women to take over the roles. Second, women themselves do not question the work men choose to do and thus go by what is practiced in the society. This means that women are responsible for supporting the disparities that exist in the society as they accept the fact that men are bound to do certain tasks and women are bound to do certain tasks, instead of revolting against it (Shrestha Thapa, 2009). The lack of voices regarding tasks automatically adds burden on women, as they tend to do both paid and unpaid household works without

the support from women. Hence, despite gaining economic opportunities to work outside of home, women tend to do both household and outside of household work, thus sharing distress through workload.

6.3 Contextualising Empowerment from the Findings

Taking the 5Ds of women empowerment to indulge in this research, few concepts emerge. First, the power dynamics among men and women caused by economic opportunities is visible, given that women tend to have equal power as men when it comes to handling income and making decisions on the use of income. However, these power dynamics are still in favour of men when it comes to land and property ownership, use of land and resources for production. This has been due to lack of leadership abilities, trainings for women, lack of legal access to land and the continuation of activities in reflection of traditional structure.

Second, decision-making by men or women relies on the situation they are at. For example, decisions to work outside of home depended on the distance to work. The further the distance to work, more men decided to travel than women. Both men and women in the households jointly decided that men travel for work reasoning safety issues. This, on one hand, reflects concern about women's safety while on the other hand reflects women's lack of mobility for work. Such issues can only be addressed through policies on safety at the local level.

Third, institutions have played a major role in shaping women's empowerment. Women have been able to gain both social and financial literacy through institutions. They have been able to develop leadership capacities such as raising concerns, organising events and participating. Women have also been able to save their earnings in a smaller or bigger amount inviting financial security along with enhancing their knowledge on financial management. However, the finances women save are mostly their own earnings from agricultural work and do not include their access to property and land or other resources. This again calls for attention at the policy level to address women's access and rights to property related issues. A lot has changed in the policy level regarding provision of equal access to property among both men and women. But there are gaps in implementation as well as denial in the households on property fragmentation. For instance, in the study site, women are denied rights to property

reasoning that the property belonged to the men's ancestors. However, women who have been provided properties as gifts by their parents have this property under their names.

Previous studies show that the term "powerful" is mostly used to describe men. And in case of economic opportunities, if men have less power than women it would outburst physical or emotional violence causing power conflict (Logan et. al., 2006; Mahalik et. al., 1998; Blazina & Watkins, 1996; Eagly & Karau, 1991; O'Neil, 1981; Goode, 1971). Although this aspect of power dynamics was less visible, the emergence of economic opportunities has been able to bring both men and women in the same spectrum. Hence, economic change has led to women's empowerment, as they have been able to earn and make use of their income.

This further reflects that, in the current society, women's empowerment refers to their ability to earn and make use of the earnings at the individual and household level (Rangel, 2005; Duflo, 2003; Thomas & Strauss, 1995; Thomas, 1994, 1990). Empowerment is also being able to make decisions to create an impact at the individual and household level (Tandon, 2016). And hence, this has been evident through this study as women have been able to earn and make use of income without being dependant on men or other family members. Women have been able to make choices by being a part of commercial cardamom farming, compared to the past when they were a part of subsistence farming. This reflects Kabeer's (1999) idea on empowerment as "the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them". The change women have faced compared to the past as subsistence producers to the current commercial production reflects the different choices available for them. The ability to take up the given choices reflects women empowerment, as they are able to convert the choices to action.

Institutions have proved to be the powerhouses of empowerment. West and Zimmerman (1987) pinpoint that social interactions and institutions help reproduce masculine authority and produce changes. Institutions have shaped interaction process further addressing concerns, particularly in the lives of women as given by the above testimonies. Women's engagement in local institutions has enhanced their ability to make decisions, participate in events and negotiate at the greater level in the household.

But the journey of women does not end from their engagement in institutions because this questions why men do not require the support from institutions. Since men already have the power to bargain and take leadership stances in the society, they might not require any assistance, in general. This automatically shows how the power structure can have an effect on someone's overall empowerment.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter contributes to the debate of women's empowerment using several indicators on decision-making. It also adds to women's engagement in institutions and time use. Overall, this chapter finds that there exists a gender gap in terms of visibility of men and women in deciding on the type of crops to be grown in their household. Despite women's equal participation in the farms, starting from setting the farm to harvesting, men and women both perceive that the decision on marketing is entirely done by men. Women are believed to have low bargaining capacity or men have reported women of not wanting to be responsible for certain tasks. This is happening because most of the times women themselves rely on unreasonable biases and misplaced speculations which bring discriminatory consequences (Boserup, 1970; Kabeer, 1994). Even though women are given equal opportunities, they are not seen directly questioning about the spectrum they are put into in regards to their gender. For example, it is the women who encourage other women or daughters in the households to become ideal by doing tasks that are pre labelled as a "girls task" which already creates biases accepted by women themselves. This means that women progress through women in first place. It is women who reproduce gender within the household through psychological and emotional developments with their children (Lorber, 1994). In such stances women tend to discriminate between sons and daughters within the household by putting more pressure to the former and forbidding daughters to various rights. This makes women the follower of already existing prejudiced social ideologies.

My findings show that institutions exist and shape women's ability to make decisions in the households, engage in savings and events but women's leadership abilities at the macro level are still questionable. For example, women are seen making decisions regarding issues such as use of income, investment and children's education but their decisions about going to the market to sell their products is null. The potential reasons provided for this has been geographical location and minimal transportation facilities,

which limits to only one member, where men take the lead in going to the market. This suggests that the institutions might not be focused on providing women the skills to reach out to the market and expand their work from home to farms and markets. This could also mean that women are still mute in deciding for themselves on entering the market. Moreover, institutions can only encourage women at one level. But for these women to claim that they can become part of any activities such as marketing, they need to reconstruct and re-understand their potential compared to men rather than accepting what is there in the society. Kabeer (1999) reveals women accept their position in the society as inferior to men with lack of access to resources and impose discriminatory rules against their daughters compared to sons. This further lowers women's position in the society, undermines their well-being and executes more gender inequalities. This generates a notion that despite women being a part of institutions and showing active participation making decisions regarding activities like marketing shows that inclusion of women in institutions does not mean that they can become active decision makers in the society. For this to happen women need to voice their concerns in a mass of men rather than only in mass of women. Also, men have to show their support for women to graduate from where they are.

Moreover, pleading for changes that are already enrooted with patriarchal system, poses women at high risk. Sometimes it becomes impossible to question the existing societal ideologies. More so, it is much more riskier if women are the ones raising concerns because revolutions takes a lot of time, effort and sometimes altercations, which can affect a woman's image in the society. By going against the deep-rooted norms, a woman could be tagged as a bad woman and ostracised from the household or even the society. And not many women are in the position to stand out by revolting because they have their daily lives to run. Also it could be easier to go against societal practice as opposed to going against their husbands or male member's in the household. This could result in family distortion. In Salakpur, women tend to earn through cash crops but majority of finances such as return from selling cardamom and other crops goes in the hands of man through marketing. On contrary, if compared to the past when there were no cash crops, women did not have personal money to spend on. But due to their engagement in cardamom farming, women started earning and spending on their needs. But majority of income seems to be collected by men given that they have access to land and resources of the household. In this context, it is worth noticing the perception

about women earning less than men, which is recurring information of various employment sectors. This suggests that there is a need to understand whether women realise the summation of paid and unpaid working hours, and whether such realisation can have an impact in decision-making. Again raising these concerns would be going against patriarchal setting. Hence, this requires a top-level policy related debate. In terms of deciding on labour for household member, quantitative data shows men overrule women, however, qualitative perceptions show women's active engagement. There is a variation in the perception as the decisions, particularly for women, are made on the basis of type of work, distance and safety, which is also an important preposition for future research.

In summation, in the rural setting egalitarian decision-making on income earned by men and women exists. In addition, the income men and women earn does not seem to be equal and is mostly related to the type of work. Also, since men own property and resources, women become vulnerable in terms of financial resources.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, I provide a summary to the overall thesis in line to the analytical framework presented in Chapter Two (Figure 2.9). I have included the elements used throughout this research; agriculture development, livelihoods and well-being and empowerment. I have summed up my research by using a feminist methodology and explanation applied throughout this research. This chapter have concluded by providing a recommendation and potential ways forward for further research that could be conducted in the near future.

7.1 Evolution of Cardamom Farming and Commercialisation

The first chapter reflects on evolution of cardamom farming in Salakpur acquired by using a timeline narrative. Salakpur has undergone massive transition from subsistence to commercial farming over the years. From subsistence rice farming to commercial ginger followed by cardamom farming, people in Salakpur have experienced economic change and gained economic opportunities, particularly through cash crops. However, they have also faced constraints such as disease infestation in ginger, lack of skills on husbandry practices, irrigation obstacles and use of own trial and error method in cropping. At present, commercial cardamom farming, particularly of one species called “Salakpurey” is the main source of livelihoods of majority of households. Despite of farmers claiming cardamom as their major crop, they also rely on other agricultural productions such as oranges, broom grass, livestock.

The farmers of these households are tagged as small holders cardamom farmers as the land of these farmers range between >0.25 and <1 hector. Even farmers with less than 0.25 hector of land have got rid of vegetable crops with cardamom. Hence, cardamom has been planted in both *khet* (field requiring irrigation) and *bari* (field where vegetables etc for subsistence use are grown). Though it seems in Salakpur that agricultural transition have not completely substituted other crops with cardamom, I claim through this research that people have lost their interest in other crops besides cardamom due to its return and the easy cropping pattern. Broom grass, another major crop in Salakpur grows in cliffs, which people claim to be their property and has nothing

to do with cardamom and land favourable for cardamom. This means, had the land where people produce broom grass been favourable for cardamom, people would no doubt replace broom grass with cardamom given its value and benefits. Oranges, the third major but important as claimed by villagers, is a crop that compliments cardamom bushes, as shades. If we compare this substitution process with rice farming which used to be a major crop during the 1940s, at present the rice farms in Salakpur has been converted to cardamom farms. In 2016, there was only one household with a very little land with rice farming. Therefore, crop prioritization has been set in such ways that are related to profit and market orientation, where cardamom wins over the other crops.

Empirical evidence shows that in the production of cardamom in Salakpur, the market is dominated by Jhapa district. After harvesting and drying cardamom, local collectors, who are also farmers, take their products to regional collectors in Birtamode city of Jhapa district. These local collectors pay taxes in few points while taking their cardamom outside of Salakpur and while entering Jhapa district. The regional collectors sell their products to the Indian traders across the borders after clearing their customs. The Indian traders determine prices on a daily basis, hence, causing fluctuation in prices of cardamom. Moreover, after reaching India, cardamom is sold to other countries using Indian label. However, reaching out to the Indian traders and beyond was not accomplished, as it did not fall under the scope of this research. Hence, it would be crucial in the future to map the channel of products by identifying Indian traders and understanding in detail how the product is sold to other countries.

Overall, agricultural development has occurred due to the villagers' effort rather than institutional approach in the village. The reason Salakpur is known for its species of cardamom is because of one villager who introduced this crop to the entire village. At present, this species of cardamom is prominent in various districts across Nepal.

Additionally, despite having a viable paradigm shift in agriculture, Salakpur is far behind in developmental aspects. The village faces developmental problems such as lack of proper roads for transportation, no electricity gridline, lack of health care facilities and water for irrigation. People strive to commute from the village to the cities because of lack of access to proper roads. The geographical location of this village has proved difficult in bringing facilities such as electricity and water pipes.

Administratively and logistically, these facilities are passed from the Municipality of Ilam district. However, since Salakpur is located further from the municipality, introducing facilities become time consuming.

7.2 Commercial Cardamom Farming and Women's Livelihoods

This chapter provides a scenario of the livelihood activities of the households of Salakpur. It highlights people's engagement in cardamom and other crops farming to set a backdrop on the status of the village to emerge into the livelihood trajectories of the households engaged in cardamom farming. In understanding the livelihood trajectories, this research points out that over the years, households have undergone transition in agriculture through subsistence rice farming and moved gradually towards commercial farming. The journey of commercial farming did not start with cardamom but it started with ginger farming and its commercialisation. However, as ginger became extinct due to disease infestation after serving livelihoods for a little more than a decade, large cardamom came as an alternative. Eventually, this crop became the major source of livelihood and farmers became small holders representing cardamom. Additionally, people's livelihoods improved due to large cardamom farming and changed the livelihood trajectories of the entire village engaged in cardamom farming, from farm level labourers to land owners and producers. The combination of factors such as income opportunities, good return and being able to invest through commercial cardamom farming has satisfied the people of Salakpur. This suggests that being able to fulfil basic needs first and then being able to invest and be a part of society equally adds to happiness and well-being of people.

This research spurs a new idea on feminisation by reflecting that feminisation of agriculture happens in the presence of men. Hence, this challenges the idea that in order for women to be visible in the market based economy, men do not have to migrate or be absent from the households. In the commercial cardamom farming, both men and women have been actively participating through their share of roles from farms to the market. In this process, women's roles in cardamom farming compared to men is gendered. While majority of men irrigate the farms and harvest cardamom using special knives, majority of women tend to separate cardamom capsules from the flowers and do household chores such as cooking for labourers and family members. The idea that men do masculine work and women do feminine work, which has been put into place

conventionally, exists. Patriarchal reinforcement and customary practices restricts men from performing jobs women perform despite them being able to perform it. Moreover, no one has challenged the masculinity way of farming based on different roles that are gendered due to societal settings. Women have been able to make a good living, relatively, as equally as men. However, it is also evident, regarding roles that women do not exist in trading and marketing of cardamom. These shows the existing cultural barriers derived by patriarchal pervasiveness. Men rule over women in markets of the products creating bias that women cannot bargain well. This questions women's ability as well as equal opportunities women are subjected to when it comes to performing certain roles. Why cannot women bargain? Why is it difficult for women to bargain? This is because women are submissive towards men and they accept whatever is practiced in their society without questioning. The socially constructed norms have been translated to a theorem and a rule of law. When men do not take care of children and household chores, the theorem tends to be proved because it becomes a time issue. Women become short of time and hence, are automatically restricted from taking up chores such as marketing of the products. For instance, when a mother in law or older generation family member, starts questioning a woman's ability in bearing a son or take care of a baby and household chores, this is when things fall apart for women. They are bound to prove they are good daughter in laws like men are bound to prove they are responsible sons who can earn and take care of family. The difference is socially constructed and it automatically demeans women. This questions the issue of equality in regards to roles. When men opt out of unpaid work, women by nature take it up to maintain a familial balance. The livelihood conditions of women has improved livelihood due to economic opportunities through commercial cardamom farming. Despite these implications of cultural barriers, women have been able to at least participate in the cardamom labour market as producers and wage based workers to make a living. Through the income earned, they have been able to invest on household food needs, children's educational needs and savings through institutions. This chapter also reflects upon the livelihoods of marginalised women or the Dalits. For the Dalits cultural barriers have changed, as they are freely able to participate in the labour without facing any discrimination, particularly of wage.

To understand well-being, material, subjective and relational well-being were explored. In regards to material well being, evidences from this research show that women are

highly satisfied with commercial cardamom farming as they link it to being able to earn and fulfil household's food needs and invest on children's education and health. Moreover, satisfaction level also differed based on the type of households. For instance, some households were able to add assets such as vehicles (motorbikes, pickups), house or land in the village or in Jhapa district selling cardamom. Such activities and accomplishment raised the satisfaction level as a whole. Likewise, in regards to subjective well-being women generated high level of satisfaction with life and achievement associated with commercial cardamom farming. Finally, women also generated good level of satisfaction in regards to relational well being, generating that their personal health, community and safety and relationships with family and community were satisfactory. Overall, this research points out that women from different ethnic background and status have been able to benefit well from cash crop farming, particularly since they are able to make income for their own use. Additionally, in regards to well-being, men and women from different social backgrounds have generated their satisfaction in life through cardamom farming claiming that it has improved their livelihoods and well-being. They have compared their lives with cardamom farming against lives in the past without cardamom farming. The satisfaction level is visible through their positive opinion about being able to upgrade their living standard through cardamom farming compared to other farming techniques in the past. Overall, poorer women, with no land, have been able to step out of poverty because they have been able to earn through wage labour if not through cardamom production.

Also, institutions have played a major role in shaping livelihoods of women, as they have been able to voice their concerns through institutions and save money by becoming members. The reason these institutions have been established, particularly targeting women, is to provide a platform for these women to gather under the same roof and participate in various activities. As many women reflected on the importance of savings in their lives, it is evident how community organisations function well and how they can be used as a source to shape livelihoods of people.

Comparing my study to various findings from all over the world including Nepalese context (for example, Tandon, 2016; Alufohai & Ojogho, 2014; Dimova & Gang, 2013; Bomuhangi, et. al., 2011; Deere, et. al., 2010; Ashraf, et. al., 2009; Ngome, 2003; Kabeer, 2001; Rowlands, 1995) in regards to gender and empowerment, my findings

seem no different. Chapters Five and Six are the main part of my discussion where I present existing scenario of women engaged in large cardamom farming in regards to gender ideologies and the degree of participation that is affected by social construction of gender. By using a feminist methodology and delving into women's daily experiences, this study reveals local perception of gender and empowerment of cardamom growing community.

7.3 Women's Empowerment and Commercial Cardamom Farming

My findings reveal women's perception of empowerment based on their daily experience. Five major elements, as factors affecting women's empowerment were used based on the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index. The five elements adapted were i) decisions about agricultural production, ii) decision making on participation in employment activities, iii) income and decision making on finances, iv) leadership in the community, and v) time allocation.

Empirical evidences have shown that women view empowerment as being able to lead an independent life through earnings, being able to take part in community and organizations, being able to earn, save money, make decisions, raise voice and concerns when needed and add assets through earnings. Through contribution in commercial cardamom farming majority of women have been able to earn, use their income, save some money in the institutions and make decisions at the household level. Moreover, few women reported of being able to add assets in the households such as land, jewelleryes and vehicles.

In regards to decision making about production of crops, which includes taking actions such as supplying input to the farms, irrigating, harvesting and marketing of products, findings suggests that the decision making activities are highly gendered. For instance, men make most decisions on the use of fertilisers, irrigating and marketing of the goods. Women have lesser influence on decision making on these issues. The reason behind this is due to existing patriarchal roles and system people have been embedded in from the past.

Likewise, regarding decision making about participation in employment, both men and women of the households play equal role. The decisions are shaped by age factor as for

the younger population decisions are made by the elder members of the family. Decisions to work outside of home also depended on the distance to work, type of work, time for work and confidence level on doing the job. Men travelled further distance than women, children and elderly for work.

Findings reveal that men earn more than women when it comes to income. Majority of men and women revealed that they kept the income together and used it for household needs and children's education. Men perform tasks such as trading of goods and picking cardamom from the farms, which requires traveling. While women perform tasks such as separating cardamom pods from the flowers which does not require much traveling. Hence, there is difference in payment in wages based on that task which results in difference in wages. Additionally, women also perform unpaid household chores and contribution of their time in household chores makes them less income earners.

Institutions have proved to be a major contributor for women's empowerment. Institutions such as women's group and co-operative have helped women to acquire financial literacy through monthly savings and meetings. Many have been able to raise their concerns through institutions. Being able to save has also reflected on women being able to take loans to start any livelihood activity.

This research has revealed that the number of hours worked by men and women depend on the type of roles they perform. Although women are able to work outside of their homes and earn, they are also bound to perform household chores, which adds more working hours. Men are seldom found performing household chores and hence, men tend to have more leisure time than women. However, women feel empowered by being able to work outside of homes despite having less leisure time.

Overall, this research has covered only five elements of empowerment related to commercial cash crop production. However, much research is needed to understand whether women would feel empowered if they were provided skills and trainings to make decisions. Additionally, it would be interesting to explore whether eliminating patriarchal structure can make women take a lead in decision making in line to men. This would help seek answers to the question on whether patriarchy is the only enemy in shaping women's empowerment.

It would be fruitful to see perception studies conducted in rural agrarian areas that elaborate men and women's experiences in decision making of various sorts. Since this study is an attempt to demonstrate what happens in cash crop farming households in terms of gendered perception and decision-making, it would be very important to understand various associations between decision-making and agriculture at the individual level, such as land entitlement and education.

This research has shown that women view empowerment as being able to lead an independent life through earnings, being able to take part in community and organizations, being able to earn, save money, make decisions, raise voice and concerns when needed and add assets through earnings. Through contribution in commercial cardamom farming majority of women have been able to earn, use their income, save some money in the institutions and make decisions at the household level. Moreover, few women reported of being able to add assets in the households such as land, jewelleryes and vehicles. In regards to decision making about production of crops, which includes taking actions such as supplying input to the farms, irrigating, harvesting and marketing of products, findings suggests that the decision making activities are highly gendered. For instance, men make most decisions on the use of fertilisers, irrigating and marketing of the goods. Women have lesser influence on decision making on these issues. The reason behind this is due to existing patriarchal roles and system people have been embedded in from the past.

7.4 Major Conclusion in line to the Findings

As the new variety of cardamom called "Salakpurey" has set its own benchmark in the cardamom-farming sector across Nepal. And till date Salakpur has been successfully producing this species and spreading the variety across Nepal. The one concern that rises in the context of Salakpur and cardamom farming is the issue of sustainability of this crop. Since cardamom has been produced commercially in Salakpur for the past twenty years, very few people had shared their concern about the sustainability issue of the crop. Yet no one can clearly tell whether cardamom will last forever in Salakpur or not. But farmers would expect this crop to stay with them forever because of the benefits they acquire from this crop. A proper study of this species of crop, husbandry practices

in regards to soil, climatic conditions and irrigation would help understand the sustainability of this crop.

One of the most important aspects I have shown in this thesis is that by being a part of large cardamom farming, women have been able to participate in local institutions, particularly cooperatives in the study site. I have read many news, reports and studies that state women's engagement in institutions does not necessarily lead to empowerment because they do not have access to resources. But my study claims that women who have been a part of cash crops farming have been able to participate actively in all women institutions that are led and run by women. My finding shows that one woman can motivate another women and empower if they are provided spaces to grow. And this shows positive signs for women empowerment in the commercial sector, given that there are institutional capacities that boost women's activity, participation, skills and knowledge.

Apart from institutions and active participation, the one thing lacking still is women's access to property, which demeans their status. Even with the change in law that women are entitled to property, this has not been implemented across the country. Land has been an element that has universally been passed from men to men in the household. There is a saying in Nepali that says "*Chora kul ko diyo, chori mutu ko diyo*" which means that sons have spaces in the house while daughters have space in the heart. This already provides gendered spaces of men and women. This also gives a notion that sons are entitled to carrying and passing on the household's identity and hence they are the lights of the households. This also gives sons the right to property and access to household resources. In my study, although people stated that women should be entitled to resources and properties, households that could afford have been able to provide property such as land and jewelleries to daughters in the name of dowry (or as gifts) when they get married. This could mean that daughters who elope or do not get married are not entitled to such gifts. These findings open a new floor for discussion concerning land rights and policies for women and the consequences of such policies on women's status.

Findings of this research evidently show that in the commercial cardamom farming roles are gendered. In majority, men take up with tasks such as carrying loads, picking

the fruit and marketing while women take up with tasks such as cooking for labourers and separating the fruits. Moreover, this research associates picking of roles as “doing gender” meaning that men perform tasks they have been doing to show that their “sex” or identity is male and women perform tasks they have been doing to show that their “sex” or identity is female. The existence of roles being gendered is because of the existing patriarchal pervasiveness in the village. Moreover, lack of market facilities near the village and lack of infrastructure also abides women from traveling to market their goods. Such situation automatically puts men first in terms of taking up roles such as marketing of goods. Moreover, future research could delve further into the changes in roles of women given that the infrastructures are well built in the village.

Spaces are created in the society for men and women, which is a product of gender. Gender itself is a production of constructions by the society. Lorber (1994) states that doing gender comes to everyone without any notice and this is exactly what I believe in. The deeply rooted social construct and a woman doing what she has been doing is a pervasive signal of doing gender. That is we accept things as they are make it a societal construct. The theories of gender and social construction and doing gender proved helpful to gather insights for this research. By using the feminist methodology, I have shed lights to women’s daily life experiences and brought out the socially constructed life pattern women undergo in their society. This is solely based on every day experiences of women and myself as a researcher. My position as a woman was essential to delve into the issues of women’s lived experience in Salakpur. But I do also believe that the gender that is socially constructed can be amended and adapted because it is not a divine force but human created phenomenon. And it is important to make the gender institutions and ideologies negotiable with the change in time. Instead of men and women agreeing to the fact that *things are as they are so we need to follow it as they are*, there should be a belief that *things are as they are but they can be modified for ones well being*.

The idea of men and women as sexes is a divine force. Human interaction cannot create only men or women. Men and women exist to create a world of humankind. And the idea of gender is human made. Gender as a social institution does no harm as far as it creates equal spaces for both men and women. However, the gender ideologies in the society has been moulded in such ways that men and women become competent for

power and prestige in which the former has dominated the latter in most cases. This has created a huge gap in gender and development. To be tagged as a woman with set boundaries in the society leads to decrease in women's efficacy numbs them and thus women become deprived of resources and other facilities. This automatically puts women in the lower spectrum than men. There is a chain impact of such lower status as it prevents women from getting access to education and resources; this results in women not being able to earn or make decisions. This further results in peaking of men's position and lowering of women's position. Bringing women in the same level as men by empowering them can question the hierarchical position of men and women in the society and challenges power asymmetry that exists in the society.

Empowerment is the ability to make choices for self and lead a life without being demeaned. Kabeer (1999) states that empowerment refers to the notion of power. Hence, empowerment leads to creating change. I have stated in chapter six that empowering women is key to empowering the entire household. Creating spaces for women to bring about changes in their lives by implanting leadership skills could possibly create big changes in the lives of women. Empowerment challenges the concept of hierarchy, questions the power and prestige issues and provides opportunities for women to be in the similar spectrum as men defined by capabilities in women.

Gender equality and empowerment in today's world is the key to economic and social development. And my study is a proof of such notion. Women being a part of large cardamom farming have been able to benefit both economically as they can earn and socially as they can contribute to the society. Women's access to resources and position has been denied for many years while men have enjoyed power and position. And as feminism endeavours' equal women's equal participation and liberation, bringing women in the forefront of decision making and power play through inclusion can help maintain women's status in the society. Additionally, such act can lead to reduction of gender gap and overall development. Only bringing women to become members in institutions do not answer the question of equality. Nor does it comply with the rule of feminism. But bringing women as active members who can participate, negotiate at the institutional level and show leadership skills could answer the question of equality for change.

Taking all these issues into consideration, my study holds a strong perspective on gender and social and economic development caused by agricultural transformation in Salakpur village of Rong rural municipality. This study was worth conducting because it delved deeper into understanding the livelihood trajectories set by change in agricultural systems in rural Nepal. This study helped conquer meaning to agricultural systems and the changes it has brought into livelihoods, empowerment status and institutional arrangements of a particular village relying in cash crop farming.

7.5 Recommendations and Future Research

Since the government of Nepal lists large cardamom as a top priority crop, it would be important to own this crop by strengthening the trademark, which has been passed as Everest Big Cardamom. Creating suitable action plan and collectively collaborating with the cardamom farmers at the grass root level can do this. A direct trading of cardamom from Nepal to other countries would be the best to flourish cardamom trading by owning the product as Nepali product and opening trade linkages directly with other countries without relying on India.

Though the agricultural strategies such as the ADS reflects on protecting cardamom as a crop by providing incentives to farmers, it fails to underline an action plan in how to achieve the goals in a long run. The strategies do not mention the idea of sustainable cardamom farming through soil testing and protection, lab management and technical support.

The issue of taxes seems serious among the cardamom farmers, who have been forced to pay taxes in areas that do not produce cardamom, like in Jhapa district. This would put the farmers in loss. Hence, the provincial government could now enforce legal taxes only by strict monitoring and penalising the tax points that are set illegally. This is because farmers are the ultimate loss bearers in this process.

This research calls for a need for further investigation regarding sustainable large cardamom farming and its impact on women. Also to what extent could women move out of poverty through cash crop farming in a long-term perspective is an important issue to look at in future. Moreover, to support this idea, government initiatives on

agriculture, particularly on the large cardamom, which is declared as the top cash crop in Nepal, could be reviewed and analysed using a political economic analysis. For example, It would also be fruitful to conduct a political economic analysis of the Agriculture Development Strategies as well as structural changes in the cooperatives and institutions at the local level in line to its provision and policies on cardamom and its effective implementation. Even though it might be too early to begin the assessment of this policy, adapting this process in near future can be crucial in measuring success of this strategy and if possible, identify possible measures to amend it.

The issue of sustainable cardamom farming is less assessed and debated in the agriculture sector of Nepal. However, there have been reports of disease infestation and decline in production of cardamom. Hence, there is a need for a proper assessment of cardamom production and sustainability to help farmers learn more about their crop.

This research sets a backdrop on the cardamom production and marketing but it does not cover an in-depth analysis of value chain of this crop. In the cash crop farming sector, exploring the value chain is an essential part of research. This is because it helps understand the situation of those involved in the value chain along with issues of trademark, taxation and marketing of the product across the border. Hence, this research calls for a future scrutiny in the value chain sector of cardamom farming.

This research does not explore a pertinent issue regarding implication of cardamom farming and its link with migration in the study site. Generally people reported that there have been returnees in the village who have taken up cardamom farming upon their return and it would be fruitful to explore further on the linkages between cash crops and migration. The assumption that cash crops farming reduces migration and motivates people to accept livelihoods options in their own places of origin could be a pertinent research topic in migration discourse.

Lastly, and most importantly, this research contributes broadly to the field of development studies by i) adding knowledge based on empirical evidences on commercialisation of agriculture with specific focus on large cardamom; ii) providing new insights and knowledge on gender relations in expanding arena of high value agriculture in the front of agrarian change, and iii) broadening knowledge and insights useful for research, policy and practice in high value agriculture.

8. References

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9. Appendices

1. Annex for Tables

Table 1: Responses of Females on their Well-being (%), N=312

Satisfaction with	99*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Life as a whole	-	-	0.3	2.2	3.5	20.5	15.7	16.3	15.7	4.2	18.3
Standard of living	-	0.3	0.3	1.6	5.1	15.4	21.8	20.5	15.4	4.2	15.4
Current living standard compared to five years ago	-	0.3	-	1.0	1.6	9.3	20.8	17.3	23.4	10.9	15.4
Personal health	-	3.5	1.6	3.2	12.8	13.8	14.7	15.7	18.3	4.2	12.2
Achieving in life	-	3.0	0.3	1.9	4.8	11.5	19.2	23.4	18.3	3.8	16.3
Personal relationships	-	-	-	0.3	1.3	6.1	10.9	18.9	23.4	11.9	27.2
Safety of life	-	-	-	1.0	3.5	7.4	14.4	19.2	26.9	7.7	19.9
Feeling part of community	-	-	0.3	0.3	1.6	8.7	14.7	24.4	20.8	7.7	21.5
Future security	-	-	1.0	2.9	5.8	9.6	20.2	22.4	17.6	5.8	14.7
Cash/non-traditional crop(s) production	3.2	1.3	0.6	1.3	5.8	10.9	13.5	14.7	20.2	14.1	14.4
Satisfaction with off-farm employment	72.1	4.5	0.3	0.3	1.0	2.6	4.8	3.8	4.8	1.9	3.8

Source: Field Survey, 2015

**[99 means not applicable since the respondents are not engaged in off farm employment]*

Table 2: Responses of Males on their Well-being (%), N=282

Satisfaction with	99*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Life as a whole	-	1.4	0.4	1.4	2.8	16.7	14.5	22.0	17.7	2.5	20.6
Standard of living	-	0.4	0.4	1.8	5.3	18.1	17.4	19.9	15.6	6.4	14.9
Current living standard compared to five years ago	-	0.7	0.4	0.4	5.3	11.0	16.7	19.9	22.3	10.3	13.1
Personal health	-	3.5	1.1	3.5	7.1	13.5	11.3	19.1	17.4	6.4	17.0
Achieving in life	-	0.4	0.4	0.7	5.3	12.1	18.4	24.1	16.3	6.7	15.6
Personal relationships	-	-	-	0.4	0.7	6.0	9.2	15.6	29.1	10.3	28.7
Safety of life	-	-	-	0.7	1.4	7.4	10.3	17.7	27.3	11.0	24.1
Feeling part of community	-	-	-	0.4	1.4	7.4	14.2	19.5	26.2	8.2	22.7
Future security	-	0.7	1.1	2.8	6.4	11.3	16.3	27.3	15.2	5.3	14.5
Cash/non-traditional crop(s) production	3.5	1.4	0.7	2.1	5.0	12.1	12.4	14.9	19.9	12.4	15.6
Satisfaction with off-farm employment	61.7	5.3	-	-	0.4	6.0	4.3	5.3	5.7	6.7	4.6

Source: Field Survey, 2015

**[99 means not applicable since the respondents are not engaged in off farm employment]*

Table 3: Decision about growing crops (%) [N = 282 for Males, N = 312 for Females]

	Participants													
	Male (%)							Female (%)						
	1	2	3	4	5	88	99	1	2	3	4	5	88	99
Decision on →	Land acquisition (purchase, seize, allocate)													
Crop I	1.1	3.9	19.5	31.2	39.4	5.0	-	3.8	17.9	34.3	26.0	12.2	5.1	0.3
Crop II	0.7	3.2	16.7	31.9	31.2	16.0	0.4	2.6	39.8	31.7	23.4	11.5	16.7	0.3
	Which plot to plant													
Crop I	1.4	2.5	21.3	30.1	39.7	5.0	-	5.4	15.4	36.5	24.3	12.8	4.8	0.3
Crop II	1.1	3.2	16.3	34.0	31.9	17.0	-	3.2	11.9	33.0	22.1	13.8	15.7	0.3
	Use of technologies													
Crop I	-	1.8	16.3	30.5	34.0	13.5	0.4	-	20.5	25.3	24.7	12.8	14.1	2.6
Crop II	1.1	2.5	13.5	29.4	29.4	23.8	1.4	7.4	14.7	22.8	20.2	9.9	23.4	1.6
	Apply fertilizer (how much, when)													
Crop I	1.1	3.5	17.7	27.0	33.7	17.0	-	8.7	15.1	29.2	21.5	12.2	12.8	0.6
Crop II	0.4	3.2	15.6	27.3	28.7	24.8	-	6.1	13.1	26.3	19.6	10.9	23.4	0.6
	About labour													
Crop I	1.4	4.6	17.0	30.1	38.7	8.2	-	3.5	11.5	28.8	27.6	18.3	9.6	0.6
Crop II	0.7	4.3	17.0	28.4	30.5	19.1	-	1.9	9.0	26.3	24.4	17.6	19.9	1.0

	About harvesting (when)													
Crop I	1.1	4.6	14.9	36.9	39.0	3.5	-	3.2	10.6	34.3	29.8	17.9	4.2	-
Crop II	0.4	3.5	15.2	30.6	32.6	15.6	-	1.9	9.6	30.1	29.2	13.8	14.7	0.6
	Selling product? (to whom)													
Crop I	1.1	4.3	16.3	33.3	40.4	4.6	-	4.5	14.4	34.0	27.6	15.1	4.2	0.3
Crop II	0.4	3.2	14.9	33.0	32.6	16.0	-	3.5	13.5	28.8	26.0	12.5	15.4	0.3

Source: Field Survey, 2015

I = First Main Crop, II = Second Main Crop

Code1: Input into decision making

- No influence1
- Limited influence2
- Influence in some decisions.....3
- Influence in most decisions.....4
- Important influence on decision5
- Decision not made/not applicable.....88
- I do not know.....99

Table 4: Time Use on the Basis of One-Day Work (%) [N = 282 Males, N = 312 Females]

1 Day Work Description	Below 1		1 to 2		2 to 3		3 to 4		4 to 5		5 hours +		77*		Total	
	hour		hour		hours		hours		hours							
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Agricultural production for HH	26	6.9	22.2	21.2	16.5	17.6	16.0	13.1	19.6	15.5	43.8	25.7	-	-	68.8	78.5
Off farm employment	6.4	7.7	10.3	9.2	9.0	9.2	-	7.7	10.3	7.7	53.8	41.5	10.3	16.9	27.7	20.8
Taking care of livestock in HH	27.4	30.1	38.7	36.3	24.1	23.8	8.0	7.8	0.9	1.2	0.9	0.8	-		75.2	82.1
Cooking	55.1	25.9	33.3	48.9	11.6	19.7	-	4.4	-	-	-	0.7	-	0.4	24.5	87.8
Purchasing foods or other goods for HH	25.2	46.4	15.3	13.8	13.5	8.7	5.4	3.6	3.6	2.2	36.9	24.6	-	0.7	39.4	44.2
Doing the cleaning, beds, taking care of the dwelling	72.9	69.3	1.4	4.6	21.7	19.9	0.4	5.0	0.4	1.2	1.4	-	-		24.5	77.2
Washing/hanging/taking care of the clothes	81.2	58.3	2.4	4.1	12.9	32.6	2.4	5.0	0.2	0.4	1.2	-	-	-	30.1	77.6
Taking care of the kids and the sick or the frails (including old people).	32.5	36.9	2.6	1.5	36.4	26.2	1.7	7.7	3.9	8.5	3.9	13.1	9.1	6.2	27.3	41.7

Getting firewood and/or water for the household?	37.7	46.6	38.3	25.7	14.9	18.9	5.2	5.4	1.9	1.4	1.3	1.4	0.6	1.4	54.6	47.4
Community service including attending community meetings.	23.6	27.7	26.4	38.3	27.3	18.1	12.7	10.6	7.3	2.1	1.8	2.1	0.9	1.1	39.0	30.1

Source: Field Survey, 2015

2. Annex for Interview Guides

i) Checklist for cardamom farmers – In-depth Interview

Check	Guiding lines	Remark
Familiarising the Context		
	Self introduction & Objective of the Research [Introduce FATE]	
	Household introduction; family background/members Name of Respondent: Sex: Age: Ethnic Background: District, VDC, Village, Ward#: Marital Status:	

	Spouse's status/employment: Children: Number of Family Members:	
	Livelihoods activities of the Household members [Agriculture, Service, wage labour]	
Guide to reaching objective 1: Document the evolution of commercial cardamom farming in Salakpur		
	Respondent's first experience of cardamom farming Could you tell me when you started cardamom farming? Who started cardamom farming? How did it become so popular? What crops were produced before cardamom farming? Number of years of engagement in cardamom farming	
	Farmers knowledge of the crop [planting technique – self-inherited or trained]	
	Land use and HH inheritance of land for cardamom/other crop farming →Land ownership of the HH [probe]	
Following up with the results of context mapping: Shock and Shock Resilience		
	Disease in cardamom farms – origin and impact in the farms [shock]	
	Impact of disease in production [reduction by.....; loss by.....]	
	Impact of loss in production in income	
	Changes experienced in livelihoods [how did this impact women/men, differences in experiences?]	
	Measures adopted	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> →Response: self, government, other institutions →Grievance mechanism; time taken for grievance →Recovery: Time, Money and Revival 	
	<p>Changes in cardamom farming century ago and changes now</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> →Planting technique →Species and elevation →Irrigation facilities →Harvesting methods →Labour →Marketing system →Destination of produced goods 	
Guide to reaching Objective 2 Assess the linkages between women’ engagement in commercial cardamom farming culture and their livelihoods		
	Reasons for choosing cardamom farming for livelihoods	
	The process of farming [setting the farm,,, and.....	
	Role performed in cardamom production [each process] by men and women [differences or similarities] Also children’s contribution	
	Reasons for differences or similarities [who determines the role]	
	Market dimensions for cardamom [Process: who sells, who collects, price determination, destination for goods]	

	Well-Being	
	Motivating factors of being a cardamom farmer [...being a female/being a male...] [eg, good return, cultural affiliation]	
	Demotivating factors in being a cardamom farmer [...difficulties faced, discrimination in payment/return, decisions during planting and harvest, disease in crops, lack of support...]	
	Alternatives one wants to undertake/ or is undertaking if not cardamom farming	
	Alternative employment/jobs if any – reason for choosing the job	
	Total quantity of cardamom sold this year [HH] – the process of selling Note: Researcher to know the price beforehand [eg recent price of cardamom: 40 kg of cardamom = 1 lakh 15 thousand]	
	<u>Use of the income</u> →Decision making to use the income [men make the most decision or women...probe] →Types of investment [education, health, food needs, bigger investment] Probe: eg, how will the decision-making done by you (or your husband/wife) affect the HH]	
	Impact seen through engagement in cardamom production [in the HH, children and their need/education; health; achieve dreams]	
	Changes in lifestyle and livelihoods since cardamom farming [provide a time frame]. ...What if they did not produce cardamom but produced other crops?	

Guide to reaching Objective 3: Identify and explore the factors associated with women's empowerment, through participation and earning, in the cardamom farming and participation in institutions		
	Meaning of assets for each individual and importance [tangible/intangible]	
	Assets inherited [difference by gender (eg, dowry)]	
	Assets accumulated through engagement in NTAE/ cardamom alone Any other crops? Or jobs?	
	<i>How does asset accumulation and empowerment relate?</i>	
	Meaning of empowerment for each individual [<i>social, political, economic...</i>]	
	Relations in having assets and being empowered [can have a stand in the family....]	
	Feelings of empowerment through NTAE [any changes if respondent were not engaged in NTAE before]	
	Participation in social groups/institutions related to cardamom farming/NTAE [cooperatives, women's group etc] and activities	
	Types of participation [active, semi-active; inactive – listener than a leader]	
	Support from family members, restraining factors due to participation	
	Changes in lifestyle after being a part of NTAE/social organization How does being in an organization help?	
Others relevant questions to probe		
	Types of known policies/act for cardamom at the local level	
	Types of institutions for cardamom/NTAE crops initiated by government [...other institutions]	

	Measure taken by government to combat disease [both local and national level]	
	Compensation for crop failure [government/institutions]	
	<p>Alternatives adopted due to crop failure</p> <p>Probe.... if the farmer did not give up with cardamom despite failure, why? What measures were taken? Who did they go to for support?</p>	
	<p>Existing labour market situation/status on cardamom</p> <p>→Pricing policies and determination</p> <p>→Pricing and its impact on farmers</p>	
Concluding Remarks		
	Satisfaction level with the current NTAE work [aspirations....]	
	Expectations from the government/institutions	
	Plans on continuing cardamom farming [...probe, why?]	

ii) Well- Being Index

Respondents to give a ratings between 1 and 10 [1 being least satisfied and 10 being highly satisfied]

1. *How satisfied are you with the current income of your family?*
 2. *How satisfied are you with your current living standard compared to five years ago?*
 3. *How satisfied are you with your current living standard compared to other household in your community?*
 4. *How satisfied are you with your current employment situation?*
 5. *How satisfied are you with your health?*
 6. *How satisfied are you with what you are achieving in life?*
 7. *How satisfied are you with your personal relationships?*
 8. *How satisfied are you with how safe you feel?*
 9. *How satisfied are you with being a part of your community/organisations you are involved in?*
 10. *How satisfied are you with your future livelihood security?*
 11. *How satisfied are you with your future political security?*
- In case of commercial and non-commerical crops:***
12. *How satisfied are you with your cash/non-traditional crop(s) production?*
 13. *How satisfied are you with traditional crop(s) production?*
 14. *How satisfied are you with the return/income from your cash/non-traditional crop (s)?*
 15. *How satisfied are you with the return/income from your traditional crop(s)?*

iii) Focus Group Discussion Guide

1. Name, Age, Background information
2. Knowledge about cardamom farming and history
3. Current situation of cardamom farming and its impact in lives of households from different background
4. Reason for choosing cardamom farming in the village
5. Opinion about knowledge on cardamom as a crop [How well do farmers know their crop?]

6. Importance of cardamom farming compared to other crops [such as subsistence rice farming in the past, ginger farming in the past...]
7. Situation of livelihoods post cardamom farming
8. People's perception of empowerment [particularly women's definition of empowerment]
9. Situation of empowerment post cardamom farming and the factors adding to empowerment
10. Institutional participation and its impact in the members lives
11. Programs and plans regarding cardamom production for sustainable farming of the crop
12. Problems faced by the village regarding cardamom farming
13. Wellbeing of people before and after cardamom farming and factors associated with the well being

iv) Key Informant Interview Checklist

1. Scenario of cardamom farming in the village
2. Information on households producing cardamom, traders and the process in which cardamom production is handled in the village
3. Transition from one crop to another and its impact, income and benefits, drawback
4. Men and women's engagement in cardamom production in the village from farming to marketing
5. Impact of cardamom farming in the lives of farmers, traders and those engaged
6. Status of women's livelihoods and empowerment through cardamom farming
7. Status of poorer household's caused by cardamom production
8. Institutions engaged in shaping cardamom production from the farm level to trading level
9. Issues around trademark of cardamom and the status of ownership of cardamom as a Nepali crop
10. Existing support from national to local level institutions for cardamom farming, drawbacks, expectations and issues around sustainability of cardamom

3. Annex for field excerpts

- *In-depth Interview – excerpt*

...Today I interviewed Mr. Tamang from Salakpur, who is one of the cardamom farmers. He revealed information regarding how cardamom farming started. According to him, prior to cardamom farming, his family cultivated ginger. Ginger went extinct about 10 years ago and as a replacement came cardamom. Selling cardamom commercially started about 7 years ago. He produces cardamom in 15-16 Ropanis of land. In his cardamom farm he could produce 120 kgs in approximate. But every year the production varies by few kgs. He expressed that to produce 120 kgs, the labour cost is about 25,000-30,000 NRs. By selling cardamom last year he made around 3 lakhs NRs. Though the amount is good, he opined that he and his family had to buy pipes for irrigation. The village faces severe irrigation problem due to its geographical location. The villagers are still waiting for the government to do something about irrigation.....

- *Focus Group Discussion with women in Salakpur – excerpt*

...The Focus Group Discussion held with women from women's group in Salakpur today brought various insights about the status of women, including impact of livelihoods from cash crop farming and empowerment. Many women believe that cardamom farming has really improved their livelihoods. First because this crop has been easy to farm compared to other crops such as rice in the past and maize or even ginger, which was a cash crop farming in Salakpur prior to cardamom. Ginger farming was inflicted with disease and hence, as an alternative farmers took up with cardamom farming. Second, that the revenue from cardamom is more than any other crops. The income from cardamom production has been able to help poorer women fulfil their basic needs and improved their overall status and well-being. The engagement in cardamom farming has also empowered women, particularly with the help of institutions like women's group. Women expressed that institutions have shaped their lives. This is because in the past many women were not able to speak or they were timid to even tell their names. But now most of them as members of institutions have been actively participating in events, meetings, savings in the institutions

and trainings provided occasionally from the institutions. This, according to the women, has been one of the biggest achievements. Empowerment therefore, has happened due to the presence of institution...

- *Key Informant Interview with President of Cardamom Entrepreneurs Association*

...I conducted a Key Informant Interview with the president of Cardamom Entrepreneurs Association today. The Cardamom Marketers Association was established in 2064 BS. This institution was established with an aim to unite all the marketers with the establishment of this association. First, they collected funds within these people, in small or big amounts and started this venture. So in 2064 BS under the presidency of Mr. Rajendra Ghimire, they established this organization. With this institutions they are not only looking after marketing of the cardamom but also associated with cardamom farmers as they feel like they should walk hand in hand with the farmers. At the moment there are branches of these associations in various districts, so far in 13 districts. And under these branches, they have been working on identifying the problems faced by farmers such as diseases in cardamom, which is the main issue at the moment, with aims to providing solutions. And they are also focused on nursery management for cardamom. Also, maintaining quality of cardamom is one of the main priorities. They have been running various programs and under this, they have plans and programs on a yearly basis...

- *Timeline Narrative*

...In the midst of practicing rice farming, ginger was introduced in Salakpur during the 1960s by Narad Adhikari, another popular figure. Mr. Adhikari brought 5 kgs of ginger seed from Sikkim, India and produced 100 kgs after sowing the seeds. Since then, every household replicated ginger plantation in their bari without knowing that Salakpur would be producing ginger as a commercial crop. In the process of ginger cultivation, households while still producing rice, planted ginger in their vegetable gardens or bari. In the beginning, the return from ginger was not good. Household producing this crop had to travel to the nearby market to sell their product. Since there were no roads, horses and donkeys were the main means of transportation...

By 1981 Salakpur became a commercial ginger producer where the ratio of ginger production against rice production reached 5:2. The production increased highly by 30 percent between 1983 and 1993. The value of ginger was high and the export market India had huge demand for this crop. This pushed the farmers to cultivate more ginger and substitute other crops with ginger. During the process of this cash crop farming, rice cultivation lost its value in this village. Also, households started substituting their vegetable garden with ginger...

In 1984, a villager called Sungtuney Kancha, brought cardamom sapling to Salakpur from Darjeeling. During that time Darjeeling was going through political unrest and Nepalese in Darjeeling migrated to Nepal. In that process, the villager who settled in Salakpur planted cardamom. After few years, locals started replicating him by planting cardamom saplings just as an attempt to see what the plant would look like and what it would bear. In 1995, the first batch of cardamom from Salakpur was sold in a local market in Harkate, Ilam. During this time farmers produced 1-2 kgs only to sell to the market. Before 1995, very few households had started planting cardamom in their rice fields and they used it for household consumption and gifted it to relatives during festivals...

- *In-depth Interview*

SKC: Namaste. So after the short introduction and given that you give me permission to record this interview, I am switching on my

recorder to hear your insights. So tell me, you are a part of the co-operative here?

LT: Yes. I am. It is a women's cooperative. I am simply a member of it. So far I know, it has been helping in providing goat-farming training. Also it has provided support for beekeeping. Women who could not even speak their name in the past have developed the habit of public speaking. They can now express themselves in front of other people.

SKC: So how has the cooperative helped women in particular?

LT: In the past, women were very shy like I told you. They are now well aware about the current situation of the society and encourage children to go to school, save money in the cooperative, speak when needed and support each other. Like if a woman is sad due to some reasons at home, be it violence at home or other kinds of treatment, and if she shares then we all suggest her what to do based on the situation. These things are huge change for women in general if we compared to that women like our mother and grandmother in the past. They had no such power. Before being engaged in cooperative, women had no idea of savings and balance and now they know the value of savings even small amount of money. Also, women now visit schools of their children and attend meetings when called for. These can be counted as the positive help from the cooperative by being a part of it.

SKC: So, you mean women have also become powerful by being a part of cooperative?

LT: Yes one can say that. Because women who are shy turn to becoming vocal and these are things that helps them create change. And being able to create change in the household level is power. For example, we have met women who could not make decision, small decisions at the household level but now they are ruling over. It is a positive power, being able to speak, share what they think, decide to save money and attend meetings. These are all component of having some power, I think. Power is not only

defined by money or strength, physical strength but also being able to voice.

SKC: On that front, I wanted to ask about the political scenario in this village and women's representation. Are women active politically in this village?

LT: Well, men are more involved in political activities but women are less active, I think. We do not have women, let's say a proper woman who has acted as a politician and asked for votes and all that, for a particular political party. But if some women become interested then, I am sure they can do well, mainly from this village because women have learned a lot by being part of organizations like cooperative or women's groups.

SKC: Would you possibly be that woman – the interested women you mentioned?

LT: [laughs]. I wish. I have so much to do and I have less interest in politics. I would rather be apart of organizations like this and work for welfare of women. I don't think women need a political party to be empowered or represent their areas, you know. They can learn from small groups to bring changes in the lives of others and that is enough. I do not know any sisters and friends around who are interested in politics.

SKC: So besides, politics, do you know any women from your village representing in any other organization?

LT: There are two main organisations here; the cardamom cooperative and women's cooperative. I know women from these cooperatives. They are our neighbours, sisters and from our community.

- *Key Informant Interview*

...NB: And this year, I mean we had applied for cardamom trademark last year...

SKC: Oh yes, sorry to cut you but congratulations on that. It is a huge achievement. I have come here for three years now and everyone

I talked to regarding cardamom, they had been lamenting on how we do not have a trademark and this is it. You all have proved that you can get one. Congratulations really. It is a new beginning.

NB: Yes thank you. On the 14th of Ashar, 2016 we received this trademark. The registration has been done. And under this trademark, we have been collaborating with the Nepal government to connect with three main countries, India, Pakistan and Dubai, to join hands of trading cardamom directly. We have also hired an international layer. The process will take some time.

SKC: I see

NB: After 5 to 6 months, when we get the process done, we will be able to trade with other countries. Also, another thing is, there has been a new agreement with India, Bandarga agreement a new one, Bishaka Kapil or something. If we have that agreement then the products will reach the destination in 15 days, which is not so bad. It will be easy for us if that takes place. The trademark will also be effective. And in addition, we can trade by giving the value chain of such commodity a special push by adding value, which is our wish and attempt.

SKC: Ok. so you can sell it as Everest Big Cardamom right?

NB: Yes

SKC: And, like at the moment, the traders here in Nepal, how are they exporting the goods to India? Is there a specific packaging? For example 30 kg sack? 20 kg sack?

NB: In the past when the value of cardamom was not so much, they used to send it in a sack with capacity of 50 kgs and at the moment since the value has gone up they have been sending the goods in 25 kgs and 10 kgs sacks.

SKC: ok.

NB: we do the packaging that way.

SKC: ok and if the trademark passes, god willingly we pray that it does, and if you get through the other processes, would the packaging size go down?.

NB: Yes that could happen if the value is still good. At the moment the demand is up to 5 kgs as well. But we have not done that yet. The Indians do it in India.

SKC: Ok in India?

NB: Yes. We have not taken that step of reducing the packaging to less than 10 kgs because we think it would be difficult. But there is a chance in near future that the packaging might be reduced to 5 Kgs.

SKC: Ok. Nice. And also since the product has been going to India as of now for a long time, have you ever thought about how the product goes to other countries from India? Regarding the trademark?

Focus Group Discussion

SKC: Thank you all for your introduction. Since we all are cardamom farmers here, I want to begin by asking some questions and anyone can answer but one by one. So my first question is, since we know a lot about cardamom farming, what kinds of work do men and women do? Is it different? Is it similar?.

MS [Male]: Men do the labour requiring work like carrying cardamom and plants from one place to another, irrigating the farms, picking during the harvest season. Women do other works like weeding the surrounding along with men, women do the separating during harvesting season, cook for labours when there is *parma* or wage work going on. These things.

PRT [Male]: Yes. It is like that. After harvesting if the men of the household are available then they do the drying or sometimes both men and women do it. It depends on how much work a household needs to do. Some have cattles and so labour has to be divided between the family members, the ones that can work. Sometimes only women have to do everything if men have gone to the market, or even gone to other countries for migration. It all depends on the household work.

MD [Female]: Sometimes both men and women do the works together. There are women who pick too but not so many because picking is done using knife and that requires some training. And women can get the training too but there are so many other works pending

KP [Female]: The work is similar but only when it comes to dividing work then one has to do one thing and the other has to do other thing. That is why it looks like men do one work and women do another work. All the work is similar. If one picks using special knife, then other separates using gloves. Both can be easy and difficult work at the same time, depending on how one takes it. The work that men have been doing and women have been doing has been there for years and so we have followed what we have seen. But it is not like women cannot pick or they don't want to. It is just the division of work in the household.

SKC: So who introduce people in this village about cardamom farming?

DBD [Male]: There was a man, who was called Sungtuney Kancha, I heard. I don't know his name but villagers used to call him with that name. When he visited his in-laws place in Mirik, India, he brought saplings from there and planted in his garden. But then people did not know that much about cardamom here. We used to have rice farms then. So he brought it and when time came everyone started planting cardamom.

ST [Female]: I heard the sapling was already in the forests of Salakpur in the beginning. And that is why they say this species came from Salakpur.

RA [Male]: If we keep digging, many stories will come up but wherever this species came from, Salakpur is known for that. We have been able to sell the saplings to various parts of Nepal. And we have set our trademark.

SKC: Did anyone receive training(s) regarding cardamom plantation?

PCR [Male]: No training. We did not. People of today's generation have acquired trainings but not people like us. We are old. We learned by doing. I still do cardamom farming. It is easier than rice farming.

PT [Female]: Yes the cardamom cooperatives sometimes call for training and some people receive it. The local officials come and give training to the villagers.

4. Example of transcript in English with manual (open) coding [Transcript from in-depth interview with cardamom farmer]

SKC: Namaste. So after the short introduction and given that you give me permission to record this interview, I am switching on my recorder to hear your insights. So tell me, you are a part of the co-operative here?

LT: Yes. I am. It is the women's cooperative. I am simply a member of it. So far I know, it has been helping in providing goat-farming training. Also it has provided support for beekeeping. Women who could not even speak their name in the past have developed the habit of public speaking. They can now express themselves in front of other people.

SKC: So how has the cooperative helped women in particular?

LT: In the past, women were very shy like I told you. They are now well aware about the current situation of the society and encourage children to go to school, save money in the cooperative, speak when needed and support each other. Like if a woman is sad due to some reasons at home, be it violence at home or other kinds of treatment, and if she shares then we all suggest her what to do based on the situation. These things are huge change for women in general if we compared to that women like our mother and grandmother in the past. They had no such power. Before being engaged in cooperative, women had no idea of savings and balance and now they know the value of savings even small amount of money. Also, women now visit schools of their children and attend meetings when called for. These can be counted as the positive help from the cooperative by being a part of it.

SKC: So, you mean women have also become powerful by being a part of cooperative?

LT: Yes one can say that. Because women who are shy turn to becoming vocal and these are things that helps them create change. And being able to create change in the household level is power. For example, we have met women who could not make decision, small decisions at the household level but now they are ruling over. It is a positive power, being able to speak, share what they think, decide to save money and attend meetings. These are all

Experience with institutions

Changes caused by being a part of institution; financial literacy through savings; value education for children

Benefits of being a part of institution; Household decision making by women

component of having some power, I think. Power is not only defined by money or strength, physical strength but also being able to voice.

CONTINUED...

SKC: So, lets talk a little about your household now. How do you and your family members run your day, what kind of work do you do and what do your family members do?

LT: Normally it is me and my husband in the house since the children go to school. I mostly work in the kitchen. Early morning, my husband goes to the jungle to gather fodder for the cattle. I cook and clean. We eat lunch and then we both go to our farms to work. There are works like weeding the farms. We have cardamom farms with oranges in them mainly. So we weed the grasses to keep the surrounding clean. We both come home in the evening and while I make dinner, he feeds the cattle and milk the cows as well. This is how the day looks.

Difference in roles performed by men and women in the household - a daily routine

SKC: So, you do this everyday?

LT: Mostly everyday. But during the cardamom season, the scenario is different. This is from July to September. While the days are busy, I am usually at home cooking for the laborers and serving food for them. My husband leads the laborers to the farms for harvesting cardamom. During the season, my husband collects fodder early morning, eats and leaves around 9 am. I cook, clean, feed the cattle and milk the cows. Then I start preparing meal for 20-40 laborers, depending on the day and turn out. Once the laborers harvest and bring the cardamom to our house, I serve them lunch around 2 pm, clean. After cleaning, I sit with the ones separating cardamom. I get to do it only 2 hours or so. Around 4 pm or 4:30, the laborers go home. I then get back to making dinner and husband feeds the cattle and milks the cows.

Women's role in the HH

Men's role during the harvest

Leisure time more for men than women

SKC: Ok. That is hard work you both do. Do you like working in the kitchen or would you rather go to the farm and work? I mean I want to know here a bit about why is it only women doing the cooking and cleaning?

LT: It is not about liking or not. One has to do the cooking and cleaning and it has always been women. My husband can cook but he does not take care of the kitchen very well like I do. When I fall ill, he does the kitchen work, and it is so frustrating, it makes me more sick [laugh] looking at the kitchen. I find myself

