



# **Women at the Decision-making Level in Nepalese Civil Service: Impacts of Culture**

**By**

**Puja Pokhrel**

**MPPG 9<sup>th</sup> Batch**

October 2020



**South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG)**  
North South University



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**South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG)**  
North South University

## **Dedication**

To my lovely parents Tika Ram Pokhrel and Yam Kumari Pokhrel for their unconditional love and support.

## **Declaration**

I declare that the dissertation entitled “Women at the Decision-making Level in Nepalese Civil Service: Impacts of Culture” submitted to the PPG Program of North South University, Bangladesh for the Degree of Master in Public Policy and Governance (MPPG) is an original work of mine. No part of it, in any form, has been copied from other sources without acknowledgement or submitted to any other university or institute for any degree or diploma. Views and expressions of the thesis bear the responsibility of mine with the exclusion of PPG for any errors and omissions to it.

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## Abstract

Women cover more than half of the total population and half of the labor force in Nepal. Women's participation is indispensable for the social and economic development of the country however represents only 13.83 percent (System, 2075) positions in the civil service of Nepal. Due to patriarchy, women were treated as objects and properties in the past. Whereas after rising wavelength of women empowerment since the beginning of last century, it has raised substantial stakes of women in decision-making process. In Nepal, being itself a least developed and emerging democratic society the situation of women was not indifferent from others. The underrepresentation and exclusion was one of the major agenda of armed conflict in the country. After signing Master Peace Accord insurgent groups agreed to ensure 33% stake of women in every segment of state structure. Thereafter the second amendment of civil service act incorporated the provision of 33% reservation seats to women. And it is the first decade of experience we practice reservation; we are still far behind to secure 33% representation of women in civil service. And most of the women are at the mid and lower level of the service and only few at the top positions. The reason behind this underrepresentation is not only the formal sector also the informal socio-cultural setups. Therefore, it is argued that socio-cultural factors are one of the major factors which effect on women empowerment in civil service of Nepal. This study examines how cultural practices affect women to reach in the decision-making level of Nepalese civil service. The study aims to answer the major research question by retaining the major qualitative data. The study has one preliminary question: In what ways cultural practices affect women to reach at the decision-making level in civil service of Nepal? And other three secondary questions: What are the policies of the government pertaining to women participation in the civil service? What are the barriers for women to enter the civil service and compete for promotion in their service? How does culture shape the Nepalese society's perception toward women? During the development of the study from 45 respondent the data was collected were 30 of them were collected through face to face and phone interviews and through email from other 15 responded. To examine the relation between dependent and independent variables the collected data was analysed by

categorizing them into five major themes. The analytical framework has been developed on the basis of the Culture Theory by Geert Hofstede. The theory has been effectively used to explain the socio-cultural impacts on women empowerment in civil service of Nepal.

Based on the empirical evidences, the findings of the study advocates that due to socio-cultural barriers women are deprived of competitive the education and further disparity existing in education system leads towards the competitive disadvantage of women on education and it ramifies the impact of under-representation in every spectrum. The dual responsibility of working women decreases interest for further competition which effect on further women empowerment. Likewise the negative attitudes of male colleagues toward women. Men always consider women as the secondary citizen of society and it is reflected inside bureaucracy too. Women are directly or indirectly dominated in the administration till the date. Not only male employees but also women do not accept progress of other women. They do not accept women as a leader they prefer male leader. Whereas society has divided the women's role in taking take of the family and children's sphere. They do not trust on women officer and their work. As a result, capable women are under-represented and less qualified male employees are upgraded. Moreover the high-political interference, nepotism and favouritism which is deep-rooted in the bureaucracy creates barriers toward the empowerment of women in the civil service.

Keywords: Women, Socio-culture, Women empowerment, Civil service, Under-representation

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## Abbreviations

BCS	Bangladesh Civil Service
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all form of Discrimination
GDI	Gender Development Index
GNI	Gender Net Income
HDI	Human Development Index
IBM	International Business Machines
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
INGOs	International Non-Government Organizations
MWCSW	Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare
NGOs	Non-Government Organization
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSCR	United Nation Security Council Resolution
APF	Armed Police Force

# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Throughout the world, disparity between male and female has been wide. This is even wider in the context of less developed south Asian countries. From the past a wife is considered a subordinated person to husband. St. Paul, one of the early church fathers stated that man was made for god and women for men (Joshi, 2011:1). Women are perceived to be born to serve men. Women are supposed to do domestic tasks and taking care of children and family. The economic contribution, both in formal and informal sectors, remain either ignored or unacknowledged. It is difficult, or perhaps impossible, to identify how and when such practices had been created. But in many places in the world, these practices, as well as perception towards women, have become normal and/ or taken for granted norms, and have become integral part of culture.

It is globally acknowledged that women occupy more than half of the total population of the world, and women's participation in social and economic development of a country is indispensable. Therefore, it is important to note that development of the country toward the desired direction is impossible without women's equal participation in decision-making level. Realizing the importance of women in socio economic development since 1945, the UN started working to promote and protect women's right emphasizing on the equal right of men and women. The UN declared 1975 as the "International women's year" to ensure the social, economic and political advancement of women (Kabir, 2013:16). The first conference was held in Mexico in 1975 to address the issue of gender inequality, second in Copenhagen in 1980 and Third in Nairobi in 1985 and so on, world leaders accepted women's vital role in achieving sustainable development (Fadia, 2014:538).

What is the purpose of these conferences? To ensure women's participation in socio-economic sector. Despite several international efforts, women of south Asia, however, need to go long way to participate in all spheres of development activities. For my research, I look at Nepal to examine how the above-mentioned taken-for-

granted norms and values shape the perception of women regarding their participation in formal sector of the country, and how the Government of Nepal has been trying to support women and reduce gender inequality particularly in the civil service of Nepal. Nepal has signed 23 treaties and International Human Rights instruments within the legal framework for women's right and equality (CARE, 2015). The Interim constitution of Nepal 2007 provide substantive quota (33%) for women in civil service.

In Nepal, many women have started joining civil service but very few of them are visible at the decision-making level. The perception of the society toward women remains similar as earlier. The number of women who join the civil service in Nepal has been increased, still their competence and potential are not really given value as equal to men. Are they considered weak and unable to make proper decisions? Most of the positions at the decision-making level in Nepalese civil service are generally occupied by men. The higher posts which are occupied by women are usually with less challenges and limited responsibilities. Clearly, socio-cultural values and norms play a crucial role in shaping our notions of gender roles. Although a fewer number of women work at the higher positions at Nepalese civil service, majority of women civil servants occupy the middle or lower level positions. My study explores how cultural practices create barrier for Nepalese women to reach at the decision-making level in the civil services.

While women's access to civil service is a sign of empowerment of women in a country like Nepal, women being unable to reach at the top level of the organization is a sign of empowerment in a limited way. In my research, I argue that women empowerment in the fullest sense in the civil service is possible when women are at the decision-making level and have the power and right to make decisions. The following passages provides a brief description on the definition of empowerment.

### **1.1.1 Definition of Empowerment**

Empowerment is the authority or power given to someone to do something (Oxford, 2020). It can be said as increasing the degree of autonomy and self-determination, people enabling themselves to represent their interest and act in their own authority.

Bookman and Morgen (1988) define empowerment as “Process aimed at consolidating, maintaining, or changing the nature and distribution of power in a particular context”(Bookman & Morgen, 1988). In social science the concept of empowerment is understood as the process of social change from personal as well as structural level. Social science defines empowerment considering three elements i.e. individual, society and community. In this view empowerment is the act assisting individuals to manifest constructive capacities, institutions to exercise authority in order to lead the progress and communities to provide an environment in which culture is improved and individual’s wills and capacities combine in collective actions. It mentions that participation only is not enough for empowerment, even they have voice in certain decisions. They must actively involve in decision making process, identify the problems, formulate solutions and approaches, enjoy benefits and determine criteria for appraisal (Yadav, 2018).

Empowerment in general sense is the ability to exercise power in any form. Not only it encompasses individual dimension, together with it comprises social and communal too. In Nepal though women entered in bureaucratic structure, they have empowered in individual sense only. Looking from the social and communal perspective they are not empowered as such they could enter and make substantial changes in their institutions.

## **1.2 Statement of problem**

The problem I would like to investigate is why fewer women in the civil service are able to hold decision-making positions while most of them are not. Being half of the total population women contribution for social, economic and political development is crucial in Nepal. But women’s contribution is not taken seriously as a part of development. The contribution of more than half population lies below the consideration. What are the major causes for this? Is this because of women are not able to represent themselves? Unfortunately, there are very few women in civil service where they can represent themselves. What is the major cause for women’s low representation at the higher level in the civil service career? What is the status of women in service now? Situation of women in Nepal is changing than the past, as access to education has changed the life of women. Many of them have access to job.



Data from Public service commission shows rate of women joining civil service is increasing every year. Then still why women are lagging behind than male. This has inspired me to study in this field what is the status of women in the civil service and what are the reasons behind low representation in decision making level. There can be a lot of other factors for low representation, but for my study I look at how socio-cultural practices are affecting women to pursue their career in civil service.

The proposed study will examine the impacts of socio-cultural practices on how women fail to reach at the decision-making level in Nepalese civil service. Driven by movement against gender inequality, affirmative action and women's strong ethic to work encourage women to join the civil service. Despite the efforts to motivate women and an increase in the number of women in civil service, still the representation of women in decision-making level is very minimal.

Government of Nepal has included a chapter in the sixth five-year plan (1981-1985) which talks about the women participation in all government projects and programs. Following its seventh five year plan (1986-1990), eighth plan (1990-1995) and ninth plan (1997-2002) which focus on increasing the number of women at decision-making level of government and non- government services (Joshi, 2011:4). With the second amendment of Civil Service Act (1993), the Interim constitution of Nepal 2007 provided reservation seats for women in government service. Along with this, other affirmative actions include

- Maximum age for women to enter the service is 40, which is 35 for male.
- The maximum age for lateral entry in second and first class posts has been set at 45 years.
- If both husband and wife are government officers, then transferring them to the same district.
- Women are promoted in 4 years whereas it takes 5 years for men.

Despite of all these positive and encouraging efforts, women's representation in the decision-making level is not satisfactory. Undoubtedly, the affirmative actions increased the number of women in the service. It, however, remains unexamined why

a significant number of women are there only at the executive level. The table below shows the present status of women in Nepalese civil service.

**Table 1: Present status of women in civil service**

S.N.	Class	Male	Female	Total	Male %	Female %	Total %
1.	Special	61	2	63	96.77	3.23	0.07
2.	Gazetted First	575	41	616	93.34	6.66	0.69
3.	Gazetted Second	3416	252	3668	93.13	6.87	4.09
4.	Gazetted Third	9562	1449	11011	86.84	13.16	12.26
	Gazetted Total	13614	1744	15358	88.64	11.36	172
5.	Non- Gazetted First	14975	2731	17706	84.58	15.42	19.74
6.	Non- Gazetted Second	9160	2641	11801	77.62	22.38	13.16
7.	Non-Gazetted Third	573	64	637	89.95	10.05	0.71
8.	Non-Gazetted Fourth	115	4	119	96.64	3.36	0.13
9.	Non-Gazetted Fifth	49	3	52	94.23	5.77	0.06
10.	Non- gazetted total	24872	5443	30315	82.05	17.95	33.8
11.	Classless	15589	1490	17079	91.28	8.72	19.04
	Total	54075	8677	62752	86.17	13.83	69.97

*Source: Personnel Information System (2074/075) (System, 2075)*

The above table raises some inevitable questions: What are the main factors that pull women from being motivated to achieve higher position in the service? In what ways, women are capable to pursue their career in the services? The data from public service commission indicates that more women have entered through open competition than reservation in service. Then what are the main reasons for underrepresentation of women in higher positions?

Based on the above discussion, I would like to argue that though affirmative action taken by the government are encouraging, it is cultural practices that restrict women to reach at the decision-making level in civil service in Nepal.

### **1.3 Research objective**

The main objective of my study is to examine how socio-cultural practices influence women to reach at the decision-making level in civil service of Nepal. In this regard, the study will concentrate on the present status of women officials in service. Based on the empirical findings, the study will attempt to suggest some guidelines.

### **1.4 Research questions**

The study aims to answer a set of questions regarding how cultural practices create barriers for women to reach at the decision-making level in civil service. The study will help to reveal the reality that how fewer women reach at the decision-making level while majority of them remain at the bottom in civil service. The questions are:

- Preliminary Question
  - In what ways cultural practices affect women to reach at the decision-making level in civil service of Nepal?
- Secondary Questions
  - What are the policies of the government pertaining to women participation in the civil service?
  - What are the barriers for women to enter the civil service and compete for promotion in their work?
  - How does culture shape the Nepalese society's perception toward women?

### **1.5 Scope of the study**

The focus of the study is limited on how socio-cultural factors impact on women empowerment in Nepalese civil service. It attempts to examine how socio-cultural factors creates barrier for women toward their career advancement. The scope is limited on the employees who belongs to the different post of Nepalese civil service. This study is based on gender perspective.

## **1.6 Research strategy**

Research designs are the plans and procedures for research that span the decision from broad to detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009:3). Research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived to obtain the answer of the research questions (Kumar, 2011). In fact, it is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure (Selltitz, Deutsch and Cook 1962) as quoted in (Kumar, 2011). While Kothari describes research design is the blue print for the collecting data, measuring them and analysing the collected data (Kothari, 2004).

Every scientific research is conducted using three approaches i.e. qualitative, quantitative and mixed approach. “Qualitative means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem while quantitative research means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures. Mixed method research is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative forms”(Creswell, 2009).

This study adopts the qualitative approach to elucidate the impact of socio-cultural factors in women empowerment in the civil service of Nepal.

### **1.6.1 Research Methodology**

The study is qualitative where the focus is to interpret, explore, and examine the situation, feeling, attitude, beliefs and experience of the employees regarding women empowerment. In-depth interviews, emails and content analysis have been used in this study. Interviews is the technique where the researcher can collect idea face to face or through the phone from the respondents. Interview is the best way to collect data when participants cannot be directly observed, can provide historical information, also researcher can control over the line of the questions (Creswell, 2009:179). I conducted interviews using in-depth interview methods in this study. The questions were unstructured (open-ended). The open-ended questions were used to collect the in-depth knowledge and experience of the respondents about how the

socio-cultural factors are affecting women empowerment inside the civil service of Nepal. Open-ended questions make the scope of conversation wider between respondents and research through which the inner perspective can be collected. Interviews were conducted through the phone as well due to the global pandemic the movement of people was not possible. Phone was used to reach the targeted respondents as well as the employees were not available for phone interviews due to closing of the fiscal year (data was collected from 10<sup>th</sup> of July 20<sup>th</sup> of August) were reached through email. Open-ended questions were sent through email and answers were received.

### 1.6.2 Sources of Data and Data Collection Technique

The data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources through interviews, emails and different webpages, websites, journals, articles, acts and policies. The following table presents the source of data and data collection methods.

**Table 2: Data Collection Method and source**

Sources of data	Data collection Methods
Individual Interviews	Interviews with men and women civil servants of administration and judicial section of Nepalese civil service.
Emails	Answers of the open-ended questions were received through emails from different women and men civil servants.
Secondary Data	Annual report of public service commission, Personnel Information System of Nepal Government, websites, journals, articles.

### 1.6.3 Sample Size

Total number of 45 respondents were there during the research. Respondents were from the lower level of the service to the higher policy-making level. Those employees who have working experience more than 2 years were taken as respondents in the study. The interviews were taken with 30 respondents and other data through emails from 15 respondents. Where 20 interviews were conducted face to face and 10 interviews were conducted by phone. Open-ended questions were sent to 15 respondents through email and answers were received from different male and

female civil servants. Due to the global pandemic, it was not conceivable to reach every office so, possible means were taken to collect the data during the study. The following table presents the sample population.

**Table 3: Sample size**

<b>S.N.</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
1	Interviews	30
2	Emails	15
	<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>

#### **1.6.4 Sampling Method**

For collecting data through interviews purposive sampling technique was used in this study. It was necessary to select this sampling method for this study because civil servants only can provide the information's regarding cultural barriers for women empowerment inside the civil service. Therefore, employees from the administrative and judicial sections of civil service were selected as sample. Employees from lower non-gazetted second-class officer to higher secretary (special) class officer were considered in this study. The majority of the women's population are at the lower level hence more women data were collected from lower level whereas the perception from policy-making level is fundamental for this study hence both male and female employee form the lower to higher level of an administrative and judicial section of Nepalese civil service were under the sample of this research. Thus, the main portion of the universe has been taken from the bottom and mid-level of the bureaucracy. The following table shows the data about the respondents with their levels the service.

**Table 4: Profile of the Respondents**

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
Secretary (Special)	1
Joint Secretary (Gazetted First Class)	2
Under Secretary (Gazetted second Class)	6
Section officer (Gazetted Third Class officer)	20
Non gazetted First class	12

Non gazetted second class	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>

### **1.6.5 Selection of Study Area**

The study area of this research includes all the male and female civil servants of civil service from the ministry level to the field level. Due to the global pandemic selecting respondents from one specific office or ministry was not possible. Hence, all the employees who acquire different post in the administration and the judicial sections of civil service were under the scope of the study. To make the study more specific employees were limited up to the administrative and judicial section.

### **1.6.6 Measuring Validity and Reliability**

Validity in qualitative research is the description and explanation, and whether or not the given explanation fits a given description (Bashir et al., 2008:40). Validity is the process of measuring the accuracy of the finding through the point of view of the reader, the participant or the researcher (Creswell, 2014). Creswell (2009) mentioned that validity is one of the important strengths of qualitative research. Validity measures the trustworthiness of the data. Joppe (2000) cited in (Golfashani, 2003) explains “Validity as which determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are.”

Reliability means when someone applies the same procedure in the same the result will be the same (King et al., 1995). In general term reliability refers when reliable processes is used in different research, in different time periods with the same sample size population and the result turn out the same.

This study has collected data from different respondents at various levels from low level to high secretariat level. To have a better understanding from ground level to policy-making level respondents from different levels were selected. Thus, same questions were asked to check the reliability of the data from multiple levels. As well as to enhance the trustworthiness of the data different secondary documents were used to cross-check the data collected from interviews.

### **1.6.7 Data Analysis Tools and Techniques**

The collected data which was similar were categories into five major themes. Under the five theme the collected data were processed and analysed manually.

### **1.7 Rationale of Study**

Lots of efforts have been made to encourage women and for their advancement in the civil service of Nepal. Changes in the women's situation can be observed, but still it is not satisfactory. The percentage of women representation at the decision-making level is very low. Maybe there are lots of factors affecting women representation, but the perception, attitude toward women in office, women's personal beliefs are some of the main factors which cannot be avoided. Thus, my study using the culture theory of Hofstede makes an effort to explain how the socio-cultural belief, norms and values affect the empowerment of women in civil service in the fullest.

There are lots of research in women empowerment in Nepal but there is no known significant study that focuses on the role of culture in women's access and progress in the civil service of Nepal. The study will help to understand the role of culture in women's progression in civil service. Moreover, it will identify the major problems that women go through during their job.

### **1.8 Organization of the Thesis**

This study will be composed of six chapters, each of which contains are discussed in short here:

**Chapter one:** The introductory chapter contains the background, statement of problem, research objective, research questions, scope of the study, research strategy, and rationale of the study followed by the outline of the thesis.

**Chapter Two:** This chapter provides review of different literature on women empowerment and factors affecting women empowerment in civil service of Nepal. After reviewing the different literature and mapping different socio-cultural factors as a barrier for women empowerment, this chapter develops an analytical framework on the basis of culture theory by Greet Hofstede.



**Chapter Three:** Presents a brief account about the historical participation of women in civil service of Nepal, Constitutional arrangements for women in civil service of Nepal and Gaps in government initiatives for women in the civil service.

**Chapter Four:** Contains data analysis analysed by categorizing them under five major theme. This chapter presents the collected data for the systematic result of the whole study.

**Chapter Five:** Contains the major limitations and challenges that were faced during the study.

**Chapter Six:** Contains the major finding of the study, the relation of finding and the theory and the conclusion of the study.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter is the introductory chapter of this study. It covered the background of the study along with the definition of empowerment. It contains the statement of problem, research question and research objective of the study. The research strategy used for the study is systematically presented in this chapter. This chapters supports to develop the second chapter where different literature are reviewed and the analytical framework of the study is developed.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Conceptual and Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Reviewing the prevailing literature related to the research topic and drawing analytical framework is essential in any study. Giving short introduction to the concept of women, gender, representation, participation and civil service this chapter reviews major relevant literatures and develops an analytical framework. This chapter mainly reviews the literature on women in civil service and women empowerment. It reviews the literature on socio-cultural factors affecting women empowerment in Civil service. It also deals with the analytical framework of this research study which identify the variables and their indicators with their operational definitions.

#### **2.2 Gender**

It is important to understand the gender issue because they are determined as the key factor for the development. The difference between male and female are determined by biologically, then by society (Ferdous, 2014:178).

Sex refers to the biological characteristics that define human as male or female. Gender refers to the socially determined personal and psychological features relating to men and women. A gender relation determines the activity or behaviour that is appropriate for male and female. Gender describe the social meaning of male and female. Gender states both male and female and the interaction between them. Gender role can be different in every society term of religion, culture, political, social and economic factors. Hence, gender can be define as how a person is culturally valued as per their biology into locally acceptable ideas of what it is to be a man or women (Kabir, 2013:12).

#### **2.3 Women**

Women who cover half of the total population and one-third of the labor force (Nations, 1980) are considered as disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups and discriminated by the customs and laws. Women contributes more than one-tenth of

the world's income and without active participation of women at the decision-making level of the society the socio-economic development is impossible. However, women across the world are treated unequally. Women are discriminated on the basis of their gender. Women are left behind socially, economically, and culturally. It is even more in third world countries like Nepal. Women are expected to live inside the boundary i.e. depending on father, husband and son.

## **2.4 Representation**

Representation refers to the process of standing in for someone or something, or acting as substitute or real thing (Page, 2012:3). Representation includes two types and they are active representation and passive representation. Where active representation is the policy or functional representation and passive representation is the demographic representation (Mosher, 1968). Mosher (1968) explains passive representation as the large number of service provider in the bureaucracy. It presence the presence of civil servants of various group. Therefore, it is indicated as descriptive in nature. Passive representation is also considered as it reflect the equal access of power and legitimacy to the bureaucrats. Also it carries the concept of equal access and opportunities to the different post of the bureaucracy of the different employees in respect to their biological identity, caste, position (Selden, 1997).

Active representation refers when a bureaucrat press for the interest and desire of those whom he/she is presumed to represent. In active representation bureaucrats gives effort to perform in bureaucracy to make sure of the interest and desire of the people which they are representing. Bureaucrats advocates or release the interest of the group which they are similar in nature and identities and produce benefits for the represented population (Gupta, 2020:45).

It is observed that in Nepalese bureaucracy there is passive representation of women. Women representation is only at the lower level of service. Majority of the higher level are represented by men. Those few women at the higher level are unable to actively represent themselves. They have to struggle hard to develop their own style and to prove herself equally capable to men.

## **2.5 Participation**

Participation is the process where specific group with shared needs actively pursue identification of their needs, takes decisions and establish mechanism to pursue it (Claridge, 2004). It simply refers to working jointly to achieve the common goals. Human Development Report defines: Participation means that people are working together in the social, economic, cultural and political process which affect their lives cited in Kabir (2013). Participation refers actively involving in the decision-making activities, identifying the problems, carrying out the activities, managing the activities, equally utilize the benefits and evaluation of the activity (Kabir, 2013:23).

## **2.6 Civil service**

The civil service is an institution of the government which support in executing government policies and program. Government make policies and civil servants are those who implement them. Civil service specifics that the state will be oriented toward public welfare by maintaining peace and order and distributing of all the economic sources available in the country (UNDP, 2014). Civil service is a body of professionals and expert in administration, which serve the nation without any affection to its personnel gains and without any reference to class interest or any political parties (Ferdous, 2014:178).

Nepalese civil service acts as per the directive principles and policies of the state in the interim constitution of Nepal 2007(UNDP, 2014). Nepalese civil service is divided into three classes i.e. gazetted, non-gazetted and classless. Gazetted class is the higher top level, which is divided into four groups: special, gazetted first, gazetted second and gazetted third. Non-gazetted class is also divided into four groups from non-gazetted first to fourth (Ishtiaq Jamil & Baniamin, 2020). Except defence, health, APF, teaching all of the other services are included in the civil service. It carries out all of the permanent functions of the government.

## **2.7 Literature review**

Kabir (2013) in her research comparatively study on the participation of women in civil service in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh which demonstrates that the

disparity between males and females in civil service is quite wide (Kabir, 2013). A small number of women are in the service and most of the decision-making positions are occupied by men. Despite the government has taken steps for the upward mobility of women in the service, a significant number of women are only in the decision-making level. In her work, Kabir (2013) rightly identifies that culture is the main barrier for women's equal participation in the civil service of Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, regardless of their position. The difficulties that women face on the way to manage their work and personal life due to the socio-cultural practices can be clearly understood from the Jahan (2010) study of women Problems of Working at the Field Level: A Study of Women civil Servants of Bangladesh.

Jahan (2010) in his study has explained problems faced by women who work at the field level of Bangladesh Civil Service. Where dual responsibility of job and household chores, safety at the workplace, housing and uncongenial working environment are the major problems of women employees in BCS. Jahan (2010) in his study points out that one of the main factors for which women at the field level of BCS (Bangladesh Civil Service) face problems is the culture. Dominated by the patriarchal social system in Bangladesh women usually remain behind. Society considered women's first priority is family and career is taken as a secondary as opposed to men. Even if women are allowed to work outside, working women are expected to perform dual roles such as looking after their Family as well as working outside. Society has defined their role like staying with family and taking care of them. They are mainly considered as weak and unable to take concrete decisions and they have to follow the decisions taken by male colleagues at work, and male members in the family. All these factors often make women less interested to work outside home. Many of them start to believe that they are less able than men, which eventually causes their physical and mental stress. Many women feel discouraged to apply their creativity to work they perform inside and outside the home, and as a result they miss lots of career development opportunities. Jahan (2010) confirms that women themselves are not weak but it is socio-cultural practices that create barriers towards women's advancement. Jahan (2010) also states that if women are given opportunities and

favourable environment where they can perform freely and comfortably they can produce better results.

The above scenario is common for other south Asian countries too such as Nepal. Shrestha and Gartoulla (2017) talk about the gender disparity in Nepalese society, which is significantly caused by socio-cultural factors. Taking five distinct ethnic groups from Kathmandu valley Shrestha and Gartoulla have shown how cultural factors shape our perception. In this regard, Shrestha and Gartoulla say that the culture, social perception, patriarchy system, level of income and education, political awareness are the cause of the disparity.

Shrestha and Gartoulla (2017) culture is developed to maintain the norms, values in the societies. Culture is the determinant of shaping gender roles and determines the personality of individuals. The sexual division of labor is supported and justified by beliefs and value systems which state that gender roles are normal, natural right and proper. But the reality is that gender role has given authority to men to enjoy their rights and entitlements and thus to restrict women from enjoying their freedom. In order to explain gender inequality, Shrestha and Gartoulla ( 2017) echoes Jahan (2010) as he indicates that most of the women are dominated and exploited due to the patriarchal social patterns.

Shrestha and Gartoulla (2017) myths and fear created by culture and social norms are the cause of gender discrimination in Nepal and discriminating women has become part of some culture. It is the society that creates gender roles in line with the patriarchal system due to lower level of education among women and the presence of fewer numbers of women in the political system (Shrestha and Gartoulla, 2017). In general, these are common causes of gender discrimination in Nepal. The division of gender roles is clearly visible among the civil servants working in Nepal.

However, we can see women are changing nowadays, perceptions toward women are changing. Sharma (2015) in her paper broadly explains the change in the life of Nepalese women through globalization in her paper: Process and Impact of Globalization Nepalese women. She mentions that globalization has largely affected the life of Nepalese women positively as well as in a negative way.

She talks about cultural globalization. To explain how the shared culture has affected women daily lives. By shared culture, Sharma (2015) denotes the specific types of cultural globalization in which the specific sets of values and beliefs are largely shared around the world. She has used Berger and Luckmann's concept to understand the social world. According to Berger and Luckmann (1996) understanding in society is maintained through interaction and communication and the concept we establish based on our interaction becomes the part of our reality (Sharma, 2015).

Nepalese society, which is ruled by the patriarchy system, globalization has tried to redefine and reconstruct the traditional concept and bring change in the life of the women. Some of the changes in the economic, cultural and political spheres of society are clearly visible. Society has started talking about the empowerment of women. Different steps toward empowering women are being taken like providing special facilities such as quota systems in government service and etc. Globalization has expanded opportunities for women by increasing access to labour market, increasing their substantial participation in social activities and politics. The trend of working in a household has shifted to the economic sector. The employment opportunities that globalization offers have empowered women in a way that it has created employment opportunities for women. In addition, the negative attitude towards women is decreasing, which eventually helping to decrease gender inequality, and making women independent (Sharma, 2015).

But on the other hand, although women have started working outside the home, they cannot really go beyond the gendered roles created by society. As a result, they perform dual roles. They are economically active and contributing to their family, but their work does not get recognition. Moreover, their job is considered "inferior" to that of men (Sharma, 2015). I can say that Nepalese society is now in cultural transition, women are educated they want to work, some of them are working but still, the socio-cultural practices is pulling them back. Furthermore, we can find the major blocks and problems that women should face while working in Ferdous (2014) women in Bangladesh civil service: stumbling Blocks toward the way of participation.

Ferdous (2014) in her article talks about the major blocks and problems which are discouraging the women in Bangladesh to join the civil service and suggested some remedies to these problems.

Ferdous (2014) suggests that without equal participation of women in the economic, social and political sectors a country cannot achieve development. But in Bangladesh, the scenario is different as most of the women are lagging socially, culturally, and economically. The disparity between men and women is very wide. To decrease inequality and provide equal opportunity to women like men government introduced quota systems in BCS so that the participation of women is increased. But, still the representation of women in civil service is not satisfactory. Most of the decision-making positions are occupied by males where women's presence is almost invisible. According to Ferdous (2014), women in civil service in Bangladesh face lots of problems which lead to their low representation (Ferdous, 2014).

Ferdous (2014) mentions that the unfavourable policies and programs and the dominating social norms, values and belief are the main barriers which do not allow women to participate in decision-making level. The role divided based on cultural practices predominantly expected women to work at home. If they hold any job, they have to look after both their family as well as job. Such dual responsibility often makes it difficult for women to pay full attention toward job. Moreover, lack of a good working environment, transport, security and accommodation women feel discouraged to join and continue the service (Ferdous, 2014).

Ferdous (2014) mentions that the policy enacted at the entry-level only is not enough to improve the condition of women. Increasing awareness and encouraging them from grass root levels by providing education and training is necessary, which will bring a change to the perception towards women and helps them to increase their representation at decisions-making level. It is important to note that all authors, as discussed above, have indicated that the main problem regarding women empowerment lies in culture, social norms and values of society.

Khair, Haque and Mukta (Khair et al., 2017) in their study on gender and representation of women in Bangladesh civil service: An empirical analysis of 'Glass ceiling' points out that the discriminatory practices still exist in Bangladesh civil



service. The affirmative action taken by the Government of Bangladesh helped to increase good number of women in civil service, however the women's situation has not been improved substantially. The discriminatory practices against women still exist, which is evident in the presence of fewer numbers of women at top positions in the job. But in most of the cases, women by themselves lack enthusiasm in taking challenges to pursue the career. They seem less interested in sacrificing personal priorities for the career. As a result, they remain in the same position for a longer period. In fact, cultural orientations force them to consider family as a priority. In addition, due to lack of leadership and management skills negative perceptions toward women's advancement. The situation regarding women's empowerment in a government job in Bangladesh and Nepal seems quite similar, in which cultural practices play a key role in shaping the attitude of women and the perception of others towards women.

Khair (2017) says though the number of women in civil service in Bangladesh has been increased, yet the glass ceiling is to break. In order to break the glass ceiling clearly, attitude toward women should be changed, various policies that are gender-sensitive should be implemented, and at work seniors should mentor women to develop their capacities. For the sustained promotion of women in civil service implementation flexible workplace policies and making the seniors responsible for career and tracking of their female employees is necessary. The patriarchal power should be restructured, social awareness should be built where women will play an active role in the overall development process. The importance of such steps is reflected in Savage, Mujica, Chiappe and Ross (2015) Gender Equality and women's Empowerment in Public Administration.

The case study mentioned in Savage, Mujica, Chiappe and Ross (2015) focuses on cadre service of the government of Bangladesh especially on the centrality, women and innovation happening within the service. Savage (2015) the employees working in the service enjoy equal benefits like salary, pension and etc. still the difference between males and females is high. While enjoying the facilities of government they are equally capable than why not while using the authority. Thus, the government has taken various measures to promote gender equality and many efforts to reform the

policies to better address the need of citizens in the program and the institutions. Various reviews on administrative reforms have found that improvements in working conditions are needed to attract more women where constraints and priorities will demotivate them. However, according to UNDP's Human Development Index (2008) gender development has increased in Bangladesh. Still reform in public administration, coordination between institutions, support from the institution to improve gender balance, advocacy, strengthening the role of international agencies are needed for increasing gender equality (Savage et al., 2015). All of these are necessary to challenge the culturally created barrier towards women empowerment in Nepal as well.

Women empowerment in civil service is linked with women's position in politics. Because more women's participation in politics would create a platform to have more gender-balanced policies to encourage women in civil service. Fadia (2014) in her article using women's situation in India, shows that women's empowerment through political participation has been increased. Empowering women is essential rather imperative for families, society, nation, and international development. Realizing the importance of women for sustainable development significant efforts are given by different national and international agencies for empowering them.

According to Fadia (2014), the empowerment of women in all spheres, particularly in the political sphere is critical for the foundation of a gender-equal society. Political participation provides women access to power. With power and their capability, they can transform the structure and institution of patriarchal ideology into a more gender-fair structure. Women's involvement in politics not only empowers women, but it also monitors the standard of political performance. However, the participation of women in politics is virtually invisible. Though the government is providing constitutional safeguards and institutional frameworks for increasing women's participation they are only taken as an appendage of men. Due to the low representation of women at the decision-making level women always suffer from neglect of their interests, needs, perspectives, and policymaking. To increase women representation, according to Fadia (2014) a radical change initiating quota for women in all levels of elective bodies, has been made. Which served as a major breakthrough

toward ensuring women's equal access and increased participation. Women should get opportunities which help in increasing participation, empowering, increasing their confidence, and bring changes to the perception regarding their contribution to society, which eventually improves the status and position of women in society. It is necessary to understand that political participation is the major tool for the overall empowerment of women.

All the studies above indicate culture as the barrier for women empowerment whereas how changes in culture are creating opportunities for them. The socio-cultural practices are reflected in administration and become the part of administrative culture. The organization operates and interacts with the surrounding environment and they cannot guard against the influx of social values. The social values, norms and beliefs are not external to an organization they are part of an integrated totality that makes up the organization as a culture (Istiaq Jamil et al., 2013).

Most of the literature above reflect the Bangladesh context about women which is similar in Nepal as both countries are patriarchal. Gender roles vary with the context, castes, ethnic groups and socio-economic conditions. Men have pre-eminence over women in each group. Women depend on men socially, culturally and economically. Nepalese women contribute to the economic sector significantly, yet their contributions are unnoticed because of their traditional beliefs. Their role is to look after their family and take care of them. They do not participate in decision-making process as decisions are usually made by the male members of the family. They have limited control and access to sources and even they are restricted from mobility (Banu, 2016). Men are expected to income and support their families. Mostly men are educated, and they are seen as the future breadwinner for family and daughter leave home after marriage. Some of the high caste educated women may have fewer opportunities to work than women from rural areas. (CARE, 2015).

However, the situation is now improving as most of the women are now getting educated. Many of the women are engaged in income generation. The government of Nepal has signed 23 treaties and international Human Rights instruments in the legal framework for supporting women rights and equality. The

interim constitution of Nepal 2007 provides a substantive quota for women in government service(CARE, 2015).

If we analyse the participation of women in the civil service of Nepal lots of women are now in the service. The reservation system initiated by the government helped lots of women to enter the service. But in the upper decision-making level, there are very few women. Despite the constitutional provisions the status of women in the civil service is in a world of extreme inequality (Joshi, 2011).

Each year the number of women in the service is increasing. Unfortunately, they are unable to hold significant positions at decision-making level. Though the policy agreed to enhance the participation of women in service but still it is perceived they are weak, unable to handle the situation. Women are supposed to look after their family, manage the office because women's primary job is to care of the family and the office is secondary. For men, it is opposite. Though women are educated, they have started working but the role which society has already decided no one has able to come out from this. The capable women are compromising for family or we can say in most of the cases women themselves consider family is important than a job (Joshi, 2011). The reflection of socio-cultural practices can be easily observed in the civil service of Nepal.

## **2.8 Theoretical framework**

### **2.8.1 Culture Theory**

The literature review of my proposal clearly indicates that culture plays a key role in shaping women's perspective towards empowerment as well as the society's perspective towards women, regardless of the difference in geographical locations. Therefore, my research proposal employs Hofstede's (1980) cultural theory. The theory shows how culture shapes a society's values, and how these values relate to the perception of the individuals regarding their career and empowerment.

Every individual has certain patterns of thinking, feeling and acting which are learned throughout the person's life. Such patterns of thinking, feeling and acting, according to Hofstede (1980) are considered as "software of mind", which is called culture. Human mental programs are full of the social environment in which they have

grown up and from where they have collected the experiences which become way of living life which is the civilization or refinement of mind. Basically, culture is a set of social rules that determines individual behaviours or paves the way of living in a society. In Hofstede's (1980) view, one's behaviour depends on the society where he/she has grown up (Hofstede, 1980). Since culture shapes people's behaviours and perceptions, my research aims to use Hofstede's (1980) culture theory to examine how culture affects women empowerment in civil service in Nepal.

Hofstede's theory of culture states that culture is a combination of values, norms and social relationship. He examined the behaviour of employees working in IBM (International Business Machines) for more than fifty years and came into a conclusion that culture varies between nations. He found that the workers are doing the similar work in the organization many intervening variables could be controlled, the only significant difference was their nationality. Thus the study came to conclusion mentioning that the variation in the attitude and behaviour of human beings occur due to the cultural difference (Kabir, 2013:34).

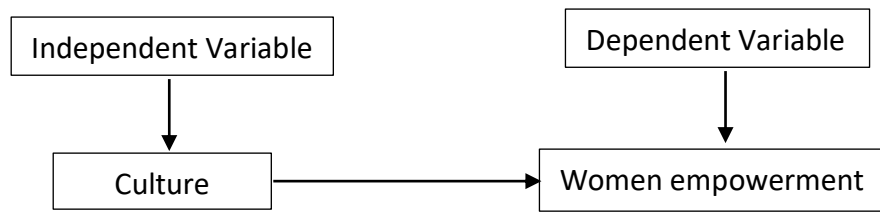
Organization culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of the organization from others. It is not only the mind of the members of the organization but also the different stakeholders, different authorities, labor organization etc. who interact within the organization. So, as per Peter and Waterman (1982) the organization culture can be negative for some people, and positive for others. It is important to note that the organization culture can be affected by the national culture. Because every individual holds different values and perceptions, and these affect the working environment as noted by Hofstede (1980). People set their goals of life as well as their goals in their career according to their perceptions shaped by culture.

Nepalese society follows the traditional concept, which is collective in nature and highly dominated by patriarchal system. The gender roles are clearly defined in this society. The males are superior to females. Females are supposed to stay at home and take care of family. Though today lots of women are working and engaged in various service but still it is considered that their primary role is their family and other works are secondary. Some norms and values can be observed in the administration

as well as Hofstede mention that national culture affects organization culture (Hofstede, 1980). The belief with which we have grown up can be found in the behaviour of the employees in the service.

What is noticeable among the female officers in the civil service in Nepal is a large number of them seem happy with their career instead of driving for promotion and competition with males for further progress in their career. Indeed, few of them compete with male colleagues to prove that women are not less qualified. This is why an inevitable question emerges: why do most of the women feel content with their existing position in their jobs while a few of them are open to compete with male colleagues in the workplaces? How does culture shape women's perception regarding their progress in career in Nepalese civil service?

In my view, Hofstede's (1980) culture theory would help me to gain a better understanding of how culture shapes women's perception in Nepalese civil service, and thus find the answer of the above question. In my study, the dependent variable is women empowerment in civil service, which is affected by culture, the independent variable. It is necessary to mention that, the interim constitution of Nepal 2007 guaranteed the right to equality. The government of Nepal formed reservation policy for the underprivileged community of Nepal, which includes women, and which reaffirms women backwardness in the civil service in Nepal. Clause 3 of article 13 of interim constitution of Nepal 2007 mentions that "nothing shall be deemed to prevent the making of special provision by law for the protection, empowerment or advancement of women, Dalit's, ethnic, Madhesi, labourers or those who belongs to a class which is economically, socially or culturally backward or children, the aged, disabled or those who are physically or mentally displaced". The constitutional provision along with some other provision with the second amendment of the civil service act 1993 made provision of reservation (Dhakal, 2013), which ensures 33 percent seat for women in government service. In what ways such reservation policy reflects the influence of culture over women's perception towards their career, and also how does men view women participating in civil service through quota system and/ or reservation system? My study will explore these areas.



### 2.8.2 Dimensions of Culture Theory

The four dimensions of Hofstede’s (1980) culture theory include Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity vs. Femininity and Collectivism vs. Individualism. The following passages present an overview of these dimensions to show which one of them is most closely related to my proposed research.

#### Power distance

Power distance is the extent to which inequality in society is accepted by people. It reflects the degree to which people are likely to respect hierarchy and rank in organization. The degree of tolerance for power distance will influence the relationship between management and employees how responsibilities are assigned and discipline is maintained (Kabir, 2013). In small power distance countries, there is limited dependence of subordinate on superior and there is a preference for consultation and in large power distance there is a dependent relationship among superior where their superior impose their opinion on the subordinate.

In Nepalese civil service, most of the executive positions are occupied by men. And everyone accepts the unequal distribution of the executive position. Subordinates are afraid to approach and contradict with them who are at a higher level. Actually in Nepalese society, if the higher post is entitled to men they believe they can take prompt decisions. Or in other words people think that men can take better decisions than women and it is better men be in higher posts.

#### Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which people are ready to face future uncertainty. It is the degree to which people are likely to prefer structured or unstructured organizational situations within an organization. It is the ability to face the risk of change and innovation (Kabir, 2013). People from those societies where

there is high uncertainty avoidance tend to be more emotional. Usually, these people try to minimize the risk and try to solve them by taking careful steps.

### **Masculinity versus Femininity**

A society is called masculine when gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be decisive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life (Jahan, 2010). In masculine society females are considered as they are limited up to family, childbearing and males are considered as competitive, ambitious. Whereas in feminine society both males and females are considered equal. Females are also equal to males they both are considered modest and tender.

Nepalese society is also predominated by a masculine culture. Which is clearly reflected in civil service. Where very few women employees likely go against men employees. The decision taken by men employees are considered correct and most of the women are ready to follow their instructions.

### **Collectivism versus Individualism**

Collectivist societies are those where group interests are considered important than individual interests. On contrary individualist society are those where individual interests are considered to be important than the group. In individualism, people focus only on themselves and their immediate family. Whereas people in collectivist society are strongly attached to family there is strong cohesion in groups. Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (Hofstede, 1980).

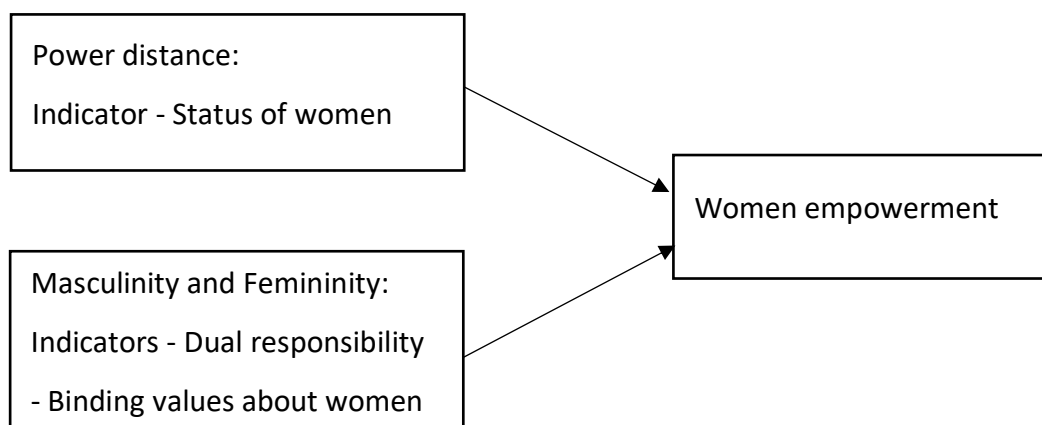
In Nepal, women contribution to the socio-economic development of a country is usually ignored. It is because it is hardly recognized that without equal participation of women a country cannot achieve social, economic and political development. Right now, in Nepal the president is a woman, earlier the chief justice was a woman, the speaker of parliament was a woman. But the situation of women in



civil service does not present a hopeful scenario regarding women's presence in the civil service in Nepal. There are very few women at the decision-making level in the civil service in Nepal. What is the barrier? What makes women ineligible to hold the decision-making positions in the civil service? How do men accept to be subordinate under a female supervisor in Nepalese civil service? Those women who are in the decision-making level what was their motivational factor that leads them to that position? Using culture theory, my research will look for these answers

Most of the women are performing dual roles. Those women who are capable as men or perform better than men are losing their creativity because in most cases their contributions are not taken for granted. The dominant nature of men decreases the confident level in women. Perhaps, this is why most women are happy with their present position and also they have to look after their family as well as their office they do not want to work more and do not want to stay far from their family. In Nepal there is a provision that after entering the service the women can use the quota in the examination for promotion but, in most cases, they seem less interested in competing further as they already have a job or the burden of dual roles. All of these factors point to the effects of cultural values and norms. Therefore, I will look at how culture shapes women's perception of women empowerment in civil service.

Influence of different components of culture for overall empowerment of women in civil service of Nepal.



*Figure 1: Theoretical framework*

*Source: Formulated on the basis of Culture Theory*

**Table 5: Operationalization of variables**

<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>Operational definition</b>	<b>Indicators of the variable</b>	<b>Source of Data</b>	<b>Collection method</b>
Power distance	-The extent to which the inequality in the society as well as in organization is accepted by people. Degree to which people are likely to respect hierarchy and rank in organization.	-Status of women	Women and men civil servants.	Interview
Masculinity and Femininity	-A clearly defined gender role where males are considered as tough, modest, career focused, and female are considered as soft and responsible to take care of family and children.	-Dual Responsibility -Binding values about women.	Women and men civil servants.	Interview

<b>Dependent variable</b>	<b>Operational definition</b>	<b>Indicators of the variables</b>	<b>Source of Data</b>	<b>Collection method</b>
Women Empowerment	-Women representation in decision making process, identify the problems, formulate solutions and approaches, enjoy benefits and determine criteria for appraisal.	- Motivation level of women for joining civil service. - No. of women in civil service since the reservation policy is in place. - Women's perception toward career - Women inspired for promotion after entering civil service.	Women and men civil servants.	Interview

Some writers have criticized the culture theory of Hofstede as they did not agree with Hofstede's approach. They question the accuracy of his works. Hofstede made it clear

from his work in 1998 that survey was the only method used for data collection in his study and it was smaller work done to learn about the culture. Another criticism against Hofstede was that he failed to include the view and opinion of ethnic minorities as he focused mostly on national culture, which he viewed as homogenous (Paul, 2020).

Some of them also raised question against the dimension of the culture i.e. the dimension are very few and they cannot contribute to gather sufficient information about the difference in culture(Paul, 2020).

However, Hofstede's theory clearly describes about the socio- cultural practices and how these cultures shapes people's perception. The theory is very relevant to explain how people's perceptions can affect women empowerment in civil service.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

Based on the above discussion, it can be said that culture theory provides a foundation for my study. Culture theory talks about the values, beliefs, and norms of people within respective societies and how these are built up in one's perception. The theory categories the major dimensions of culture collectivism, individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity and femininity. Every component examines how all these factors affect women empowerment in the civil service of Nepal. It is difficult to change the deep-rooted perception of people but women need to come forward and prove that they are not ineligible. With this culture pattern, it is difficult but women should establish their leadership role. Women should establish ways to accrue responsibility, skills knowledge so that they can grow from their position and make able them to participate in decision-making level without any barrier. My research using culture theory aims to examine whether, and to what extent, it is possible for women to move ahead in the civil service by embracing, balancing and challenging the cultural norms and values.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Women's Participation in Public Administration of Nepal: A Brief Account**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

To draw a clear picture of culture and its influence in women empowerment it is important to understand the related topic more precisely. The main purpose of this chapter is to introduce the participation of women in civil service of Nepal in socio-cultural context. The chapter includes historical overview of women presence in civil service, legal arrangements for women and finally the gaps in government initiatives in civil service of Nepal.

#### **3.2 Historical Overview of Women Participation in Civil Service**

Historically Nepalese administrative system dates back to the time period of unification of the country. Different political movement occurred in the country i.e. Anglo- Nepal war (1814-1816), Rana Regime (1846-1951), Panchayati system (1962-1990), reestablishment of democracy (1996) and the establishment of democratic republic (2008) (Acharya, 2018:1). During the monarchical system king used to appoint the public servants and after the overthrow of Rana regime and with the enactment of the civil service act 1956, Nepal civil service was formalized with the legal framework for the first time, common Nepalese citizen were able to participate in the Nepal's civil service (Maharian & Kim, 2016:8).

From the time of Anglo Nepal war policies and programme for women were enacted and as per time they were changed. But women presence in civil service was started only in the mid- sixties. Women presence was extremely low. Before 1990 women were totally deprived of education. People were not aware about educating women. They were limited up to household activities. Some of the women who were in urban area and whose family belongs elite group they used to get education, they were aware about the government service and they used to enter the service. But commonly in Nepalese society there was no any system of educating women and women to hold any type of career. The Maoist movement 1996-2006 became turning

point for women in Nepal. The movement somehow helped to empower women in Nepalese society in every corner of the country. Specially, the empowerment is associated with recruiting women in the military, inculcating in them the sense of right, improving the situation of women who are lagging behind through vocational training and enabling themselves to about their self. The movement bought some kind of awareness in women from typical Nepalese society. Maoist entered in Nepali politics with 12 pints Agreements which helped to increase the number of women in bureaucracy and politics of Nepal. Maoist bought agenda to represent women in the constitutional assembly. Maoist movement increased the representation of women in all level of government from 5% to 33%(Acharya, 2018:1). As a result there were 8% women civil service in 2003 which increased to 15% in 2010 and 18% in 2015. Whereas in 2018, 23% of job were held by women. In present context women now comprises 20334 of the 87753 civil service employees. The increment of women begun with the adoption reservation policy by the government. But most of the women are observed at the non-gazetted level however the increment in number has raised the interest of young generation women toward civil service(Gupta, 2020:46).

### **3.3 Existing legal Arrangements for Women Participation in Civil Service of Nepal**

Nepal government has given importance on women participation and taken many necessary measures to encourage and motivate women to participate in government sectors. To provide equal opportunities with the concept of equity government have taken various steps nationally and in international levels.

#### **3.3.1 Constitutional provision**

Article 18 in the constitution of Nepal talks about right to equality it declares that all citizens shall be equal before law. No person shall be denied the equal protection of law. [18(2)] No discrimination shall be made in the application of general laws on grounds of origin, religion, race, caste, tribe, sex, physical condition, condition of health, marital status, pregnancy, economic condition, language or region, ideology or on similar account. [18(3)]The state shall not discriminate citizens on grounds of origin, religion, race, caste, tribe, sex, economic condition, language, ideology or on

similar other grounds. No discrimination shall be made on the ground of gender with regard to remuneration and social security for the same work (Nepal, 2015).

The interim constitution adopted the principle of proportionate inclusiveness for disadvantaged, downtrodden and oppressed groups, and it was materialized in the constitution assembly 2008. The same principle was adopted in the second constitution assembly election of 2014. This constitution had extended the fundamental rights including the right to women. The sense of inclusive governance has been further intensified through the constitution of Nepal 2015. Also the constitution had included the provision of acquiring citizenship from the name of a mother in the sub article 5 of the article 11(Bhandari, 2016:38).

Similarly, the constitution has provision of for 13 constitutional bodies among them one is National Women Commission in the article 252 which looks after all the issues related women. The commission is responsible to look after all the national and international treaty regarding women and inspect it and give valuable suggestion to the government, about women empowerment, gender equality, women rights, and women violence(Nepal, 2015).

The constitution of Nepal ensures equal opportunities for citizens regardless of gender, also it is taking special measures to uplift the marginalized group of people.

### **3.3.2 Institutional Arrangements**

Several initiatives have been taken by the government to improve the condition of women through the arrangement of different institutions/ organizations. Government set the ministry of women, children and social welfare in 1995 as its initial move for promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. The department of women development under the MWCSW looks after women's and children's programs and implements them through its women development offices, which are the key gender focal points in the districts(Amin et al., 2010:6).

Gender equality units have been formed in the ministries of health and population, and agriculture and cooperatives, education and more recently the ministry of local development. Central agencies have also taken initiatives to guide the government in its approach to gender mainstreaming. The ministry of finance

established the inter-ministerial gender- responsive budget committee with the mandate to design a methodology to monitor sectorial budget allocations and public expenditures from a gender perspective and to assess the impact of development policies on women and men. The national planning commission formulated a gender management system and a classification system of program and projects using the gender code in 2005-2006. The ministry of local government develops a gender budget audit guideline to guide local bodies to keep gender related issues in their plan and program. The ministry of agriculture and cooperatives, ministry of general administration and ministry of education and sport with the help of Asian Development Bank for promoting gender equality and women empowerment have prepared gender strategies that focus on alleviating constraints and creating new opportunities their sectors for women(Amin et al., 2010:7).

### **3.3.3 Development Plan for Women**

The government of Nepal has taken lots of effort to reduce the gender inequality through its different development plan since its first development plan in 1956. The first five year development plan of government mainly focused on women reproductive role and it continued up to the sixth five year plan of the government. In 1980-1985 the sixth five year plan of government focused on efficiency and equity also focused on women in development approach. The concept of women in development was shifted to gender and development in the ninth five year plan 1997-2002, tenth five year plan and the eleventh three year plan in 2008-2011(Amin et al., 2010:5). The concept of inclusion and gender equality had been incorporated in all government 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup>plan. The 14<sup>th</sup> three year plan, has included gender equality, inclusion and mainstreaming as a separate component of development under interrelated development policies. The 14<sup>th</sup> plan has focused gender equality, women empowerment and inclusion. The 14<sup>th</sup> plan has 23 different strategies to achieve women representation, empowerment and program to enhance the skills and competency of women (Bhandari, 2016:37). The fifteenth five year development plan aims to maintain gender equality through full and respectful participation of women in economic and sustainable development activities, to decrease all kind of discrimination, violence against women. It ensures 50% participation in every level of

government, institution and development activities. It plans to give priority to those women who are economically and socially vulnerable and develop measuring instrument to measure women empowerment (National Planning Commission, 2020:202).

### 3.3.4 Quota in Civil Service at Recruitment Level

As per the constitutional provision of Nepal, the reservation system for women was started with the second amendment of civil service act 1993 in 2007. In order to create an inclusive civil service the civil service acts sets 55% of the posts to be filled by open competition with the remaining 45% posts will be filled by spate competition for quotas between women, Indigenous, Madhesi, Dalit, Disabled and Backward area (Maharian & Kim, 2016:11). The distribution of quota in civil Service is shown in the following table:

**Table 6: Quota system in Recruitment of civil service of Nepal**

Sl.	Distribution of Quota	Percentage	
1.	Open	55%	
2.	Women	33%	45%
	Indigenous	27%	
	Madhesi	22%	
	Dalit	9%	
	Disabled	5%	
	Backward Area	4%	
3.	Total	100%	

Source: (Civil service act,2049 and civil service rule, 2050) (Narayan, 2065)

The civil service act has also provision of reviewing the impact of the above provision in a time period of ten years. The Act has also fixed the 40 years age bar for women candidate to enter the civil service, where the maximum age bar to enter the service is 35. Those employees who fall under the inclusive category have grace period of one year for being the potential candidates for promotion (Dhakal, 2013:15).



### 3.3.5 Women in the Parliament

Nepal has a long political history and gone through different unfavourable circumstances but women have established themselves as key as of socio-political change. Struggle of women in political was begun with birth of women movement during Rana regime. But the way to the constituent assembly was during the Maoists insurgency which helped them to pave their way toward parliament. The 19 days Jana Andolan 2006 where the former deputy speaker Chitra Lekha Yadhav played crucial role in reinstating the dissolved parliament and by raising the women issues added new dimension to the Nepal women's movement. The 2007 the interim constitution of Nepal 2007 under clause 3 ensured political parties shall ensure proportional representation of women where the reinstated legislature saw 17.3% women participation in the major political parties. The constitutional assembly was historic as 53% of voter were estimated to be women outnumbering men voters. Nepal ranked 16<sup>th</sup> out of 140 countries in term of percentage of total women in national parliament, by significant contribution in term of gender equality in parliament. However in the constituent assembly 2013 only 30% out of 601 were women. The constitution of 2015 guaranteed 33% in the constituent assembly which was really a milestone for women to represent them in the parliament. Where the constitution has provision to include at least one women in the two leadership position, among the highest positions of the nation and at least 33% representation of women in the state structure. The year 2017 was landmark for Nepal as it conducted the first election after the adoption of constitution of Nepal 2015 and the election of local level where there was maximum representation of women and marginalized group which was considered as successful year for women empowerment and social inclusion. 41% were women among the newly elected officials (Upreti et al., 2020:86). In provincial election in 2017-18 it was historic movement for women because almost all the major political parties there was great representation of women. Women achieved 40.4 percent seat as mandated by the national commission, including the higher post of mayor and deputy mayor, at least one seat for women in each parties. Women representative has been able to occupy the president position, 17 position the house

of representative, 6 in the provincial assembly. And 21 in the National Assembly (Upreti et al., 2020:87).

### **3.3.6 Commitment at International Level**

Nepal has undertaken lots of international commitments in relation to non-discrimination, gender equality and social justice. Nepal became part of convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CDEAW) on 22 April 1991 (UN Women, 2014:3). Nepal being the part of the convention must fulfil all the aspect of its legal obligations under the provision of the convention which includes respect, protect and fulfil women's right, non-discrimination and the enjoyment of equality.

The Beijing platform for Action 1995 also address gender inequality. The government has also formulated a national plan of action to implement the 12 critical areas of concern, including women's poverty, access to education, health services, participation in decision making and violence against women. For the continuous progress of these activities periodic international discussion are held as well as these areas are monitored by different non-government organizations (NGOs). The International Conference on population and development (ICPD) and ICPD + 10 which focus on women reproductive health and rights as well as other health services regarding women. The sustainable development goals set target for 17 development goals including gender equality. Nepal has set road map up to 2030 and tries to achieve the respective goals. The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) establishes legal standard to ensure the meaningful participation of women in the peace process (Amin et al., 2010:5).

### **3.3.7 Maternity leave**

The government has increased the maternity leave for female employees up to 98 days with 60 fully paid. Also employees can extend their leave three more months as maternity leave. The government has adopted safe Motherhood and Reproductive health Rights act in 2018 which secure legal protection for paid maternity leave, prohibits discrimination, and ensures job security during pregnancy and after birth (Elisha, 2020). Government is also providing 5000 NPR for employees

of Nepal government for the support of child care at the time of child birth. It is really appreciable deed of government toward promoting women in public service.

### **3.4 Gaps in Government Initiatives**

#### **3.4.1 Absence of Gender Sensitized Administrative Reforms**

The government of Nepal since 1960 adopted some reform initiatives for real change in the administration. Government purpose of the reform is to redefine the role of the government, strengthen public administration, increases accountability and change the administrative capture (Ghimire & Ashraf, 2017:7969). Till now government bought 18 administrative reform programme to improve the civil service, for better governance in different time period (Administration, 2076). These reforms programme hardly talks about the gender issue also about the representation of women in bureaucracy.

Recently the reform programme started talking about gender issues and implementing the concept of equality and equity in the administration. But traditionally there were no any reform programme regarding women. Even the major programme for women in recent reform programme are only limited up the ministries and in urban areas. Still women employees in rural are suffering from the major problems. Most of the women struggle to reconcile office work with their traditional gender roles in the family and society. Female employees who have small kid and need to breast feed face great challenge to manage their office and home because of the absence of day care centre in offices. Government brought reform action but it is limited up to the capital and ministries level but other outside the capital who directly deal with the general public still face lots of challenges of managing family and office. Reforms are only urban centric. Even different training institution are only in urban area those women who are in rural place and wants further advancement in their career they do not have any access to such institute. Government needs to provide different training and motivating programme for empowerment. Women employees' life is more challenging so, the reform should address the problem of women in every level of government. Without reform in administration no women can be empowered.

Hence, reform programs should be implemented all over the country so, that women from every part can be empowered.

### **3.4.2 Gaps in Data and Analysis**

Government took measures for women equal participation and decision-making in administration but there is a lack of data and analysis to measure the implementation level of taken measures and the map of actual progress of women in civil service (Bilkis, 2012:28). Lack of adequate data on gender at the organizational level undermines decision-making and makes oversight very difficult.

Nepal is a country where there are more than 125 ethnic groups, 123 languages are spoken and the country is divided into three geographical regions, it means in this diversity of geography, community and language women are also diverse by their nature, educational qualification, and other resources. All women may not have equal access to the resources. Hence attention needs to be given to ensure that the equal participation and decision-making of all group of women in respect to their class, race, ethnicity, indigenous identity, age disability and etc. Research and data regarding women is needed to ensure that women in their full diversity are equally represented in the public administration of Nepal (UNDP, 2014:25).

### **3.5 Conclusion**

Historically, the civil service of Nepal was occupied by men, women were not allowed to acquire education and hold any type of job. However, women also started joining the service since 1960. Government has taken many initiatives to increase the women civil servants but only participation has increased women are still unable to represent themselves. In order to create a truly representative and responsive public administration government need to mainstream gender concerns especially in decision-making roles.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Data Analysis**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to map the impacts of the socio-cultural factors for women empowerment in the civil service of Nepal. As already mentioned women continue to under-represent in the decision-making positions in civil service of Nepal though there are various program and policies to support. The study found that there are external barriers hence it is needed to explore the new and positive approach for implementing new initiatives for increasing women in decision-making positions. For the analysis of the factors that can affect women empowerment in this chapter they are divided into five categories: (a) Motivation to join civil service and career development, (b) Barriers towards women empowerment in civil service, (c) Socio-cultural factors in administration and status of women, (d) Comparing leadership between male and female employees, (e) Reservation policy and other policies of the government. Through interviews and text analysis, I gathered information which are useful in understanding and interpreting how socio-cultural factors are affecting women representation at decision-making level.

#### **4.2 Data Analysis**

##### **1. Motivation to join civil service and career development.**

When we analyse this theme, we are able to determine how much women are concern about making space at decision-making level. Inspirational and motivational factors are very important to enhance one's internal confidence and believes on themselves. Person's determination is always based on some inspiration or something motivating factor, casually no one will be attracted/ attached toward something.

The major concern of this theme is to map why female and male employees have chosen civil service as a career? How they were motivated to join the service? What is their thought about further career advancement? What are the motivating factors available for career advancement in service? And how those few women who are in the decision-making position are inspired to reach there?

Most of the participants opined that in Nepal civil service is one of the most attracting, secure, prestigious job and a place from where you can serve the nation. They mentioned that there was not an option other than government service. Because most of them belong to the middle-class family and government service is the place where without any investment on the basis of the ability and qualification employees are selected.

Among the participants most of the female respondents mentioned that the reason to join civil service was because the government job is considered good for women in Nepal, as it has different facilities for women like maternity leave, pension, continuous income, low workload and security. Motivation from family, husband, and self-willingness attracted them toward the civil service. Whereas male respondents mentioned that in Nepalese society males are considered as breadwinner they have to involve in income-generating activities and government service is the multidimensional field where you can enter in any field of your choice in your ability.

Regarding career advancement, most of the women in the service have thought to go further up to the next level of civil service. They mentioned that at the beginning while entering the service only getting the job was a main concern but after entering definitely everyone wants a promotion to the next level. Many of them are preparing for further examination, but they mentioned that they do not have much time for preparation as they have dual responsibility and there are no training and preparing institution in the rural area. Everyone wants more respect, salary, power and opportunities, as much as you go up you will acquire more. These factors motivate more to pursue the higher positions. Whereas family also plays a vital role in women's development in the context of country like Nepal. If a family is supportive then only women will be able to achieve success.

It shows that though women are attracted to the higher posts, they are not able to pursue it due to their responsibility toward their family, lack of training institution and low level of quality knowledge. Balancing social life and working life is always difficult for women which they are still struggling in Nepalese bureaucracy. One of the section officers mentioned that how responsibility toward family became a barrier for her career.

*“She wanted to be second class gazetted officer she was taking class for examination but her family forced her to give birth to child, where she was in dilemma if she did not give birth to a child her family and society will curse her and if she gives birth then she will not be able to focus on her studies, She withdraws her idea for further competing and she focused on child caring and family. She said now there is a long gap earlier I was active in studies but now I cannot be attentive in studies like earlier.”*

This is the consequence of the patriarchal system of our society. Where women are responsible for looking after family and taking care of children and men have free time for developing careers.

Not only the gender role but also Nepotism, favouritism, Bribery, and political connection which exist inside bureaucracy also demotivate women in the service. Nepalese bureaucracy is highly affected by informal rules and regulations. It is common in Nepalese bureaucracy that if you know some right person in office then your work can be easily done. Likewise during the transfer and promotion also there is not fair arrangement. Those who are close to seniors and good political connection they can get easy promotion and transfer to better places.

One of the woman administrators mentioned that:

*“Hard work and promotion are not interlinked with each other.”*

For female employees, it is much difficult as they are busy in their domestic life they do not have much time to be close with seniors or to involve in political activities. And its impact can be observed during the promotion and transfer of the employees. While as per the respondents it was found that sometimes informal relations made by husbands and brothers, their wives, sisters and relatives are benefited. We can see there few women in higher level of civil service. As per the respondents, those women at the top level of bureaucracy belong to an elite and educated family and most of the time, one of the family members will be at the top position of the service or has a good political and bureaucratic relation. Which means through their network women are able to reach in those positions. Women are using their husbands and relative's power

and network to reach the top positions. Most of the women who are right now in top positions are due to the informal network of their family members.

But for all women, it is not possible to remain in touch with high senior officials and political authority or use family networks. In such situation, women lose interest in further competing. On the one hand, they have a responsibility towards family on the other the faulty system of the administration decreases their willingness toward empowerment. Nepotism, favouritism in transfer and promotion, fewer opportunities to women are some of the reasons which discourage women though they are interested in career advancement. Thus, because the fault administrative system, the practitioner of the system and members of the so-called patriarchal society women are unable to break the glass ceiling between them and their career.

## **2. Barriers towards women empowerment in civil service.**

The main issue discussed under this theme is why most of the women in civil service are at the middle level or lower level and very few women are in decision - making position? The major concern is what is the reason behind low representation of women at the decision-making level? What are the impacts of socio-cultural factors for women empowerment inside the service?

From the information collected through different male and female respondents the data is analysed by dividing into these subsections: a) Late exposure to education and opportunities, b) social system, c) Lack of enthusiasm.

### **a) Late exposure to education and opportunities**

The majority of participants mentioned that one of the reasons behind low representation is due to the late exposure to education and opportunities. They stated that the trend of educating women started only 20-25 years ago. Women were not allowed to involve in any educational activities, they were limited up to household chores. Some of the women who were from an elite, educated families and who were aware of the importance of government job they entered but most of the people in Nepalese society were not aware that they should educate girls too and still in some part girls are deprived of education. As a result, very few or almost null women were



there at the beginning of the service which affected the participation of women in decision-making levels of civil service till the date.

Some of the respondents stated that when the Maoist conflict started in 1995 then the conflict time period brought political, social and economic awareness in Nepalese women. Some of the women after that started joining government service. Also, the introduction of the reservation policy was late. Only after the introduction of the reservation policy women employees were increased in civil service.

Now there are lots of women in service while going through the process it takes time. The late entry showed low representation but now after five years, we can see lots of women in decision-making level of the service.

#### **b) Social system**

Another reason mentioned by the participants is the social structure of Nepalese society. The social responsibility divided between women and men is becoming a barrier toward women's progression. The masculine culture of Nepalese society says women should focus on family and children. But for working women, it is difficult to focus equally on their office and family at the same time. Hence, in between their dual responsibility they give their first priority to family than only to their career.

One of the non-gazetted officers told that:

*“Earlier women were limited up to only household work but now they have office work. Which is becoming a burden for them. Society accepted that women can engage in employment activities but only from 10-05. Before 10 and after 5 we have to fulfill our household duties on the other hand for men everything is similar as earlier. Still, the social responsibility that was divided between males and females is not changed. Which is making women employee life harder. We cannot run from our social responsibility and while fulfilling those responsibilities we get lost in it and cannot give much focus on work. The time that can be used for preparing further competition we have to give for our family and children.”*

The role divided by the masculine culture is pulling women backward. Most of the women mentioned that they feel dominating nature from their male colleagues.

Men are considered as superior in our society so, directly or indirectly they always dominate us and they feel we are weak and cannot perform anything. If sometimes while working some difficulties occur the blame goes to females and the reason is that the work is done by women and women are unable to work. Also, there are some people in the office who never appreciate our work and do not prefer women's progress. Even society does not trust us. One of the administrative officers mentioned that:

“When she was in the office of women development all of the employees in the office were female and only peon of the office was male. In the program and seminar of the office, general people asked us to give speeches by peon in place of the officer of the office who was female. They belief on male even if he is peon and does not trust on women who is an officer.”

The general people do not believe in the capacity of women yet. Some people are the service seeker and if they do not trust women's ability then it is difficult for women to achieve growth. Likewise, one of the server officers mentioned how she was de-motivated to work in the field as she was not trusted by the local people.

*“She have to go for field to measure the land but always before she starts any work people start doubting on her. They do not trust that being woman she can work in the technical field. Which I always feel demotivating. If I try to convince them they say Pothi Basnu Hudaina.”*

It shows that despite lots of effort dominant culture is not changed. Social system, the gender role divided between males and females it will take a long time to be modified. Society will never adopt immediate change in culture.

### **c) Lack of enthusiasm**

The majority of the respondents mentioned that lack self- interest is another reason for the low representation of women in decision-making level of civil service in Nepal. Most of the women are happy in their post where they are right now. They are so much mixed up with their office and home their interest declined slowly.

One of the woman officers stated that:

*“Her husband is principal in school he has his own income and she also continuously receive salary every month so why to work. When I was new in service there was energy and some motivation, those times I spent caring of my child and family. Now the interest is gone, I am happy with this position.”*

There are lots of motivating factors inside service for women further career development like quota for competition, more respect, more salary, and more power. However, the social structure is creating a barrier on the way for their development. Like in Nepal there is a concept that girls should get married when she reaches 20. There is a saying *“Besh Pari Biya Bari”* (Girls should get married when she is 20) so, when a girl reaches 20 they are forced to marry by family and society. After marriage the responsibility of giving birth to a child and raising them will engage them toward family. Hence, though they have a willingness for further competition they have to post pond their aim and later they drop with their idea.

One of the woman administrators mentioned that:

*“She entered the service through quota after entering the service she got married and her husband is also civil servants. After marriage she have some responsibility of giving birth to a child.so, she had a baby then she has to give time to nurture her child. In between this, she got a government scholarship for foreign education in one of the universities in Japan, her husband was supportive thus she went to Japan for further study. When she came back she found her child was not so closed to her she felt bad that she could not give mother love to her child, so she decided now I will spend much time with my child and give focus to her. How much I have to achieve I have already now I will focus on my child and make their career bright because father cannot give much care like mother. Their career is important than mine. When they will grow up and if I got time then I will compete in the future but now I am concerned about my child rather than my career.”*

Not only social responsibility also the patriarchal thought inside men employees who always dominate women inside the bureaucracy demotivates women and decreases their self-confidence. The low level of interest in work always shows

women weaker than men. And those women who are struggling and working hard for promotion their performance also do not get any consideration.

Whereas it is interesting to note that 5 of the woman administrators who were experienced more than 25 years in the service they mentioned that if we want we can do. Most of the women are afraid to talk in front of a male employee, they think they cannot compete further because of their responsibility, they are weak than male employees, they do not show much interest after having a child and they are happy in their recent post but we can do a lot inside the service. We should be dedicated to our aim. Family is secondary for achievement but a person own determination, willingness is very important for further growth. One of the section officers told that women need to be knowledgeable, only being educated is not enough if a person is knowledgeable then no need of any motivating factor person career is build up itself. Everything that we do inside the service is part of learning. The main thing is we should not distract our focus.

We can see how the social concept of not educating women and limiting them up to the household has created a culture that women are those who are responsible for domestic activities and it is so much deepened in the of the people. And its biggest impact is women are losing interest. Though some of the experienced woman administrators mentioned self-determination is very important. But when women start engaging herself toward her family slightly her energy, the capacity of memorizing, the flow of learning everything is affected. As a result, most of them drop their aim of reaching a higher level by competing through an exam.

### **3. Socio-cultural factors in administration and status of women.**

This theme is useful to identify what is the present status of women in Nepalese society and civil service as well as the impacts of socio-cultural factors in administrative culture. Status is obtained mainly from two sources one based on the achievements, and another based on gender, age, education and class (Rameshwor, 2005:65). In the case of civil service also these aspects are equally important. Analysis of this aspect helps us to understand women's acceptance of discrimination, and women's life in Nepalese society.

This theme is analysed under the following aspects. They are a) Women in Nepalese Society b) Socio-cultural factor and administrative culture c) status of women in Civil Service.

### a) Women in Nepalese Society

Nepal is a country which is multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural. The hierarchical social structure, status-oriented attitude of the people are some of the characteristics of the people in Nepalese society. There is hierarchical class between people i.e. brahmin, chettri, baysha and surda. Where brahmin are the top and sudra are at last who are considered as untouchable group. Also, there are different communities and tribes. Brahmin and chettri are considered as high class of the society who have more access to the opportunities. Hence, in civil service, the groups other than brahmin and chettri have a quota for entering and promotion as they are considered as weaker sections of the society. The women from brahmin and chettri community can use only women quota and women from other can use women as well as quota from their respective caste. The following table shows the data of women in civil service from different groups entered through women as well as the quotas of the external group to which they belong.

**Table 7: Number of women as per the recommended group in civil service**

Recommend Groups		Women	Dalit	Madeshi	Indigenous
Number of recommended candidates according their group	Women	625	36	61	123
	Indigenous	97	0	0	509
	Madeshi	51	0	409	0
	Dalit	10	168	0	0
	Differently abled people	1	3	5	9
	Backward place	31	22	0	12

*Source: Annual Report of Public Service Commission (2075/2076) (Commission, 2076)*

It is quite helpful to those women who belong to other community than brahmin and chhetri as they can use two quotas for entering and promotion. However, women in Nepalese society either from higher caste or lower caste the situation is not different. The social roles for all of them are same.

During the interview majority of the respondents mentioned that women in Nepalese society are changing for all groups and communities. Access to education, technological development, and globalization is leading women toward betterment. As well as roles of different NGOs and INGOs, the moist movement also bought a sense of responsibility, economic, social and political awareness in women. The following table presents the development of women in health, education, and employment sector.

**Table 8: Nepal’s GDI for 2018**

		Nepal	South Asia
F-M ratio	GDI Value	0.897	0.828
HDI values	Female	0.549	0.57
	Male	0.612	0.688
Life expectancy at birth	Female	71.9	71.1
	Male	69	68.5
Expected years of schooling	Female	12.7	12
	Male	11.7	11.6
Mean years of Schooling	Female	3.6	5
	Male	6.4	8
GNI per capita	Female	2,113	2,639
	Male	3510	10,693

*Source: Human Development Report 2019 (UNDP, 2019)*

We can evaluate this table women’s growth in the field of education, health and employment are commendable comparing to the GDI report of earlier years which was and 0.194 (UNDP, 2018:126). In some field like schooling and health number of women are more than male but women’s contribution to the employment sector is still low. The contributions of women in household work and their participation in home agriculture are not considered as their economic input. Which shows women economic contribution is lower than male in Nepal.

The data shows an increase in the number of women in education, health and employment. But the situation of all women are not equally changed. Women from some of the western rural parts are suffering till the date. Those women who are in urban palaces are changing their education level, their mobility, participation is increasing in every sector. Whereas women in rural areas are still struggling. But how

much society has modernized the role responsibility for women either rural or urban has not changed.

The respondents mentioned that our society is changed in terms of providing education to girls, involving them in the election, their involvement in income-generating activities, and all. However, in term of cultural pattern like the role divided between male and female is not changed, women should live under men, they have to obey men and the responsibility of women as a daughter and as a daughter in law is not changed.

Nepalese society is moving ahead but carrying all the values and beliefs along with them. There is cultural transition i.e. women are moving forward but the cultural values are pulling them back. They can neither move ahead freely nor come back. This means this much change is not enough there should be rapid change to improve the situation of women.

#### **b) Socio-cultural factors and administrative culture**

Regarding the reflection of socio-cultural factors in administration, most of the respondents mentioned that administration is miniature of society and the rules, regulations, acts, and policies are based on the social values and beliefs, it cannot remain apart from societal factors.

Nepalese society is highly dominated by the masculine culture. The patriarchal nature of men can be observed in the organization. There are many provisions and gender-friendly rules for empowering women in administration but still, women are suffering from the dominating culture in administration. Highly educated employees also dominate women and there's a feeling that women cannot perform like men. The less qualified male employee get respect whereas qualified women are under-considered.

One of the woman administrators mentioned that:

*"In her office, her colleague from the same post others call him saying sir but they say Bunu (sister) to her, it is okay to say sister but I have also post and my post should be respected. There is no value to my post and me. If it was outside*

*the office it does not matter but inside the office, I feel it dominating. If they say sister to me they can say brother to him as well."*

Not only males, but females also dominate other females in the organization. Backbiting, Groupism of women which is the nature of typical Nepalese women can be seen in the organization too. If any women got progress or promotion women themselves starts talking about her. Pulling legs of others that exist in our society among women are seen in administration as well.

One respondent said that women should give "*agni parikshya*" (exam to prove honesty) they have to prove themselves in front of everyone. Women never appreciate another woman's progress and men never consider women equal to them.

One of the male administrators mentioned that:

*"There is no negative effect on the performance while working with women but in this social structure, it is difficult with women employees. I feel difficulties in asking them to do any work because they do not perform immediately, they need support like friends while working, they cannot go alone in fields, we can't take single women with a group of boys in the field but in the case of men they immediately response everything."*

We can see how much the social structure has created hinders while working for women. The concept of male colleagues while working with a female is showing a negative response. It has built the perception inside male employees that women cannot do fieldwork. Whereas society does not accept men and women working together in the field. But if society does not accept women working in the various fields than how women can learn, increase their quality, and leadership skills.

### **c) Status of Women in civil Service**

The attitude between female and male employees is analysed here. In other words, this aspect is applied to measure to what extent women employees expect and accept male members are more powerful inside the bureaucracy. To what extent women are involved in decision- making procedure? Nepalese bureaucracy is characterized by high power distance because of the unequal distribution of roles and responsibilities. Also, the pyramid-shaped organizational structure of the bureaucracy



which means it is hierarchical and authority is centralized vested to the top. The lower level employee seems to be pleasing to seniors and the concept of thinking boos is always right. To what extent it can be found between female and male employees. What is the status of women in the service? The main assumption here is if women employees do not depend on men employees while taking decisions from their respective posts then it is considered as the existence of low power distance between men and women employees.

Regarding the overall status of women in civil service of Nepal majority of respondents mentioned that in terms of number, there are large numbers of women now in civil service but in term of quality of performance it has not been increased. Reservation is playing a vital role in the increasing numbers of women in the service. But only at the lower level of the service.

In civil service the decisions are taken by the post and the decision should be valid as per the acts and laws. Women are capable to make their own decision but in some cases male doubt about decisions taken by women employees. However, the decisions are taken by the respective post either the person in the post is male or female.

Though women are more hard-working and talented than male employees. They are capable enough to compete openly with males. They mentioned that if there is senior officers in the office they consult with them before making any decisions.

One of the woman officers stated:

*“While taking decision there is no any interrupt from male employees, we always take decisions under the jurisdiction of law and yes if there are old male employee who is much familiar to the office then we consider their thought before taking decision otherwise the decisions are taken by ourselves in the office.”*

It means women despite their ability they rely on male officers to be assured of the decisions they are going to make. The decisions are made within the jurisdiction of laws and acts than why women still depend on male officer? Is this because women think men are superior and they are right than women or only because he is a male?

As in Nepalese society, all of the decisions are taken by the head of the family and males are considered as head in every single family. Likewise, inside the organization, it is thought that males can take appropriate decisions than females. Depending on male officers while taking decisions makes women weaker in front of them.

#### **4. Comparing leadership between male and female employees.**

The main issue discussed under this theme is how working under female and male officers differs? Do women possess low leadership capacity comparing to men? To find the leadership capacity question like how working under the supervision of a female officer differ than that of male officers? Was asked to different responded.

During the interview among 45 respondents more than 40 respondents mentioned that they do not have any working experience under female officer. Most of them have no female senior officers. During the interview participants were those who have working experience from 2 years to 25 years till the date most of them do not have any female senior officers.

They mentioned that they have worked with lots of female colleagues and they experienced that they lack decision-making capacity. However, the working environment is friendly when there are female colleagues.

One of the male officers mentioned that:

*“In rural areas, if there are women employees the women service seeker find easy to make their work done. They are quite comfortable to work with the same sex which they are. But regarding taking decisions and taking other risk factors within organization women by themselves goes a step back.”*

When a person finds the same sex-person they find it comfortable to work. Especially in Nepal where women hesitate to come forward and speak it is easy for them to mention their problem to the same-sex group to which they belong. Which means women are aware of the real problem that ground-level women are facing. Why then women employees go one step back when it comes to making decisions? Is this because they think they do not have the leadership ability like that of men employees have. As a leader, they can work for local women and prove their ability.

One woman administrative officers shared her experience that She was in a meeting in Biratnagar (one of the biggest city in the eastern part of Nepal) all of her female colleagues were accepting the term and condition without questioning. Even they did not get a chance to keep their thoughts. She told her colleagues that we should raise a voice against it, they should give us also chance to present the view from our side. But her colleague said its okay they are male whatever they say is fine and when they used to give us chance that they will give today. As we are women we should endure these things. Why to add more headache in life. We attended that's enough. At the end of the meeting I kept my point of view but my female colleague said nothing. They physically appeared in the meeting but did not represent them than how to show how much capable women are.

At this time women are more talented and competitive than males in Nepalese society as well in civil service. But when it comes time to take risks women do not want to involve themselves. Usually, women choose urban areas where there other facilities like good schools, hospitals are available. So, that she can look after their family as well as she can continue office but in these places office is bigger with large numbers of employees and in big office women vanish automatically they do not get any chance to show their talent. They choose rural area until or unless her family is already settled there.

One of the woman administrative officers mentioned that:

*“Ministry of General Administration asked the list of name of female employees who are interested to go in to the local government but there are only 3 women in the 751 post of local government now. Women do not show any interest to go to the local level and serve there. Local-level is the place where you are face to face with the public. You have to work by coordinating with different offices, a place where you can show your ability and capability also get a chance to learn new things every day.”*

If women themselves do not show their interest to work in all layers of government then it will decrease the trust among male colleagues regarding women's capability. The mentality of male employees will never change until women come forward and show their ability by working at each level. If women can handle the

situation staying in local field they can be more experienced and they can be the eligible candidates who can pursue the decision-making position. But the low level of interest in working field level makes them weaker, less credible in front of male employees though they are capable.

One of the male officers mentioned that:

*“It is always difficult to work with female colleagues they always depend on others while working. It is observed that there is always debate while working with women and also some sort of problem arises with them. When it’s time for taking responsibility they never come in front for the risk. We also never assign them difficult tasks, if any mistake occurred later than what to say to females it’s even difficult to scold them but in case of boys its opposite we can assign them any task at any time.”*

Due to the females less interest to go in the field and work, male employees think that they are less able to take the risk and handle the challenge. Women attracted toward urban due to the family responsibility are creating a picture that women are weak to work at field level. Not only family but security also matter for women while working in the field. Which do not mean all women employees are less qualified to work and to tackle the situation. But denying the fieldwork has created an image of women as they are less competent.

##### **5. Reservation policy and other policies of the government.**

The government of Nepal has different policies regarding women and for their empowerment in the civil service of Nepal. The reservation policy from 2007 and other different affirmative policies which is supporting women from joining to promotion in the service. To know the perception of the respondents regarding reservation and other different policy questions like how reservation policy is contributing to the empowerment of women in civil service? What types of changes the government should bring in its policies to improve the women’s condition in civil service in terms of occupying decision-making positions? Were asked. The majority of the respondent has the same opinion that reservation is necessary for the context of a country like

Nepal. The reservation policy is playing the role of a bridge for women who have to manage the household as well as their studies.

One of the woman administrators mentioned that:

*“We should not measure male and female by keeping them in the same basket. Women have dual responsibility before marriage or after marriage, they have house as well as an office whereas males have free time for preparing for the exam. For equality equity is necessary. So, reservation is necessary right now in Nepal.”*

Women who are serving the nation and managing house they need support for balancing these two responsibilities. Male employees who are free from all the domestic responsibility cannot be treated equally in term of the competition. A person with a load in his back and a free person cannot be brought together in a ground.

Respondents mentioned that government brought the reservation policy which is helping lots of women to enter in the service as well as for the promotion also they can use quota but there should be some modification in the policies. It seems that providing quota during selection and promotion is decreasing the quality of the employees because with less effort you can enter and promoted in the service.

Similarly, the targeted groups are not able to use it yet. The majority of common people who are aware of the quota are using quota as a supportive medium for their career development. But the focused group i.e. women from the rural district, inner terai, economically back warded group, and etc have no idea about these policies of the government. The low access to education is the main reason which is making them more retrograde. For instance, if we go to Jumla district (rural district from far western part of Nepal), women from there even do not know about this policies which seem it is worthless to keep this policy. There should be a demarcation line for the use of quota inside the women quota. The government should mention which level or class group of women can use it like women from backward places.

Not only positive but there are some of the negative impacts of the quota system. The majority of the respondents mentioned that those employees who have entered through the quota system are taken differently in service. They are

considered weak and incompetent compare to others as they used reservation to enter in the service. Those respondents who entered through reservation mentioned that they feel demotivated, less interested to work and feel depressed.

In this regard reservation policy, a temporary measure which was bought to cover all the external group of society need modification in its program. Its impact should be analysed and how much positively it is functioning it should be examined. Though it is helping women to develop their career the scope should be clearly mentioned and regular inspection is necessary because the policy is unable to cover the real vulnerable group and it can bring fluctuation in the result. A sudden increase and decrease in the number of quota users can take the results in a negative direction.

Regarding the changes that the government should bring in their upcoming policies they mentioned that the government should focus on education for women, increment in political, economic, social participation of women. The government should make women compulsory participation in any type of challenging activity. It will help women to increase their inner confidence and space to show their ability.

They stated that the government should increase the seats in the decision making level so that more women can represent themselves. As well there should be 25% compulsory female employee in the local level which will help women to deal with local people and win trust in the local level that women can also, work as men.

The government should build training institute and classes in every district for those women who wants to prepare for further competition. Female employees who are outside the city area they have to take a leave for joining the class to prepare for the exam. And it is not possible to take leave for a long time period.

Another change the employees in civil service wants is that the upcoming policy comes with a new program of establishing baby care centre in offices. Establishing baby care centre in every office will make easy for women to focus on their work. Right now the facility of baby care centre is only inside the *Singha Durbar* (Where all the ministries of Nepal are located). One of the woman administrators mentioned that:

*“She was working in another district (Solukhumbu) her family was in another Panchthar district and her child was also in Panchthar district. So, she asked for a transfer in the Panchthar district so that she can look after her child. Now in the morning she feeds her child and in the daytime during the lunch again she goes to her house from office she feeds her child and comes back to the work and same after work. She mentioned she cannot transfer to another place until her child grows up. If there was day care centre in my office I don’t need to transfer from the earlier district. I missed lot of opportunities.”*

We can observe how much difficulties women employees are facing to manage their work and house life. Little effort from the government side can make their life convenient. It is the responsibility of the government as well to help in developing their career to a person who is giving all of his life for serving the nation.

Some of them mentioned that women should be informed of the risk factor in a job, different geographical constraints, and administrative domination before they join the service. So, that they cannot deny the work after joining the service.

However, some of the women administrator thought were different than others they mentioned that the policies from the government is enough. The only weakness from women side they are not giving there 100% effort. The main thing for motivation is self- willingness if a person is self -motivated than more policies for support are not needed. They also mentioned that by claiming more policies women themselves are proving weak in front of male.

#### **4.3 Conclusion**

Issues related to the factors affecting women to make a space in decision-making level in Nepalese civil service have been discussed, analysed and explained in the chapter based on the data collected from my research participants. The variables with their indicatives issues have been analysed here. It was found that the socio-cultural factors are highly reflected in the administration and its impact is negatively affecting women’s empowerment in the civil service of Nepal. Civil service is the first choice for every new generation in Nepal but social values and beliefs are becoming obstacles for women in their path of career development. Not only the administrative

culture, but women mentality are also affected by the socio- cultural values that they could not take their social role out of their mind. As a result, they are losing interest to compete further. Promotion takes a long process and reaching up to the higher level it takes time. Hence, which makes a continuous majority of male employees at the top level.



## **Chapter Five**

### **Limitations and Challenges**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The limitation and challenges of the study are discussed in this chapter. As every social research has limitation and nothing can be predicted perfect in social science as everyone has a distinct view and argument. Every steps in research in full of challenge where researcher should be focused to accomplish the study. The challenges faced during the research and the major limitation of the study has been explained here. The limitation of the study is discussed first followed by the challenges of the study.

#### **5.2 Limitation**

Every study have some kind of limitations which confines the study and make it narrower. It is important that you restrict your discussion to limitation related to the research problem under the investigation. The limitation are the characteristics of the design or methodology which impacted while interpreting the finding of the research. In simple language they are the constraints on generalizability, applications to practice, on the way of finding the results in which you initially chose to design the study or the methods used to establish internal and external validity or the result of unanticipated challenges that emerged during the study (Libraries, 2020). Limitation in the research study can be the methodological limitation, the research process used for the study also the study limits on the accessibility of the researcher to the different sources.

It is important is to identify and acknowledge the limitations of the study because it is an opportunities to make suggestions for further research, to demonstrate that researcher have thought critically about the research problems, understood the relevant literature published about the related heading, the assessment of the method chosen for the study. Limitation basically discusses the unanswered questions of the study. Could the researcher have used another means of data collection methods? Could the research design have been better? Was the

sample size not representative to the targeted population? Acknowledging such limitations will make you aware of what the study was not able to cover (Editage, 2020). Research is not only about discovering new knowledge, also confront assumption and explore those we don't know.

### **5.2.1 Limitations of the study**

The main objective of the study is find the impacts of socio-cultural practices for women empowerment in civil service of Nepal. On the way to find the answer of the research questions the study was affected by different factors. We all are aware that our research depend on the methodology which we have used, the size of the sample, behaviours of the respondents during the data collection (e.g. nature, prejudice, like dislike, attitude and etc.), time limit and the accessibility of the researcher. So, based on it some of the limitation of my study I have categories them into three headings which includes a) Methodological limitations, b) Accessibility of the researcher c) Time constraints.

#### **a) Methodological limitations**

- **Sample size:** Due to the nature of my study which is qualitative the sample size consists only 45 respondent who are the employee of Nepalese civil service. So, the finding cannot be generalized on the large population.
- **Low access to the reliable data:** Due to the global pandemic only online library and online material were used for study. But there was minimum access to the different source of the related filed. Relevant source was not freely available in different websites.
- **Lack of prior research studies on the topic:** There are lots of research done on women topic and women empowerment but minimum on impacts of culture in women empowerment in civil service of Nepal. There are researches about women participate in south Asian context but specifically in Nepal there are not much research done about empowering women and culture as an obstacle for their enablement. This is not only limitation but also opportunity to add something new in this field.

- **Measure used to collect data:** All the primary data were collected through interviews with different male and female respondent. As this is qualitative research open-ended questions were prepared and asked during the interviews. No quantitative methods are used for collecting data. It is totally a qualitative study.

#### **b) Accessibility of the Researcher**

Due to the global pandemic, the study area was changed which decreased the ease of access up to the civil servants. Earlier the study area was inside the Kathmandu valley where different ministries lies and a large number of employees are available there, but due to pandemic all of the employee from administrative and judicial section of civil were considered during data collection. As I do not belong to bureaucracy I do not have much connection with the employee. So, randomly employees were selected who were with in the touch with me.

#### **c) Time constraints**

The study is conducted with in short time period. Within a time period of few months all of the relevant information were collected and the study was accompanied.

### **5.3 Challenges**

Every researcher goes through different challenges during their research study. Research requires in depth knowledge regarding the subject matter and hard work which is critical challenge for researcher. During the research study different obstacles may hinder the researcher to find the answer to the research questions, but it do not make difference in the result. It also depends on the technique of the researcher that how to cope up with these challenges so, that its impacts cannot make difference in the result as pre-determined.

Sometime researcher face challenges in their study due to not having clear understanding of the research methodology or of the ontological or epistemological choices which they need to make in order to frame the research. The most specific challenge for researcher is to understand the complex nature of management research. Some of the researcher think the biggest challenge is about collecting data or understanding case studies whereas some of the researcher think whether there

study will provide sufficient information in that related field. While some of the researcher face problems because they could not pick an appropriate topic for their research (Lubbe et al., 2005:244). Besides these researchers have to face various external obstacles though they are confident about their research methodology and field of study. These external challenges may occur during the data collection process or finding the materials for study.

### **5.3.1 Challenges of the study**

During the research time this study faced different challenges. Despite of these different challenges I was able to find the relevant data and the major finding of the study. The major challenge during this study was the global pandemic COVID-19. Due to the novel virus the biggest challenge was to conduct this study. When the whole world was in lockdown it was very difficult to conduct study with limited sources of materials. Effect of pandemic was seen in every process of the research. Because of the pandemic other different challenges were raised during the exploration. The challenge faced during the study are explained under in different headings.

#### **a) Travel constraints**

The novel virus was spreading all over the world, therefore the whole world went on lock down. Nepal government also declared lockdown for more than six months. So, movement of people from one place to another was not possible. Because of the pandemic the study area was changed, and alternative modes were used to reach the respondents during data collection. We were not able to go to university for using library, meet our supervisor face to face etc. Every activity were carried out online.

#### **b) Availability of women**

Though the country was in lockdown, but the government organization were open. As my respondents were employee from civil service from Nepal it was easy for me to collect data. But the biggest challenge was there were very few women in the district. Due to the pandemic the study area was changed, and the data was collected from the respective district where the researcher was staying but there were very few women in that district. Some of the organization were running without any female

employee. Hence alternative method was used to reach the targeted sample size of the study. Half of the data was collected by the means of ICT (Information Communication and Technology). By collecting phone number from the Administrative Staff College female employees were communicated through phone and emails. By taking appointment with female civil servants, interviews were conducted through phone.

### **c) Online collection of Data**

As already mentioned, due to COVID-19 movement from one place to another was not possible. So, the relevant primary and secondary data were collected online. It was easy to collect secondary, but the biggest challenge was to collect the primary data. First, to manage appointment in phone to different respondents was difficult task second, long duration on phone was quite uncomfortable to respondent third, the information, their gesture which can be observed during face to face interview cannot be obtained through phone. The network problem, electricity in both researcher and respondent side and the expenses on the phone/ internet, to manage time on the availability of these things on both side was very challenging.

In spite of these various challenges relevant data and material required to complete the study was collected. I fully utilized the available resources so that the research could not face any shortcoming. The half of the data was collected through face to interviews where I was able to observe their feeling, dedication, their satisfaction regarding service. During the online interview also required information was collected and with their permission the interview was recorded so, that if any technical disturbance occurred during interview the recording can help later.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

To conduct any research is a big challenge with its various limitation. Limitation helps the study to be more focused and challenges make the researcher more confident about his study. Before starting any research researcher should be clear about the field that they have chosen, the research design they are going to use and the contribution that the study will give for future reference in that respective field. Which will help them to cope up with the various challenges that occur during study.

Every study have some limitation and to acknowledge the limitation is very important, so that the researcher can understand which area or part he or she is not covering in their research.

## Chapter Six

### Findings and Conclusion

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the major findings of the study followed by the conclusion of the study. My assumption for the study is that the socio-cultural practice of Nepalese society affects women empowerment in the civil service of Nepal. It is because of the gender role divided between male and female binds women while it has given liberty to men. Whereas the societal values are fundamental for the development of administrative culture because civil servants are products of society and they carry certain societal values with them which are reflected in administration, which affects women's growth inside the civil service. Lots of women are present in the service right now but do entering and holding one post determine the person is empowered. No, entering in the service only does not mean empowerment, my argument here is that women empowerment in the fullest sense in the civil service is only when women have the power and right to make decisions.

Hence, all the way through this study I want to find out the answer of these question: In what ways cultural practices affect women to reach at the decision-making level in civil service of Nepal? What are the policies of the government pertaining to women participation in the civil service? What are the barriers for women to enter the civil service and compete for promotion in their work? How does culture shape the Nepalese society's perception toward women? After analysing the data (in chapter 4) under different theme collected from female and male civil servants who poses different post in civil service of Nepal the researcher drew the finding of these questions.

The dependent variable of the study is the women empowerment in civil service of Nepal which is dependent on the cultural factors i.e. power distance and masculinity versus femininity.

The preliminary question of the study is:

## **In what ways cultural practices affect women to reach at the decision-making level in civil service of Nepal?**

The following section discusses the major finding of the study.

### **Cultural factors as a barrier to women empowerment**

The research revealed that the Nepalese bureaucracy is highly affected by socio-cultural practices. The administrative culture is based on socio-cultural values than organizational culture. Social values and beliefs can be clearly observed in the employee's behaviour.

The collected data clearly shows how social beliefs affected the women on the way toward their growth. Nepalese society is patriarchal. Women are seldom treated equal to males. Their presence is usually negligible in civil service. Qualified women are under-considered whereas less competent male are provided opportunities. Whenever women come forward and does argument women are observed as "*Pothi Baseko*" which is not normal and can bring bad luck.

Society never accepts women to be forward than men. Direct or in an indirect ways women are always being dominated by the employees in the organization. Not only the male employees but also the female employees hesitate to follow women as a leader. Society is so deep-rooted in the masculine culture that women by themselves are not able to take their social responsibility out of their mind and keep their work-life superior to their social roles. Women will not choose their career over their family. While fulfilling their role they cannot manage their work life. It was found that women are so much engaged in their social life that they are not able to give much attention to their work life. Most of the women are happy in the position where they are right now.

Moreover, women who take care of family are considered as good and cultured and those women who are competitive and focused toward the career they are also accepted then again women tend to remain responsible for their family. Society accepted that women can involve in income-generating activities, but social responsibility has not been changed. The role divided between male and female and their work-life has so much mixed up the life of the women that the females in



Nepalese society is hovering between modernization and traditional values. Those women who want further growth are also not able to focus on their career only because of the social role.

The gender role is used as a tool of identity which places women inside the home and provides the freedom to men. Which is not letting women to go out of their home and show their capability. The social structure has set the ideology of men and women which keeps men and women in the hierarchy, where women are usually considered valueless because the masculine culture has set the women's role in reproduction and taking care of the family zone. This masculine culture of the society has always given limited scope for women to grow up. The human development in South Asia 2003 report shows that "discrimination against women in south Asia is far worse than other developing countries"(Kabir, 2013:171).

There are other secondary questions to support the preliminary question. Findings of these questions makes us more clear about how socio-cultural factors are affecting women empowerment in the civil service of Nepal. Based on the respondent's arguments socio-cultural factors are identified as the obstacles for women to pursue space in the decision-making of civil service of Nepal.

### **What are the policies of the government pertaining to women participation in the civil service?**

The government of Nepal has initiated various policies to reduce discrimination against the women in respect to sex, gender, post and policies to support women so, that they can equally use their rights like men. As mentioned earlier the quota system for women, maternity leave, selection of place for posting and other affirmative policies are the major tools used for encouraging women to join civil service.

After collecting the data, it was found that in the perspective of Nepal the concept of inclusion is important. The quota system has helped lots of women to enter in the service as well as many of them have used reservation tool to reach on next level of the service. For those women who have to manage their house and work these policies are proven very effective.

However, it was found that the government lacks in measuring the effectiveness of the policy. The quota system is the temporary measure used by the government to support women for their growth in Nepalese society. The efficiency needs to be measure in every 10 years' time period. The main objective of the reservation is to uplift the women's situation in Nepal. But the inclusive policy for whom it was brought they are still deprived of them. The collected data showed that most of the women in civil service belongs to those family where one member is civil servants, educated family and most of them are motivated by their family. On one hand, we can see that the society is changing families are forcing their daughter to join the service on the other hand, many of the women are deprived of such facilities. Women in the far western region are deprived of education, women who are economically backward, quota is for them. But as we can see the reservation is used by the educated and elite women. Employees are using the benefit of their network with a higher level. The quota is misused by the elite groups. Hence, the division of quota based on class, geographical, economic status, access to education inside women quota should be divided by the policymakers.

Moreover, it was found that the women who have entered through quota are considered less qualified and they are not considered as capable to carry responsible activities which are affecting their growth. Male employees do not understand why they have used reservation as a tool for entry and by understanding also they dominate them as by nature they are used to this. Which is demotivating women to work. Hence, the effectiveness of the policies needs periodic review.

**What are the barriers for women to enter the civil service and compete for promotion in their work?**

The main obstacle for women in Nepal are the social system. The social responsibility of women and lack of access to education is the main barrier for women which create hinders on the way for their career development. The social system which has divided the role of women to care for family and children has limited the women up to the household chores. Though society is changing women are engaged in educational activities however the social values, belief has not changed.

In Nepal women access to education has been started too late and when women reach the age of 20, they are forced to get married. During the data collection, most of the women are married though their age was 20 and have just started their career in the service. When a girl completes her school, society forces her to get married. Her career is not given much importance than her marriage. Though women are unemployed it's considered good as her husband is there to look after her. Lack of quality education hinders women on the way to career development. Because in civil service for every post certain educational qualification is necessary like to join the service the person needs educational qualification of secondary education examination and it increases as per the post.

Right now, in Nepalese society women are aware of the importance of getting employed. After marriage also women are entering the civil service. But due to the low and late access to education, they cannot make space in the higher position of the civil service. There are lots of motivating factors to compete for higher position but due to their dual responsibility and the patriarchal nature of employees in service, low level of quality education it decreases the confidence and interest in women. Those women who are capable and wants to compete further are also demotivated, underrated and do not let them participate in the competition.

Moreover, it was found that there is high nepotism, favouritism and high political interference in the bureaucracy. Those who are close to the officials from higher-level get easy promotion and transfer whereas other hardworking employees are under consideration. It was found that most of the women have a family to look after office but for men, after office, they have leisure time which they spend with different official's through which they increase their connection and take opportunities during their promotion and transfer. However, it was found that some of the women are using networks for their promotion and transfer. Those women who are in high positions in civil service are due to their and family's good relationships with political authority and senior officials of the service. Women who are at the high position are either wife of secretary, deputy secretary or their family members. The informal relations are becoming heavier than the formal rule. While the majority of the women are struggling only because of the social role.

## How does culture shape the Nepalese society's perception toward women?

Women in Nepalese society are considered as a second class citizen. Women, regardless of their caste it does not matter, the role and responsibility for all of them are similar. Men are higher and women are considered inferior to them. The gender roles are clearly visible in this masculine society. The dominant social structure is more positive for men and tapering for women. This society has a specific gender role which has limited the opportunity for women in employment, access to education especially for higher education.

It was found that access to education, modernization, globalization the people thought about women are changing somehow. Women are improving in the economic, social and health sectors. However, women economic contribution is not considered in Nepalese society. Women are perceived as it's their role to help husbands in economic activities, but they are not earner, husbands are the real earners in the family.

Though society accepted women's engagement in different social and economic activities. But in a real sense society to the date has not accepted women's role equal to males. Despite women's large contribution in employment activities they tend to remain responsible for their domestic activities.

As a result, women by managing their dual responsibility they are losing interest. They do not want a burden in their life. Their responsibility pushes them into a dilemma that what to do and what no to do. Thus, in such situation, most of them choose their family. Which makes women's participation lower comparing to males.

**Table 9: Findings of the study in tabular form**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Findings</b>
Women Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Job Security, Pension, Social prestige, multidimensional field and government job is considered good for women in Nepal.</li><li>- Motivated by family</li><li>- Highly motivated for further career development</li><li>- More salary, more respect and more power are motivating factors available</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quantity of women are increased but quality of working has not been increased</li> </ul>
Power distance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less confident in decision making and lacks trust</li> <li>- Reliant on male officers while taking decisions</li> <li>- No working experience under women officer</li> <li>- Only in small organization women will access authority in big organization they will vanish</li> </ul>
Masculinity versus femininity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negatively impacted by social factors</li> <li>- Late exposure to education and opportunities</li> <li>- Social system</li> <li>- Lack of enthusiasm.</li> </ul>

## 6.2 To what extent finding are related to theory

All the identified factors can be explained using the culture theory (explained in chapter two). Family is the main motivating factor for joining the service, women have dual responsibility, women are supposed to be more focused toward family than office. Men are considered higher they are supposed to be the breadwinner for the family which link with the masculine dimension of the culture theory.

Decision-making in the organization is done by the post either there is a male or female in the respective position which can be measure as a low power distance. Though decisions are taken by women still male lack trust on the decision of women, they depends on senior male officials while making decisions. Women are less likely to take risk while working in the organization, they prefer easy task without any challenges can be guided by the masculine and feminine culture of society where women are considered as soft, caring where are male are considered a career focused, tough and strong. And the finding explains that the reason for taking less challenge, highly depending on the family, considering themselves weaker than the male is because of the patriarchal culture which is clearly explained by the masculine dimension of culture theory.

Therefore, the culture theory of Hofstede (1980) is the most influential theory to examine the socio-cultural impacts on women empowerment in the civil service of Nepal.

### **6.3 Future research**

The empirical findings of the study presents that the there's a glass ceiling in the case of women to go up and make space in decision-making level but the social system is not letting them break the glass and pursue the decision-making position and make women empowered in real sense. Moreover, this research only covered the socio-cultural factors as barriers for women empowerment in civil service. Research can be done to analyse others factors like political, organizational factors as a barrier for women empowerment not only in civil service but also in other government services of Nepal.

### **6.4 Conclusion**

This study examines how cultural practices influence women to reach the decision- making level in civil service of Nepal. With the research questions: In what ways cultural practices affect women to reach the decision-making level in civil service of Nepal? The findings of the study and the major argument i.e. socio-cultural practices are the main barriers for the women empowerment in civil service totally matches with each other.

The above discussion on the finding section gives us a broad analysis of the effects of socio-cultural factors for women empowerment in civil service. It was found that women in Nepalese society are attracted to the civil service because it is secure, prestigious and, due to the motivation of their family. Everyone wants to compete for further growth in the service. Government has provided lots of motivational factors inside the service for encouraging women to compete for higher posts. The government initiated a reservation policy to support women so that women can make their special space in civil service.

However, women are able to maintain their space only in the lower level of the service. Very few women are able to reach the decision-making level. The socio-cultural practices have limited the opportunities for women in civil service of Nepal. Due to the socio-cultural barrier women are deprived of education especially higher education. People in Nepalese society do not invest in their daughter's education as they are considered "*aarka ko ghar jane jaat*" (they have to go to their husband's

house). Males are considered as breadwinner, so women's education is not given much importance like males. Hence, women are deprived of a competitive education. Low level of quality education does not support them for their career development.

The dual responsibility of women which binds them in these two roles they could not focus on their career. Most of the women lose their interest on competing further for their career development. The social role is so much deeply rooted in the mind of women that they choose their family over their career. Most of them are happy with their current position and their focus is on their child's future. A very minimum number of women are there who are preparing for further competition. Lack of interest for further career development is pulling women more behind than men.

The social values, norms that places men at the top and women at the lower segment of society these values are reflected inside the bureaucracy as well. Women are directly or indirectly dominated by the employees in the administration. Though the education system is advanced the people's perception toward women has never changed. Women are considered weak and less capable than males. Even the less qualified male are given opportunities and qualified women are under-considered only because she is female. Even society does not trust women. They prefer male officers to do their work. They do not believe women as an officer in administration. They research male officer to do their work. Which demotivate those women who are qualified and hardworking it creates a negative impact on their minds.

Moreover, the informal relation and high political interference and the culture of choosing "*ramrod vanda hamro*" (prioritizing personal relation) are also creating barriers for women in promotion and transfer. The process of entering in political parties and supporting them and making political ideology is common in society. "*Chakari and Chaplusi*" (being close to seniors, creating a situation that boss is always right) of senior inside the administration is widely accepted in the bureaucracy. These political networks and informal relations with seniors are used during the promotion and transfer of employees. Women are bind with social responsibility, they do not have much time to make informal relations which hits them during the promotion and transfer of employees. However, some of the women are using networking through

their family members to reach the upper level of the bureaucracy. But for all women networking is not possible. The promotion and transfer of employees through networking demotivate women as despite their hard work other less competent are benefited.

Hence, the socio-cultural values regarding women, the gender role is difficult to change. It takes a long time to change the mentality of the human being. Lots of effort needs to be given to improve the women's condition in civil service. New research, and innovation in the women field needs to be done for the change in their situation. The measure steps which were taken by the government like education, the concept of inclusion can bring some change in the mind set the people. But it needs to preview continuously. The government should work in a planned way that how much women representation is the target of the government and up to when. If the government works in a planned order considering the dominant socio-cultural values, then only women representation in decision-making will be equal to men in Nepalese civil service.



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## **Annexure**

### **Set of interview questions**

This questionnaire is a part of the research paper entitled “Women at the Decision-making level of Nepalese civil service: Impacts of Culture” of Master in Public Policy and Governance (MPPG) program at the North South University, Dhaka, Bangladesh. The objective of the study is to find the impacts of socio-cultural practices for women empowerment in civil service of Nepal. In this regard, your honest and practical response is greatly expected. Furthermore, the shared information will be used only for academic purpose, and your identity will remain anonymous.

Respondent’s Name:

Gender:

Educational Background:

Work place/ Office Name:

Living Place:

Designation:

### **Part A:**

1. Why have you chosen civil service for your career?
2. Tell me about your experience with this job (i.e. how long have you been working, your workplace, relations with colleagues/ bosses, financial benefits, social status etc.)?
3. What gap have you realized between you expectation before your entry in the service and after entering in the service? What factor of service is attractive and encouraging to you?
4. What are the discouraging factors you experienced during your service tenure?
5. How do you see impacts of socio-cultural practices in women empowerment in administration?

6. What is your satisfaction level in this position and the service system?

**Part B:**

**Questions for female civil servants**

1. Tell me your experiences in civil service (how you entered in the service through open competition or reservation quota? Who/ what motivated you? In what ways?)
2. How reservation policy is contributing to the empowerment of women in civil service?
3. What is your view on present status of women in civil service?
4. Most of the women in Nepalese service are at middle and lower level, very few women are at the senior or decision-making level. What do you think the reason behind low representation of women in decision-making level (higher positions)?
5. Do you feel low representation of women is due to the socio-cultural practices? If yes/ no, why?
6. What is your thought about further career advancement in service?
7. What are the motivating factors available for competing for higher positions?
8. What types of changes government should bring in its policies to improve the women's condition in civil service in terms of occupying decision-making level positions?

**Questions for Male civil Servants**

1. What is your view on increasing in the number of women civil servants?
2. What do you think about the improvement of women's situation is in Nepalese societies?
3. What is your view regarding reservation system and other affirmative policies for women in the civil service?
4. Most of the women in Nepalese service are at middle and lower level, very few women are at the senior or decision making level. What do you think the

reason behind low representation of women in decision-making level (higher positions)?

5. Do you feel low representation of women in decision making level is due to the socio - cultural practices? If yes/ no why?
6. What is the reason behind those very few women who have reached at the decision making level in the same culture?
7. How working under the supervision of a female officer differs than that of a male officer?
8. What is your view on present status of women in civil service?
9. If the Nepalese government wants to make policies regarding women empowerment, what areas in the civil service should the government focus on to facilitate women empowerment?