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**The Role of Nepali Carpet Manufacturing Industries
in Alleviating Rural Poverty:
A Case Study of Rural Women Workers**

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ABSTRACT

In 1996 Nepal had a per capita gross national product of \$US200, the fourth lowest in the world. Nepalese rural women, like those in many developing countries, are even poorer than men. Further, their contribution towards household activities remain unrecognised and unmeasured. It is because of poverty that rural women have started to move from subsistence farming to the formal sector in order to better meet their economic needs. Regardless of how much labour women put into the agricultural sector, it has yielded very little cash income. The Nepali carpet manufacturing industry has provided employment for rural women. It is also a significant user of New Zealand crossbred wools. Wages earned by rural women through the carpet industry contribute to the alleviation of rural poverty by increasing the total annual income of the households in which they reside.

The purpose of this study was to determine the socio-economic impact of the carpet manufacturing industries on the well-being of rural women workers. In addition, the benefits of, and limitations to, rural women workers becoming involved in the carpet industries were assessed.

Four levels of respondents were interviewed for the study: 5 key informants, 5 focus-groups (n=10) of rural women workers, 36 carpet manufacturers, and 144 rural women workers. The survey data were evaluated relative to a conceptual model developed to explain total annual household income, a proxy variable for rural poverty alleviation. The model included non-economic (social and demographic) and economic characteristics of households.

Variables included in a multiple regression (reduced) model collectively explained 50% of the variation in total annual household income. Among all the non-economic and economic characteristics outlined in the conceptual framework, the number of working adults per household was most important in influencing household income. One person increased total annual household income by Rs 15,228 per annum and a 5% increase in total annual income was associated with additional savings by Rs 67.08 per month. It was concluded that the Nepali carpet industries have assisted in alleviating rural poverty amongst rural women through income generation. New Zealand wool exports to Nepal therefore appear to have an indirect positive benefit on rural households by enabling carpet industry expansion.

Keywords: Nepal, carpet industries, rural women workers, total annual household income, and rural poverty alleviation.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Nepal's population, estimated to be 21 million in 1994, is growing at a rate of 2.5 percent per annum (World Development Report, 1996). Nepal ranks as one of the poorest countries in the world with a per capita gross national product (GNP) of US \$200 and an average life expectancy of 54 years (World Development Report, 1996). Except for a few elite groups of people, and perhaps some large-scale farmers, everyone in Nepal is poor (UNICEF, 1992). Recent government estimates put the proportion of the national population living in absolute poverty at 40 percent (World Bank, 1990). Approximately, 90 per cent of Nepali people live in rural areas, however, net cultivated land accounts for only 20 percent of the total land area: there remains very limited scope for expansion (Asian Development Bank, 1994a).

Many of the poor are engaged in subsistence farming. In this labour intensive subsistence environment, women spend much more time than men on food production activities and as a result, the work burden of adult women exceeds that of adult men by about 25 percent (World Bank, 1990). People in Nepal work very hard for the little income that they make; 70 percent of production is estimated to be at a subsistence level and does not go through the cash economy (UNICEF, 1992).

Limited off-farm employment opportunities and a high population growth rate of 2.5 per cent (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1993) have increased the economic burden on the agricultural sector. There has been little change in agricultural productivity over many years, and the long-term decline in the average size of rural land holdings in Nepal continues to intensify this. Thus, the present level of rural dependence on a subsistence agriculture that has stagnant low productivity is not sustainable.

Statistics shows that 80% of poor peasants, including women, spend their time in subsistence farming (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1994). Many rural people work on larger farms at or below minimum wages. Furthermore, rural employment opportunities have continued to deteriorate over time due to increased pressure on scarce agricultural land. Also, structural adjustments in the economy have favoured economic

development of the urban industrial sector, and this has been to the detriment of the rural agricultural sector. As a result, rural men have preferred to migrate to urban areas in search of better job opportunities, leaving their wives and children behind to struggle with farming and the associated daily necessities for living (Buvinic and Lycette, 1988). Women continue to contribute their time, energy and efforts to maintain their farming operations, but their contribution remains unmeasured and unidentified at the national level (PAI, 1996a).

The development of a rural economy requires adequate mobilization of its human resources. Human resources refer to the skill, knowledge and capabilities of the people in increasing the production of goods and services. Economic development therefore requires proper planning and utilization of human resources. The thrust of development in Nepal has been to eliminate poverty and to fulfill basic human needs. Since, women constitute almost half of the total labour force, proper mobilization of women is a must for attaining the development goals of Nepal. Therefore, rural women's entry into employment is essential to their becoming economically self-reliant and gaining the ability to alleviate poverty in the households in which they live.

1.1 Background and Problem Statement

In developing countries, poor men in almost all cases have even poorer wives and children. The problems that exist amongst women in developing countries often remain unheard and unnoticed, particularly in the rural economy. Where efforts are undertaken to mobilize women in development, they mostly impact on women's issues in urban areas and a few selected rural areas.

Women constitute about half of the world's population and a major part of the unrecognised labour force in the world. Agriculture has traditionally been a predominant source of employment, although the share of the non-agriculture sector in total employment has shown a substantial increase in Nepal (Acharya, 1995). In addition, Acharya (1995) mentions that the percentage of the economically active population in agriculture decreased from 94.4% in 1971 to 91.2% in 1981 and further to 81.2% in 1991. Over the same period the proportion of women employed in the

non-agricultural sector increased from 1.8% in 1971 to 8.9% cent in 1991 (Acharya, 1995). Thus, while agriculture is still the major source of employment for Nepali males and females, the share of employment in the non-agricultural sector is increasing. This shift in employment was associated with a tangible change in the industrial structure of Nepal in the 1980s (Acharya, 1995). This allowed more women to join the ranks of industrial workers despite their low level of skills and cultural inhibitions. In 1992 women accounted for 23% of the total labour force (CBS, 1995).

Home-based industries are either progressively dying due to competition from imported products or are being replaced by organised formal units. The displacement of traditional crafts by light industry is forcing female workers into contract-based labour in the specialised sectors, such as the carpet industry. The work force in the carpet and cotton-textile weaving industries, which is inspiringly dominated by women, reflects this change (Acharya, 1995).

While the role of non-agricultural sectors in Nepal as a source of employment is increasing at a faster rate for women than for men, the proportion of women in the agricultural labour force has also been increasing in real terms due to population growth. Overall, an increasing number of women are entering the work force in the formal manufacturing sector because their economic needs cannot be met by subsistence farming.

Efforts are thus required to engage rural women in the formal sector. Increased participation would allow household members and women in particular, to generate additional income for productive investment and consumption requirements; this in turn would alleviate poverty. It is for this reason that hand-knotted carpet manufacturing industries have been a major contributor to the employment of women in the formal sector and is therefore, by association, an important contributor to poverty alleviation.

1.1.1 Carpet Industry

Carpet manufacturing industries were first established in Nepal in the early 1960s and were operated initially with imported Tibetan wool and primarily located in Kathmandu (Shrestha, 1991). Presently, most of the wool required for carpet production is met through imports from New Zealand and Tibet (Shrestha, 1991). Nepal in turn exports quality carpets to European and North American markets.

General observations indicate that women contribute a high proportion of the total work force in the carpet manufacturing industries. Most of them come from rural areas and they have been able to repatriate part of their income to their families. Carpet manufacturing industries, through the utilization of New Zealand and locally produced wool, therefore have been able to provide rural women with some independence and economic stability. However, the magnitude of carpet-manufacturing industries' impact on the socio-economic well-being of rural women largely remains unknown. The purpose of this study was to measure the impacts of carpet manufacturing industries on the alleviation of poverty amongst rural women through employment generation.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study was conducted to assess the impacts of Nepali carpet manufacturing industries on poverty alleviation amongst rural women. It was hypothesised that employment provided by the carpet industry assists rural women to alleviate poverty through income generation. The study had three associated objectives:

- to identify the socio-economic impacts of carpet manufacturing industries on the well-being of rural women workers;
- to identify the benefits of, and limitations to, rural women becoming involved in carpet industries and;

- to formulate potential development strategies to encourage the active participation of women in the carpet manufacturing industries in order to improve their well-being and alleviate poverty.

1.3 Relevance of the Research

The findings from this study will provide valuable input to His Majesty's Government of Nepal, non-government organizations (NGOs) working on development issues, the Women's Development Division of the Ministry of Local Development, and the Central Carpet Industries Association. Wools of New Zealand will benefit from factual data on the economic well-being of rural women that has occurred due to the utilization of New Zealand wool. Such information will assist Wools of New Zealand in its marketing strategies in Nepal and other countries.

This study will also establish benchmark data for follow-up research by researchers based in Nepal and New Zealand. It will contribute to an improved understanding of the dynamic relationship between the Nepali carpet industries, New Zealand wool producers and exporters, and the socio-economic well-being of rural women workers.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

The study was undertaken entirely in the Kathmandu valley of Nepal and was limited to women who had migrated from rural areas to work in the carpet industries of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur districts. The study therefore reflects the situation at one point in time. It does not reflect the impact of carpet industry relocation on carpet manufacturers and rural women. In addition, this study does not look in detail at the existing social and cultural (welfare) issues of women workers.

1.5 Thesis Outline

This chapter has provided a brief overview of Nepal, the Nepali economy and the situation for Nepali rural women. The study problem was then identified and the

objectives defined. A review of literature follows in the next chapter. The review includes relevant studies on women and development, participation of females in the labour force, women in agriculture, poverty, women and poverty, poverty alleviation and poverty measurement. The methodology implemented in the study is outlined in Chapter 3. This includes a description of the conceptual framework and the research design used, the study area, and an outline of the data collected. The results of the study are presented and discussed in Chapter 4. In the closing chapter, the results from the study are summarized and conclusions are drawn. Recommendations arising from the research and related areas requiring further research are also presented.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

In this chapter the literature on rural development, female participation in the labour force, agriculture, migration and poverty is reviewed with a special emphasis on Asian rural women. The available literature in these fields is broad and extensive; an overview of all the topic areas relevant to the study objectives is therefore provided, rather than an in-depth investigation of a particular subject area.

2.1 Women and Development

Women's issues were firmly placed on the agenda for world development at the World Conference on the International Women's Year (Women in Development) in Mexico in 1975. At this conference the period 1976-1985 was declared to be the "UN Decade for Women." The achievements of the "UN Decade for Women" were reviewed and appraised at the World Conference in Nairobi in July 1985 (Roy et al., 1996; Asian Development Bank, 1994b).

The role of women in development is not a simple one; it relates to a complete range of socio-economic activities. Quibria (1994) argued that the socio-economic status of women has a major influence on economic development and, conversely, that the socio-economic status of women is significantly altered by economic development. It follows that women contribute greatly to poverty reduction and to economic security within the family because they are the major providers of food for millions of families and contribute more than 50 percent to total food production and about 25 percent to the total industrial work-force in the developing countries (ADB, 1994b). Consequently, women are vitally important agents for change in an economy.

Heyzer (1986) supported this view and stated that the prosperity and growth of a nation depends on the status and development of its women as they not only constitute nearly half of its population, but also influence the growth of the remaining half of the population. Sustainable economic development of the world population, including the developed countries, therefore, requires significant improvement in the

socio-economic status of women. Varma (1992) further argued that, improvement in the socio-economic status of women cannot be achieved without economic development. It is not surprising then that the central role of women in development and the need for improvement in their economic conditions was re-emphasised again at the 1994 UN Conference on "Population and Development," held in Cairo in August 1994 (Roy et al., 1996).

Women in Development (WID, 1989) pointed out that women's contribution to economic growth and development remains substantially underestimated, partly because their work often "does not count" and partly because much of it is home-based. Hertz (1989) supported this view by mentioning that women's contribution is under-priced because it is difficult to value, is often immediately consumed and it quickly ceases to be visible in the eyes of an evaluator. There is increasing evidence that the structural adjustment measures currently being implemented in many Asian countries are impacting more severely and adversely on women, and especially poor women, than any other group (Quibria, 1994).

Nevertheless, a growing number of households headed by women produce food for their children and family, and they also contribute substantially to the household expenditures through income-generating activities such as food processing, trading of agricultural products, and the production of handicrafts (Taplin, 1989; Boserup, 1986).

The socio-economic status of women is directly influenced by these activities. Socio-economic status is defined as "...the position that an individual or a family occupies with reference to the prevailing average standards of cultural possessions, effective income, material possession and participation in the group activities of the community" (Varma, 1992, p. 46). More importantly, as Varma (1992) concluded, the socio-economic status of women is multi-dimensional, and economic development can improve the status of women in some respects but cause it to deteriorate in other respects.

The increased recognition of the direct link between expanded opportunities for women (especially in education and income generating activities) and reduced population growth, improved health and education of children, poverty reduction and sustainable development have all made it essential to address and enhance the role of women in development (Bardhan, 1993). Women therefore need to be brought into the mainstream of development programmes (Hertz, 1989) rather than ignored or treated in only a secondary way. As a result, the needs and concerns of women in development have been openly placed on the development agenda in developing economy countries over the past 20 years.

2.2 Women in Asian Agriculture

Asia is currently the most rapidly growing and dynamic part of the world economy. Despite accelerating economic development, a large number of women continue to suffer poverty, illiteracy, poor health, malnutrition and the low economic, social and political status (Roy and Tisdell, 1991). As Todaro (1994) commented, “..in addition to women’s reproductive role, they provide an important source of labour for cash crop production, cultivate food for household consumption, raise and market livestock, generate additional income through cottage industries, collect firewood and water, and perform household chores including the processing and cooking of foods.” Hence, women fulfil a wide variety of functions in Third World countries agricultural sectors. This diversity in duties makes it difficult to determine women’s share of agricultural production, and to place an economic value on their work.

It is in this context that Cho (1994) wrote that regardless of rural women’s contribution to agricultural work, the government’s agricultural policy in general and the policy towards farming women in particular usually disadvantages women rather than benefit them. Cho (1994) further argued that the mechanisation of agriculture was not having a positive effect on women in general and particularly, poor rural women. Although the introduction of machines brings some relief from farm work, this usually pertains to the men and women are left with traditional tools and heavy manual labour. Poor rural women therefore tend to lose waged work because of the

mechanisation of farming rather than gain any benefit from its introduction (Heyzer and Kean, 1988).

Nepal, like many other countries, lacks adequate quantitative data on the role and contribution of women in agriculture (Acharya, 1993). In Asia, it is estimated that women provide between 60-80% of agricultural labour (ADB, 1994b). Moreover, as described earlier women take on a large share of the agricultural work and, in addition, they handle rural trade in foodstuffs and work in home industries and services (Boserup, 1986).

Farm women constitute such a significant part of the working women population in Nepal that it necessitates a fuller understanding of their current status and role. It is essential that this is obtained so that appropriate development strategies can be designed and implemented. Limited education, poverty and few job opportunities elsewhere, restrict the majority of Nepal's rural women to work in agriculture as unpaid family workers (Shrestha and Pant, 1995). In this role they participate in a wide range of agricultural production activities, cottage industries and the marketing of products. The commercialisation of agriculture therefore impacts directly on women and their socio-economic status.

2.3 Migration

"Migration is the movement of people across a specified boundary for the primary purpose of residing" (Agrawal, 1993, p. 102). In order to meet basic needs household members must decide where to work. Where incomes are low, working for wages often requires members of rural households to leave "home", either temporarily or permanently (Gilbert and Gugler, 1994).

The 1995 World Bank Report (WRD) commented that migration, whether permanent or temporary, domestic or international, largely depends on a labour market decision: household members move to where the jobs are. The desire to diversify sources of household income may result in a person being sent to work in the city while others stay on the family farm or in the local wage economy (Thandani and Todaro, 1984).

Temporary migration is generally associated with seasonal jobs and may involve crossing an international border: an example in the case of Nepal is, male workers travelling to Saudi Arabia.

Over time economic development tends to increase urban employment opportunities and encourage workers to resettle to the cities. This process, however, can be distorted by policies that are biased against agriculture and toward the creation of jobs in urban areas. Despite the range of policies that have been implemented to stop migration or reduce urban job opportunities, migration of rural people continues as households responds to opportunities elsewhere (Hauser et. al. 1985). Fundamentally, this is because the priority of rural workers is to fulfil their basic needs rather than remain poor and unemployed (WRD, 1995).

Factors that influence the decision to migrate are varied and complex. Todaro (1994, p. 263), explained that, since migration is a selective process affecting individuals with certain economic, social, educational, and demographic characteristics, the relative influence of economic and non-economic factors may vary not only between nations and regions but within defined geographic areas and population. This view was supported by Boserup (1986) who claimed that the process of economic development, in terms of its effects on the status of women, can mean either geographical migration (rural to urban) or occupational migration from agricultural to non-agricultural activities.

2.3.1 Rural to Urban Migration

The rural areas are experiencing major transformations that are having profound effects on migration, hence rural-urban migration continues disproportionately throughout the developing countries. The substantial body of research on rural-urban migration accumulated over the last three decades provides overwhelming evidence that most people move for economic reasons (Kearney, 1986). The 'Todaro migration model' explains, "*rural-urban migration* (the movement of people from rural villages, towns, and farms to urban centres (cities) in search of jobs) as an economically rational process despite high urban unemployment" (Todaro, 1994, p. 705). This

theory is based on the view that migrants calculate their *expected income* (the product of the urban wage rate and the probability of finding an urban job) in an urban job and move if this exceeds their average rural income.

Internal migration (rural-urban) was believed to be a natural process in which surplus labour is gradually separated from the rural sector to provide needed manpower for urban industrial growth (Johnston, 1991). However, Todaro (1994, p. 260), argued that "...the rural-urban migration process is deemed socially beneficial because human resources are being shifted from locations where their social marginal product was often assumed to be zero to places where this marginal product was not only positive but also rapidly growing as a result of capital accumulation and technological progress."

In addition, the 'Harris-Todaro model' assumes an economy is comprised of an urban manufacturing sector and a rural agricultural sector. Because capital and land are assumed to be both perfectly immobile, the production function in each sector depends on labour. The total supply of labour is fixed, so that allocation of labour between sectors plays a critical role in determining each sectoral output. Moreover, since the model assumes a closed economy, the terms of trade between sectors are determined within the model (Ogawa and Suits, 1985).¹

Boserup (1986) argued that many agricultural labourers or cultivators leave the village for the town because of famine and lack of work due to harvest failure. In the case of Nepal, as mentioned by Gurung (1989), forces that have influenced migration in Nepal are economic dislocation, population pressure, malaria control, land settlement and regional disparity. In the case of rural women workers involved in the carpet industries, the factor behind rural-urban migration has been primarily economic dislocation. Economic dislocation has been created by the increasing economic depression caused by increasing poverty (Gurung, 1989). Most migrants have moved from resource-poor regions to regions with more land resources and employment opportunities. Internal migration in Nepal has had a positive impact on the total

¹ A detailed mathematical formulation and graphical exposition of the model may be found in Harris and Todaro (1970).

economy in both the originating and destination regions. This is because the population pressure in depressed areas is relieved and the resources available in resource-rich regions can be utilised through the availability of an economically active labour force (Niroula, 1995).

2.4 Female Participation in the Labour Force

The female labour force participation rate has increased considerably throughout Asia, as a result of the massive inflow of women into the work-force during the 1970's (ILO, 1985). Despite this, only a minority of Asian women participate in the formal labour market, although they make a crucial contribution to the informal labour market and to agricultural activities. Their profound contribution towards the rural economy and the urban informal sector continues to be discriminated against by their male counterparts. Nevertheless, women are continuing to participate or are preferred in the export-oriented industrial sector due to their ready availability, low cost, efficiency, reliability and high level of discipline (ADB, 1994b).

The establishment of export-oriented manufacturing industries in Asia, particularly the carpet and garment industries, has generated extensive employment opportunities for women (Acharya, 1995). This form of employment has saved many women from the prospect of unemployment or low paid work in the informal sector. More importantly, it has enabled women to be more independent and to provide economic support that is acutely needed to meet their families well-being.

In addition, the availability of formal sector employment provides economic stability for women in comparison to farm activities. Haggblade and Hazell (1987) pointed out a high population density limits the number of households able to survive from agriculture alone, and this forces some into non-farm activities to supplement their income. Families in developing Asian countries that no longer rely on agriculture and the informal sector for their survival, but who depend on remittance money provided by women, provide on-going proof of the economic well-being of these people.

The reduction of employment in agriculture has been and will continue to be a persistent feature of the evolution of developing economies for some time (Mazumdar, 1994). Women's employment shifts out of agriculture into three main sectors, namely manufacturing, commerce and services (Schultz, 1990; Horton, 1996). At the same time an increasing proportion of women are self-employed outside agriculture and are contract workers in the home (Standing, 1989; Lim, 1993). Women also sell a range of food and other items in markets and on the streets, work on construction sites as labourers, clean streets, and work as agricultural labourers and domestic workers. This demonstrates their remarkable adaptability and flexibility to changing circumstances.

2.4.1 Significance of Employment for Rural Women

The economic objective of households are similar everywhere: families seek to meet their basic needs, improve their standards of living, manage the risks they face in an uncertain world, and expand opportunities for their children. Many studies have indicated that poverty seems to be higher in rural areas than in urban areas (World Bank Report, 1995). This is supported by Quibria (1993) and many others, who also show that among the rural poor, women in general are poorer than men. Consequently, the alleviation of poverty requires the creation of adequate employment-generating activities for women.

Roy and Tisdell (1996) contended that providing women with employment would help them achieve economic independence and improve their socio-economic status. Ensuring that they remain employed would further help them to stay economically independent. In this context, Roy and Tisdell (1996) suggested that employment is a way of achieving economic independence for women, while education is a means of them obtaining and staying in employment.

Wage labour and employment in the formal sector are extremely important for all women, particularly rural women, for several reasons according to Youssef and Hetler (1983, p. 238):

- Women have no access to land or other property.
- Women agricultural labourers earn less per day than males, and they are more likely to be seasonally employed.
- Women often remain in the villages while their male partners migrate. When regular remittances are not forthcoming, their need for income increases.
- As men gain control over new technology, there is a widening gap between men's and women's productivity and income earning capacity.
- Women's traditional jobs are often low-paying and of low status, with little or no opportunity for advancement.

Rahman and Hossain (1995) argued that rural households are rarely able to depend on a single, substantive source of income as in the urban, formal sector. Likewise, many married women enter the labour force because of falling household income and the rising cost of living, although some have progressed to become the principal breadwinner of the family.

In urban areas, where women's contribution to household income is essential and where they are limited to working in low-level service jobs in the informal sector, access to employment in formal sector activities such as manufacturing industries can result in a substantial improvement in the economic status of their households (Raju, 1993). In many developing countries, export manufacturers have shown a preference for women workers, because, unlike agricultural day workers, they are low cost, less likely to unionise, and have greater patience (Safa and Crummett, 1996).

2.4.2 Benefits of Working in a Formal Sector

The 'Formal' sector of the urban employment describes "...large scale, 'modern' urban enterprise such as factories, offices, public services and registered commercial establishments" (Brydon and Chant, 1993, p. 165). Workers in this sector are generally skilled or semi-skilled and in theory they are protected by wage and labour legislation. They may also belong to an officially recognised trade union.

Women are showing increased involvement in the formal sector. Thus, as Garnsey and Paukert (1987) mentioned for the developing countries of Asia as a whole, only 8.3% of the female work-force was employed in the industry (formal sector) in 1960. Over the past two decades the percentage of the female work-force in industry has doubled.

The increased proportion of women in the labour force is supported by (Heyzer and Kean, 1988), who commented that many studies have indicated that women who work in the formal sector earn wage incomes that are almost always higher than incomes from agricultural activities. When several members of the same family bring home wages from industrial employment it is possible to obtain not only the equivalent of the goods and services provided through subsistence activities in a simple rural community, but to purchase many other consumer goods. Therefore, women and their families are likely to alleviate poverty by raising their standard of living through the income generated by formal employment.

Garney and Paukert (1987) also argued that both the factory work and the urban social environment offer women workers (most of whom are young and unmarried) a chance to become acquainted with the consumer society and its material benefits. Even if women earn low wages it is still better than living under poverty in a rural area. The meagre wages still improve the family's well-being by providing a considerable proportion of the household income.

Among others jobs in the urban areas 'domestic services' is the most common one amongst women (Hein, 1984). However, this has lower status than factory work

which is considered to be much more interesting and carried out in a friendlier environment. It also provides more opportunity to meet new people and to have a group of friends at work, than domestic work.

2.5 Poverty

Development banks, international development agencies and national governments, refer to the inability to meet basic needs as well as poor health, lack of education, housing, unsafe water and sewerage as living in absolute poverty (ADB, 1988). Rahman and Hossain (1995) suggested poverty is a multi-dimensional process as it refers to the inability to attain a minimal standard of living.

In poorer countries - especially in their rural areas - a large segment of the population suffers from varying degrees of chronic poverty (Quibria, 1994). Reducing poverty is therefore the fundamental objective of economic development of these areas (Glewwe and Gaag, 1990). The World Bank Report (1990) argued that while improvements in the health, education and nutrition of the poor are significant, the promotion of growth in incomes, including the incomes of the poor, are equally important. Hence, the encouragement of the productive use of the poor's most ample asset - labour - along with the provision of primary health care, family planning, nutrition and primary education are the means by which poverty can be alleviated.

Poverty is not the same as inequality. This distinction needs to be emphasised as clearly explained in the 1990, World Development Report, p. 26: "Poverty is concerned with the absolute standard of living of a part of a society - the poor - whereas inequality refers to relative living standards across the whole society."

2.5.1 Women and Poverty

According to the Poverty Alleviation Initiative (PAI, 1996b), women in the developing countries are responsible for 68% of the food production and they are the driving force behind 70% of the small enterprises, and 30% of the families are

dependent on women for their subsistence. Yet, women are among the poorest of the poor. As mentioned repeatedly, in developing countries, poverty and women are closely related to each other. In most cases, "female-headed" households are poorer than "male-headed" households, as they lack access to land, capital, technology, credit and extension services among many other things. Nearly half of the world's poor live in South-Asia (WDR, 1990). This region accounts for roughly 30% of the world's population. Poverty in this region mainly affects on the most susceptible group: rural women.

Drawbacks to liberating women living under poverty are related to their gender and economic circumstances. In particular, a substantial number of studies have indicated that women not only have less access to assets, skills and resources, they are also usually assigned to labour intensive and time consuming work with small economic returns (Jayaweera, et al. 1994).

Poverty seems to be particularly chronic among women of developing countries. It perpetuates from generation to generation without allowing them to get out of the vicious cycle. Generally, in a developing country like Nepal, women are expected to perform all the household chores and take care of children. They also toil in their subsistence farms, however, these produce very little output that can be sold to generate a cash income. As a consequence of the demands of farm work they have very limited time to seek work elsewhere.

It has been widely observed that the poorer a family, the greater their dependence on the economic contribution of women (Bamberger, 1994). Hence, anti-poverty actions should concentrate on increasing the economic productivity and income of women to reduce poverty, and to empower them to control their assets and resources in order to improve their situation. Accordingly, Bamberger (1994) argued that the promotion of non-farm activities will have strong poverty alleviating effects. Indeed the most important factor behind rural poverty alleviation is accessing income from non-agricultural sources. In addition, the educational level of women tends to have a significant impact on increasing rural incomes, and hence, on reducing poverty.

It has been argued that due to rural poverty, non-farm activities are a flourishing source of income for rural families, especially when crops fail or market prices fall (Sopchokchai and Yongkittikul, 1994). It is for this reason that women engage in a range of non-farm activities such as marketing, seasonal off-farm employment in both rural and urban settings (rural industries, domestic servants, factory and construction workers) or their own enterprises (handicrafts and street vendors).

2.5.2 Poverty Alleviation in Asia

Some Asian countries managed to alleviate poverty in the 1970s and 1980s, however, it persists even in some of the middle-income countries (Islam, 1990). The World Development Report (1990) indicated that approximately 800 million people in Asia still live in poverty.

Poverty lines are widely used to quantify the magnitude of absolute poverty and to measure alleviation of poverty (Islam, 1990). In the case of Nepal, although there are very few data to make firm conclusions, Islam (1984) concluded that rural poverty increased in the 1960s and early 1970s. Furthermore, estimates based on National Planning Commission surveys of 1976/77 and the Nepal Rastra Bank surveys of 1984/85 indicate that the increase continued between those years, even allowing for problems of comparability due to differences in the samples and methodologies of the two surveys (described in Bajracharya and Bajracharya, 1989).

The performance of 10 Asian countries in alleviating rural poverty over the past three decades is summarised in Table 1. It shows that they were least successful in the 1960s, when four out of 10 countries surveyed showed a deterioration and one showed no improvement. There was clear improvement in only three countries. The best performance was in the 1980s, when five of the 10 countries achieved clear improvement, two more reversed the short-term deterioration of the early 1980s and only one showed a clear deterioration.

Table 1 **The record on alleviation of rural poverty in selected Asian countries.**

Country	1960s	1970s	1980s
Bangladesh	-	-	+
China	+	+	+
India	?	?	+
Indonesia	?	+	+
Malaysia	-	+	-+
Nepal	-	-	-
Pakistan	-	+	+
Philippines	=	-	?
Sri Lanka	+	-	-
Thailand	+	+	-+

Note: -denotes deterioration; +denotes improvement; =denotes no change; ?denotes unclear.

Source: Islam, R. (1990).

Reducing poverty is a tremendous challenge for the governments of developing countries and for the World Bank (World Bank, 1994). In the recent past and even currently, the governments in many countries have heavily interfered in the market in the name of helping the poor. In general, the most important way for economic growth to help the poor is by expanding their opportunities for productive and remunerative employment (Bardhan, 1996). Islam (1990) supported the use of macro-economic policies to expand employment in manufacturing industries as a mechanism to alleviate rural poverty.

2.5.3 Poverty Measurement

Poverty has been recognised as major economic and social problem for centuries and furthermore, it has many aspects that are beyond the economic test of 'insufficient means to meet a standard of needs' (Horn, 1993). Statistically, problems of poverty assessment extend to setting a poverty line that can be applied to identifying and measuring the intensity of poverty. A lot of literature presenting ways to measure poverty is available: only a few authors are referred to here.

Horn (1993) described a number of indicators which can be used for poverty measurement. The *head count* measure gives the number of persons below the poverty line as a proportion of the total population. It does not show the income shortfall nor the income inequality among the poor, nor relative movements of income

below the poverty line. The *poverty gap* measure, shows the percentage shortfall of the average income of the poor, relative to either the poverty line or the average income. It registers when the poor become poorer, but is insensitive to changes in their proportion in the community and to income transfers from poor to less poor persons.

Sen (1973) proposed a *combination* of the head count and poverty gap measures with an indicator of income distribution among the poor. His complex formula would register relative deprivation at various income levels. Kakwani (1980: Ch. 15) in another version of the Sen (1973) model developed a procedure to show the percentage of income required to lift the income of the poor. It thus centres on *redistribution* from the top down in terms of income rather than persons.

Hamada and Takayama (discussed in Sen, 1978) suggested a revised income-distribution statistic that uses poverty as a standard of *needs fulfilment* and treats all those above the line as being just on the line. The Gini coefficient then refers to poverty below this norm. While this measure shows the extent and distribution of poverty, it fails in the same ways as the head count measure. The *monotonicity test* requires that any income reduction for the poor should increase the poverty measure. In this case an increase in the number of those below the line but above the poverty average would reduce the (Gini) poverty index².

Kakwani (1984) proposed a *general deprivation curve* based on the Lorenz curve-Gini coefficient and the equi-proportional principle that, if all incomes rise in the same proportion, the index will not change. Put another way, a rise in the income of the rich, with the income of the poor remaining unchanged, would increase the poverty indicator. This is not reflected in the Sen, Kakwani and Hamada-Takayama measures described above.

Other poverty measures, based on welfare functions and using ordinal weighting, have been constructed in recent years, such as the *index of malnutrition* by Kakwani (1986) or the *index of under-nourishment* by Sen and Sengupta (1983, described by

Kakwani). The discussion of suitable income distribution and poverty measures in terms of ‘welfare economics’, along the lines of Sen, Kakwani and others mentioned in this section, continues, for example in the book *Ethical Social Index Numbers* by Chakrarty (1990).

2.6 Gaps in the Literature

Extensive studies have been undertaken in the informal sector on employment, poverty, poverty measurement, poverty alleviation, migration and other aspects of women in development. These have concentrated mainly on the rural areas of developing countries. Unfortunately, there are few reports on formal sector employment, such as in the carpet industries, in a developing country like Nepal. There are studies regarding the marketing of Nepalese carpet, wool production, and employment patterns in the industrial sector but there are few reports on the socio-economic status of women employed in the formal sector. However, these studies are either not well documented or are inaccessible to the public. This gap in the literature and interest in improving the economic well-being of rural women in Nepal prompted the present study.

² For further details on *monotonicity*, *Gini coefficient*, see Sen (1978).

CHAPTER 3

Research Design and Methods

This chapter comprises two parts: the conceptual framework for the study and the research design used. The steps taken to collect data are described in the final part of the chapter.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

In several regions of Nepal, the female labour force participation rate appears to have increased during the last two decades. The growing participation of women in the labour force has been accompanied by decreasing opportunities for employment in agriculture. The decline is more rapid in the rural regions of Nepal than in the capital city, Kathmandu and this is consistent with the observation of Anker and Hein (1986) that the modern non-agricultural sector is still relatively small in many Third World countries. However, this sector is expected to be the fastest growing as development proceeds.

In the less developed countries (LDCs), particularly in South Asia (consisting of Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), inequalities in economic and material welfare for women are well recognised. Despite this recognition, unemployment and underemployment of women in the agricultural labour force is rampant and this in turn is causing landlessness and rural poverty to accelerate (FAO, 1993). Low or nil income for rural women reduces the overall quality of life and standard of family living (Wallace and March, 1991). As a result, members of poorer households are more likely to participate in waged labour, such as in the carpet industry, to ensure household survival (Wolf, 1990). The carpet industry is the prominent foreign currency earning industry of Nepal (APROSC, 1993); it has made a significant contribution not only to the economic development of the country but also to the social progress of the people, especially that of rural women, through its generation of employment opportunities (Shrestha, 1991).

Mueller (1983, p. 272) suggested that a person may be viewed as poor when he or she does not have adequate access to the necessities of life “..recognizing that ‘necessities’ are defined differently at successive stages of economic development and in different cultures.” People gain access to the necessities of life primarily by means of work, paid either in cash or in-kind. The lack of necessities for rural women has many causes and consequences and it was not possible to deal with the measurement of all of them in this study. However, an operational definition of the concept of women’s poverty should include various measurable aspects of the ‘necessities of life’ that can be studied at the micro-level.

Numerous approaches have been developed to measure rural poverty alleviation as outlined in Section 2.5.3 but most of these were not suited to the resources and time available for the present study. Instead a simple measure of poverty alleviation of rural women workers in the carpet industries was developed using *total annual household income* as a proxy variable (dependent variable). The reasons for selecting this indicator and associated variables in the conceptual framework are outlined briefly in the next section.

3.1.1 Variables Included in the Conceptual Framework

Indicators of economic activity should ideally describe the amount of “work” people do, irrespective of whether the work is performed in the formal or informal sector of the economy (UN, 1991). For most households, poor and prosperous alike, income from work is the main characteristic of their living conditions (World Development Report, 1995). A household is defined as “...A person or a group of persons living under one roof, and collectively sharing food and other essentials for living.” Household income is defined as “...the amount of cash income obtained by the household from all activities of the household plus non-money income valued at farm prices” (Firdausy and Tisdell, 1991, p. 4).

In this study, household income was calculated on a yearly basis by multiplying average household income per month by 12. The average total annual household

income was estimated by dividing the annual total household income of each household by the number of persons in the household.

Figure 1 depicts the relationship among the socio/demographic (non-economic) and economic characteristics such as age, number of dependent adults, number of dependent children, number of working family adults, number of years in the current occupation, regular work hours, over-time (Saturday) work hours, monthly expenses (food, clothing, housing, entertainment and other) and monthly savings, and how these are likely to affect *total annual household income*. It was hypothesised that increasing total annual household income would decrease rural poverty.

The conceptual model permits the inclusion of a range of variables that are vital for measuring the contribution of woman's work to a household economy in order to alleviate poverty. The age of rural women determines their ability to work in a particular field and earn a living. The total number of years employed in the carpet industry recognises that rural women may no longer be living in poverty because they have been earning a regular income. The number of hours of regular work indicates their employment status and how much they are likely to earn by weaving extra more square meters (volume) of carpet. Saturday work hours reflect over-time work and additional hours worked in order to increase earnings by increasing the volume of carpet. The number of dependent adults and children also affects *total annual household income* through consumption patterns. If more than one member of a family works (i.e. number of working adults) then it is likely that their combined economic contribution will contribute more to the well-being of a family than if a single member works (in this case, income earned only by the rural women workers).

An increase in *total annual household income* allows greater fulfilment of basic necessities. Additionally, monthly household expenses (food, clothing, housing, entertainment and other) are determined by the *total annual household income*. Hence, net monthly savings are also dependent on the proxy variable *total annual household income*, indicating that greater savings are positively associated with the level of household income.

The conceptual framework of the relationships between ‘total household annual income’ and other variables associated with rural poverty alleviation developed from the literature (Chapter 2) for the present research is illustrated in Figure 1.

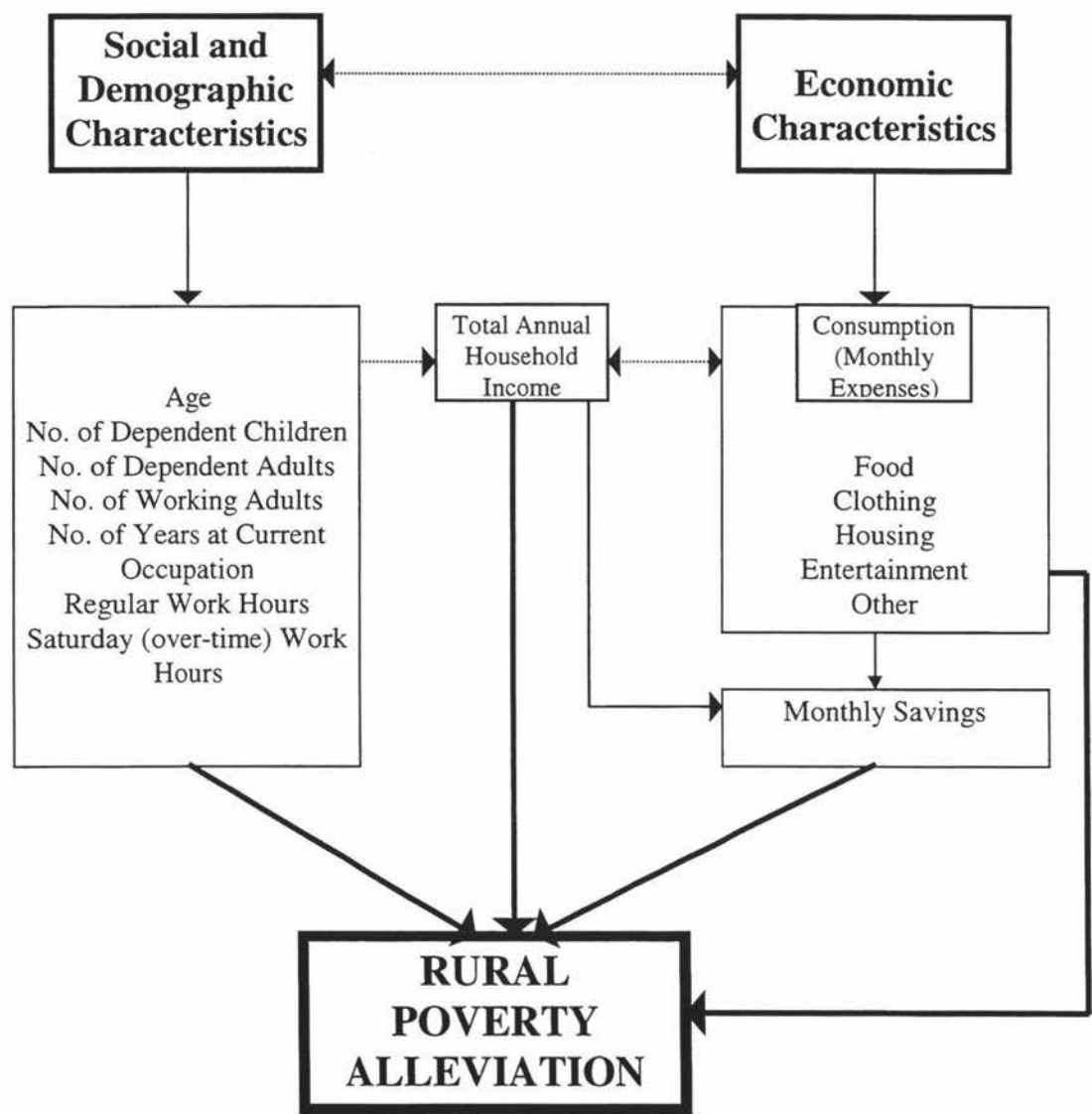


Figure 1 The conceptual framework demonstrating variables associated with total annual household income, a proxy variable for rural poverty alleviation.

3.2 Research Method

Two questionnaires were developed: one for rural women workers employed in carpet industries and the other for carpet manufacturers. Both questionnaires incorporated open-ended and closed questions. They were designed and structured to obtain the data to meet the objectives of the study. Three levels of respondents were used: rural women workers, carpet manufacturers and key informants. Fieldwork was carried out in the Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts over a period of two and a half months commencing from April 1996. The Carpet and Wool Development Board supplied a list of 650 registered carpet manufacturing industries in these districts.

The questions in the socio-economic survey were divided into four groups: personal and household characteristics, employment characteristics, farm characteristics and general characteristics. The data from these sections describe the social and economic characteristics of rural women workers. In the rapid diagnostic survey of carpet manufacturers, a combination of open-ended and closed questions were included to obtain information about the employment of rural women workers from the employer's viewpoint.

The questionnaires were translated into Nepali by the researcher to increase the level of respondents participation and to create a comfortable atmosphere for both the respondents and field assistants.

Before the field interviews started, the Central Carpet Industries Association was consulted concerning the study. Two female Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) staff with a Bachelor of Education (BE) degree were recruited to act as field enumerators. They were trained in interviewing techniques and in the correct procedure for filling in the questionnaire. Additionally, before commencing the survey, the questionnaires were pre-tested with 15 rural women workers and 5 carpet manufacturers, respectively. Their responses are not included in the result. Only minor revisions were deemed necessary as a result of pre-testing. The final versions of the questionnaires are included in Appendix I and II, respectively.

3.2.1 Location of the Study

The majority of the employment in the formal sector of Nepal, whether it is wage or contract based, is in Kathmandu. Rural people from the surrounding countryside migrate to Kathmandu in search of jobs and better facilities, such as schools and health-care for themselves and their family. Many rural women who live in the rural areas migrate to a city such as Kathmandu to earn cash income so that they can spend money on basic needs as well as make savings. Despite some social drawbacks of residing in the city, their living standard rises in contrast to the lifestyle they experienced in the village.

The researcher's initial intention was to conduct the study in the Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur) as well as in Narayanghat (located in the mid-central part of Nepal). However, due to the recent shut-down of carpet manufacturing industries in the Narayanghat region, the study was restricted to the Kathmandu Valley (see Figure 2 on the next page).

3.2.2 Data Collection Methods

The study was based mainly on primary data. These were obtained from the survey responses of the rural women workers and carpet manufacturers. In addition, information was generated from key informant interviews with representatives of different private and government agencies and from focus group interviews of rural women workers. An arrangement was made with the supervisors, before leaving New Zealand, to send regular facsimiles with details of accomplishments and outlining any problems in meeting the research objectives as the field work progressed. An average of five to six interviews was completed each day. Generally, the interviews took place while the women worked. Co-workers (male and female) and the managers frequently distracted the interview process. This problem could not be avoided.

On many occasions, rural women workers were hesitant to answer questions due to the presence of other co-workers and managers who were in hearing range. The field enumerators had to convince and prompt the rural women workers regularly to seek responses and continue with the interview process. Despite these actions, a few questions remained unanswered in several interviews.

The researcher met with the enumerators every other day to discuss any problems and to check the thoroughness of completing the questionnaire. In the interim, if any problems arose, the enumerators contacted the researcher by telephone. Most interview sites were visited several times by the researcher herself and this enabled questions that had not been fully understood, either by the enumerators or the rural women workers-respondents, to be identified and corrected. Both enumerators were good communicators and pointed out problems they encountered.

3.2.3 Sampling Procedure

3.2.3.1 Key Informant Interview

A list of key informants³ was drawn up with the supervisors before leaving for Nepal. A total of eight key informants were selected for the interview process. Each had a direct or indirect relationship with the socio-economic well-being of rural women workers. However, in Nepal only five out of eight informants were available for the interview. Contacts were made with the remainder of the key informants to ask general questions regarding rural women workers. However, it was disappointing to learn that they simply did not have any thing to report about the rural women workers in their area of responsibility.

The key informants provided very little input with respect to policies for the well-being of rural women workers. It soon became apparent that the government had implemented no policies recently in favour of rural women workers.

³ A semi-structured interview (SSI) with local experts, who has a natural and special interest in a particular subject (Messerschmidt, 1995, p. 24).

One of the key informants, who was unavailable from Women in Development Division, indicated that a meeting was to be held among members of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Women in Development Division in July 1996. At the meeting issues regarding rural women working in the formal as well as the informal sector of the economy were to be presented.

3.2.3.2 *Focus Group Interview*

A total of five focus groups⁴, comprising 50 rural women workers, were interviewed to identify common issues (limitations and benefits) and obtain their viewpoints about work and social life (both in the city and village). Focus group interviews were conducted at two different carpet industries, located in the Kathmandu district, who employed rural women with different personal backgrounds. To avoid similar responses, women were selected from different families by asking them directly whether they had any family members working with them in the factory. The 50 rural women involved in focus group interviews were not included in the socio-economic survey. Each group included both married and unmarried women. Other issues, such as ethnicity or origin were not considered to be significant for the selection process. The focus group interview was conducted after the socio-economic survey had been completed and took approximately two hours for each group.

An interview schedule was employed with checklists of various socio-economic topics (for details see Section 4.2) were presented to each group and answers received from the individual group members were collected without identifying the respondents. This latter posed difficulties when coding the results. The results are therefore discussed in a qualitative format in Chapter 4.

⁴ "The contemporary focus group interview generally involves 8 to 12 individuals who discuss a particular topic under the direction of a moderator who promotes interaction and discussion remain the topic of interest" Stewart and Shamdasani (1990, p.10).

3.2.3.3 *A Rapid Diagnostic Survey of Carpet Manufacturers*

A rapid diagnostic survey of carpet manufacturers was administered at the same time as the socio-economic survey of rural women workers. The managers, owners or representatives of the carpet manufacturing industries were interviewed. A total of 36 carpet manufacturers were randomly selected for interview using the list provided by the Carpet and Wool Development Board. Eighteen carpet manufacturers from Kathmandu were surveyed, and nine from each of the Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts. The rapid diagnostic questionnaire is included in Appendix II.

3.2.3.4 *Socio-Economic Survey of Rural Women Workers*

A random selection of rural women workers was drawn to represent the population. For this purpose, a total of 144 women workers were interviewed from three districts within Kathmandu valley. Seventy-two rural women workers from the Kathmandu district and 36 from each of the Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts were selected from the work force of 36 carpet manufacturing industries. The Carpet and Wool Development Board provided this list of registered carpet manufacturers. The survey conducted with each individual lasted from an hour to an hour and a half.

3.3 **Data Editing, Coding and Analysis**

Once individual surveys of rural women workers and carpet manufacturers were collected, the data were edited, tabulated, coded and entered into a computer file using the Windows Microsoft Excel® package. The data were re-coded where necessary and then analysed using the statistical package SAS® (Delwiche and Slaughter, 1995). The data analysis covered:

- Univariate analysis was carried out for continuous variables using the UNIVARIATE procedure in SAS®.

- Explanatory descriptive statistics between the continuous and discrete variables using the MEANS (SORT BY) procedure in SAS®.
- Cross-tabulations for selected discrete variables (see Tables 14-24) were performed. Chi square value below a 0.10, 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance are reported.
- Correlation analysis for continuous variables by Pearson's correlation coefficient was used, incorporating the data from continuous variables in the socio-economic survey of rural women workers by using the CORRELATION procedure in SAS®. Correlation variables significant at a P value below 0.10, 0.05 and 0.01 are reported.
- A multiple regression analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between total annual household income (dependent variable) and the sets of independent variables: social/demographic (non-economic) variables along with the household economic characteristics (Figure 1) included in the study.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Discussion

In this chapter summaries of the five key informant interviews and focus group interviews with 5 groups of rural women workers are presented. Results of the rapid diagnostic survey of 36 carpet manufacturers and the socio-economic survey of 144 rural women workers are also described in the latter sections of the chapter. Characteristics associated with the employment and social life of rural women workers are discussed in the concluding sections.

4.1 Key Informants Interview

Information obtained from interviews of 5 key informants related to the employment of rural women on various aspects such as the impact of employment in the carpet industry, types of facilities provided by the carpet industry, benefits to women of the facilities provided, other ways to the raise socio-economic status of women, other types of job interest for women, the impact of migration on family members remaining in the village and preference for farming or employment at a carpet industry. The view of the key informants on the relocation of carpet industries to rural areas, migration, wage policies, employment policies and general comments on the socio-economic well-being of rural women workers are also presented in this section.

4.1.1 *Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)*

Several NGOs were identified and approached through the assistance of Central Carpet Industries Association. However, most of them only served the most vulnerable group, the children of rural women workers. The Centre for Co-operative Community Development (CCCD) is one of the very few NGOs, who directly worked with women workers in the carpet industries to improve their socio-economic well-being.

The CCCD is based in Kathmandu and has branches in the far eastern region of Nepal. It provides adult education classes for women and informal education classes

for the children of rural women at various locations. The classes assist rural women workers to learn how to read and write, and develop other life-skills. It also offers health education classes and provides training and assists women to establish small-scale income generating activities.

Impact of Employment

Some of the views supplied by the representative of the CCCD regarding employment provided by the carpet industries in alleviating rural poverty were: -- "...we support the carpet industry employment by considering rural women's ability to earn cash income and to afford many more items than they previously could. Rural women are much happier working in the carpet factories because they always have money in hand and have gained purchasing power. They are able to meet the monthly expenses with fewer difficulties compared to their previous situation in farming. In summary, employment has given them a sense of independence and raised their socio-economic standards."

Benefits of Facilities

The views of the CCCD representative regarding the benefits derived from facilities provided by the carpet industries were: -- "...the majority of the carpet industries contain housing facilities for their workers either free of cost or at a relatively cheaper rate than other private rental properties. This assists women in securing their lives by being able to save more. Carpet manufacturers provide health care facilities in most places. Through NGOs many carpet industries also provide adult education or informal education classes for both women workers and their children. However, fewer carpet manufacturers provide child-care facilities. Sick and paid leave are almost non-existent, it does not seem to be a priority for them."

Other Ways to Raise Socio-Economic Status

The CCCD's views regarding other ways to assist rural women to raise their socio-economic status included: -- "...we recommend 'education' as the first priority they should give. The higher the level of education rural women obtain, the higher the level of job opportunities that open doors to recruit them. Likewise, if rural women

involve themselves in informal sector jobs, not only will they develop more skills, they will stay productive and raise their socio-economic standards.”

Impact of Migration on Remaining Family Members in the Village

When asked who took care of the farm once the rural women and their family migrate to city, the CCCD's response was -- “...in most cases, there will be other family members along with the parents of migrants staying in the village. Usually young unmarried women run away from their villages. Once they arrive in the city they lose contact with their family in the villages, whereas some continue to support their family financially. Some of them may send some money home from time to time. In some cases, the whole family moves to the city. Families left behind spend the rest of their life working on their subsistence farms or working for wealthy landlords, or may even migrate to the city themselves.”

4.1.2 The Ministry of Women and Social Welfare - Labour Department

The labour department of the MWSW is a government organisation. It is directly concerned with the socio-economic well-being of women. They formulate and implement social welfare and labour policies for formal sector employment agencies such as the carpet industry. They also provide skill training, credits and small-scale income generating activities to rural women.

Impact of Employment

The views of the MWSW representative regarding employment provided by the carpet industries in alleviating poverty were: -- “...we definitely agree that women have immensely benefited from the employment generated by the carpet industries. Women are better off working in the carpet industries than being stuck in their subsistence farming operation; at least they earn cash income. Nepal is such a poor country that unemployment and underemployment has always been a major problem. It is good that a large number of women are being employed by the carpet industries. This gives them the opportunity to reflect their skills or at least what they are good at.

The more we create job opportunities the more people are employed, but at a certain point in time labour shortages will occur and the employers are bound to provide facilities and benefits to attract more manpower. Therefore, we have to first think about generating employment opportunities instead of thinking about its disadvantages and drawbacks.”

Relocation of Carpet Industry to Rural Areas

The views of the MWSW regarding the relocation of carpet industries from city to rural areas was: -- “..it is better if carpet factories are relocated to the rural areas so that women can work in the factories as well as work in the farming operation. This will assist the local community to develop and rural women to stay productive.”

4.1.3 Carpet and Wool Development Board (CWDB)

The Carpet and Wool Development Board (CWDB), a semi-government organisation, deals with the marketing of carpets and the importing of wool from New Zealand and Tibet.

Impact of Employment

The CWDB views regarding employment of rural women in the carpet industry in terms of raising their socio-economic status were -- “...we totally agree that rural women have benefited from working in the carpet industry. Socially they may have had some disadvantages, however, they are better off economically. Women earn cash income and earn more if they can reflect their effective carding skills. If they were to remain in their village, they would have to survive in a subsistence farming economy.”

Relocation of Carpet Industries to Rural Areas

The CWDB views on the relocation of carpet industries to rural areas were -- “...it is better for the carpet factories to relocate to the local villages. They can emphasise the development of more trained manpower locally, which will substitute for transportation costs and will create employment opportunities for the local community thereby minimising internal migration.”

Benefits of Facilities

The CWDB comments on the facilities provided to rural women workers were -- "...housing facilities are available in almost all of the carpet factories, which reduces the expenses for rural women and enables them to invest that money in something else. There are facilities such as child-care and health services but they are also working to expand these facilities to accommodate more employees. Schooling facilities and housing facilities are in the same predicament of trying to keep up with demand."

Wage Policy

The CWDB comment on the wage policy was -- "...it is beneficial for both manufacturers and the workers to get paid on a contract basis. Workers themselves made this decision and are satisfied with the present practice. This works out best for them."

Employment Policies

According to the CWDB no employment policies "...had been formulated to date which specifically target women workers. However, the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare and Women in Development Division under the Ministry of Local Development are presently working on issues on behalf of rural women workers."

General Comments

Recommendations/suggestions of the CWDB with respect to the well-being of rural women workers were: -- "...social problems should diminish. Women workers are an asset to the carpet industries so existing facilities should improve in terms of better child-care facilities, more schooling facilities for both women and their children, more skill training and more involvement in social organisations (co-operatives). A better working environment should be introduced (cleaner working space and easier equipment to work on)."

4.1.4 Central Carpet Industries Association (CCIA)

The Central Carpet Industries Association (CCIA) is a trade union representing the carpet manufacturers. Like the CWDB it deals with the marketing of carpets in international markets. It also develops employment policies for the workers in the carpet industries.

Impact of Employment

The CCIA views regarding the role of carpet industries in alleviating poverty among rural women workers by raising their socio-economic status were -- “..if rural women remain in their home districts there are fewer job opportunities. Working on the farm limits them to a meagre income or no income at all. No matter how much labour they put into farming activities, they are less likely to obtain a substantial amount of production and maintain even a minimum level of basic necessities. Hence, employment at carpet industries has definitely raised the socio-economic status of rural women through income generation, which in turn has alleviated rural poverty.”

Provision of Facilities

The CCIA indicated that the facilities provided by the carpet industries were not sufficient and they were active in trying to have these improved: -- “...We have many facilities in mind such as child-care, more schooling facilities or informal education classes for the women workers and their children. Quite a few carpet factories have already started to provide this facility. A few NGOs are involved in training rural women and in providing informal education classes.”

Employment Policies

The CCIA views on employment policies were: -- “...there are simply no government policies that look at the well-being of rural women workers. However, both employers and rural women workers seem content with the present relationship they hold. It is just that the women want to have more facilities such as child-care, schooling for them and their children, and improved working conditions. Since very few carpet manufacturers provide child-care facilities, rural women are concerned. They have no choice, however, but to bring their children with them to work. Further,

more training is required so that rural women workers can prepare themselves for better job opportunities in the future or even to start their own business. The employers are concerned with the marketing of carpets more than the provision of better facilities for their workers. Since the carpet industries have not been doing so well in the international market recently, due to the fluctuation in wool prices and decreased demand for carpets, the manufacturers have been less concerned about the well-being of their rural women workers.”

Farming or Employment at Carpet Industries

The CCIA's outlook towards rural women remaining in their village compared to taking up employment in the carpet industry were: -- “...no matter how much labour rural women put into the farming activities they end up with very little income or no cash income at all. Generally, most of the farming operations they toil at are controlled and owned by wealthy landlords. And these rural women and their family members are so poor they have to work extremely hard even to meet their very basic need, food. They are usually suppressed by the debts owed to the landlords and end up working only to repay the debts. Therefore, rural women workers are better off working in the carpet industry despite its other disadvantages.”

General Comments

The CCIA made several recommendations/suggestions on how policies could be improved for rural women workers. For example: “...policies need to be developed and implemented regarding the availability of skill training. Skill training will enhance the ability of rural women workers to gain access to more high skilled and secure jobs (i.e. in either the informal or formal sector). Policies regarding the provision of a minimum level of (more than present) child-care, schooling facilities should be also taken into consideration.”

4.1.5 Nepal Carpet Federation (NCF) and Nepal Carding Association (NCA)

The Nepal Carpet Federation (NCF) and the Nepal Carding Association (NCA), interviewed jointly, are both trade unions. They have a direct relationship with carpet manufacturers and their workers and in this context have linkages with rural women workers.

Impact of Employment

Representatives of the NCF and the NCA accepted that employment created by the carpet industries had reduced the level of poverty amongst rural women workers because it provided them with a higher level income and greater savings than under their previous circumstances of subsistence farming.

Migration

The views of the NCF and the NCA regarding rural-urban migration of rural women were -- “...people migrate from one place to the other for many reasons. In the case of rural women, migration is due to a lack of substantial production from the farm either for consumption or cash income purposes. They either work in their resource-poor farming operation or for wealthy landlords for an extremely low wage. They have very little property in the village. They have no resources to expand their farming operation to make it more productive. Hence, the only way they can potentially enhance their living standards is by migrating to the cities to work in the formal sector such as the carpet industry. Most of them have some connection with this sector through friends or family members already working in the carpet industry. Upon migrating they rarely remain unemployed and unable to face the more expensive lifestyle in the city. They earn cash income on a contract basis and can easily maintain a fairly good lifestyle. Therefore, it is better for them to migrate to the city to work instead of remaining in their village where life is extremely tough.”

Impact of Migration on Remaining Family Members in the Village

The NCF and the NCA commented on the impact of migration on the family members remaining in the village and their farming operations. They indicated: -- "...family members, especially parents or siblings of the migrants, continue to work on the farm. They may receive some money from time to time from their family members working in the city. Despite that some may just end up migrating to the city themselves rather than working in subsistence farming all their lives."

Relocation of Carpet Industry to Rural Areas

The NCF and NCA view on the relocation of carpet industries to rural areas was -- "...it would be better if employment was created in the rural area itself. It will definitely reduce pressure on urban growth. It may be better for the rural women also if carpet industries relocated to the rural areas. They will have the opportunity to work in the carpet industry as well as on their farm. Thus, the local community will not have to lose their work force. They can concentrate on developing the village because more job opportunities and the associated cash income coming in for the rural people will help to sustain the local community."

Other Types of Job Interest

The types of other work rural women are interested in, as perceived by NCF and NCA representatives, were -- "...most rural women are interested in opening their own businesses. Many want to work where they can earn cash income and develop skills as well."

General Comments

The representatives of NCF and NCA recommended that -- "...increased facilities for rural women workers be provided as an incentive to enhance their performance. A better working atmosphere would be created if more emphasises was put into providing facilities such as childcare. More training in skill development should be provided. More support to encourage workers to participate in social organisations would help them to develop team building skills."

4.1.6 Discussion

The information generated from all five key informants pointed out that employment in the carpet industries had made a positive contribution towards rural women's socio-economic wellbeing. The reasons outlined were: cash earnings and provision of better facilities such as housing, health care and schooling (even though they were few in number). It is clear from the information provided by the key informants that they believed employment in the carpet industry had a good influence on the life of rural women workers relative to the previous occupation (i.e. farming). The earnings had increased rural women workers' power to purchase preferred household items that would be impossible in their previous occupation.

As outlined in the literature review, people who move away from rural areas and work in the formal sector generally earn a higher income to maintain a better living standard. The key informants thought that life in rural areas, including working on a farm, had been an extremely laborious job and relatively unproductive life for rural women. This farm work did not offer rural women any cash income in order to maintain a life style above the subsistence level. Hence, their view was that employment in the carpet industry is better than farming.

In respect to relocation of the carpet industries, the majority supported a move to rural areas. Rural relocation would mean local development by utilising the local labour-force and would minimise transportation costs, due to rural-urban migration. Women would be able to work in the carpet industries as well as on the farm, so that they would have the best of both worlds both socially and economically.

The information provided by the key informants indicated that the facilities in the carpet industries were inadequate. However, almost all of them had been provided housing facilities (free or subsidised). Additionally, quite a number of them had been provided health care facilities but schooling had been provided to very few. One of the informants thought that 'education' was a key to enhancing the circumstances for rural women and their children. It is true that higher the levels of education, are

associated with better job opportunities for rural women. In sum, this would mean a better lifestyle.

The key informants indicated child-care facilities were in the process of being extended to more workers. This suggests that the industries are concerned about their employee's well-being.

It was found that no Government employment policies had recently been implemented for female workers, therefore this needs prompt attention since it mandate that employers become more concerned about women worker's issues, constraints and view-points. Almost all the manufacturers paid their workers on a contract rate basis, which is good in a sense that majority had no education and the earnings were based on the skills they possessed and the amount of work they were capable of doing. However, if the rural women acquired a higher level of education then it would be better for them to find a higher skilled or wage-based job. More skill training and involvement in social organisation for rural women workers were identified as a priority for improving their socio-economic well-being.

Migration to the city for rural women workers was referred to as an 'economic need' by the informants. This is consistent with the literature. Moreover, many of the remaining family members depended on the remittance money sent by these rural women workers, although in some cases, most of their family members had also moved to the city. If the family members remained in the village, they took care of their subsistence farms and relied on the remittance money.

In summary the informants agreed that rural women migrated to the city and worked in the carpet industry (or other sectors), primarily to earn cash income. Although the informants were concerned that few employment policies were in place that targeted the needs of rural women, some were giving this further attention.

4.2 Focus Group Interview of Rural Women Workers

In this section the results from the focus group interviews are presented. Five groups, each comprising 10 rural women workers employed in the carpet manufacturing industries were interviewed. The interviews focused on identifying socio-economic issues for rural women in the carpet industries.

Employment: Carpet Industry over Farming

The reason rural women left farming to work in the carpet industry was attributed to a combination of factors including lack of money, food shortages, less income, laborious farm work, no property or nothing left to keep them in the village, as well as family tensions. They also left farming to earn money in order to repay debts. Some of the respondents were working in the carpet industry simply because they wanted to live and work in the city. For others, the move to work in the carpet industry was due to family members living already and working in the city. Few worked in the carpet industries in order to save money so that they could buy jewellery.

Employment: Carpet Industry over Other City Jobs

The main reason why the women preferred to work in the carpet industries rather than other city jobs was because they needed money and in this respect the carpet industry was able to recruit them without difficulty. Some respondents had better skills to work in the carpet industry compared to other jobs, whereas others preferred the flexible work hours they offered. For most of the respondents, income earned from employment in the carpet industries enabled them to easily meet their daily necessities for living (see Section 4.4). Some preferred to work in the carpet industry simply because people from their village already worked there. Better pay than from other jobs was the reason for others. Generally it was easier or more convenient to work in the carpet industry because of their better facilities than at other places of employment. They also had opportunities to learn by working in the factory itself. A few women said that they were unfamiliar with other city jobs or faced difficulty locating employment at other places or lacked the education required to work elsewhere. A few simply disliked other jobs compared to working in a carpet industry.

Rural location of Carpet Industries

The majority of the rural women in the focus group preferred working in the city than on a farm because of the greater earnings, better facilities, wider scope to develop innovative skills and greater job opportunity that it offered to them. Some thought it was better simply because they could work with family members. In contrast, some believed more money would be saved if the industry was in a rural area as it would be cheaper (own accommodation, less luxury items) to live and work in a village than in the city. Also if the carpet industry was located in the village, acquaintances and relatives could help them with their needs (e.g. child supervision). Parents would not allow some of the rural women, especially those who were unmarried, to move to the city, but would if the carpet industry were to relocate to the villages. Others would decide, depending on their colleagues' decision, on where they work. Some thought their presence in the village would help the local community to develop and others believed it would be good to work in the industry as well as to take care of the farm. Overall, there was positive support for carpet industries to be relocated nearer to rural areas.

Some women said they would rather look for a city job because family members already worked there or they simply did not want to return to the village. For others they had no choice but to remain in the city as there was little in villages to return to, whereas some found that city living offered them more facilities and opportunities, hence, they would look for other city jobs if the carpet industries were to be relocated. For many, the convenient lifestyle that they had become accustomed to in the city would also prevent them from moving back to their village.

Reasons Behind Migration to the City

Most women initially came with friends to visit the city. Some had husbands working in the city. Many simply came to earn money. For some respondents the reason for migrating to the city was for their children's education and improved access to better health care facilities. Some moved to the city because they wanted to learn and experience new things which they thought would be impossible to realise in the village. A few of them were born in city because their parents had migrated a long-

time back. Many just adored city life and were willing to overlook any drawbacks of city living. Other respondents did not always want to live or work in one place, which was usually the case in the village. Family tension in the village home and inability to repay debts were reasons to remain in the city even if the carpet industry relocated to rural areas. Overall, most women had come to the city because it was more difficult to live in the village, where they had no way to earn an independent living. However belongings or family members remained in the village to whom they could relate and maintain contact.

Views Regarding Living in a City

The views regarding city living, its benefits and limitations were explained by the rural women. The majority of women viewed living in the city as being advantageous because it offered better facilities (e.g. education, health care). They, therefore thought it was good for their children's future. City life also offered them a range of job opportunities which matched their level of qualification and skills. They thought additional skills could be developed by living in the city and that these could be utilised to improve their situation. Best of all, most of them thought that living in the city would enable them to earn cash income to enhance their living standard. On the other hand, few rural women workers viewed the city as an inexpensive place to live and they had difficulty saving in order to send money home for the family. The polluted environment in the city was less pleasant to live in than in the village. Some women believed they developed expensive habits while living in the city.

Views Regarding Living in a Village

Rural women workers shared their thoughts on the advantages and disadvantages of living in a village. Most, if they were in the village, would help out with the farm work, and at the same time they would be living in a cleaner and less expensive environment. Lack of transportation in the village was a major concern for some rural women, as it rendered them immobile and dependent on others. Life in the village was extremely difficult for many women because of inaccessible health care facilities and no schooling for their children. For many unmarried women, as well as married women, living in a big family in a village would mean feeding more mouths with very little or no cash income at all. In the village there are few job opportunities and the

laborious farm work they normally did paid no cash income. Everyone agreed that living in a village when combined with being a woman, made life much more complex and limited than living in the city.

Occupations Rural Women were Previously Engaged In

Prior to coming to the city the majority of rural women had worked on their subsistence farms. Their responsibilities were to perform tasks such as tending livestock, selling farm produce, carrying fertiliser and wood, and completing outdoor chores (collecting firewood, grass, water), as well as helping parents and taking care of siblings. Some worked for other people, mainly, doing farm work and household chores. A few of them had their own businesses, such as a convenience store. Some did weaving at home as an individual contractor while a few simply stayed at home to take care of the family and housework.

Present Farm Care-taker

A few of the rural women said no one was now working or living on their farm. A couple of them had used their farm (property) as collateral due to outstanding debts, and as a consequence, no one was working on it either. However, most of them had parents, siblings, in-laws or cousins working on the farm. In a few cases the husband was taking care of the farming activities while they worked in the city. Some had farm labourers working on farm as sharecroppers. Quite a number of those who had migrated permanently to the city had sold their properties.

Reasons for Satisfaction with the Income Earned

Self-sufficiency was a major reason for their satisfaction with the income they earned as a carpet worker. The majority of women thought they had a good income, at least it was better than their previous occupation, which was subsistence farming for most of them. Many were satisfied with the fact that they were able to save as well as spend money according to their needs. The capability to send money home was satisfying for many rural women. Being able to raise the family in less difficult circumstances was also a reason for satisfaction with the income they earned. They were happy to be able afford to educate their children. And most of all, satisfaction was gained from

being paid according to their job performance and the skills that they possessed.

Reasons for the Family's Dependence on Rural Women's Earnings

The significance of women's employment and earnings was high because of their families' dependence on them. The earnings received from the carpet industry helped rural women to enhance the well-being of their children. For many unmarried women it reduced the burden on their parents; they no longer had to take care of them. For married women, the second income helped their husbands to meet expenses, and more importantly, it provided them with the opportunity to have more income to secure life since their combined savings were higher.

Changes in Lifestyle after Working in the Carpet Industry

For all women meeting the basic necessities of life was now less of a hurdle, and meeting the reasonable needs of family members had become less difficult. They were able to educate their children and send money home for those who were still living in the village. Many thought life had changed because they were no longer idle but instead were developing skills while working. More importantly earning cash income as compared to no income from farming activities, had changed their life in every conceivable way.

Impact on Family Members if Unable to Send Income Home

Many women sent a proportion of their income home, however, if for any reason they failed to do so, this affected dependent family members. For example, no extra money would be available for emergency purposes and worse still, many family members would be unable to meet their daily necessities for living. Some had sick family members, and in these cases they would not be able to afford medical treatment. Other families would be unable to repay debts and for others sending children to school would be out of the question if income from work in the carpet industry was unavailable. In summary, without money from the carpet industry, nearly all the family members of rural women would find it extremely difficult to survive.

Migration Problems

Since city life was a totally new experience to majority of the women, they were asked whether they had encountered any migration problems. Most women had experienced no difficulties in migrating to the city because other family members or friends were already living in the city. Those who had started work as soon as they arrived in the city had few problems. Industry owners were co-operative in most cases and had provided assistance to the women when settling in the city. Women who were unfamiliar with city life or who did not know anyone, however, had experienced difficulties when moving to the city. Some faced harassment because they were villagers and others initially had difficulty meeting the increased expenses associated with city living.

Initial Provision of Facilities

When the women first started working, several types of facilities were provided, including basic skill training (considered very important). For some rural women, the carpet manufacturers had purchased essential daily items until they became established in the city. The carpet manufacturers provided housing facilities: either free rooms or cheaper rooms for the rural women and their families. And for others, the carpet manufacturers had permitted them to learn weaving skills with friends before starting work in the industry.

Benefits of Working in the Carpet Industry

Most women thought that working in the carpet industries had helped them to remain occupied, develop skills, earn money, become independent, buy preferred items, interact with more people, work with family members and most importantly, save money.

Limitations of Working in a Carpet Industry

There were however, limitations of working in the carpet industry. Some had no free time to learn new skills since they worked long hours. For some working in a carpet industry was the only thing they were good at. The city offered material goods for the consumers; therefore, rural women were inclined to develop more expensive habits than when they were in the village. The main limitation of working in the carpet

industry was lack of job security, since its profitability, and hence ability to hire workers, was very depended on wool prices and export market demand for carpets. The fact that the women were on contract rather than a fixed waged increased the level of job insecurity.

Other Preferred Jobs

Some women were unsure as to whether they would prefer to work elsewhere, whereas a few wanted to open their own business (for example, a shop or hotel). A few of them wanted to work for the government or in the private sector, if they were able to study to gain the necessary knowledge and skills. Some wanted to work in any occupation that involved sewing and knitting. For some respondents any job (as long as it was in the city) was preferable. Some wanted jobs with definite work hours so that life would be much more predictable. Others wanted to work in child-care or to teach while others wanted a job that was closer to their villages.

If Family Members Moved Elsewhere

Some women were determined to remain in the city to work, under any circumstances. If it were better to move elsewhere then most women would not hesitate. For others they had no choice but to move with their parents or husbands. A few were adamant that if they have a choice between going either to India or the village, they would rather go to India.

General Comments

Many women said they would definitely return to their villages if any developments were to take place which provided the opportunity for them to earn cash income. A few thought lives would be always difficult for women no matter where they were. Others would prefer a better paying job than their present employment. Some had intended to start their own business, if they could earn more income. If an alternative job was available to meet the needs or was more convenient, then some women wanted to work elsewhere. A few of them wanted to study, if possible. Lack of skills to work elsewhere was a major concern for many women. The majority of the women desired more facilities to be provided by the carpet industry especially for child-care, education for them and their children, and a better working environment.

4.2.1 Discussion

The rural women workers chose employment in the carpet industry over farming and other city jobs. It was because farming had very little to offer these rural women workers, therefore, they worked in the carpet industries. Other city jobs also seemed unsuitable to fulfil the necessities of these rural women workers. Most of them migrated to the city with or without the knowledge of employment in the carpet industry, because of their 'economic need'. The majority of rural women workers faced few migration problems because family members or friends already lived and worked in the city.

The information gathered from the focus group interviews with 10 groups of women pointed out that employment in the carpet industry may have had its own set of problems, however, it had contributed towards the socio-economic well-being of rural women workers through increased income, better facilities and hence, self-sufficiency. Because the majority of the rural women had no education employment in the carpet industry was the most direct way of raising their socio-economic status.

The information suggested that earnings from their employment were the primary priority for all the rural women workers. Some would move back to the rural village due to family or peer pressure as long as it would not mean reverting to an entire reliance on farm earnings. However, the majority were determined to remain in the city, implying that living in the rural village was a harsher life for them. In addition, to better earnings, city life provided access to a wider range of facilities for them and their family.

Earnings from the carpet industry were significant in terms of the family's dependence on them. A second income for the household for married women and a reduced burden for unmarried women on their parents due to earnings from the carpet industry eased the household's financial challenges. Remittance money also served its purpose for the remaining family members of many rural women: without these funds they would struggle to meet even the basic necessities of life.

The focus group information indicated that developing more life skills, attaining education and participating in social organisations were also priorities for rural women workers moving to the city. They were interested in enhancing their social status by involving themselves in these activities, showing an enthusiasm to move forward in their life rather than being limited to their present lifestyle.

4.3 A Rapid Diagnostic Survey of Carpet Manufacturers

Altogether 36 carpet manufacturers were surveyed from within Kathmandu valley. Eighteen were from the Kathmandu district, 9 from Lalitpur and the remaining 9 from Bhaktapur. General employment characteristics of rural women workers, from the carpet manufacturer’s point of view are described in this section.

The total number of employees (workers) in the 36 carpet manufacturers varied from 25 (minimum) to 1800 (maximum) (Table 2). The average number of workers (male and female) per industry was 169. The total number of women workers per industry ranged from 6 (minimum) to 1260 (maximum). The average number of women workers per industry was 94. Women workers therefore comprised the majority of carpet industry employees.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics for the total number of workers in the carpet industries, the proportion of the women workers and the age profile of these workers.

CHARACTERISTICS	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	S. D.
No. of total workers	36	25	1800	169	306
No. of total women workers	36	6	1260	94	210
No. of women workers (< 16 yrs)	36	0	6	0.19	1.01
No. of women workers (16-20 yrs)	36	0	252	26	43
No. of women workers (21-30 yrs)	36	3	630	47	109
No. of women workers (31-40 yrs)	36	0	315	17	52
No. of women workers (> 40 yrs)	36	0	63	3.4	11

The result suggested that most women workers are between 21-30 years of age followed by between 30-40 years and 16-20 years, respectively. Those below 16 and over 40 years, respectively, were in the minority (see Section 4.4.1 for further details).

Two-thirds of the manufacturers recruited rural women workers from all over the country whereas one-fourth recruited specifically from the Central Development Region of Nepal, 2.8% recruited from the eastern region of Nepal and 5.6% of the manufacturers hired women employees only from Tibet. It is likely that rural women workers living in the districts close to the Kathmandu Valley tended to work in carpet industries due to their better knowledge of city job opportunities.

Rural women in most cases discovered their own way (through their personal network) to the employment in the carpet industry. All but three of the 36 carpet manufacturers surveyed had no special arrangements to recruit rural women workers; the balance had contractors who made arrangements to bring them to the factories.

Three-fourths of the employers had no provision of schooling facilities, however, one-fourth provided informal as well as formal education for both female workers and their children. Of the 9 respondents who provided schooling facilities, 6 provided classes inside the carpet industry and 3 at various private organisations. Thus, it does not seem to be a priority at present for the carpet manufacturers to provide schooling facilities.

Provision of health-care facilities was more common than schooling facilities. Slightly less than half (47%) of the respondents provided health-care services. The majority (72%) of the employers provided services for the whole family and 28% covered only the women workers. Five of the employers provided health-care services inside the carpet industry compound and the remainder provided services through hospitals, clinics and health-care centers. Health services were provided at no cost to the employees.

Data indicated four-fifths of the respondents provided housing facilities for their employees. Rooms were provided free of cost by nine of the ten manufacturers: the other employer provided rooms at a subsidised rate compared to elsewhere in the local area. Again, almost all (93%) of the housing facilities were provided inside the carpet industry compound. The need for housing facilities for the rural women workers were recognised by the manufacturers and this in return, assisted rural women to save the amount required for rent and gave greater flexibility to utilise earnings on other household items. It also gave more control on worker's time input to the carpet industry.

Childcare facilities were provided by only 3 of the 36 carpet manufacturers. All three facilities were established inside the carpet industry and they served an unlimited number of children. On the bright side, all 36 carpet industries provided toilet and bathing facilities on site, but only 2 carpet industries involved their workers in a social organisation namely, the labour union. Further details were not available on this matter.

None of the industries had any restrictions on family employment. Four manufacturers, however, only provided skill training for the children of women workers, since others did not see any need for such training.

All, 36 carpet manufacturers paid workers (both female and male) on a contract basis. The main reason (54%) for contract rate payment was because they believed it was mutually beneficial. In 6% of the cases, workers had requested payment by contract and 40% considered it to be only beneficial for the workers.

Only 4 of the 36 carpet manufacturers involved workers in a decision making process. Their involvement was through meetings and discussions either in a group or at an individual level. Five respondents reported that they included their worker's viewpoints in terms of making employment decisions. Again, this was achieved through meetings or recommendations from individuals.

None of the carpet industries had provision for paid leave when women chose to visit their village or take time off because all of the workers were paid on a contract basis. Manufacturers agreed that women workers had made a positive contribution towards their success. A number of reasons were outlined for this such as rural women workers being ‘hard working’ (83%), “women are better workers than men” (11%) and “women workers are patient and obedient” (6%). These comments reflect a positive recognition by carpet manufacturers towards rural women workers’ efforts in their success.

Table 3 indicates the average number of hours worked per week (normal and peak demand) by women workers. During normal work hours the minimum and maximum number of hours female workers worked per week was 35 and 98, respectively. On average the total working hours per week was 59. During periods of peak demand, work hours per week ranged from 46 (minimum) to 105 (maximum) and averaged 71 hours per week. Thus women are required to work long hours.

Table 3 Average hours worked per week in the carpet industries.

CHARACTERISTICS	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	S. D.
Normal work hours per week	36	35	98	59	18
Peak demand work hours per week	36	46	105	71	19

The frequency distribution the ranking carpet manufacturers placed on various attributes when employing rural women workers are shown in Table 4. Less than half of the manufacturers (44%) considered young age to be moderately preferred whereas (33%) ranked this attribute to be of ‘very low’ importance. One manufactures ranked this attribute as ‘high’. Prior work experience was ranked ‘very high’ by 42% of the respondents and 6% indicated that this attribute was of low significance. Many employers considered ‘prior work experience’ significant in order to recruit an exceptional work-force. Three-fourth of the respondents considered carding skills to be significant when employing women. Educational qualifications were ranked ‘very low’ (67%) to ‘low’ (25%) by employers when considering women candidates for the

carpet industry. Only a 8% considered educational qualification to be moderately significant. Hence, educational attainment was of minimal importance to employers. On the other hand, prior training was considered significant by more than half the respondents (58%). A minority (6%) considered prior training to be of low significance when recruiting women workers. Skill training, carding skills and prior work experience were associated positively with the employability of women. Ethnic background was insignificant to almost all of the respondents (94%), except for 2 industries (e.g. the one hiring Tibetan women) it was considered to be a priority.

Table 4 **Frequency distribution of the Attributes of rural women workers employed in the carpet industries.**

CHARACTERISTICS	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	TOTAL
Young age	12 (33.3) ¹	7 (19.4)	16 (44.4)	1 (2.8)	0 (0.0)	36 (100.0)
Prior work experience	0 (0.0)	2 (5.6)	5 (13.9)	14 (38.9)	15 (41.7)	36 (100.0)
Carding skills	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	9 (25.0)	14 (38.9)	13 (36.1)	36 (100.0)
Educational Qualifications	24 (66.7)	9 (25.0)	3 (8.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	36 (100.0)
Prior training	1 (2.8)	1 (2.8)	13 (36.1)	7 (19.4)	14 (38.9)	36 (100.0)
Ethnicity	34 (94.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.8)	1 (2.8)	36 (100.0)

¹Figures in parentheses are the row percentages.

4.4 A Socio-Economic Survey of Rural Women Workers

Altogether 144 rural women workers were surveyed. Data on individual women related to their social/demographic and economic characteristics directly or indirectly associated with employment in the carpet industries were collected to meet the objectives outlined in Chapter 1. Survey results are presented in this section.

4.4.1 Characteristics of Rural Women Workers

Personal and Household Characteristics

The socio-economic survey of 144 respondents pointed out that they had migrated to city (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur) from various parts of the country. The majority of the respondents (64%) were from the Central Development Region

(CDR), 29% came from the eastern region and the remainder had moved from the western region of the country. Therefore, it is believed that rural women who originate from districts closer to Kathmandu Valley are more likely to move to the city and work in the carpet industry as indicated for the carpet manufacturers survey in Section 4.3.

Most respondents (61%) had spent either five years or less in the carpet industry. Virtually all of the respondents had migrated to Kathmandu city within the past ten years.

Table 5 illustrates that the average age of rural women employed in the carpet industry was 24 years. Slightly more than half of the respondents were less than 20 years old. The result suggests that younger women tend to work in the carpet industry, despite the ‘low priority’ of carpet manufacturers to employ them (as shown in Section 4.3, Table 4).

Table 5 Age profile of rural women working in the carpet industry.

CHARACTERISTICS	N	PERCENT
Age		
< 20 years	73	51
20-30 years	41	28.7
> 30 years	29	20.3
TOTAL	143	100.0
MEAN	24	
SD	8	

Nearly three-fifths of the respondents were married (Table 6). Only one respondent was a widow: this was counted in the married category to simplify data analysis. Furthermore, the data shows younger married women (less than 30 years of age) worked in the carpet industries.

Table 6 Marital status of rural women working in the carpet industry.

CHARACTERISTICS	N	PERCENT
Marital Status		
Unmarried	60	41.7
Married	84	58.3
TOTAL	144	100.0

In the case of married women, almost all (86%) had husbands present with them in the city. The remainder (14%) were separated from their husbands, their husbands had a job elsewhere or they were still living in the village. These findings suggest that both husband and wife move together in the city in order to work.

It was disappointing to learn that (85%) of the respondents were illiterate, and that only 15% had attended school. Among the latter group, the average educational qualification was 4.6 years of schooling with minimum and maximum ranging from 2 to 10 years of schooling (School Leaving Certificate (SLC) pass), respectively. None of the respondents had a college degree. This is consistent with the carpet manufacturer’s low consideration for ‘educational qualifications’ when employing women (see Table 4, Section 4.3).

The respondents came from families with an average 6.2 family members, whereas more than half had no dependent adults and only (15%) had more than 2 dependent adults in the family. About (40%) had between 1-3 dependent children, and 30% had more than 3 children. Overall, the respondents had an average of 2 dependent children and 1.2 dependent adults suggesting dependent adults are lesser in number than dependent children since most of the respondents are married (Table 7).

Table 7 The number of dependent family members of rural women working in the carpet industry.

CHARACTERISTICS		N	PERCENT
1. Number of Dependent Adults			
	0	81	56.3
	1-2	42	29.2
	Over 2	21	14.5
TOTAL		144	100.0
MEAN		1.2	
SD		2	
2. Number of Dependent Children			
	0	43	29.9
	1-3	58	40.3
	Over 3	43	29.9
TOTAL		144	100.0
MEAN		2	
SD		2	

More than half of the households represented had 2 adults working in the carpet industry and one-fifth had more than 3 adults working (Table 8). The average number of working adults in a family (including the respondents) was 2. None of the respondents had working children (below 16 years): since most were less than 30 years old, they tend to have young children.

Table 8 Number of working adult members of rural women working in the carpet industry.

CHARACTERISTICS		N	PERCENT
Number of Working Adult Members			
	1 Adult	40	27.8
	2 Adults	77	53.5
	Over 3 Adults	27	18.7
TOTAL		144	100.0
MEAN		2	
SD		1	

The total annual household income for the 144 respondents was distributed evenly across four categories (Table 9), with one-fourth of the respondents earned Rs 31,000-Rs 40,000 per annum and the remainder less than Rs 30,000 (27%) and more than Rs 50,000 per annum (30%), respectively. The average total annual household income was Rs 45,587 with an average of 2 working members. This is a good income compared to their annual farm production and percentage of farm income or (income from previous occupation).

Table 9. Total annual household income of rural women working in the carpet industry.

CHARACTERISTICS	N	PERCENT
Total Annual Household Income		
< Rs 30,000	39	27.1
Rs 31,000-Rs 40,000	29	20.1
Rs 41,000-Rs 50,000	33	22.9
> Rs 50,000	43	29.9
TOTAL	144	100.0
MEAN	Rs 45587	
SD	Rs 19536	

Employment Characteristics

Prior to working in the carpet industry the majority (88%) of women had been involved in farming activities. However, nearly one-tenth had been weavers or owned their own businesses before commencing work in the carpet industry. The reasons for leaving their previous occupation varied. For almost two-fifth of the respondents, the previous occupation (farming in most cases) did not offer any incentives. One-third of the respondents had come to city with the intention to visit, but, ended up working instead, either due to peer pressure or the presence of family members.

More than half (55%) of the women had no family members working in the same carpet industry, whereas the remainder had husbands (45%), or siblings (33%) or

parents (13%) working in the carpet industry. More immediate family members working in the same employment would collectively contribute towards greater household earnings.

All of the respondents surveyed were contract-rate workers. They were paid according to the volume of carpet they produced (i.e. per sq. meter). While none were paid on a wage basis or salaries, it does not mean that this practice is non-existent in the carpet industry. The greater number of hours they put in (which enables them to produce more carpets) leads to greater earnings.

Less than half of the respondents had worked for less than 2 years in the carpet industry (Table 10). The average number of years working in their current occupation was 4 years which indicates that they have adjusted to city life and work.

Table 10 Number of years rural women workers worked in the carpet industry.

CHARACTERISTICS	N	PERCENT
Number of Years At Current Occupation		
< 2 Years	65	45.1
2-4 Years	38	26.4
> 4 Years	40	28.5
TOTAL	143	100.0
MEAN	4	
SD	3	

Table 11 **Number of working hours per week (regular & over-time) of rural women workers.**

CHARACTERISTICS	N	PERCENT
No. of Regular Work Hours per Week		
< 48 Hours	78	54.2
> 48 Hours	66	45.8
TOTAL	144	100.0
MEAN	59	
SD	18	
Number of Over-time Work Hours per Week		
< 8 Hours	56	64.3
> 8 Hours	31	35.2
TOTAL	87	100.0
MEAN	10	
SD	4	

In addition, data concerning the number of work hours per week shows that more than half worked less than 48 hours per week with an average of 59 hours (Table 11). Finally, Saturday work hours were completed by 87 respondents for an average of 10 hours per week. Both characteristics (number of work hours: regular & over-time) should contribute to greater earnings because they equate to more time producing carpet.

Farm Characteristics

The majority of respondents, were unaware of the characteristics of the farm they had come from such as the quantity of crops produced, farm area, percentage of household income earned from farming or total annual farm production. They claimed that usually their parents, husband or other male person (brother, uncle, father-in-law) in the household was the decision-maker. Their role as a woman was only to provide the physical labour required for farming activities. Information collected through this section of the questionnaire (Section C: Q3 - Q9 in Appendix I) was sparse and inconclusive and details of farm production and attributes are not included in the results.

Of the respondents who had farming background (88%), two-fifth did not respond to the questions regarding farm characteristics due to the lack of information they had about farming activities as explained in the earlier paragraph. The remaining one-fourth had less than 3 years experience on the farm while nearly half (45%) had between 4-6 years of experience and the rest had more than 6 years of farming experience. The majority (88%) owned their family farm. Ten percent worked on someone else's farm. In response to the question concerning the number of farm workers currently on the family farm, the majority (87%) had between 1-5 people working, however, one-tenth had more than 5 people working and a minority had none. The percentage of farm income as a proportion of total annual household income was less than 25% on one-fourth of the farms; for less than half the percentage was between 25-50 percent. The remainder earned more than 50 percent of their income from farming activities.

Nearly half of the respondents (48%) indicated they had no cash income; only enough produce was generated for consumption purposes. Less than Rs 5000 per year was generated on 42% of the farms, and 10% earned more than Rs 5000 from farming activities per annum. This subsistence level of living compared to their earnings in the carpet industry (Table 9).

The information concerning crops, livestock & poultry (types & quantity), farm area; was largely incomplete and those who worked at other farms recalled very little regarding their earnings. These data have therefore not been reported.

General Characteristics

None of the respondents had a community or social group involvement. This probably reflects their long hours of work. Only two worked elsewhere (at a family convenience shop and a home-based carding business, respectively). The hours worked, earnings and responsibilities at these jobs were not determined. Because the number of hours in the carpet industry are high it is unlikely that women seek an extra job.

Nearly all (88%) of the 144 rural women were satisfied with their job. The reasons for this ranged from 'work is always available' (44%) to 'I am able to develop skills' (32%) and 'a good cash income is earned' (24%). One-tenth of the respondents were dissatisfied with the job because they had no education to work elsewhere, the work environment was not good for their health, or work could not be found elsewhere.

Almost all (90%) of the rural women were satisfied with their employer. The reason for employer satisfaction for more than half (54%) of the rural women was because the 'employer provides timely income payments,' whereas for 32% of the respondents satisfaction was due to the 'employer evaluates work and income with respect to weaving skills.' For the remaining respondents satisfaction was simply due to 'the provision of a job by the employer.' Employer dissatisfaction was due to the lack of provision of facilities at work. It is clear that despite the inadequate facilities, respondents were generally content with their work, income and employer. This explains the motivation and dedication of rural women to seek work in the carpet industries. The majority of women (84%) were satisfied with their working conditions. The reason for this satisfaction was 'convenience' whereas 'no choice to work elsewhere' was the response of those who were dissatisfied.

With respect to the question on what would they do if the carpet industry shutdown -- slightly less than half (47%) of the women said their preference would be to return to the village. Fewer (39%) would prefer to find another job in the city, and the 15% were unsure of what they would do.

With regard to the formation of a co-operative carpet carding and manufacturing unit - all of them seemed eager, however, they stated that it would be difficult due to the enormous amount of resources and capital required to get it established. Thus, self-employment was not a viable option for most respondents at that time of the study.

Surprisingly, only one-fourth of the respondents had encountered migration problems. Most of the migration problems were due to 'the unfamiliar atmosphere of living in the city' whereas one-fourth believed 'inability to afford (expensive lifestyle) city living' contributed to their migration problems. As many migration studies indicate

that rural-urban migrants are likely to encounter many problems this study appears to be an exemption. However, three-fourths of the respondents were fortunate to receive assistance from family and friends and this would have reduced migration problems.

Table 12 shows the monthly distribution of five expense categories (food, clothing, housing, entertainment and miscellaneous). In terms of food, most respondents spent more than Rs 1000 per month. The average amount of money spend on food per month was Rs 1,415. A minority (15%) spent less than Rs 500 per month. Sixty respondents sincerely did not know how much they spent each month on clothing. The values they quoted for clothing purchases were inconsistent and depended largely on the needs of the family members at any particular time. However, for the rest of the respondents, the majority spent less than Rs 300 per month with an average of Rs 220.

Table 12 Monthly household expenses of rural women working in the carpet industry.

CHARACTERISTICS	N	PERCENT
Monthly Food Expenses		
< Rs 500	21	15.1
Rs 501-Rs 1000	45	32.4
> Rs 1000	73	52.5
TOTAL	139	100.0
MEAN	Rs 1415	
SD	Rs 851	
Monthly Clothing Expenses		
< Rs 300	56	66.7
> Rs 300	28	33.3
TOTAL	84	100.0
MEAN	Rs 220	
SD	Rs 143	
Monthly Housing Expenses		
0 (free)	90	64.7
< Rs 500	27	19.4
> Rs 500	22	25.8
TOTAL	139	100.0
MEAN	Rs 193	
SD	Rs 292	
Monthly Entertainment Expenses		
< Rs 100	70	55.5
> Rs 100	56	44.4
TOTAL	126	100.0
MEAN	Rs 145	
SD	Rs 78	
Other Monthly Expenses		
< Rs 500	28	20.3
Rs 501-Rs 1000	43	31.1
Rs 1001-Rs 1500	37	26.8
> Rs 1500	30	21.7
TOTAL	138	100.0
MEAN	Rs 1145	
SD	Rs 669	

The majority (90%) had free access to a housing facility. The average housing rent was Rs 193 per month; 19% of the respondents paid less than Rs 500 per month and 26% more than Rs 500 monthly. Entertainment expenses for most respondents seemed to be a luxury, and were estimated to amount to an average of Rs 145 per month. In terms of miscellaneous expenses, 31% spent between Rs 500 and Rs 1000 per month. The average monthly expenses on miscellaneous items was Rs 1,145.

In sum (Table 12), food and miscellaneous expenses constituted the major part of monthly expenses followed by entertainment expenses. However, clothing expenses seemed inconsistent since these were not a regular monthly requirement for most of the respondents. Furthermore, housing expenses (rent) was insignificant since most of them lived in rent-free housing facilities.

More importantly, all 144 respondents indicated that they saved some proportion of their income although 29 respondents did not know how much they saved per month. Slightly less than half (48%) of the respondents saved less than Rs 500 per month, however, one-fourth saved more than Rs 1000 per month. As shown by Table 13 the estimated average savings per household was Rs 732 per month. This implies their monthly income enabled them to meet the monthly expenses as well as save.

Table 13 Monthly household savings of rural women working in the carpet industry.

CHARACTERISTICS	N	PERCENT
Monthly Savings		
< Rs 500	55	47.8
Rs 501-Rs 1000	35	30.4
> Rs 1000	25	21.7
TOTAL	115	100.0
MEAN	732	
SD	515	

The majority of respondents had found their household expenditure (food, clothing and savings) had changed since working in the carpet industry. The reasons for this were increased flexibility to spend money on preferred food and clothing items, as well as the ability to save money for future usage.

The work facilities provided such as housing (free of cost or subsidised) and health-care services (covering most expenses) contributed positively towards supporting the family household. However, since schooling facilities, child-care services and entertainment were offered by only a very few employers, these factors contributed less towards the family's well-being.

Responses regarding income repatriation showed only (32%) were able to send money home: the majority (41%) sent money twice a year. More than half (54%) sent their families less than Rs 1500 per year: the remainder sent more than Rs 1500 (the maximum annual amount being Rs 5000).

Of the 46 respondents who sent money home, only one had invested money to purchase land and two used these to increase savings. Money was used for medical expenses (39%), and for children's education (20%). Most of the money (74%) was used for food consumption, clothing (48%) and sundry (10%).

As far as the period of work in the city was concerned, more than half (56%) responded that they planned to work less than 3 years, however, the remainder indicated the duration of work in the carpet industry would exceed 3 years. In terms of their work situation in five years time, one-fourth indicated they would be working at a carpet factory, 30% would be back on the home farm, 15% expected to be working elsewhere in the city and the remainder were unsure.

In general, most of the respondents commented that they enjoyed working in the carpet industry and although some were going to eventually return to their villages (after saving some money), others were determined to remain in the city for the sake of their children. Some desired to take up study, whereas others wanted more facilities to be provided by their employer. While the majority were quite content

with their work and the income earnt in the carpet industry, some complained that the carpet industry offered no job security (due to fluctuation in wool prices) and for others city life was too expensive compared to their previous lifestyle in a rural village.

4.4.2 Social/Demographic Characteristics of Rural Women Workers

In this section the relationship between key non-economic (social/demographic characteristics) associated with rural poverty alleviation and the marital status of rural women working in the carpet industries is presented.

Age by Marital Status

The average age of unmarried rural women workers was 19 years, compared to an average of 27 years for married women (Table 14). The highest percentage of rural women working in the carpet industries were unmarried and less than 20 years of age. Slightly more than one-fifth (23%) married women were between 21-30 years and one-fifth were married and over 30 years. Thus younger, unmarried women tend to be the main employees in the carpet industry and this disapproves the low significance of ‘younger age’ claimed by the carpet manufacturers (see Section 4.3, Table 4).

Table 14 Relationship between age and marital status of rural women working in the carpet industry.

Age	Marital Status		Overall
	Unmarried	Married	
< 20 Years	51 (35.66) ¹	22 (15.38)	73 (51.05)
21-30 Years	8 (5.59)	33 (23.08)	41 (28.67)
> 30 Years	1 (0.70)	28 (19.58)	29 (20.28)
TOTAL	60 (41.96)	83 (58.04)	143 (100.0)
MEAN	19	27	24
S. D.	3	9	8

¹Figures in parentheses are the row and column percentages, respectively.

Number of Dependent Adults by Marital Status

The married women belonged to a household with slightly more dependent adults than the unmarried women and as a consequence they probably have more financial commitments (Table 15). One-fifth of the married respondents, compared with 10% of the unmarried respondents, had either one or two dependent adults in the family. The majority of married as well as unmarried respondents had no dependent adults. This may be due to more working family members working elsewhere or a ‘nuclear’ family composition (i.e. not an extended family arrangement).

Number of Dependent Children by Marital Status

Table 15 shows that 48 married respondents (33%) had between 1-3 dependent children, whereas a little less than one-fourth of the unmarried respondents had none. The average number of dependent children for unmarried and married women was 1.3 and 2.2, respectively.

Table 15 Relationship between number of dependent family members and marital status of rural women working in the carpet industry.

No. of Dependent Family Members	Marital Status		
	Unmarried	Married	Overall
No. of Dependent Adults			
0 Adult	37 (25.69)	44 (30.56)	81 (56.25)
1-2 Adults	14 (9.72)	28 (19.44)	42 (29.17)
Over 2 Adults	9 (6.25)	12 (8.33)	21 (14.58)
TOTAL	60 (41.67)	84 (58.33)	144 (100.0)
MEAN	1.1	1.2	1.2
SD	1.5	1.6	2
No. of Dependent Children			
0 Children	34(23.61)	9(6.25)	43(29.86)
1-3 Children	10(6.94)	48(33.33)	58(40.28)
Over 3 Children	16(11.11)	27(18.75)	43(29.86)
TOTAL	60 (41.67)	84(58.33)	144(100.0)
MEAN	1.28	2.21	2
SD	1.81	1.47	2

Number of Working Adult Members by Marital Status

Seventy-four married women (51%) came from households with more than two working adults, suggesting their husbands also worked in the city (Table 16). Unmarried women had fewer dependent family members and, as anticipated, fewer working adults per household. Hence, married respondents with extended family members need earn more in order to support the greater number of dependent adults and children in their households.

Table 16 Relationship between working adult members and marital status of rural women working in the carpet industry.

No. of Working Adults	Marital Status		
	Unmarried	Married	Overall
1 Adult	30 (20.83)	10 (6.94)	40 (27.78)
2 Adults	15 (10.42)	62 (43.06)	77 (53.47)
Over 2 Adults	15 (10.42)	12 (8.33)	27 (18.27)
TOTAL	60 (41.67)	84 (58.33)	144 (100.0)
MEAN	1.8	2.1	2
SD	0.9	0.7	1

Number of Years at Current Occupation by Marital Status

The majority of married and unmarried respondents had worked in the carpet industries for less than 2 years (Table 17). One-fifth of married respondents had been employed by the carpet industries for more than 4 years. Overall, the mean value for years involved in the carpet industries in the cases of unmarried and married was 2.4 and 4.7 years, respectively. Married women were more likely to be employed longer than unmarried women and this is most likely due to their greater age (see Table 14).

Table 17 Relationship between number of years in current occupation and marital status of rural women working in the carpet industry.

No. of Years at Current Occupation	Marital Status		
	Unmarried	Married	Overall
< 2 Years	44 (30.77)	42 (29.37)	86 (60.14)
2-4 Years	10 (6.99)	14 (9.79)	24 (16.78)
> 4 Years	6 (4.20)	27 (18.88)	33 (23.08)
TOTAL	60 (41.96)	83 (58.04)	143 (100.0)
MEAN	2.4	4.7	4
SD	1.9	4.1	3

Number of Hours worked per week by Marital Status

The average number of hours worked per week for married and unmarried respondents was 59 and 58, respectively (Table 18). On average the unmarried and married respondents worked 9 and 11 hours per week of over-time, respectively. Of the 87 respondents who worked on Saturdays, proportionately more married women worked more over-time hours than unmarried women. Married women worked more hours per week than unmarried and this could reflect their greater responsibilities to fulfil household needs (see Tables 15 and 21).

Table 18 Relationship between number of hours worked per week and marital status of rural women working in the carpet industry.

No. of Work Hours/Week	Marital Status		Overall
	Unmarried	Married	
No. of Regular Work Hours			
per Week			
> 48 Hours	35 (24.65)	41 (28.87)	76 (53.52)
> 48 Hours	25 (17.61)	41 (28.87)	66 (46.48)
TOTAL	60 (42.25)	82 (57.75)	142 (100.0)
MEAN	58.48	59.30	59
SD	16.79	18.78	18
No. of Over-time Work			
Hours per Week			
< 8 Hours	9 (10.34)	5 (5.75)	14 (16.09)
> 8 Hours	30 (34.48)	43 (49.43)	73 (83.91)
TOTAL	39 (44.83)	48 (55.17)	87 (100.0)
MEAN	9	11	10
SD	2.6	4.2	4

4.4.3 Relationship between Total Annual Household Income and Marital Status of Rural Women Workers

Table 19 illustrates the breakdown of total annual household income of rural women workers by marital status. Overall, an average unmarried women earnt Rs 37,410 per annum per household. Married women earnt Rs 51,428 per annum per household ($P < 0.01$).

Table 19 Relationship between total annual household income and marital status of rural women working in the carpet industry.

Total Annual Household Income	Marital Status		
	Unmarried	Married	Overall
< Rs 30,000	33 (22.92) ¹	6 (4.17)	39 (27.08)
Rs 31,000-Rs 40,000	10 (6.94)	19 (13.19)	29 (20.14)
Rs 41,000-Rs 50,000	5 (3.47)	28 (19.44)	33 (22.92)
> Rs 50,000	12 (8.33)	31 (21.53)	43 (29.86)
TOTAL	60 (41.67)	84 (58.33)	144 (100.0)
MEAN	Rs 37410	Rs 51428	Rs 45587
SD	Rs 20924	Rs 16232	Rs 19536

¹Figures in parentheses are the percentages.

4.4.4 Economic Characteristics of Rural Women Workers

In this section the relationship between key economic characteristics associated with rural poverty alleviation and the marital status of rural women workers is presented.

Monthly Household Expenses and Savings by Marital Status

Table 20 shows, for married women, the average expenditure for food items was Rs 1816 compared to Rs 856 for the unmarried women. The higher expenditure by married women reflects the larger number of dependent family members in their households as indicated in Table 15. The married women spent an average of Rs 233 per month on clothing expenses compared to Rs 200 for unmarried women.

Table 20 Relationship between monthly household expenses/savings and marital status of rural women working in the carpet industry.

	Marital Status		Overall
	Unmarried	Married	
Monthly Food Expenses			
< Rs 500	20 (14.39) ¹	1 (0.72)	21 (15.11)
Rs 501-Rs 1000	31 (22.30)	14 (10.07)	45 (32.37)
> Rs 1000	7 (5.04)	66 (47.48)	73 (52.52)
TOTAL	58 (41.73)	81 (58.27)	139 (100.0)
MEAN	Rs 856	Rs 1816	Rs 1415
SD	Rs 676	Rs 730	Rs 851
Monthly Clothing Expenses			
< Rs 300	24 (28.57)	32 (38.10)	56 (66.67)
> Rs 300	9 (10.71)	19 (22.62)	28 (33.33)
TOTAL	33 (39.29)	51 (60.71)	84 (100.0)
MEAN	Rs 200	Rs 233	Rs 220
SD	Rs 116	Rs 158	Rs 143
Monthly Housing Expenses			
0	40 (28.77)	50 (35.97)	90 (64.70)
< Rs 500	12 (8.33)	15 (10.42)	27 (19.42)
> Rs 500	5 (3.47)	17 (11.81)	22 (25.81)
TOTAL	60 (41.67)	84 (58.33)	139 (100.0)
MEAN	Rs 144	Rs 229	Rs 193
SD	Rs 248	Rs 317	Rs 292
Monthly Entertainment Expenses			
< Rs 100	38 (30.16)	32 (25.40)	70 (55.56)
> Rs 100	18 (14.29)	38 (30.16)	56 (44.44)
TOTAL	56 (44.44)	70 (55.56)	126 (100.0)
MEAN	Rs 125	Rs 161	Rs 145
SD	Rs 70	Rs 81	Rs 78
Other Monthly Expenses			
< Rs 500	16 (11.59)	12 (8.70)	28 (20.29)
Rs 501-Rs 1000	24 (17.39)	19 (13.77)	43 (31.16)
Rs 1001-Rs 1500	13 (9.42)	24 (17.39)	37 (26.81)
> Rs 1500	5 (3.62)	25 (18.12)	30 (21.74)
TOTAL	58 (42.03)	80 (57.97)	138 (100.0)
MEAN	Rs 934	Rs 1297	Rs 1145
SD	Rs 597	Rs 681	Rs 669

Table 20 (continued)

Monthly Household Savings			
< Rs 500	30 (26.09)	25 (21.74)	55 (47.83)
Rs 501-Rs 1000	9 (7.83)	14 (12.17)	23 (20.00)
> Rs 1000	14 (12.17)	23 (20.00)	37 (32.17)
TOTAL	53 (46.09)	62 (53.91)	115 (100.0)
MEAN	Rs 676	Rs 779	Rs 732
SD	Rs 546	Rs 486	Rs 515

¹Figures in parenthesis are the percentages.

The average monthly housing expenses (rent) for married respondents was Rs 229 and Rs 144 for unmarried respondents. Housing expenses for the married women were more, probably because of the greater space required to accommodate the larger number of family members. The average amount of income used for entertainment purposes was Rs 125 for unmarried and Rs 161 for married women, respectively. The average amount of income spent on other items was Rs 934 for unmarried women and Rs 1297 for married women indicating that there are extended responsibilities for married women compared to unmarried women. Although married women earned more, they also spent and saved more in comparison to unmarried respondents. Monthly household savings averaged Rs 779 per month for married women compared to Rs 676 for unmarried respondents.

4.4.5 Relationship Between Average Monthly Household Expenses and Number of Dependent Family Members

The relationship between the average monthly household expenses/savings and the number of dependent adults and children is shown in Table 21. On average, most money (Rs 1680 per month) was spent on food in households with more than 3 dependent children. Rural women who had between 1-2 dependent adults consumed an average of Rs 1736 per month on food. The least amount of money was spent on entertainment by rural women who had no dependent children, (Rs 115 per month). The highest levels of savings (Rs 979 per month) occurred in households with more than 2 dependent adults. Expenses varied widely between households.

Table 21 Relationship between the number of dependent family members and average monthly expenses of rural women working in the carpet industry.

Monthly Household Expenses & Savings (Rs/month)	Number of Dependent Family Members		
	Number of dependent adults		
	0 adult	1-2 adults	over 2 adults
1. Monthly food expenses	1262 (825) ¹	1736 (852)	1352 (806)
2. Monthly clothing expenses	210 (157)	232 (115)	241 (139)
3. Monthly housing expenses	295(209)	279 (163)	314 (195)
4. Monthly entertainment expenses	132 (79)	178(79)	129 (50)
5. Monthly other expenses	1032 (683)	1263 (662)	1319 (578)
6. Monthly savings	586 (452)	874 (492)	979 (621)

	Number of dependent children		
	0 children	1-3 children	over 3 children
1. Monthly food expenses	887 (757)	1618 (656)	1680 (945)
2. Monthly clothing expenses	173 (114)	242 (172)	233 (103)
3. Monthly housing expenses	275 (220)	331 (222)	243 (127)
4. Monthly entertainment expenses	115 (75)	145 (79)	179 (66)
5. Monthly other expenses	900 (641)	1229 (664)	1282 (654)
6. Monthly savings	535 (444)	729 (420)	950 (622)

¹ Figures in parentheses are the standard deviation.

4.4.6 Association Between Social/Demographic and Economic Characteristics

Two sets of characteristics were hypothesised to be associated with rural poverty alleviation: sociodemographic and economic (see the conceptual framework outlined in Figure 1 in Chapter 3). In this section, the results of Pearson’s correlation analysis to determine the association between social/demographic (non-economic) and economic characteristics are presented and statistically significant correlations are discussed.

The age of rural women workers was positively associated ($P < 0.01$) with entertainment ($r = 0.28$) and other monthly expenses ($r = 0.23$). The low correlation coefficients suggest a weak association between the pairs of variables examined. In

contrast, the age of rural women workers did not influence the level of monthly expenditure on food, clothing or housing as well as the level of monthly savings. Older respondents consumed a greater proportion of income on entertainment and other miscellaneous expenses. As earlier data has shown most rural women were less than 30 years of age, therefore, younger women have a tendency to spend more money on entertainment. The rural women below 30 years also had younger children, and a greater amount of miscellaneous expenses e.g. school fees and medical expenses.

Table 22 Association between non-economic and economic characteristics of rural women working in the carpet industry(Pearson's Correlation Coefficients).

Non-Economic Characteristics (Social/Demographic)	Economic Characteristics (Monthly Expenses and Savings)					
	Food	Clothing	Housing	Entertainment	Other	Savings
Age	0.41	0.03	0.06	0.28** ¹	0.23**	-0.06
No. of Dependent Adults	0.11**	0.10	0.06	0.09	0.15*	-0.32**
No. of Dependent Children	0.34**	0.12	-0.16	0.31	0.21*	-0.41**
No. of Working Adults	0.52	0.37	0.00	0.47	0.35**	0.26*
No. of Yrs at Current Occupation	0.28**	0.22*	0.05	0.20*	0.18*	0.07
No. of Regular Work Hrs/week	0.08	0.36**	-0.28	0.30**	0.33**	0.23*
No. of Over-time Work Hrs/week	0.08	0.01	-0.06	0.18	0.06	0.27*

¹ Levels of significance: + P<0.10, * P <0.05, ** P<0.01.

The association between the number of dependent adults and monthly clothing, housing, and entertainment expenditure was not significant. However, there was a positive association between the number of dependent adults and food ($P < 0.01$) and other miscellaneous ($P < 0.05$) expenditure. Overall, the low correlation coefficients indicate weak associations between the identified variables. As expected, the greater the number of dependent adults, the greater the level of food consumption and monthly miscellaneous expenses. In addition, the monthly savings reduced as the number of dependent adults increased, which contradicts with the earlier results (see Section, 4.4.5).

Generally, and as could be expected, rural women with more children consumed a greater proportion of their income on food ($r = 0.34$; $P < 0.05$) and miscellaneous ($P < 0.05$) expenses. In addition, as indicated in Table 22, women with large families had a lower level of savings ($r = -0.41$; $P < 0.01$).

There was no association between the number of working adults and food, clothing, housing and entertainment expenses except for the miscellaneous monthly expenses ($P < 0.01$) and savings ($P < 0.05$). These results suggests that as the number of working adults increase so do the level of miscellaneous expenses and savings. This is likely to be due to the greater total household income when more of its members are working.

Monthly food expenses ($r = 0.28$), clothing (0.22), entertainment (0.20) and other expenses ($r = 0.18$) were also positively associated the number of years worked in the carpet industries. In contrast, housing expenditure and monthly savings were not influenced by the number of years that the women had worked in the carpet industry.

There was a trend for women who spent more hours in the carpet industry to spend a greater proportion of their income on clothes, entertainment and other monthly items, and to achieve higher levels of savings ($r = 0.23$; $P < 0.05$). However, food and housing expenditure showed no association with the number hours of regular work. Unlike regular work hours, overtime-hours (i.e. Saturday work) was positively associated ($r = 0.27$; $P < 0.05$) with monthly savings. Thus, over-time work provided a greater discretionary ability to spend and save money.

4.4.7 Characteristics Associated With Total Annual Household

Income: Bivariate Results

Overall, most of the identified social/demographic and economic characteristics were significantly associated with total annual household income, the proxy variable for rural poverty alleviation (Table 23). The number of dependent adults and number of

years at the current occupation showed no association with the total annual household income of rural women workers. Monthly housing expenditures was also not associated with the level of total annual household income.

Age, number of dependent children, number of working adults, number of regular and over-time work hours all were positively associated with total annual household income as did monthly expenditures on food, clothing, entertainment and other items. Social/demographic and economic characteristics therefore were affected by the total annual household and this provides an indication, as suggested in the conceptual framework for the study, that they contribute to the alleviation of rural poverty.

Table 23 Association between total annual household income and non-economic and economic characteristics of rural women working in the carpet industry.

Non-economic Characteristics (Social/demographic)	r
Age	0.22* ¹
No. of Dependent Adults	0.03
No. of Dependent Children	0.44**
No. of Working Adults	0.33**
No. of Years at Current Occupation	0.06
No. of Regular Work Hours per Week	0.26*
No. of Over-time Work Hours per Week	0.15+
Economic Characteristics	
Monthly Food Expenses	0.60**
Monthly Clothing Expenses	0.39**
Monthly Housing Expenses	-0.03
Monthly Entertainment Expenses	0.45**
Other Monthly Expenses	0.52**
Monthly Savings	0.42**

¹ Levels of significance: + <0.10, * <0.05, ** <0.01.

4.4.8 Determinants of Total Annual Household Income in Alleviating Rural Poverty: Multivariate Regression Results

The conceptual framework (Figure 1, Chapter 3), combined with an assessment of the relationships shown by the univariate and bivariate analyses, was used to formulate a multiple regression model to explain the degree of rural poverty alleviation, using total annual household income as a proxy variable. Table 24 illustrates the variables selected in the final model and the associated statistics.

Table 24 Determinants of total annual household income: coefficients for a multiple regression model.

	Parameter Estimate (t-statistics)
Intercept	0.8439 (0.19)
Age	146.95+ ¹ (0.30)
No. of Dependent Adults	437.12 (0.26)
No. of Dependent Children	1910.88 (1.10)
No. of Working Adults	13863** (5.26)
Years at Current Occupation	-184.46 (-0.15)
Regular Work Hours per Week	86.08** (0.63)
Over-time Work Hours per Week	189.19+ (0.69)
Monthly Food Expenses (Rs)	0.46 (0.12)
Monthly Clothing Expenses (Rs)	-32.52 (1.74)
Monthly Housing Expenses (Rs)	-0.12 (-0.01)
Monthly Entertainment Expenses (Rs)	-15.65 (-0.43)
Other Monthly Expenses (Rs)	7.23 (1.77)
Monthly Savings (Rs)	53.09* (0.47)
R-square	0.85
Adjusted R-square	0.78

¹ Level of significance: + P < 0.10, * P < 0.05, ** P < 0.01.

Eighty-five per cent of the variation in total annual household income was accounted for by the regression equation. Older respondents and their family earned a greater level of total household annual income. The model also indicates that a one person increase in the average number of working adult members would increase total annual household income by Rs 13, 863. A one hour increase in regular work hours would increase in total annual household income by Rs 86.08. Additionally, if over-time work increased by 10 hours respondents would earn an additional Rs 389.19 of income. As regards to monthly savings, a 5 percent increase in savings per month would increase total annual income by Rs 53.09.

With the exception of age, the number of working adults, number of regular and over-time work hours and monthly savings, t-statistics in the model were insignificant. A reduced multiple regression model was therefore developed by backward elimination. The results are presented in Table 25.

Output from the reduced model (Table 25) demonstrates that the number of working adults in a household is a good determinant of total annual household income. The result suggests that each additional one working adult in a household would increase total annual household income by Rs 15, 228. This is Rs 1,365 more than shown by the original model.

Table 25 Determinants of total annual household income; a reduced multiple regression model using backward elimination.

	Parameter Estimate (t-statistics)
Intercept	0.50 (3.22)
Number of working adults	15228** ¹ (9.4)
Monthly household savings	67.08* (2.43)
R-square	0.50
Adjusted R-square	0.49

¹ Level of significance: + P * 0.05 and ** P < 0.01.

4.4.9 Summary

In this chapter four levels of results were outlined and discussed. Total annual household income was employed as a proxy variable for rural poverty alleviation since it determines the capacity of rural women workers through employment in the carpet industry to fulfil the basic needs of their family (beyond the subsistence level). The number of working adults per household ($P < 0.01$) was positively associated with total annual household income in both models of total annual household income. Furthermore, increased monthly savings ($P < 0.10$) were positively associated with increased total annual household income. When a reduced model was developed employing a backward elimination procedure, because the original conceptual model as outlined in Chapter 3 showed irregularity, only two variables remained (the number of working adults and monthly household savings) to be positively associated with the dependent variable, total annual household income.

In the next chapter the study is summarised, conclusions are drawn and recommendations for further research are presented.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

This study was undertaken to identify the socio-economic impacts of employment in the Nepali carpet industries on rural women workers, and in particular those related to alleviating rural poverty.

Data were collected using four surveys: key informant interviews, focus group interviews of women employed in the carpet industries, a rapid diagnostic survey of carpet manufacturers and a socio-economic survey of women workers in the carpet industries. In all, 5 key informants, 36 carpet manufacturers and 144 rural women workers were individually interviewed from the Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts. In addition, 5 groups, each comprising 10 rural women, participated in the focus group interviews.

Through the key informant and focus group interviews data was collected on: the impact of carpet industry employment, types of facilities provided by the carpet industry, benefits of facilities provided, additional ways to raise socio-economic status, other job interests, impact on remaining family members in the village, views regarding farming and employment in a carpet factory, relocation of the carpet industry to rural areas, migration and wage and employment policies. General comments about the socio-economic well-being of rural women workers were also collected.

Carpet manufacturers were also surveyed to compile information on the types of facilities provided, details on employee attributes and views regarding the role of rural women in the carpet industry. The socio-economic survey focused on personal and household employment, and farm and general characteristics associated with employment in the carpet industry. These data were tabulated, coded and entered into

the Excel® spreadsheet for analysis using the SAS® computing package. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation and regression analysis. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine the association between the variables included in the study.

5.1.1 Key Informant Interviews

Five key informants from government and private organisations were interviewed. They indicated that employment provided by the carpet industries had assisted rural women workers in reducing poverty through the generation of cash income. Although, few facilities for the workers were provided by the carpet industry, the organisations involved were seeking to expand these. The key informants viewed relocation of the carpet industries to rural districts as being beneficial to rural women workers. Employment policies need to focus more attention on issues concerning rural women workers.

5.1.2 Focus Group Interviews with Rural Women Workers

All rural women who participated in the focus group interviews had taken up work in the carpet industries because of the poverty they had suffered in their home rural village. For some, migration to the city meant they had left behind family members in the village who continued to struggle with the harsh rural lifestyle. Many supported these family members by repatriating part of their income. The contrary view is that the women were bringing in a second income and reducing the burden on their parents (or other household members) by working in the carpet industries. Working in the carpet industries had enabled them to develop skills, gain new acquaintances, and more importantly, to meet basic living expenses with much less difficulty than through subsistence farming.

5.1.3 A Rapid Diagnostic Survey of Carpet Manufacturers

Rural women from all over Nepal, but especially from the Central Development Region, worked in the carpet industries. The proportion of male and female workers in the carpet industries was similar; none of the manufacturing industries had an overwhelming number of women workers. The majority of rural women were between 21-30 years of age. No special arrangements were made to recruit rural women: they came to the carpet industries either independently or through friends and family members.

Most of the manufacturers provided free or subsidised housing facilities for their workers, and some provided health-care services. Schooling and child-care facilities were uncommon. Toilet and bathing facilities were provided by all the carpet industries. Skill training for workers was not a priority for the majority of the manufacturers. Paid leave was not available for rural women workers because all were employed on a contract basis. This practice was implemented in response to the initial request by rural women workers themselves.

Although, women were not involved in the decision making process or formulating employment policies, they were acknowledged for their contribution towards achieving success in the carpet manufacturing industry.

The number of hours worked by the rural women workers was high: on average 59 hours per week (normal) were worked. This increased up to 79 hours per week during periods of peak demand.

Youthfulness was given moderate priority by the majority of the manufacturers when employing rural women. Educational qualifications had a low significance in recruitment but prior work experience, carding skills and prior training were given a high priority when recruiting rural women. In contrast, ethnicity was not important

when considering rural women's employability in the carpet industry, except for two employers who preferred women of Tibetan descent.

5.1.4 A Socio-Economic Survey of Rural Women Workers

The mean age of women working in the carpet industry was 24 years. More than half (58%) of the respondents were married. The average number of dependent adults, dependent children and number of working adults in the households of rural women workers were 1.2, 2 and 2, respectively. The average number of years women had spent in their current occupation was 4 years. Households with two working adults had an average total annual household income of Rs 45,587. Women completed an average of 10 hours of over-time.

Most of the women had a farming background. The majority came from family owned farms that were still being managed by household members. Although data was difficult to obtain from the respondents, the indications were that annual farm production and income was extremely low: in most cases no cash income was reported to be generated.

None of the rural women workers had become involved in community or social groups in the city. The majority were satisfied with their work, employer and working conditions. Most were interested in starting their own carpet carding and manufacturing unit, however, obtaining the required capital was a major concern to them. Relatively, low numbers (25%) of the rural women workers had experienced migration problems due to a lack of knowledge about city life because friends or family members already in the city had assisted them. Some sent income home to remaining family members in the village. The money was primarily used for food and medical expenses.

Food and miscellaneous items were the largest items of monthly household expenditure: entertainment and clothing expenditure was lower. Household savings averaged Rs 732 per month, which suggests that basic living expenses could be more than met.

Married women earned a higher total annual household income but had a greater number of working adults and dependent family members, and greater household expenses and savings than unmarried women. Women workers with more dependent family members also saved less than those with fewer dependants.

Miscellaneous expenses were positively correlated with most of the non-economic characteristics such as age, number of dependent family members, number of working adults, number of years at the current occupation and hours worked (regular). Food and entertainment expenses also were positively associated with social and demographic characteristics (non-economic). Monthly household savings were positively correlated with the number of working adults in the home and number of hours worked (regular and over-time). However, household savings were negatively correlated with the number of dependent family members.

Age ($r = 0.22$), number of dependent children (0.44), number of working adults (0.33), number of work hours: regular and over-time (0.26 and 0.15), monthly food (0.60), clothing (0.39), entertainment (0.45), miscellaneous expenses (0.52) and monthly household savings (0.42) were all positively correlated with total annual household income, a proxy variable for poverty alleviation.

A reduced multiple regression model was developed which explained 50% of the variation in the total annual household income compared to 85% of the variation in the original model. The number of working adults and monthly savings of rural women workers per household were good determinants of total annual household income.

5.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from this study:

Provision of employment in the carpet industries has contributed positively towards the socio-economic well-being of rural women workers and this was agreed by all of the respondents to the study: key informants, carpet manufacturers and the rural women workers. Employment in the carpet industries had assisted women to generate cash income compared to no cash earnings from their previous subsistence farming operations. The earnings from the carpet industries had enabled rural women workers to meet household expenses and save at the same time. Part of their income was repatriated to family members living in the rural areas. Facilities provided by the carpet industries although inadequate were reported to be better than those available from other city jobs and in their previous occupation. The provision of housing facilities had assisted rural women workers save or purchase other household necessities. Skill development from working in the carpet industries had contributed positively to the socio-economic enhancement of rural women. The greater the number of working adults in a household of rural women workers, the greater total annual household income was and this enabled them to meet monthly household expenses and to make savings.

5.3 Recommendations

Existing facilities for women should be improved within the factories. Better working facilities that are cleaner and with a friendly atmosphere, should be introduced to attract more women workers. Facilities should be expanded to better serve the employees through child-care and schooling facilities. Rural women should be encouraged to participate in social organisations to help them develop more social skills. More job security should be offered to rural women workers by giving them incentives, such as paid leave, allowing them to participate in the decision making process and by

considering their view-points regarding employment policies. Improved skill training should be offered so that they can prepare themselves for better job opportunities or even open their own manufacturing and carding units. More, importantly, the government organisations and the carpet manufacturers should recognise the contribution of rural women workers towards the carpet industry's success. Therefore, employment policies in the interest of the rural women workers' well-being should be formulated and implemented.

5.4 Further Research

This study was limited by time and resource constraints. The researcher recommends that a comparative analysis between different regions in Nepal where carpet industries have relocated be undertaken. A further detailed study of the impact of rural migration to urban areas is required to quantify the effects on both the rural community and overall quality of life in the city. Social welfare aspects of employment in the carpet industries should also be explored, and in this respect the role of male and female workers, should be of interest to future researchers.

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APPENDIX I

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL
AND HORTICULTURAL SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

**THE ROLE OF NEPALI CARPET MANUFACTURING
INDUSTRIES IN ALLEVIATING RURAL POVERTY:
A CASE STUDY OF RURAL WOMEN WORKERS**

A SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY OF RURAL WOMEN WORKERS

Interviewer _____ Date of Interview _____
Name of the carpet factory _____
Location _____

A. Personal and Household Characteristics

1. Name:(optional) _____ 2. Age: _____
3. Marital status:

(a) Married	(b) Single
(c) Widow	(d) Other
4. Name of district you come from: _____
5. Arrival time in the city:
 _____Years _____Months
6. Educational background: Yes No
 If yes, what is your highest educational qualification? _____

7. Household size (number of people) _____
8. Number of dependents:

(a) _____Adults (above 16)
(b) _____Children (under 16)
9. If married, is your husband:

(a) Present	(b) Absent
-------------	------------

 If absent, how often do you see him? _____

10. Number of working family members:

- (a) _____ Adults
(b) _____ Children

11. What is the average total annual household income? Rs____per year

B. Employment Characteristics

1. Previous occupation_____
2. Reason for leaving previous occupation_____
3. Number of years/months employed at current occupation:
_____Years _____Months
4. How many hours per week are you expected to work in the current job?
_____Hours/week
5. Do you work on Saturdays? Yes No
If yes: _____Hours/week
6. How are you paid?
(a) wages (b) salary (c) contract rate
7. What is your average monthly 'take-home' pay? Rs_____per month
8. Does any member of your immediate family work in the same carpet factory? Yes No
If yes, who?_____

C. Farm Characteristics

1. Farming experience: How many years?_____
(a) Own family farm (b) Other farm
(If you tick (b), please go to Question 9)
2. If you have your own family farm, how many people are working on it at present?_____
3. What percentage of your household income comes from farming?

4. What types of crops do you grow?
(a) winter:_____

(b) summer: _____

5. Farm area (in ropani)

(a) Irrigated: Upland _____ Lowland _____

(b) Unirrigated: Upland _____ Lowland _____

6. What quantity of crops do you produce on your family farm?

	Crops	Quantity	Unit
(a)	_____	_____	_____
(b)	_____	_____	_____
(c)	_____	_____	_____
(d)	_____	_____	_____
(e)	_____	_____	_____
(f)	_____	_____	_____

7. Please indicate the number of livestock and poultry you have on your family farm.

Cows	_____	Buffaloes	_____
Goats	_____	Sheep	_____
Bullocks	_____	Heifers	_____
Poultry Birds	_____	Other	_____

8. How much average cash income do you earn in a year by selling your farm produce?

Rs _____ per year

9. If you worked on an other farm:

(a) How much were your earning? _____ per week
 (b) How many hours you worked? _____ per week
 (c) What was your responsibility? _____

D. General Characteristics

1. Do you belong to a community/social group of any kind?

Yes No

If yes, which group _____ What is your role? _____

2. Do you have any job besides that in the carpet factory?

Yes No

If yes, (a) Where? _____

(b) How many hours do you work? ____/week

(c) How much are you paid? Rs ____/day

3. Are you satisfied with your job at the carpet factory?

Yes No

If yes, why? _____

If not, why not? _____

4. Are you satisfied with your employer? Yes No

If yes, why? _____

If no, why not? _____

5. Are you satisfied with the working conditions?

Yes No

If yes, why? _____

If no, why not? _____

6. Did you encounter any problems when migrating to the city?

Yes No

If yes, what sorts of problems occurred _____

7. If the carpet factory shuts down, will you?

(a) Find another job (b) Move back to your village

(c) Remain unemployed (d) Unsure

Comment: _____

8. Could women like yourself get together and form a cooperative carpet carding/manufacturing unit? Yes No

What factors would allow/prevent such a group to be formed?

9. How much money on average, each month do you spend on?

(a) Food: Rs _____ (b) Clothing: Rs _____

(c) Housing: Rs _____ (d) Entertainment: Rs _____

(e) Other Items: Rs _____

10. How much money on average, each month do you save?

Savings: Rs _____

11. Has your household expenditure changed in any of the following areas since you started working in the carpet industry?

(a) Food Yes No
If yes, how? _____

(b) Clothing Yes No
If yes, how? _____

(c) Savings Yes No
If yes, how? _____

12. How has your employment contributed towards supporting your family household?

BENEFITS	REASON
Housing	
Education	
Health	
Child-care	
Entertainment	
Other	

13. Do you send any amount of your income home?
Yes No
If yes, how often? _____ How much? _____

14. If you send part of your income home, what is it used for?

(a)	Purchase of land	Yes	No
(b)	Children's education	Yes	No
(c)	Health/medical expenses	Yes	No
(d)	Food	Yes	No
(e)	Clothing	Yes	No
(f)	Other	Yes	No

15. How long do you plan to work in the carpet industry?
_____ years.

16. Moving ahead, five years, what work situation do you expect to be in?
- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|-----|------------------|
| (a) | at a carpet factory | (b) | on the home farm |
| (c) | working in the city | (d) | other |
17. General Comments: _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

THANKYOU FOR YOUR HELP

APPENDIX II

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL
AND HORTICULTURAL SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

THE ROLE OF NEPALI CARPET MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES IN ALLEVIATING RURAL POVERTY: A CASE STUDY OF RURAL WOMEN WORKERS

A RAPID DAIGNOSTIC SURVEY OF CARPET MANUFACTURERS

Name of the carpet manufacturer _____

Name of the person surveyed _____

Position of the person surveyed _____

Date of the survey _____ *Location* _____

1. How many people are currently working in your industry? _____
2. How many of them are women ? _____
3. Which parts of Nepal do the women primarily come from?

4. Are there special arrangements to recruit rural women workers into
the carpet industries? Yes No
If yes, please explain _____

5. What is the age distribution of women workers in your industry?
Please indicate the approximate number of women in each category.

_____ Under 16
_____ Between 16-20
_____ Between 21-30
_____ Between 31-40
_____ Above 40

6. What emphasis do you place on the following attributes when employing rural women?(Please circle one)

	V Low	Low	Mod	High	V High
Younger Age	1	2	3	4	5
Previous work experience	1	2	3	4	5
Carding Skills	1	2	3	4	5
Literacy Level	1	2	3	4	5
Prior training	1	2	3	4	5
Ethnic background	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please specify)	1	2	3	4	5

7. What facilities and services do carpet manufacturer's provide for the women workers?

(a) Schooling Yes No
If yes, who is eligible? _____

Is the programme held on the premises? Yes No
If no, where? _____

(b) Health Services Yes No
If yes, who is eligible? _____

Are they provided on the premises? Yes No
If no, where? _____

(c) Housing Yes No
If yes, what does it include? _____

Is it located on the premises? Yes No
If no, where? _____

(d) Child-care facilities Yes No
If yes, how many children? _____
Are the facilities on the premises? Yes No
If no, where? _____

(e) Toilet and bathing facilities Yes No

- Are the facilities on the premises? Yes No
 If no, where? _____

- (f) Transportation(pick-up and drop-off services) Yes No
 If yes, what is the mode? _____
 What is the capacity(distance cover, no. of passengers)?

- (g) Organisation of Social groups Yes No
 If yes, what type? _____

 Do they meet on the premises? Yes No
 If no, where? _____

- (h) Other Yes No

8. Do you allow employment of family members? Yes No
 If yes, are there any restrictions? _____

9. Do you provide skill training for the children of women employees?
 Yes No
10. What are the hours of employment in your industry?
 Normal _____Hrs/ week
 Peak Demand _____Hrs/ week
11. Do women workers in your industry belong to a union?
 Yes No
12. Do you involve women in decision making processes in the workplace?
 Yes No
 If yes, please explain how? _____

13. Do you include women's viewpoints and suggestion when formulating new policies for the industry?
 Yes No
 If yes, please explain how? _____

14. How do you prefer to pay women workers?
 (a) wage payments at an hourly rate Yes No
 If yes, why? _____

If no, why not? _____

- | (b) | monthly salary | Yes | No |
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If yes, why? _____

If no, why not? _____

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|-----|----|
| (c) | contract rate for work completed | Yes | No |
|-----|----------------------------------|-----|----|

If yes, why? _____

If no, why not?

- (d) What is your current practice?_____

15. Do women workers receive paid leave? Yes No
If yes, how many days of paid leave per year are allowed? _____

16. Is the contribution of rural women significant to the success of carpet manufacturers? Yes No
If yes, in what way?

If no, why not? _____

- [illegible]

THANKYOU FOR YOUR HELP