

Understanding Socio-economic Dynamics Shaping Rural Settlement of Chaurideurali, Kavre, Nepal

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Abstract

This study explores the socio-economic dynamics shaping rural settlements in Chaurideurali, Kavre, Nepal. The main objective of this study is to understand the socio-economic factors of rural settlements in Chaurideurali. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to provide a holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the community. The discussion of the study highlights significant challenges: widespread poverty, a predominantly elderly population due to youth migration, low literacy rates, and reliance on traditional, low-yield agriculture. The study reveals that 55 percent of the surveyed population is female, reflecting male outmigration, while 51 percent are over 61 years old. Fragmented and infertile land limits agricultural productivity, contributing to economic vulnerability, with 48 percent of households earning less than NPR 10,000 per month. Also, cultural resilience remains strong, with deep-rooted Hindu and Buddhist traditions and community-led rituals fostering social bonds. However, these practices are evolving amidst economic pressures and environmental challenges, including climate change and unsustainable land use. This study provides a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic conditions in Chaurideurali. It underscores the need for integrated, community-focused, and environmentally sustainable development initiatives to address poverty, reduce outmigration, and foster resilience in rural settlements.

Keywords: socio-economic dynamics, rural settlement, Chaurideurali, poverty, migration, sustainable development

Introduction

Rural settlements in Nepal are integral to the nation's socio-economic framework, housing a substantial portion of the population and contributing significantly to the agricultural sector. Chaurideurali, located in the Kavrepalanchowk district of Bagmati Province, represents both the opportunities and challenges inherent in rural development. The administrative restructuring in 2017, which amalgamated several Village Development Committees into the Chaurideurali Rural Municipality, marked a critical shift aimed at improving resource management and governance (Acharya, 2018). This change, however, also introduced socio-economic transitions influenced by migration, environmental pressures, and evolving economic structures (Yao et al., 2023).

Economically, Chaurideurali's residents predominantly rely on agriculture, with 75 percent of households engaged in farming activities despite the constraints of infertile and fragmented land

(Field Survey, 2023). Rising costs of living, limited job opportunities, and inadequate infrastructure further compound vulnerabilities. Demographic data from the 2021 census reveals a skewed age distribution, with a significant elderly population, as younger residents migrate to urban areas or abroad for better prospects (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

Cultural practices rooted in Hindu and Buddhist traditions remain a cornerstone of Chaurideurali's identity. Festivals, rituals, and community events serve to strengthen social cohesion, but these traditions are increasingly challenged by economic pressures and modernization (del Mármol et al., 2018). This dynamic underscores a tension between preserving cultural heritage and adapting to socio-economic shifts. Additionally, environmental challenges, particularly climate change, threaten agricultural productivity and the overall sustainability of the settlement. Shifting weather patterns and resource depletion necessitate adaptive strategies to mitigate these impacts (Yadav, 2024; Yao et al., 2023).

This study investigates the socio-economic dynamics shaping Chaurideurali's rural settlement, focusing on education, income, migration trends, land use, and cultural evolution. By providing an in-depth understanding of these factors, the study aims to support targeted government and community-led interventions for sustainable development and improved quality of life in the region.

Method and Methodology

The methodology of this study is designed to comprehensively assess the socio-economic dynamics shaping rural settlements in Chaurideurali, Kavre, Nepal. A mixed methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Data were collected through household surveys: Structured questionnaires were administered, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): Interviews were conducted with local leaders; Field Observations: On-site observations were conducted

The study was conducted in Ward 4 of Chaurideurali Rural Municipality, located in the Kavrepalanchowk District of Bagmati Province. This rural settlement, formed during the administrative restructuring of Nepal in 2017, is characterized by fragmented agricultural land, limited infrastructure, and significant out-migration trends (CBS, 2021).

Sampling Design

A stratified random sampling method was employed to select 76 households out of a total of 381 in Ward 4, ensuring representation of diverse socio-economic groups. Stratification was based on factors such as income levels, land ownership, and occupation to ensure inclusivity in the data collection process. The sample size was determined using the Arkin and Colton (1963) formula, with a 95 percent confidence level and a 10 percent error margin. This approach was chosen to achieve reliable and generalizable findings for understanding the socio-economic dynamics in Chaurideurali.

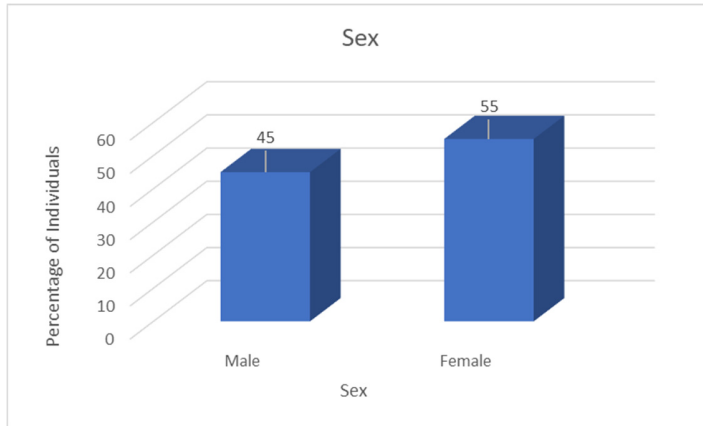
Results and Discussion

The findings of the study highlight the important potential and challenges while providing crucial insight into the socio-economic dynamics of the Chaurideurali's rural settlement. The key results include widespread poverty, a skewed demographic distribution that dominates an elderly population due to outmigration, and limited agricultural productivity, exacerbated by infertile and fragmented land. Data from household surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages and means, to identify patterns and trends in socio-economic characteristics.

Sex Distribution

The study results, Ward 4 in Chaurideurali has gender inequalities, with females accounting for 55 percent. This uneven sex ratio can be linked to significant male outmigration in search of work opportunities.

Figure 1: Sex Distribution in Chaurideurali



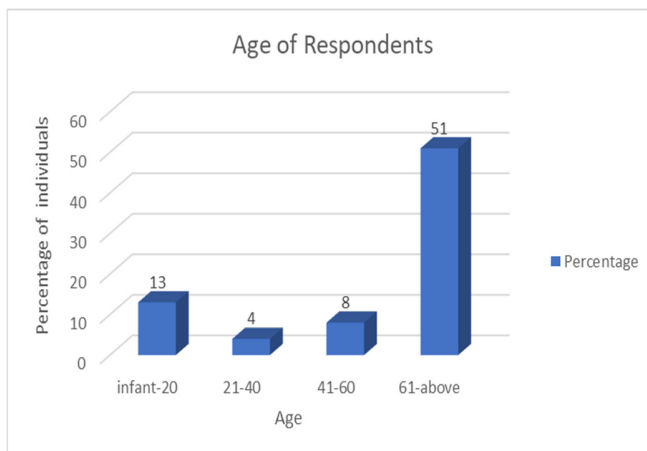
Source: Field survey, 2023

This phenomenon highlights the economic need that drives males to seek employment outside of their local area, most likely due to a lack of local job opportunities. Similarly, such a demographic trend might have far-reaching societal consequences, including increasing responsibilities for women in both domestic and communal activities, as well as a possible shift in social dynamics and support networks.

Age-based composition of the household

Out of 76 respondents, 13 percent were in the age group of infants to 20 years old, 4 were in the age group between 21-40, 8 percent were in the age group between 41-60, and 51 percent were in the age group between 61 and above.

Figure 2: Age Composition of Respondents in Chaurideurali



Source: Field survey, 2023

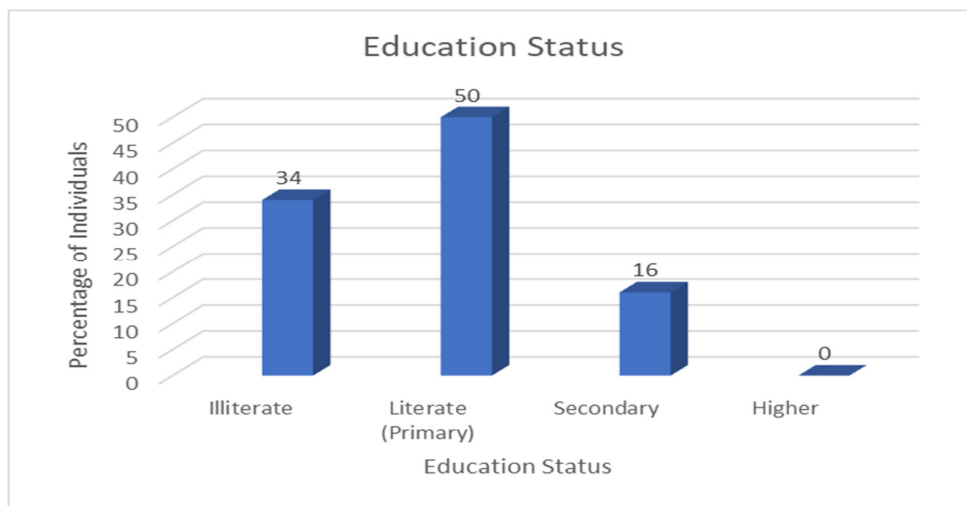
Out of 76 respondents, 13 percent were in the age group of less than to 20 years old, 4 were in the age group between 21-40, 8 percent were in the age group between 41-60 years, and 51 percent were in the age group between 61 years and above.

This demographic trend illustrates the village's considerable outmigration of young people, which is most likely caused by a lack of access to education, healthcare, and jobs. The large number of senior residents indicates potential challenges with healthcare demands and social support networks. Furthermore, the decreased presence of working-age people has also hindered local economic growth and social engagement.

The education status of the respondents

Education status of the respondents. Out of 76 respondents, 34 percent were illiterate, 50 percent were literate at the primary level, 16 percent had studied until the secondary level, and there was not a single respondent who had completed higher education.

Figure 3: Educational status of Respondents in Chaurideurali



Source: Field survey, 2023

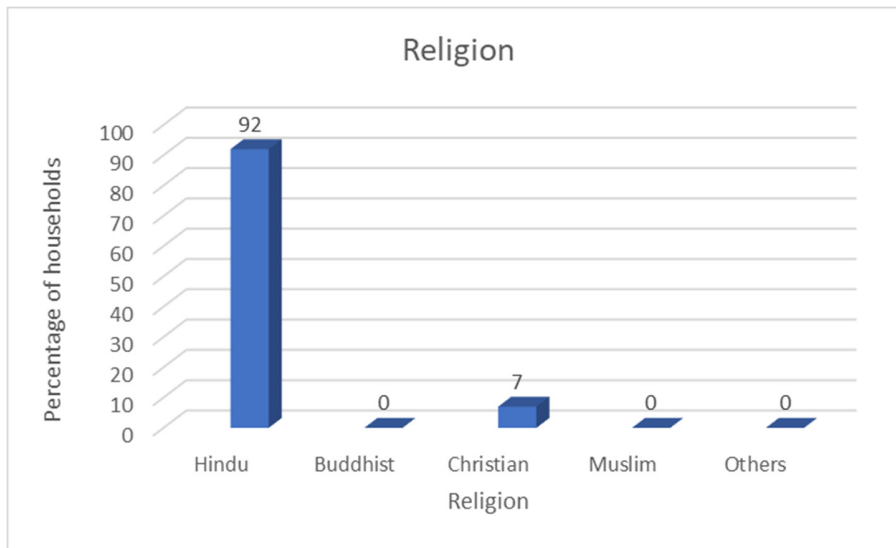
The data above suggests that the educational status in Chaurideurali was notably low. The major reason for this was mainly due to the limited educational infrastructure, characterized by distant schools and insufficient transportation, which contributes to high dropout rates. Additionally, economic constraints prevent many families from affording education. The low number of higher education graduates implies major challenges to access to learning and achievement, which fuels poverty cycles and hampers socioeconomic mobility.

However, the education situation has been improving in recent years, as some schools have started providing free food for students.

The religious composition

The religious composition of the surveyed households in Chaurideurali is predominantly showed a majority of the Hindu population, i.e., 92 percent, with a minority Christian presence of 7 percent.

Figure 4: Religious Composition of the Surveyed Households in Chaurideurali



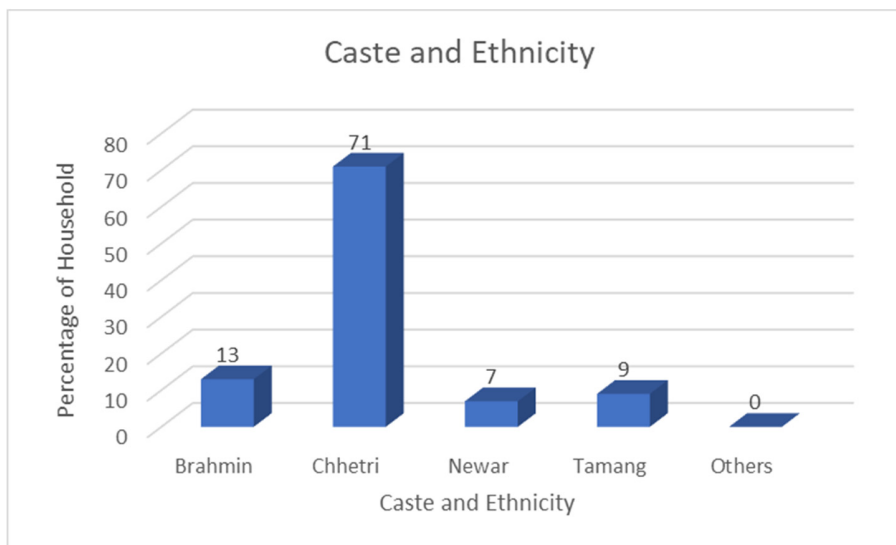
Source: Field survey, 2023

This demographic detail not only reflects the cultural and religious fabric of the community but also has potential implications for local customs, festivals, and social cohesion. Understanding the religious dynamics is crucial for implementing culturally sensitive development initiatives and fostering inclusive community engagement.

Caste and Ethnicity

The caste and ethnic composition of the respondents shows that the majority of Chhetri is 71 percent, followed by Brahmin 13 percent, and Tamang 9 percent. This demographic distribution highlights the social hierarchy and cultural diversity within the village. Likewise, the dominance of Chhetri may influence local power dynamics, social practices, and access to resources.

Figure 5: Caste and ethnic composition of the respondents in Chauriderali

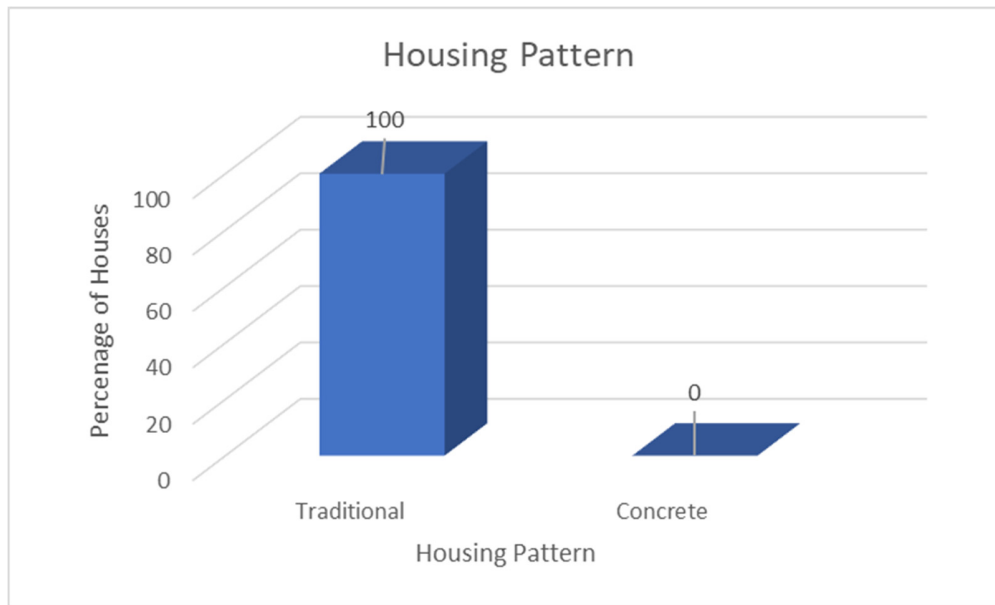


Source: Field survey, 2023

Housing Pattern

As Chaurideurali is dominant with rural settlements, the data reveals that all surveyed households reside in traditional structures, reflecting the rural and agrarian nature of Chaurideurali. The absence of modern housing also indicates limited economic resources and access to construction materials.

Figure 6: *Housing Pattern in the Research Area*



Source: Field survey, 2023

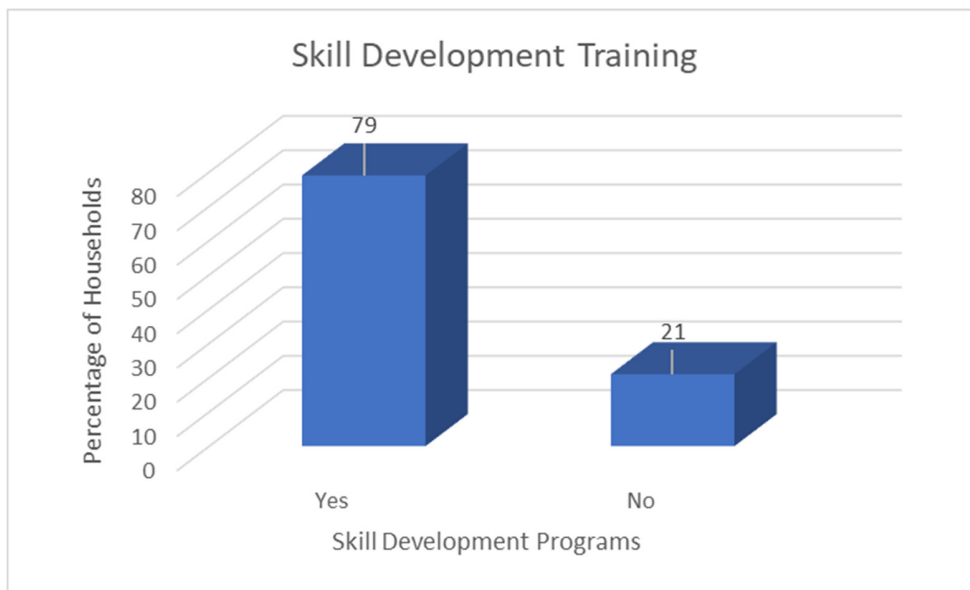
Skill Development Programs

The figure shows the skill development programs attended by the respondents in the study area. Data shows that 79 percent of the respondents attended skill development programs, whereas 21 percent didn't.

Some of the major skill development programs provided by Ward 4 are sewing and knitting, beautician training, carpentry, agricultural and animal husbandry-based training, and many more.

This implies a positive attitude towards capacity-building efforts. Programs like sewing, knitting, carpentry, and agricultural training are critical for improving local livelihoods. However, 21 percent of those who did not engage seemed to lack access or awareness, suggesting the need for more inclusive engagement and support methods.

Figure 7: Skill development programs in Chaurideurali

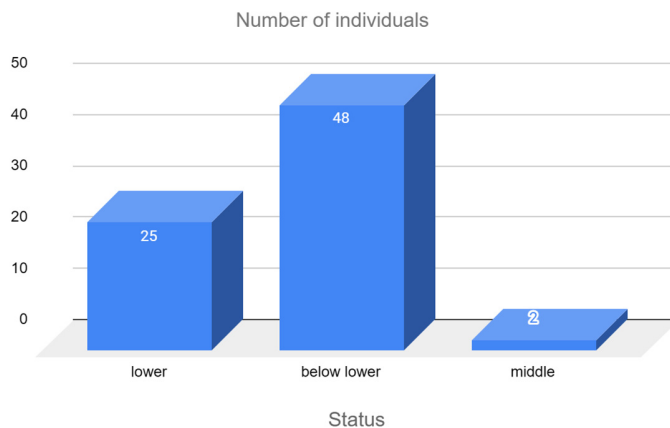


Source: Field survey, 2023

Income level

Income is one of the most important things for survival. There are different sources of income, such as business, agriculture, services, poultry farming, and foreign employment. In ward 4 of Chaurideurali, 48 percent had a lower income level, 25 percent had a lower income level, and only 2 percent of the respondents had a middle income.

Figure 8: Income level of the respondents



Source: Field Survey, 2023

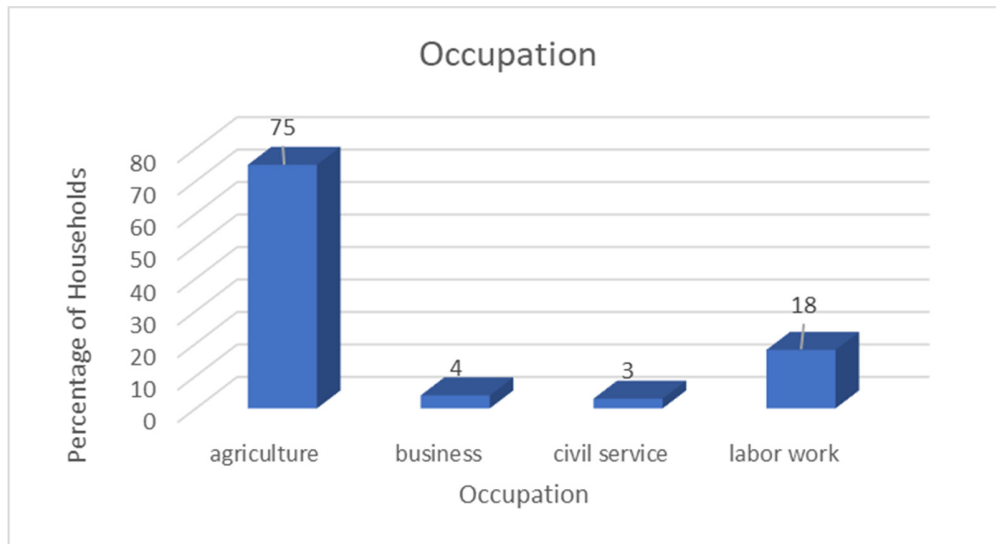
The data reveal a significant economic challenge, with the majority of households earning less than NPR 10,000 per month, significantly lower than the national average of NPR 30,000-35,000."The average monthly household income of Nepal is 30,000–35,000 as of 2023. (NRB, 2023)

This income difference highlights the economic deprivation of Chaurideurali inhabitants. The reliance on agriculture, along with infertile land and a lack of irrigation, worsens the situation. Likewise, the absence of additional sources of income and employment prospects in the area has also presented a significant challenge to the local population.

Occupation

The rural economy suffers from poor agricultural production as a result of infertile soil and inadequate irrigation. This indicates a need for diversifying the economy and the creation of non-farm job possibilities. In addition, strengthening local enterprises and services might give alternative livelihoods while reducing economic vulnerability.

Figure 9: Occupations of the respondent



Source: Field survey, 2023

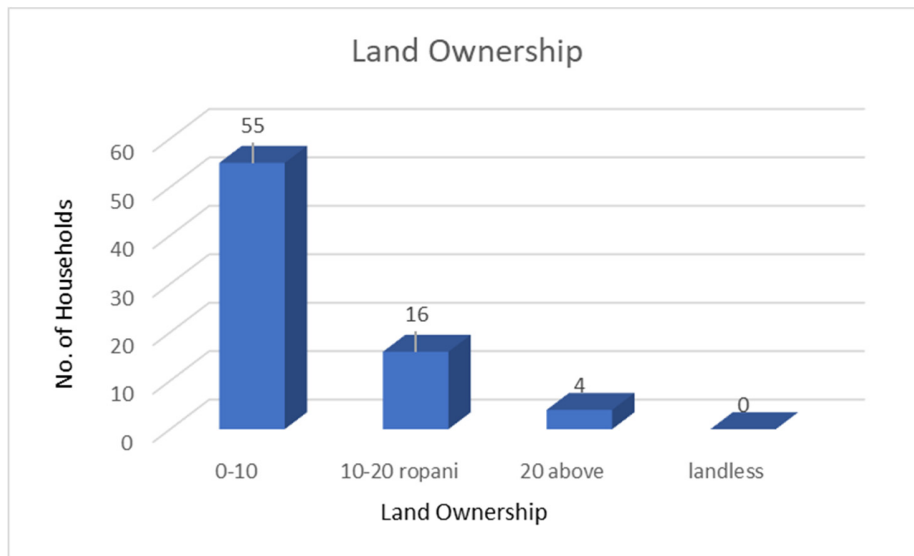
The figure 9 depicts that 75 percent of respondents were engaged in an agricultural occupation, 18 percent were working as laborers., 4 percent were engaged in business as their main occupation, and only 3 percent were working as civil servants.

Though the dominance of agriculture in the occupations of the respondents suggests that the economy is still largely agrarian, agricultural productivity is insufficient to support the livelihood of the residents of the area.

The relatively small proportion of respondents working in business or as civil servants suggests that these sectors are less developed. This could be due to a number of factors, such as a lack of investment, skills, or infrastructure.

Land Ownership

The majority of households possess less than 10 ropani of land, suggesting small and scattered land holdings. While no respondents reported being landless, limited-sized plots and infertile land hinder agricultural productivity. This fragmentation restricts economies in agriculture and keeps low incomes.

Figure 10: Land ownership of the surveyed households

Source: Field survey, 2023

The figure 10 shows the land ownership of the surveyed households. From the bar diagram, it can be seen that 55 percent have less than 10 ropani, 16 percent of households have 10-20 ropani, and 4 percent have land ownership above 20 ropani. Hence, it is evident that all of them owned land, and no respondent was found to be landless.

Conclusion

This study explores the socio-economic dynamics shaping rural settlements in Chaurideurali, Kavre, Nepal, offering critical insights into the multifaceted challenges and opportunities facing the community. Findings reveal a settlement marked by economic vulnerabilities, demographic imbalances, and environmental pressures. Key issues such as low-income levels and high illiteracy rates, fragmented and infertile agricultural land, and significant outmigration highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions.

Despite these challenges, Chaurideurali retains a rich cultural heritage rooted in Hindu and Buddhist traditions. Community events and rituals play a crucial role in fostering social cohesion and preserving identity amidst socio-economic transitions. However, these traditions are increasingly under pressure from modern economic demands and migration trends, necessitating adaptive strategies to maintain cultural resilience.

The study underscores the critical role of government and community-led initiatives in addressing these challenges. Investment in education, healthcare, and infrastructure is vital to improving quality of life, while sustainable agricultural practices and skill development programs can enhance economic resilience. Furthermore, tackling environmental challenges through nature-based solutions and climate-resilient practices is essential for securing the settlement's long-term sustainability.

The research also highlights the broader implications for rural settlements across Nepal. As a case study, Chaurideurali provides valuable insights into the complex interplay of socio-economic and cultural factors, offering a model for addressing similar challenges in other regions. Collaborative, culturally sensitive, and environmentally sustainable approaches will be key to ensuring the holistic

development of rural communities and fostering equity and inclusivity in Nepal's broader development narrative.

By identifying the critical areas for intervention, this study aims to contribute to the knowledge base on rural development and inform policy-making processes that support sustainable and inclusive growth for Chaurideurali and comparable rural settlements.

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