Determinants of the Quality of Life of Rural Household Heads in Chitawan*

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Introduction

A lot of work has been done in the field of the quality of life—both objective as well as subjective—experienced by people in countries such as the United States (Elbert 1982; Kim and Muller 1978; Hefferman 1982). The indicators employed to measure the objective quality of life include economic wellbeing, education, housing, health services, marital status, recreation, residence, occupation, environment, etc. (Treamblay et al. 1983), whereas those used in assessing the subjective quality of life entail measuring attitudes toward family life, value system, preferences, belief and goals in terms of happiness, satisfaction and a sense of wellbeing. All these indicators are self-rating measures to determine the general levels of satisfaction and feeling of happiness perceived by people. Commenting on satisfaction and feeling of happiness, Wilkening and McGranahan (1980: 3) report that

> Satisfaction depends upon the perceived relationship
> between standards and attainments and the feeling of
> happiness upon one's tone and feeling, which vary
> with mood, place and the situation at a particular
> time.

Usually, satisfaction is the fulfilment of needs. Life satisfaction is concerned with one's overall situation, including one's life achievement, while happiness reflects current feeling about one's immediate circumstances. Thus life satisfaction and happiness are considered to be important subjective indicators of the quality of life. In order to assess the quality of life experienced by people it is important to know its subjective as well as objective dimensions. Through their knowledge one can measure the quality of life as perceived by them; the quality of life is considered to be "an outcome of the interaction between the objective conditions existing in an area and the subjective feeling of the people living in that area" (Treamblay et al. 1982: 3). The

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subjective and objective dimensions are complimentary to each other. The objective indicators are very commonly used by researchers in comparision to the subjective indicators. However, one cannot underestimate the importance of the latter which has a great impact on the objective dimension of life. Wilknening and McGranahan (1980: 4) state that the

> ...subjective indicators of the quality of life are
> essential for understanding the impact of objective
> conditions and public policies and programs upon
> individual well-being; their usefulness is not
> dependent upon any particular theoretical concep-
> tion of society and its dynamics. Subjective indi-
> cators can be useful for those who view society as
> the resolution of conflicting classes and interests
> as well as for those who view society as the striv-
> ing of individuals to satisfy their needs within a
> framework of systems responsive to those needs.

The quality of life experienced by people differ from country to country due to the variation in economic, socio-cultural, political and religious settings. The feeling about life is highly affected by value system, culture, religion, ascribed and achieved status, etc. As such, a single index cannot determine the quality of life. An individual, on the other hand, is considered to be the best judge to evaluate his quality of life.

Very little has been done in the field of the quality of life in Nepal. As a result, there is a great paucity of data on it. In a socio-logical study on ethnicity and rural development, Pyakuryal (1982: 167) reported that the lower the ethnicity (ethnic quality or affiliation) the better the quality of life and higher (more) the level of satisfaction regarding the changes occurring in a village. In another study of rural poverty prevalent in Chitwan and hill villages, Bhandari et al. (1985: 27) reported that 45 percent of the sampled household heads were satis-fied with life in general in the Hills as opposed to 3 percent in the Tarai. The level of satisfaction in the hills increased with the in-crease in the caste status.

Besides these two pioneering works, no other studies on Nepal pro-vide sufficient data to examine the quality of life both on subjective as well as objective dimension. Nor is there any study being done in Nepal to provide a baseline against which future change might be asses-sed. This study has been designed against this background. Its primary purpose is to examine the quality of life as perceived by the people in the rural areas in a more systematic way by obtaining hard data and facts on various social and economic characteristics of the household heads in Chitawan. The quality of life discussed here is the subjective feeling expressed in terms of levels of satisfaction on selected domains of life. Its major objectives are:

1.   to examine the level of satisfaction experienced by the household
     heads on selected domains of life such as children's education,
     health and physical condition, spouse's and head's own health and
     physical condition and income of the family;

2.   to determine the level of satisfaction perceived by household heads
      about their life in general, happiness and hopes for their child-
      ren's future;

3.   to assess the quality of life as it relates to economic and occupa-
      tional categories and caste groups; and

4.   to investigate the proportion of household heads who trust fate to
      achieve success in life.

      The Setting: The survey was conducted in two village panchayats of
Chitwan district, Patihani and Mangalpur. These two areas can easily be
reached by driving from the headquarter of the district, Bharatpur. One
ward each from these panchayats was selected for the study. Three main
criteria were used to select sites: the degree of concentration of land
ownership; heterogenous population composition with regard to caste and
occupation and easy accessibility. A majority of the inhabitants are
migrants from the other parts of the kingdom. The aborigines such as
the Tharus and the Botes are in minority. There were altogether 374
household heads. However, only 371 household heads were interviewed to
collect information.

Methodology

      A household census was taken in the two wards during the month of
May, 1983. The quality of life was measured on a three-point scale
ranging from "satisfied" to "dissatisfied". The hope for children's
future was also developed into a composite score from a three-point
scale ranging from "high" to "low".

      The questionnaires were edited in the field for clarity, complete-
ness and consistency. A post-survey interview was also conducted on 3
percent of the respondents after the administration of the interview
schedules to review and corss-check the information already collected.
No discrepancies were found between the information on the actual inter-
view and the post-survey interview.

      The derived measures of subjective feeling about quality of life
experienced by the household heads include both single answer to ques-
tion and series of answers combined into a score. The level of satis-
faction with life in general was obtained with reference to specific
domains of life and that of happiness was also obtained. The score on
life satisfaction was constructed by adding values assigned to responses
(3= Satisfied, 2= Indifferent and 1= Dissatisfied) and dividing the total
sum of values by the total number of responses (such as children's educa-
tion and their health and physical conditions, head's own and spouse's
health and physical condition, income and general happiness) to make the
values comparable to the single response measures.

      In addition to self-rating on these selected domains of life, data
were obtained on the determination of success in life. The analysis of
data on the general quality of life by economic-cum-occupational category

and caste grouping is included in the cross tabulation. The higher castes included Brahmans and Kshetrys; whereas the middle castes included Gurung, Magars, Newars etc. and the lower castes the untouchables. Because of the differences in their social and economic characteristics and ethnicity, the Tharus and Botes--the aborigines of Chitawan--were reported as such in a caste group. The multivariate analysis and factor analysis of the selected social and economic characteristics are presented in order to show their relationship with quality of life.

Result and Discussion

The result suggests that in a three-point scale ranging from satisfaction to dissatisfaction on selected domains of life, 25 percent of the total household heads are satisfied with these domains and the rest are dissatisfied or indifferent. And the mean level for objective quality of life is only two.

As regards the subjective determinants of the quality of life, the overall means for satisfaction in life and general happiness are 1.95. The mean for expectation about their children's futures is 1.37. The observation shows that the household heads have higher objective quality of life index (2.00) than the subjective quality of life (1.76). Only 15.9 percent household heads believe in fatalism to determine success in life as opposed to 84.1 who believe in hard labour as determining success.

Determinants of the Objective Quality of Life

The objective quality of life is reported here in terms of a continuum of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in selected domains such as income, education, health and physical condition of the household, head spouse and children. Questions were asked to determine their levels of satisfaction in those domains. The results of their responses are displayed in Table 1.

The response by the household head to our question, "How satisfied are you with your children's education"? shows that 24.1 percent reported satisfaction against 25.7 percent who reported dissatisfaction. Similar questions were asked in other domains, too. Regarding the responses to health and physical condition of household head's own and his/her children, the proportion of the satisfied household heads is slightly higher than those of the dissatisfied ones, while the proportion of the satisfied ones is lower than that of the dissatisfied ones in the domains of spouse's health and physical condition and income of the family. The mean level of satisfaction is highest for children's health and physical condition (2.06) and lowest for income of the family (1.88).

The mean level of satisfaction on these domains increases with the increase in the size of landholding in most of the domains of life (Table 2). However, the medium sized farm household heads show somewhat lower mean level of satisfaction on children's education, income of the family and children's health and physical conditions. In terms of occupation, craftmen and fishermen appear to have the highest level of satisfaction in all domains of life.

Table - 1

Percentage Distribution of Responses to General Satisfaction in Life by Selected Domains in Life.

Selected Domains in Life	Responses to General Satisfaction					
	Satis-fied	Indif-ferent	Dissa-tisfied	Total%	Mean Level	N
Children's education	25.2%	49.2%	25.7%	100	1.99	327
Head's health & physical condition	23.0	56.8	20.2	100	2.02	361
Spouse's health & physical condition	17.1	63.7	19.2	100	1.98	339
Children's health & physical condition	20.2	65.3	14.5	100	2.06	346
Income of family	13.0	61.8	25.2	100	1.88	361
Total:	25.1	49.2	25.7	100	2.00	-

Table - 2

Mean Level of Satisfaction and Economic-cum Occupational Category

Domains of Life	Land-less	Near Land-less	Mar-ginal	Small Farm	Medium Farm	Govt. Job + Busi-ness	Craft Work + Fishing
Children's education	1.67	1.92	2.09	2.14	1.75	1.96	2.12
Head's health and physical condition	1.96	2.01	2.00	2.04	2.11	2.13	2.42
Spouse's health and physical condition	1.93	1.86	1.96	1.88	2.88	2.18	2.20
Children's health and physical condition	2.06	2.05	2.07	2.16	2.00	1.90	2.20
Income of family	1.60	1.72	1.92	2.14	1.88	1.83	3.14

The Tharu and the Bote caste groups show a higher level of satis-faction than other groups in all domains of life (Table 3). The Brahmans

show lowest levels of satisfaction in all domains excepting an income of the family whereas the lower caste groups show lowest levels of satisfaction in all domains. On the whole, the Kshetrys show relatively higher levels of satisfaction.

In conclusion, it can be said that the higher caste and medium-sized farm household heads are less satisfied with selected domains of life than other categories and groups.

<p align="center">Table - 3</p>

Mean Level of Satisfaction and Caste Groups.

Domains of Life	Lower Caste	Gurung,Magar Newar etc.	Kshetry	Brahman	Tharu + Bote
Children's education	1.95	1.91	1.01	1.37	2.05
Head's health and physical condition	1.94	2.07	2.13	1.95	2.15
Spouse's health and physical condition	2.02	1.93	2.05	1.85	2.12
Children's health and physical condition	2.07	2.01	2.12	2.01	2.04
Income of family	1.76	1.85	1.85	1.95	1.90

Determinants of the Subjective Quality of Life

The subjective quality of life is measured in terms of the levels of satisfaction on three aspects in life: general satisfaction in life, happiness and hopes for children's future.

Life Satisfaction: Satisfaction about life in general varies by economic and occupational category (Table 4). The landless household heads report the lowest life satisfaction (1.84), which is lower than overall mean of 1.95, while the craft work and fishing household heads report the highest (2.12). The level of life satisfaction increases slightly but not significantly with the increase in the size of landholding. The government job and business household heads show the mean level of life satisfaction, compared to the landholding category possibly due to their marginal business enterprises and lower level of governmental jobs such as peon, milkman, watchman, etc.

Happiness: The mean level of happiness increases with the increase in the size of landholding (Table 4). The household heads who are in governmental job, business, crafts, and fishing have a level of happiness above the overall mean, while the landless, near-landless and marginal household heads have a mean level of happiness lower than the overall mean.

Table - 4

Mean Levels of Quality of Life by Economic and Occupational Category

Economic & Occupational Category	Mean Level		
	Life Satis-faction[1]	Happiness[2]	Expection About Children's Future[3]
Landless[4]	1.84	1.07	1.18
Nearlandless (< 0.6 bigha)	2.08	1.89	1.23
Marginal (0.6 to 1 bigha)	2.01	1.90	1.40
Small farm (1.4-4 bigha)	2.09	2.11	1.66
Medium farm (> 4 bigha)	2.08	2.11	1.33
Government + Job & Business[5]	1.98	2.00	1.33
Craft Work and Fishing[6]	2.12	2.08	2.17
Overall mean	1.95	1.95	1.37
N	347	366	356

1.   Score of life satisfaction is based upon average responses to the
     question: "How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of
     those aspect of life such as children's education, head's, spouse's
     and children's health and physical condition, and income of family?
     3=satisfied, 2=indifferent, and 1=dissatisfied.

2.   The mean level of happiness is based upon the method adopted in the
     computation of life satisfaction score on a single question, "Con-
     sidering all you have how happy are you?" 3=happy, 2=indifferent
     and 1=unhappy.

3.   The mean level of children's future is calculated on the basis of
     responses to question: "What level of life you think your children
     will attain at your age?" 3=high, 2=medium and 1=low.

4.   The landless are those people who do not own any land, reside in
     rural areas and depend upon agricultural works for their livelihood.

5.   Includes full-time employees of government offices, corporation,
     cooperatives, schools and panchayat office. The business people
     are marginal businessmen, local tradesmen and local contractors.

6.   Includes men and women involved primarily in fishing, tailoring
     carpentry, pottery, cane and bamboo work, etc.

Expectation of Children's Future: Data on the expectation expressed by the household heads of their children's future show that the levels of expectation increases with the increases in the landholding size of the family. The economic and occupational categories-- landless, nearlandless, government job and business and craft work and fishing household heads-- show the level of their expectation about their children's future lower than the total average level of 1.35.

In all the three domains of the subjective quality of life, the landless household heads show a level of satisfaction which is lower than the overall mean.

Subjective Quality of Life and Caste Grouping

Life satisfaction: Life satisfaction does not vary significantly by caste grouping (Table 5). The highest mean level is reported by the Kshetrys (2.00) and the lowest by the Botes and Tharus (1.83). In fact, the level of life satisfaction is lower for the Tharus and Botes than for the total population. The lower caste groups fare well with other groups.

Happiness: Happiness, which reflects current feelings about one's immediate circumstances, does not vary consistently by caste groups. The mean level of happiness reported by the Gurung, the Magar, the Newar caste groups is the highest of all the other caste groups. The lower caste people report the least happiness of all caste groups. Only the lower castes and the Brahmans report levels of happiness lower than the mean level. The Kshetrys, the Tharus and the Botes also report a greater feeling of happiness than the mean level.

Expectation of children's future: The level of expectation of children's future is reported high (2.18) among the Gurung, the Magar, the Newar while it is low (1.17) among the lower caste people. The Tharu, the Bote and the lower caste people reported feeling of happiness about their children's future at a level lower than the mean while the other caste groups report happiness above the mean.

The data demonstrate the fact that the lower caste people have the lowest score in all the three domains of life. Compared to other caste groups, the Brahmans report levels of life satisfaction and feeling of happiness lower than mean level. However, their low perception about life satisfaction and feeling of happiness needs to be further explored. Although the Tharus and the Botes reported low life satisfaction and low expectation of their children's future, they appear more happy.

About 70 percent of the household heads believe that life standards for their children would be low in future (table not included here). Hopes for a high standard of life for children increase with the increasing size of landholdings. A similar pattern is found among household heads expecting a medium life standard for children in future. Neither the Tharu nor the Bote have a high expectation of his/her children's future. Accordingly, the obtained chi-square value is significant at 0.01 level for both economic and occupational categories and caste groups.

Table - 5

Mean Levels of Quality of Life by Caste Groups

Caste Groups	Mean Level		
	Life Satisfaction	Happiness	Expectation about Children's future
Lower caste	1.94	1.90	1.17
Gurung, Magar, Newar etc.	1.96	2.08	2.18
Kshetry	2.00	2.00	1.47
Brahman	1.96	1.93	1.48
Tharu & Bote	1.83	2.05	1.22
Overall mean	1.95	1.95	1.37
N	347	366	356

A Comparision Between Subjective & Objective Quality of Life by Economic-cum-Occupational Category

The mean level of subjective quality of life is postitively related to the size of the landholding (Table 6). The medium-sized farm house-hold heads show the highest score at 1.96. However, scores of the land-less and the governmental job and business household heads are low at 1.51. The score of the craft work and fishing household heads is slight-ly higher than that of the near-landless. The lowest score (1.51) is shown by the landless groups.

Table - 6

Quality of Life Score and Economic-cum-occupational Category

Economic-cum-occupational Category	Mean Score	
	Subjective quality of life	Objective quality of life
Landless	1.51	1.83
Near-landless	1.73	1.90
Marginal	1.77	2.00
Small farm	1.95	2.11
Medium farm	1.96	2.13
Government job and business	1.51	2.00
Craft work and fishing	1.74	2.21
Overall mean	1.76	2.00

As regards the objective quality of life, it is positively related with the size of the landholding. The landless category has the lowest quality of life scores both for objective as well as subjective dimensions. On objective quality of life craft work and fishing category shows the highest score, while on the subjective quality of life, the medium-sized farm category has the highest score.

A Comparision Between Subjective and Objective Quality of Life by Caste Groupings

No consistent pattern is discernible on the distribution of the subjective quality of life score by caste groups (Table 7). The Gurung, Magar, & Newar caste groups show the highest (2.07) subjective quality of life score and the lower caste groups the lowest (1.67). However, on the objective quality of life, the Tharu and the Bote show the highest mean score (2.05) and the Brahmans the lowest (1.83).

Table - 7

Quality of Life Score and Caste Groups

Caste Groups	Mean Score	
	Subjective quality of life	Objective quality of life
Lower caste	1.67	1.94
Gurung, Magar, Newar, etc.	2.07	1.95
Kshetry	1.83	1.84
Brahman	1.76	1.83
Tharu and Bote	1.70	2.05
Overall mean	1.76	2.00

Determination of Success in Life

The responses to our question "Is success in life determined by fate or by hard labour?" are presented by economic and occupational category and caste groups in Table 8 and 9, respectively. About four-fifths of the household heads reported that success in life depended on hard labour compared to the one-fifth who reported otherwise. A high percentage of the craft work and fishing household heads (32.1%) reported that fate determines success in life, compared to the government job and business household heads (8.3%). Only 22.2 percent of the medium-sized farm household heads believe in fate to determine success in life.

The highest percentage of the household heads who believe in fate to determine success in life are the Tharus and the Botes, the second-highest being the Brahmans. On the other hand a very high proportion of the Kshetrys (89.5%) believe in hard labour to determine success in life.

Table - 8

Percentage Distribution of Economic and Occupational Category by Fate and Hard Labour.

Economic and Occupational Category	Fate	Hard Labour	Total	N
Landless	18.4	81.6	100	49
Near-landless	15.8	84.2	100	76
Marginal	12.7	87.3	100	110
Small farm	15.9	84.1	100	63
Medium farm	22.2	77.8	100	9
Government Job & Business	8.3	91.7	100	36
Graft Work and Fishing	32.1	67.9	100	28
Total	15.9	84.1	100	371

Table - 9

Percentage Distribution of Caste Groups by Fate and Hard Labour

Caste Group	Fate	Hard Labour	Total	N
Lower caste	16.3%	83.7%	100%	86
Gurung, Magar, Newar & other	12.5	87.5	100	56
Kshetry	10.5	89.5	100	16
Brahman	18.0	82.0	100	111
Tharu and Bote	23.8	76.2	100	42
Total	15.9	84.1	100	371

Multivariate Analysis

The household heads were asked how dissatisfied, indifferent or satisfied they were with their children's education, their own, their spouses' and children's health and physical condition and income of the family. Their responses were coded as satisfied = 3, indifferent = 2, and dissatisfied = 1. The mean scores were assigned to the missing values of each question. To contruct a scale measuring satisfaction with life, first, Rao's canonical factoring method of factor analysis was performed on these six variables. Basically, the guiding principle of canonical factoring is to find a factor solution in which the correlation between the set of hypothesized factors and the set of data variables is maximized. The immediate result of this initial factoring is

the extraction of an unrotated factor matrix. Since factors are arrang-
ed in the order of their importance, the first factor is the most impor-
tant component.

The unrotated factor loading matrix for the factor analysis of the
five "measures of satisfaction" items is shown in Table 10. Since
each of the items has a high loading on the first unrotated factor, it
suggests that they tap the same underlying dimension and that the items
themselves are closely related. The results of the factor analysis were
used to calculate factor scores from the six items for each individual,
thereby yielding a scale score for overall satisfaction with the quality
of life.

Table - 10

Unrotated Factor Loadings from Rao's Canonical Factor Analysis of Quality
of Life Variables.

Variables	Factor 1	Factor 2
Children's education	0.495	0.228
Head's health & physical condition	0.582	-0.239
Spouse's health and physical condition	0.595	-0.268
Children's health and physical condition	0.482	-0.115
Income of the family	0.413	0.399

The overall satisfaction measure was utilized in a multiple regres-
sion analysis, following a backward-elimination stepwise procedure. In-
dependent variables that were eliminated as not significant were dummy
variables for Brahman and Kshetry caste status, cement house type, mig-
rant status, expectations of children's life, age of spouse, number of
children, total income, plural wives, literacy, number of years of edu-
cation, and current amount of land owned, as well as dummy variables for
government jobs and business, ownership of radio and cycle, loss and
gain of land, and landlessness.

Significant predictors of overall satisfaction are shown in Table
11. The coefficient of multiple correlation (multiple R) indicates that
the relationships between satisfaction and the selected social and econo-
mic variables are positive at 0.381. The coefficient of determination
(R^2) shows that 14.5 percent of the variation in the satisfaction (qua-
lity of life) is accounted for by cash income, ownership of radio, expec-
tations of children's futures, years of education, being in craft work
and fishing occupations and better occupation than father's, all operat-
ing jointly.

All of the variables except for children's future are related signi-
ficantly to satisfaction or quality of life experienced by the heads of
the households.

Other things being equal, the standardized regression coefficient (Beta coefficient) indicates that one standard deviation unit of better occupation than father's, (This variable was created from the responses given by the household head as better, indifferent or worse to a question, "As compared to your father's occupation, how do you like your occupation?") would introduce the greatest change in satisfaction, and one unit of change in children's future the least change (Table 11). The ownership of radio, and craft work and fishing occupation would introduce about almost the equal amount of change in satisfaction. However, the unstandardized regression coefficient (B) shows that one standard deviation unit of craft work and fishing occupation would bring the greatest change in the satisfaction of the household heads and one unit change in education the least change.

Table - 11

Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Coefficients for Stepwise Multipriate Analysis of Satisfaction Score Scale on Some Selected Social and Economic Characteristics.

Veriables	B	Beta
Cash income	0.243**	0.160***
Ownership of radio[c]	0.267*	0.142*
Expectation about children's future	0.266	0.116
Years of Education	0.021*	0.138*
Craft work and fishing occupation[c]	0.466*	0.145*
Better occupation than father's[c]	0.391***	0.231***
(Constant)	−0.683***	−
R^2	0.145	

*** $P > 0.001$, ** $P > 0.01$ and $P > 0.05$ c = Coded as dummy variable. For example, Radio = 1 No radio = 0, Craft work and occupation = 1 other occupation = 0, better occupation = 1, else = 0.

Summary and Conclusion

Result shows that only one-fourth of the total household heads are satisfied and the rest are indifferent or dissatisfied with the selected domains of life. The mean level of satisfaction for these domains ranges from 1.88 to 2.06. The household heads do not show significant differences on the mean levels of satisfiction on these domains excepting on income of the family.

In general, the mean level of satisfaction of these domains of life increases with the increasing size of landholding. Nonetheless, the craft work and fishing category shows the highest mean level of satisfaction of all domains of life. Unlike economic and occupational groups,

the caste groups do not show any relation with levels of satisfaction on these domains. The Tharus and the Botes show the highest level of satis- faction and the Botes show the highest level of satisfaction and the Brahmans the lowest of most of the domains.

The levels of satisfaction for subjective indicators increase with increase in the size of landholding. It is seen that the craft work and fishing category has the highest level of satisfaction of life; but it scores the lowest on hopes for children, possibly due to their carefree nature and short vision about their life.

The level of satisfaction experienced by the government job and business category, however, does not appear encouraging. Perhaps, margi- nal business and low occupational status could explain the low level of satisfaction. The landless category and lower caste groups score low in all three measures. Two-thirds of the household heads are pessimistic about their children's future.

The subjective as well as the objective quality of life score in- creases with the increasing size of landholding. The caste groups do not show any consistent pattern. However, on subjective quality of life, the Gurungs, the Magars, the Newars, etc. score the highest and on objec- tive quality of life, it is the Tharus and the Botes who score the high- est.

A high proportion of the household heads believe that hard labour plays a key role in determining success in life. Among those who believe in fatalism are the craft work and fishing category and the Tharu and the Bote caste groups.

Quality of life is related with social and economic variables. Only 14.5 percent of the variation in quality of life is accounted for by cash income, ownership of radio, expectation of children's future, years of education, being in craft work and fishing occupations and better occupation than one's father, all operating jointly.

The quality of life experienced by the household heads is high on objective indicators and low on subjective indicators. The quality of life--both objective as well as subjective--is positively related with increase in the size of landholding. On objective quality of life, the Tharu and Bote caste groups and households with craft work and fishing occupations show the highest level of satisfaction; while on the subjec- tive quality of life, medium-size farm owners and the Gurungs, the Magars, and the Newars enjoy a higher level of satisfaction. Hard labour is considered to be the key factor to determine success in life. This is certainly a healthy sigh towards modernity. However, the reader should be cautious in making interpretation of these findings. The study covers only two wards amidst the more than 400 wards in Chitawan, variation in the mean level of satisfaction and happiness is low due to the use of a three point scale. Nevertheless, this kind of study permits one to get a better understanding of the communities as a whole and of the processes that go on within them. It is suggested that a more elaborate and compre-

hensive research is needed to investigate further into the quality of life perceived by the rural people in Nepal.

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