In consonance with the set objectives of the present study, this chapter has been planned to elucidate the results backed by reasoning and logic so as to arrive at the logical conclusions and policy options. The discussion of the results has been described under the following six sections:

5.1 Socio – Economic Profile of Sample Households
5.2 Status of Women in the Study Areas
5.3 Entrepreneurial Behaviour of Women
5.4 Women’s Contribution Towards Employment, Livelihoods and Family
5.5 Livelihood Security of Women vis – a -vis Coping up Strategies
5.6 Impediments Faced by Women

5.1 Socio-Economic Profile of Sample Households

In view of considerable variation in the socio-economic features of sample households across the two study districts, it is quite obvious that these variations do have bearing on the level of resource endowments and empowerment of women which mainly determine their status in the family as well as society. It is, therefore, imperative to discuss various pointers that impact the status of women and this humble endeavor is in this direction.

When we consider the age-wise distribution of sample households, the striking feature was that more than half of the population in both the study areas belonged to
the working age group which can be considered as one of the good indicators of the development. It was revealed that the proportion of females in Kangra was higher than that of males, due to migration of males to urban areas in search of better income earning activities, education, etc. However, such type of freedom was hardly found for females mainly due to heavy work load and cultural barriers and restrictions.

Sex composition is another important socio-demographic factor that established the status of women. The sex composition of the sample households showed that the proportion of male population below 19 years in Kangra as well as in Nuwara Eliya was relatively more than females, implying thereby preference for male child in both the study areas. A recent paper presented by Arnold (1997) using the data of Demographic and Health Survey also confirmed the preference of boys than girls in India. Pullum (1980) reported that moderate son preference also exists in Sri Lanka. However, Samarasinghe and Kuruppu (1999) found that women being involved in agricultural activities and income generation for the family, the fact that daughters can care better for their parents and in the high status women society in Sri Lankan, son preference is not a common perception. Whereas on the basis of overall average, proportion of males and females was more or less similar in Kangra district, but it was found that proportion of female population was higher than males in case of Nuwara Eliya, which mainly was due to more mis happenings with males as a result of militancy and ethnic conflicts.

The phenomenon of women headship of the household is an emerging issue in the hilly areas, mainly due to rapid social and economic transformation taking place in the society. According to findings, about one-sixth of the sample households were headed by females in both the study areas. Other reasons behind female headed family are an increase in migration of males in search of occupations leaving behind their wives, widow women choosing to remain single and increase in number of divorce desertion cases. Further, it was observed that female headed households were small in size which led to increase their work load by devoting extra hours for agriculture apart from their usual domestic chores. A larger proportion of families in Nuwara Eliya district was found nuclear in nature. Poor economic condition, frequent quarrells in the joint family, belief in having separate household for married couple and their offspring and
individualistic attitude might be the main factors responsible for breakdown of joint families in Nuwara Eliya.

An overwhelming majority of widows who lost the bread winners of their families faced comparatively more financial difficulties. Apart from that they have to face various problems such as social, psychological, physical insecurity, loneliness and non-co-operation from other family members. The incidence of widow was relatively higher among females in both the districts, the reasons of which was same for the both study areas as male counterparts of most of widow women were serving in defense/security forces and as such, they were killed during encounter. Moreover, the life expectancy of females was found higher than males mainly due to health unfriendly dietary pattern of males in both the study areas. According to 2008 census, the life expectancy of males and females in Sri Lanka was 73 and 77 years, respectively. Whereas, in India, life expectancy of males and females was 67 and 72 years, respectively (Anonymous, 2008).

Education empowers women; it enhances women’s status in the community and leads to greater input into family and community decision making. Education also provides women with knowledge and skill, especially in the areas of health, nutrition, sanitation and the environment. Parental aspiration for the education of their children is considered as an upward socio-economic mobility that creates a gender neutral – social demand and provides the momentum for educational expansion without gender differentiation. However, the literacy rate was markedly higher for males (98 per cent) as compared to females (84 per cent) in Kangra district which amply speaks of disparity of education among females and males. Parents show apathy towards girls’ education in most of the cases. This is mainly due to the low aspiration and resource crisis. Whereas, in case of Nuwara Eliya such type of disparity was not found. This was due to the facility of free education to all up to graduation level in Sri Lanka. The introduction of free education in Sri Lanka, has paved the way for women to have equal access to education as an effective tool to breakdown the barriers of a patriarchal society to a greater extent.

Property rights like land ownership has been recognized as the most fundamental pre-requisite to women’s empowerment. However, the land ownership pattern was found more skewed towards males in Kangra as only 24 per cent of the total women respondents had
land in their names. On the other hand, 41 per cent of the total sampled women respondents of Nuwara Eliya had entitlement of land. The patriarchal norm, which favours the male counterparts, is the argument to justify the issue of unequal land rights of women and men. Agarwal (1989) and Fazeeha (2002) also found that the land ownership of males is higher than females.

The distribution of sampled households according to per capita income indicates that majority of households belonged to medium and low income group (77 per cent Kangra and 92 per cent Nuwara Eliya). Across the study areas, the higher proportion of respondents was found in the high income group in Kangra (24 per cent) as compared to Nuwara Eliya (8 per cent). The similar trend in distribution of sampled households on the basis of per capita expenditure was observed in the both the study areas, except varied proportion of respondents under medium and low income group (about 80 per cent Kangra and Nuwara Eliya).

Nutrition and food consumption were among the first areas of inquiry into the extent of intrahousehold differences in resource allocation (Sen, 1984), since women often were more vulnerable to nutritional problems due to their low economic and social status. The nutritional status revealed that calorie adequacy ratio was more skewed towards males in both the study areas. Similar findings have been reported by Rathnayake and Weerahewa (2003) from their studies. Across the study areas, the calorie adequacy ratio was more for females and males in Nuwara Eliya as compared to Kangra district, which might be due to the differences of food habits in two study areas. Another important point that emerged from the findings was energy inadequacy tends to decline with the age. It was found that children were the most disadvantaged group in terms of intrahousehold calorie allocation. The probable reasons might be less attention on children’s food preferences due to heavy work load of mothers and unawareness of children’s nutritional requirement. Medina (1991) and Rathnayake and Weerahewa (2003) also revealed that children were receiving calories less than their requirement.

5.2 Status of Women in the Study Areas

5.2.1 Decision making

Decision making power of rural women in the family has been looked upon as one of
the important factors impacting the life of the woman herself and others. In this context, the
decision making relating to economic aspects has been examined, which revealed that decisions
(out of six economic decisions) on minor matters such as daily family expenses and their
personal needs were generally taken independently by women in both the study areas and these
findings are in tune with that of Sethi (1998). Due to predominance of male over the females, it
has been observed that still majority of males in Kangra district are habitual of taking major
economic decisions relating to investments, savings and borrowings. Extreme patriarchal social
settings of the study area could perhaps have attributed to the male dominance in economic
related matters. Further, the findings of Meitei (2004) and Cain and Nahar (1979) also
corroborate sole power of males to take decisions on financial matters. However, this finding is
not in line with the findings of Das and Lenna (1993), who concluded that husband and wife jointly
decided major financial matters. Decision on saving appears a dominance of majority of women
in Nuwara Eliya district deciding themselves whether to save or not. This mainly attributed to the
liberal social setting of Sri Lanka. Meitei (2004) also confirmed the decision making power of
women for saving from his study. However, this finding is not confined with the results of Bala and
Monga (2004). Decisions relating to jewellry and borrowings were taken together by males and
females in Nuwara Eliya district. Whereas, in contrast to this, males alone took decisions relating
to said matters in Kangra district. The findings, further suggest that women in Kangra district are
more ignored in economic related decisions as compared to Nuwara Eliya district.

In decision regarding, social aspects, majority of females in both districts reported
that they could take the decisions related to treatment for sick child, visit to natal kin and joining
friends. However, the most important social decisions, children’s education was taken by females
as well as males. This finding is in line with that of Soni and Jindal (1983) and Bala and Monga
(2004). The important point that aroused from the findings was that females in the study areas
were not ignored in decision making relating to social aspects.

5.2.2 Key determinants of women’s status

The results of step-up regression analysis carried out for low and high status
category of women presented in the last chapter are not displayed here just to avoid repetition and thus only the implications of findings are elaborated in this section. The findings relating to low status category women revealed that marital status, education, social participation, occupation and savings of women were the key determinants that impacted the status of women in Kangra district. Cocharan (1979), Jejeebhoy (1995 & 1996) also reported the similar factors that affected the status of women. A direction of decision making power determines the resources being possessed by women. Resources include not only the income drivers, but also the educational attainment and the occupation. Therefore, in a family, if a woman has more resources, she has more power to exercise in decision making. In this context, the occupation, women’s saving and education showed positive impact on status of women. These findings have been supported by various other studies (Buric and Zeecvic 1967; Michal 1967; Saffilos-Rothschild 1967; Lamouse 1969; Lupri 1969; Kandal and Lesser 1972). Dixon (1978) also reported that status of women was determined on the basis of their earning and access to the resources. However, Bhadra (2004) argued that education has some negative impact on women’s status as educated families are economically well-off and have their different life style that confines women to the domestic sphere and withdraws women from economic activities outside the home. Further, out of said variables, marital status and occupation of the women revealed strong positive influence on the status of women, whereas, husband’s education impacted negatively on the status of women which might be due to the fact that if the female was uneducated or less educated in a family and her husband was more educated, then children were dependent, except food etc., on father for getting home work done, attending parent’s day, preparation for exams, etc., that led to lower down the status of women. In case of high status category, education, occupation land ownership and women’s income were found to be the key determinants of women’s status. In this case also, education, land ownership and women’s income had positive impact on the status of women. Overall, the key determinants of women’s status that impacted positively were found to be the pointers like marital status, education, social participation and land ownership; however, it was the caste that impacted negatively on the status of women.

In case of Nuwara Eliya district of Sri Lanka, the key determinants that impacted the
status of women in the low status category were marital status, social participation, occupation and savings. In contrast to this finding, Indira Devi (1982) has arrived at conclusion that the employment does not bring any change to status of women. Again, as in case of Kangra, husband’s education level showed negative impact on the status of women. In case of high status category, education, type of family, social participation and marriage duration had positively impacted the status of women. Bhadra (2004) also found that marriage duration positively affected the status of women. Overall, the marital status, education and social participation were the significant pointers determining the status of women in both the study areas. Also, caste was found one of the key pointers in Kangra and type of family was observed another parameter determining the status of women in Nuwara Eliya.

5.3 Entrepreneurial Behaviour of Women

5.3.1 Components of entrepreneurial behaviour

Of the major rural income earning activities, farming has been regarded as an important instrument of employment provider to the rural sector and rural women in particular. However, success of farming depends on the entrepreneurial behaviour of farm women. In this context, the relative contribution of entrepreneurial components, its association with personal, socio-economic and psychological traits and key determinants of rural women are discussed as under:

Among the components of entrepreneurial behaviour, achievement motivation, management orientation and risk taking ability in order of ranking were the important pointers for the women of Kangra district and such type of findings have been confirmed by Subramanyeswari et al. (2007). Whereas, achievement motivation, management orientation and ability to co-ordinate the farm activities were found to be the important components of entrepreneurial behaviour for women in Nuwara Eliya. Achievement motivation is the desire or need to excel and achieving a certain goal. It was observed from the results presented in the previous chapter that majority of sample households in both the study areas possessed land below 0.5 acres. Therefore, small land holders may have the desire to extend their farm size and
increase their economic level and this might be the reason for the achievement motivation being occupied first position among the eleven components of entrepreneurial behaviour of women in both the study areas. Interestingly, the women in Kangra were found of more risk averse nature and reverse was found true in Nuwara Eliya. However, risk taking ability was not contributed much to the entrepreneurial behaviour of rural women in Nuwara Eliya as in case of Kangra district. The plausible reasoning for this is that most of the women in Nuwara Eliya district are engaged in tea cultivation which is highly capital and labour intensive perennial crop and as such, they are not in a position to take risk which they have ranked at eight. Limited participation in social activities, lack of awareness about different information sources and their utilization and poor financial status might be another weak links for women in Kangra district, that is why they opted for the positions of leadership ability (V), farm decision making (VI), utilization availability assistance (VII), ability to coordinate farm activities (VIII) and knowledge of farming (IX). Low mobility and exposure due to restrictions and heavy work load might have attributed to the tenth position for cosmopoliteness in Kangra district. Further, women in both the study areas might have developed negative attitude towards the new technologies due to satisfaction of the results of technologies adopted earlier and unawareness of new technologies that attributed to their least inclination towards innovativeness (eleventh rank) which is one of the components of entrepreneurial behaviour.

5.3.2 Determinants of entrepreneurial behaviour of women

A farm woman may be differentiated in terms of her lifestyle, attitude, values and behaviour which together attribute her entrepreneurial behaviour. In this context, the findings revealed that education, farm income, economic motivation and accessibility to market were the key determinants of entrepreneurial behaviour of women in Kangra district. The positive impact of education implies that as the level of education increases, her entrepreneurial behaviour also increases. This may be due to the fact that education provides directions to the thinking process of the individual, hence improves her entrepreneurial behaviour. Similar findings were also reported by Mundhwa and Podhera (1998), Banajee and Talukdar (1997), Jajalekshmi et al. (1999), Subramanyeswari et al. (2007) from their respective studies. Higher farm income
improves the achievement motivation and also increases the ability of adoption of innovations and risk taking, thereby farm income showed positive impact on entrepreneurial behaviour. These findings are confined with the study of Banajee and Talukdar (1997). Whereas, age, farm income and information sources were the important determinants of entrepreneurial behaviour of women in Nuwara Eliya. The positive effect of age indicates that old age woman has a greater entrepreneurial behaviour than young ones. This may be due to the fact that availability of employment opportunities for young females in garment sector can provide more income and status than that of agriculture, but old women do not have any other option than agriculture for earning livelihoods. Another possible reason may be, as age of the woman increases her experience also increases which in turn influences the entrepreneurial behaviour. However, Mundha and Podhera (1998) and Saxena and Triapathi (1998) reported that young age women have more entrepreneurial behaviour than old age. As far as the findings of information utilization is concerned, easy accessibility of information sources which in turn updates the knowledge of farming might have attributed positive impact on entrepreneurial behaviour which is in tune with the findings of Manjula (1999).

5.4 Women’s Contribution towards Employment, Livelihoods and Family

Being highly engaged in farming, rural women in Kangra and Nuwara Eliya districts performed more than three –fifth of the work related to farming, making it more or less a female domain. The proportion contribution of women to the household income from farm activities was comparatively higher in Nuwara Eliya (74 per cent) as compared to women of Kangra district (52 per cent). In case of off - farm income the reverse was found true. Women income share to total household expenditure was more in Kangra (63 per cent), than Nuwara Eliya (44 per cent), but in case of saving it was found reverse. Women are the key actors in achieving food security within the household. Findings relating to impact of women on household food security of both the study areas revealed that women’s income significantly influenced women calorie adequacy ratio and household calorie adequacy ratio.

In general, women in Kangra reported that they got very limited benefits from
organizations and also there was not much impact of these services on their livelihoods. In comparison to Kangra, women in Nuwara Eliya had favourable attitude towards the organizations, indicating thereby higher level of active participation in organizations which in turn impacted their livelihoods.

5.5 Livelihood Security of Women vis-à-vis Coping up Strategies

5.5.1 Livelihood security of women

Assessment of livelihood security is helpful especially to know the constraints faced by women and also to design programme for improving their livelihoods as mentioned in the previous chapter. The purpose of comparison of cross national livelihood outcome indices is that, it could be used to evaluate the impact of national policies and spending pattern at the community level or individual level. In this context, six different livelihood outcomes of women were assessed based on the prevailing conditions of the sample households of Kangra district.

The findings of livelihood security assessment revealed that there is a significant difference between health, education, habitat and social network security of women in Kangra and Nuwara Eliya districts. On the other hand, relatively better food security score may be due to the agricultural based rural economy in the study villages coupled with introduction of food ration system for poor families. The composite index score of the overall economic security of women in Kangra showed a lower value than that of Nuwara Eliya district, indicating greater vulnerability of women in Kangra district to economic security. The limited availability and accessibility of health services in Kangra district were explained by the low aggregate health index score. It is not surprising that the index score of pre-natal and post-natal shows low value, as it was observed from the village level survey that service of female health worker is not available in some of the sample villages. Further, it was highlighted that women in Kangra district were more vulnerable to education security and women in Nuwara Eliya district stood comparatively in a better position. This might be due to the strong investment pattern on education at national level in Sri Lanka. However, it should be noted that habitat security of women in both study districts gained the
values above mid point of continuum. This indicated the less vulnerability of women in both the study areas to habitat security as compared to other livelihood security outcomes. In addition, the aggregate index score of social network security lagged behind for women in Kangra as compared to women in Nuwara Eliya district, indicating thereby low level of active participation of women in Kangra district for organizations.

Based on the livelihood security index, overall the women of Nuwara Eliya district were found better in all the indicators as compared to their counterparts of Kangra district.

5.5.2 Coping up strategies

A shock is a relatively short acting stress to livelihoods. Rural economy of both study areas is more re-silient to environmental hazardous (droughts, floods), conflicts, epidemic and other technical and social events. According to the findings, increased electricity charges and food prices were the main shocks for livelihoods of both the study areas. Coping up strategies are mechanisms dealing with short term insufficiency or insecurity of livelihoods. It was observed that borrowing food was the common practiced strategy by the women in both study areas with limited food. The next important strategy followed by the women in both the study areas against food inadequacy was to rely more on less preferential cheaper food substitute for preferred and costlier food.

5.6 Impediments Faced by Women

5.6.1 Problems/constraints faced by women being an entrepreneur

With regards to problems and constraints faced by women being an entrepreneur, poor knowledge about farming was a much severe constraint in both study districts, which perhaps might be due to low extension contacts, poor participation in extension activities and poor exposure of these women to mass media, etc. Sharma (1996), Chauhan (1999) and Chand (2000) also pinpointed these problems in farming in their studies. Majority of farm women in both study districts reported emphatically about the lack of knowledge, financial institutions, training institutions, marketing linkages and various schemes related to subsidies, loans, etc. For this,
special awareness and knowledge campaign should be launched by extension agencies. Vepa (1992) also reported that a large number of women entrepreneurs have no awareness about programmes launched by the government or private agencies. Among different problems associated with farm credits, the lengthy and complicated procedure for getting credit was the most important hindrances mentioned by them. This problem was reported by few women in Kangra district, since they were not much interested to take loans for farming. Good price as a result of high demand for the product encourages investment in farming. However, majority of females stated that low price due to no demand in the local market was a constraint to them. The problem of high cost of farm inputs was perceived by the women in case of application of manure and fertilizers, chemicals for weed control and plant protection measures. This problem might be due to the poor economic condition of sample households. Lack of subsidy was also identified as another problem faced by farm women. Singh et al (1996) also reported that lack of subsidy was one of the major problems of Himachal farmers.

5.6.2 Problems / constraints faced by women being a house manager

There are number of problems and constraints faced by women which directly or indirectly affect their livelihoods. Poor transport facilities impact on their livelihoods in many ways, eg. for schooling, marketing, etc. This problem was found to be more severe in Kangra district. Loan facilities were the dire need of households in Kangra district, for improving their households’ infrastructure like drinking water and sanitary facilities. Access to land is the most important asset of rural livelihoods. However, around one-third of women in Kangra and one-fifth in Nuwara Eliya district reported unavailability of land. It was revealed from the survey that, no effective training programmes were available in both the study areas for self employment. Moreover, majority of women expressed their willingness to get engaged themselves in small industries like mushroom cultivation, handloom, etc. Therefore, training programmes should be expanded effectively to deliver benefits for rural women in both the study areas. Seetharam (1992) also emphasized that lack of training hindered the expansion of female employment. Females in Nuwara Eliya who were employed in garment factories and at distant places reported that, working
environment in the working places was not desirable. Therefore, their security can be ensured by providing support services like crèche facilities at working places, educational institution for children and transport facilities. Few females in both the study areas, reported that family disputes due to customs of dowries, lower caste, no children and having only daughters badly affected their livelihoods. No freedom to participate in social organizations and to contribute for social causes were the other problems reported by majority of women in Kangra. Husband addiction to alcohol was another important problem faced by few women in both the study areas, which mainly affected the economic condition of the family as well as social status of women.