

Empowerment of Tamang Women through the Economy in Lamatar and Bhardev Village, Lalitpur District

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Abstract: The overall socio-economic status of the Tamang women of Lalitpur district is critical. Low income sources, lack of productive land and society lack of modern technology in farming, religious and traditional rigidity seem to be the major factors for their current situation. Women's economic empowerment is inevitable to family though out the country. To increase economic status of a means to reduce the dependency rate come sources which gradually leads to quality of life. It seem they are autonomous s from the perspective of socio-cultural situation but the scarce of diversified economic sources, lack of generating money, their current earning can only make them survive which has become a barrier to develop an individual harmoniously. It is predicted that more women's promotion in economy to make them self reliant person. Initiation of modern farming and technology encourage to invest small and medium entrepreneurship, awareness on educating female of a family in the community which are key issues to be improved of a particular villages for promoting women's status.

Keywords: Empowerment, economic condition, household income and contribution.

Introduction

The World Bank's Gender Equality Action Plan for 2007-2010 –Status of Gender Equality as Smart Economics—explicitly recognizes the broad development benefits of women's economic empowerment:

'The global community must renew its attention to women's economic empowerment and increase investments in women...Increased women's labour force participation and earnings are associated with reduced poverty and faster growth; women will benefit from their economic empowerment, but so too will men, children and society as a whole...' (World Bank's Gender Equality Action Plan 2007-10: 2)

In the 21st century, women have been enjoying more freedom and power than ever before. However, they are still underprivileged in comparison to men in various aspects of life. Women re deprived of equal access on education, health care, economy, and decision making in the political, social, and business sectors. Men are credited to performing three quarters of all economic activities in developing countries, whereas women only 53 percent.

Nepal remains one of the poorest countries in the world with a poverty incidence of 23.8 percent (NLSS, 2013) and Nepalese women are considered as poor of the poorest. Women's poverty, their low involvement in leadership and participation in decision- making, are often attributed to a number of personal 12 factors, including low literacy, skills, self-esteem, financial security, and level of awareness of their rights (Bhandari, 2014).

A woman has to maintain triple roles reproductive, productive and social and community role. It is undoubtedly, we can say that women cannot dedicate their family, occupational duties and social duties. In the process of maintaining her role, anything can go wrong for she is captive in the man's world. She may have to face commercial exploitation and gender discrimination at her work place. Empowered women contribute to the health and productivity of whole families and communities and to improve prospects for next generation. Therefore, it is crucial to empower and capacitate women (Bhandari, 2014).Nepal is a country of ethnic diversity with more than 125 language speaking groups (Census, 2011).

The literacy rate of Nepal was increased by 65.9 % in the 2011 census. Likewise, the male literacy rate is 75.13 percent and female literacy rate is 57.38 percent. Among them, the total literacy rate of Tamang is 62.60 percent and male literacy rate is 70.97 percent and female literacy is 54.83 percent in 2011 census. Male and female literacy has also increased significantly, although female literacy has remained lower than males throughout the censuses in Tamang group (CBS, 2014).

Nepalese women have substantial contributions both as a labor and mentor in the household or outside works of households, but their role is often underestimated and not counted as economic activity or their work was always unpaid. As women, they suffer from social, cultural and political biases in the community to nation. The head of households, they have to carry out the full traditional roles with the added responsibility of whole household and production management. In addition, compared to their counterparts women have limited access to educational and employment opportunities. Still largely the households and society put total responsibility in women such as; rearing, caring, bearing of children, child education, food etc. Women empowerment and household responsibilities to major issues perceived nationally or locally are addressed by both state and non-

state agencies. This study to highlights these opportunities and challenges in the process of empowerment of Tamang women of Bhardev and Lamatar, Lalitpur.

Limitations

This paper mainly focuses on economic empowerment of Tamang women of Bhardev and Lamatar in Lalitpur district. So, this study has the following limitations.

- This study has covered only 30 women who reside in Bhardev and Lamatar in Lalitpur district.
- This study is based on two case studies of Tamang women alcohol maker and seller of Bhardev and Lamatar in Lalitpur district.
- The study does not represent the total women of Nepal or Tamang women of other districts.

Method

The data used in this paper comes from a cross-sectional survey entitled "Empowerment of Tamang women through the Economy in Lamatar and Bhardev village of Lalitpur district" carried out in 2021. A self-administrated structured questionnaire in Nepali languages was used to obtain information from the respondents. The questionnaires were pre-tested among those Tamang women who are involving alcohol maker and seller before long times and later refined as required. Consent was obtained verbally from the participants before they were involved in this study. Respondents were requested to hear the consent form carefully. Participants were a given clear option of voluntary participation. It was also made clear that they could refuse to answer any questions and terminate the interview whenever they desired. Confidentiality of information was also ensured by removing personal identifiers from the completed questionnaires.

This paper is also descriptive design. The study is based on primary sources of data in field work and secondary sources of data which are also collected from related books and journal, reports etc. Thirty respondents were selected purposively which is sample size. The selections of 30 Tamang women, who are interviewed based on structure questionnaire. The researcher conducted two case studies those participants who wanted to share their experiences about economic problems and how to improving their household income. After collection of the required data, edited and entered into the computer on SPSS program. Frequency distribution and cross- tabulation are the main outputs for analysis and interpretation of data.

Results

Monthly Income of households

Out of 30 respondents, 13 respondents' households' income was 50001-10000, which was 53.8 percent Bhardev area and 46.2 percent in Lamatar area. Ten respondent's household income was 10001 and above this is equal in number in both of villages. Similarly, only 7 respondents' households' income was 1000-5000 which was 57.1 percent Lamatar area and 42.9 percent was Bhardev area.

Educational status spouse/ Partner

Hundred percent of the respondents' spouses have attended educational level but one third of the respondents have known their husband educational level which is 70 percent respondents do not know their spouse's education in Lamatar area and in the case of Bhardev 30 percent of women do not know their spouse education. Most of the respondents' spouses have completed the secondary and SLC level and very few portion of respondents' husband has completed 10+2 and above levels.

Occupational status of respondents

Out of 30 respondents 20 respondents are engaged on alcohol seller / housewife, 55.0 percent respondents stay on Bhardev area and 45 percent stay on Lamatar Area. In the same way, there are equal 4/4 respondents engaged on farming sectors. One respondents engaged on tailoring sector and one respondents involved on business sectors. In conclusion, two third of the respondents still indulge on alcohol making and selling on the households chores.

Out of the total respondents, the highest i.e. 67 percent respondents engaged on alcohol making and selling as well as on household and followed by 14 percent engaged on agricultural sector, 13 percent engaged on farming, 3 and 3 percent engaged on tailoring and business respectively.

Table 1: Occupational status of respondents by study area

Occupation	Address				Total	
	Mahalaxmi, Lamatar		Konjosung, Bhardav			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent

Alcohol seller/ Housewife	9	45.0	11	55.0	20	100.0
Agriculture	4	50.0	4	50.0	4	100.0
Tailoring	1	100.0	0	0	1	100.0
Business	1	100	0	0	1	100.0
Total	15	50.0	15	50.0	30	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

"..... I have three children, one son and two daughters. The money and crop I get by working in my land is far less than what we actually require to feed our family. That is why I have to sell local wine 'RAKSI'. I and my daughter both work together to manufacture RAKSI in our home. People in the locality pay no heed to locally made wine may be it is because of its availability far and wide. That is why we have to take all our wine manufactured, to the nearby town. Lukhusi, Satdobato and Chyusal are the places where our goods get fair market and price. First the places I mentioned are way far from our village at least 25 KM, which I have to travel on foot. Local transport refuse to give us the ride fearing they might also get caught in trouble. And next thing is police and bandits were always there to harass us. Often if police catch us they would snatch our goods and even detain us for whole the day and at the same time as we have to travel across woody roads bandits would also rub us our every belonging.

Couple of time while on the way to market police has detained me. Though brewing of RAKSI is prohibited by law, I can't survive my family if I give up this occupation. We do not know any occupation besides this and even for betterment of my children's future also I have to continue this thing. Father in laws are old and weak and they do smoke (cigarette) also. If I am unable to fetch them at least a packet of cigarette a day then they would again curse me and this is how my family is running. Life these days have been too expensive currently I earn 20-25 thousand monthly from RAKSI. Out of that money some I spend it for my family and for education of my children and few I am save it for their future."

Household major decisions

Table 2 shows that household money was kept by the female (23.3) and by males (23.3). It has been observed that 43.3 percent of both male and female keep their money and only 10 percent keep their money others like father in law, mother in law etc. Among 30 Tamangs respondents, the highest 40 percent respondents have to go to bazaar for buying households purchases and following 30 percent are jointly go to bazaar for buying things, 23.3 percent respondents' husbands are go to market and only 6.7 percent buying different purchase by others.

Table 2: Distribution of the Household major decisions

Major decision	Respondents		Husband/ Partner		Both jointly		Others	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Keep and use money	7	23.3	7	23.3	13	43.3	3	10.0
Health care	7	23.3	8	26.7	13	43.3	2	6.7
Major household purchases	12	40.0	7	23.3	9	30.0	2	6.7
Visits to family or relatives	11	36.7	7	23.3	10	33.3	2	6.7
Children's education	10	33.3	6	20.0	12	40.0	2	6.7
Inherited asset (pewa)	6	20.0	12	40.0	9	30.0	3	10.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Similarly, in total respondents, 36.7 percent respondents decided to visits to their family or relative's, 33.3 percent decided jointly, 23.3 percent decided only their husband. In the same way, 40 percent jointly (Both husband and wife) decided their children education and 33.3 percent respondent decided their children education.

Property Ownership of the Respondents

Among total respondents, among them, highest percentages of (36.7%) respondents have no ownership of land and only 23.3 percent respondents did not have land ownership. The highest i.e. 80 percent respondents have ownership of households and 16.7 percent respondents did not have any household ownership.

Table 3: Distribution of the Property Ownership of the Respondents

Property	Yes		No		Don't know	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Ownership of land	7	23.3	11	36.7	12	40.0
Ownership Household	24	80.0	5	16.7	1	3.3
Registration of HH Property	23	76.7	7	23.3	-	-

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Next ".....my ancestral land and it is the only land our family has, that too is not sufficient to support our family for living. We grow maize and mustard in our field twice in a year but the crop that we produce is barely sufficient to feed our family for a month. It was very difficult to survive our family, that's why for 15 and more years including my mother- in -law we have been selling local wine in nearby cities. Lubhoo, Dhungen one of the nearest but comparatively larger settlement, and Imadol, are the major places where I go to sell my goods. 1/2 times a week I go to these places to sell local wine i.e. RAKSI. I have to wake up early in the morning even during the mid night and leave by 2 o'clock for these places and return home by 8 AM. It is because the more I move early to these places there will be lesser chances of police patrolling detecting me or else I might have to spend all my day in police station if I get caught. And next thing is if I arrived home early I would have more time to catch up with my daily household chores. Weekly we sell 40 MANA - RAKSI (A Nepali unit to measure liquid. It is liters) and that makes 10-12 thousands a month but the net profit apart from all expenses for sugar, fire-woods and rice is 5-6 thousand. The money we gain/ receive is even less if we ourselves are not engaged as errand. There are also some other families engaged in RAKSI selling and if we ask them to take our goods to sell out they would charge 500 rupees for every they make. We need 100kg rice to feed our family in a month where - as 10-12 sacks of rice that makes 500-600 quintals is required to prepare and sell wine in a month. My father -in- law makes the decision when it comes to purchasing of major household accessories and he takes in possession of all the money that comes from selling of live stocks and farms. But the money my husband sends from abroad is solely in my name but those I also have to spend to run the family.

Domestic Violence by their spouse

The respondents viewed that the main cause of domestic violence was going out without informing her spouse, neglecting children was another cause of violence which was 23.3 percent. Similarly, arguing and debate was 23.3 percent, refuses sex was 26.7 percent, less/no dowry was 26.7 and 23.3 percent cases were for not preparing the food as their husband expected. Most of the respondent pointed out that going out without telling him has become the main cause of domestic violence who were 26.7 in percent (Table 4).

Table 4: Distribution Domestic Violence of the Respondents by their Husband

Forms of violence	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Without telling him goes out	8	26.7	22	73.3	30	100.0
Neglect children	7	23.3	23	76.7	30	100.0
Argue/ quarrel	7	23.3	23	76.7	30	100.0
Refuses Sex	8	26.7	22	73.3	30	100.0
Food	7	23.3	23	76.7	30	100.0
Less/NoDowry	8	26.7	22	73.3	30	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Discussions

According to Rowlands (1997:20), there are different dimensions of empowerment for women such as: development of a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the defects on internalized oppression and the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship and decisions made within it. The economic independence shall give more freedom to take any kind of decisions for the improvement of women community such as growth, poverty reduction, health, education and welfare which eventually will have bearings on aforementioned nuances.

It has tried to explain few variables such as the level of education, decision and responsiveness in household purchases, socio- culture aspect and participation in community activities in relation with household

economy and its consequences in empowerment. Finding depicts the overall socio-cultural, socio-economic, educational and political status of the Tamang women of Lalitpur district critical. Lesser income sources, lack of productive land and social, lack of modern technology in farming, religious and traditional rigidity seems to be the supportive factors for their current situation.

Mostly the family conflict especially domestic violence, according to male version, was found as a result of Tamang women's more engagement activities outside in family and less 'responsible' to children. Many times violence was also found as a result of refusal of sexual activities on the part of women. A considerable amount of money in hand would offer women more freedom in choosing and purchasing goods that they require for household use or for their children. This showed that Tamang women have economic autonomy.

Marital status determines a woman's position within the family as well as her status in society. Nepalese women, divorced or widowed, are widely discriminated against from the joint family. Out of the total 30 respondents interviewed 10 percent of respondent were found to have divorced and 20 percent were widowed. Considerable number of respondents, in the place like Bhardev and Lakureivanjyang, divorced gives the evidence that Tamang society is more liberal towards marriage and relationship.

Conclusions

This research unearths that their activities and earnings have empowered them in many aspects. In many ways empowerment is interrelated with economy, education and socio cultural foundation. Obviously, women economic growth is the major factor of development but not all in all. Although Tamang women are socio-culturally autonomous in many aspects but due to lack of access to good education, awareness on health and nutrition, politics and diversified economy they are limited from participating in community and higher decision-making level. To conclude, women economic empowerment is important for a country's development right from the smallest unit of the community which is the family. Having empowered women in a country, means great reduction in dependence rates, reduction in VAW, increased household income leading to increased household purchasing power resulting into an improved standard of living. Initiation of modern farming technology, encouragement on small and medium entrepreneurship, awareness on educating female members of family in the community are the areas if improved would lead that particular village for further empowerment of women.

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