

Original Article

Evaluation of Socio-Economic Status of Women in Durga Bhagwati Rural Municipality

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Abstract: The Research findings on woman's empowerment to support this policy are scarce. Therefore, this study tries to explore how socioeconomic differences shape different aspects of women's empowerment in the culture, social and economic context of a VDC of one of the major district in Nepal. The study is centralized in the Rautahat, Durga Bhawgwati Rural Municipality. Durga Bhawgwati Rural Municipality Development is divided into 5 wards. Out of these ward no. 3 is the selected area of this research. The ward no. 3 is the residential place of Brahmin. The main sources of income of this village are agriculture and they adopt another profession in regard to their caste. The study area selected is Durga Bhawgwati Rural Municipality, Rautahat. This area has been chosen for the study because that area is a Brahmin society. It is the area of Durga Bhawgwati village which has some of the most defined culture in all Nepal. To find out the socio-cultural status of women of such VDC inspired to select this area. The study area is local area for researcher so it is easy to get factual and in-depth information. The socioeconomic status of women Durga Bhawgwati Municipality educational status, family structure, decision making etc. are described in social status. These works are far from income generation which has more than 50% respondents. It shows a lower level of economic status of women in the study area. In the case of separate property of the women, 46.00% answered in the study area. In the case of separate property of the women, 46.00% answered have separate property and majority 54.00% do not have separate property.

Keywords: evaluation, socio-economic, status of women, Durga Bhawgwati rural

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1980s, the reduction of gender disparities has been of great concern for development policies, as highlighted in the third Millennium Development Goal, whose purpose is to promote gender equality women [1]. With this objective in mind, the government of Nepal has launched and implemented many plans and policies to empower women and to better integrate gender equity in policies, action, and programs. However, the Research findings on woman's empowerment to support this policy are scarce. Therefore, this study tries to explore how socioeconomic differences shape different aspects of women's empowerment in the culture, social and economic context of a VDC of one of the major district in Nepal [2]. The study is centralized in the Rautahat, Durga Bhawgwati Rural Municipality. Durga Bhawgwati Rural Municipality Development is divided into 5 wards. Out of these ward no. 3 is the selected area of this research [3]. The ward no. 3 is the residential place of Brahmin. The main sources of income of this village are agriculture and they adopt another profession in regard to their caste. Male population is engaged 588 and female population is 148 which proves that there is a majority of male population as the final results are sorted out based on the new administrative area.

We can also find people of many castes and ethnic administrative areas as of groups are found in the study area. It occupies an area of 19.80 km² with a total population of 22,599. Durga Bhagwati is a rural municipality in Rautahat District, a part of province 2 in Nepal. The total population of census 2021 is 23,226 with population density 1173/km² [4]. Education is one of the major degrees to measure the social status of any community. Education is potentially an agent for awareness and change; therefore it is central to the process of women's empowerment. The level of the education is the indicator of the social status of women [5]. Accesses to job opportunity, economic independency, decision-making power etc. of the women are evaluated in terms of education of the women. There is easy access of education and market area also [6]. So education status of this area is very good compared with national level. Available studies in different settings on the relationship between socioeconomic factors and women's status show mixed results, and a number of them report reasons to expect variations in the effects of women's socioeconomic characteristics on different aspects of their life. For example, literature usually reports higher socioeconomic status, namely women's increasing education and participation in wage work, to be positively related with women's greater say on decision making in the household. Employed and educated women were more likely to have a say in all aspects of the decision-making in their household, relative to unemployed women and women with no formal education [7]. In Nepal, women who worked for cash were more likely to participate in all aspects of decision-making than those who were not employed or did not work for cash. Similarly highly educated women and those living in the richest households were more likely to state their views on all aspects of decision-making [8]. Reported that in Nepal educated were more able to use subtle means to impose their ideas and that at the same time they were in more communicative marital relationship, which increased their influence in the household. These separate and inconsistent effects of socioeconomic factors on different aspects of women's empowerment demonstrate the need to look closely at the various mechanism through which socioeconomic inequalities affect women's empowerment [9]. The present study seeks to understand how socioeconomic inequality is part of the explanation for women's empowerment or disadvantage in households in Durga Bhagwati Rural Municipality Rautahat District of Nepal [10]. Women's empowerment can be understood at different levels, individual and social, in different dimensions, and within the intimate family setting or in the public domain. The Human Development Report of Nepal showed that there is high gender disparity, as measured by the Gender-sensitive Development Index (GDI), which looks at such indicators as life expectancy, educational attainment and income [11]. The same disparity is seen using the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), (Which examines participation in politics, the administration, the profession and income [12]. Women are vital and productive workers in Nepalese national economy. They make up one third of the labor force. The female participation rates raise in recent decades. However, Women are responsible for three types of work reproduction, management of the household and employment. However, reproduction and management of the household is not considered as a productive work [13]. Moreover, women in Nepal work for longer hours than men but have much lower opportunity for gainful employment. They possess extremely limited property rights. A woman still requires permission from her husband to go into business or work. Over 70 percent women workers are self-employed, unpaid and confined to low-wage informal sector activities. Women have moved gradually from agricultural to non-agricultural work [14]. The economic activity rates for women show an increasing trend in our society women are considered to be born to serve or husbands family and to run household smoothly. By this kind of work women cannot improve their status as well as they can't participate in any kind of personality development activities, decision making process [15]. Because of the lack of participation in various aspects, they cannot get a chance to put their real problem and their thought [16]. To uplift the socio-economic status of women, numbers of women specific NGOs were registered at the social welfare council especially for rural areas, but not in peri-urban their activities depend

more upon the availability of funds and priorities of funding agencies than social needs and priorities [17].

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to make the study more explanatory both descriptive and explanatory research designs are followed. In the descriptive research design, women's socioeconomic conditions are described as literacy and education status, family structure, sex of household head, marital status then explore the view on remarry of widow, decision of pregnancy and family planning. The study area selected is DurgaBhagwati Rural Municipality, Rautahat. This area has been chosen for the study because that area is a Bhramin society. It is the area of Durga Bhagwati village which has some of the most defined culture in all Nepal. To find out the socio-cultural status of women of such VDC inspired to select this area. The study area is local area for researcher so it easy to get factual and in-depth information. In this area no such topics has been research yet conducted. Most of the research related to status of women have been concentrated in rural and urban area, so the study area is the only 172.8 km far Kathmandu. The study are DurgaBhagwati Rural Municipality ward no 3. According to Durga Bhagwati Rural Municipality total population is 22,599. The universe of the study is 165 household. From the universe, 50 households were taken as sample. Lottery method of sample Random Sampling methods has been applied. Women is the respondent of this study. Only one from the each sample household is taken as respondent. In this research, natures of data are quantitative as well as qualitative. The sources of data are primary and secondary. The primary data were collected from field work which includes key information mostly from interview schedule, observation. In the same way the secondary data were collected from published reports, articles, existing written books, and research paper. The given methods were used to collect primary data. The data and information are collected mainly individual interview. The respondents through them. After that the interview were prepared for the selected respondents. Observation was made in the household activities and participation in public activities. To know the role and responsibilities of woman. Their Participation in social and culture activities, women involvement in the development programs were also observed and analyzed.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socioeconomic status of women Durga Bhagwati Municipality educational status, family structure, decision making etc. are describe in social status.

3.1 Age of the Respondents

The total respondent is 50. On the basis of age respondent are different age group, which is as follows:-

Table 01: Distributions of the Respondents by age

S.No.	Age group	Respondent No.	Percentage
1.	25-30	11	22
2.	30-30	15	30
3.	35-40	11	22
4.	40-45	6	12
5.	45-50	7	14
		50	100

Above table shows that majority 15 respondents (30%) are age group (age 30-35). In 25-30 years age group, there are 11 respondents which is 22% of total respondent. It is equal with age group 35-40 year's age group. And remain 6 (12%) is 40-45 years.

3.2 Age and Sex of the Respondent's family member

The total population of this sampled area is 292. On the basis of age sex female population of this area is as follows.

Table 02: Distributions of the Respondents Household member by by age and sex

S. No	Age group	Male		Female		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	0-15	38	25.50	32	22.38	70	23.97
2.	16-59	93	62.42	96	67.13	189	64.73
3.	60-Above	18	12.08	15	10.49	33	11.30
Total		149	100	143	100	292	100

There are 292 respondents family member in ward no.3 Durga Bhagwati Municipality out of 292 people, majority 189 person (64.73%) are economically active age group (age 16-59) . In 0-15 years (child population), there are 70 children which is 23.97% OT total population. And remain 33 person (11.30%) is 60 years and above (old aged population).Likewise, according to sex out of 149 are male and 143 are female in male population majority 93 are aged 16-59 years, 38 are below the age 15 and 18 are 60 years and above. In other hand, out of 143 female, majority 96 are aged 16-59,32 are below the age 15 years remain 15 are 60 years and above.

3.3 Literacy and Educational Status of the Respondents

Education is one of the major degrees to measure the social status of any community. Education is potentially an agent for awareness and change; therefore it is central to the process of women's empowerment. The level of the education is the indicator of the social status of women. Accesses to job opportunity, economic independency, decision-making power etc. of the women are evaluated in terms of education of the women. The education level of the respondents of the study area is given in the following table.

Table 03: Literacy Status of the Respondents

S.No	Education	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Literate	44	88
2.	Illiterate	6	12
Total		50	100

The study area is a semi urban. There is easy access of education and market area also. So, educational status of this area is very good compared with national level. Out of 50 respondents, 44 person (88%) are literate and remain 6 person (12%) are Illiterates. Level of Education of the Respondents Education is a determinant of development. It plays positive role for everyone. So, education is a key for overall development. The level of education of the respondent is shown in below table.

Table 04: Level of Education of the Respondents

S.No	Education	No. of Respondents	Percentage
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1.	Primary	44	25.00
2.	Secondary	6	13.64
3.	SLC	15	34.09
4.	Intermediate	8	18.18
5.	Bachelor and above	4	9.09
Total		44	100

Above table shows that among the total literate respondents, 25% of respondents have only primary level education, 13.64% passed secondary level, 34.09% have passed SLC level, 18.18% Intermediate and 9.09% Bachelor and above respectively. Family Structure of the Respondents. Nuclear family consists of husband, wife and their unmarried children living together whereas joint family consists of grandfather and grandmother, husband, wife with their married children living together, sharing same kitchen and property. This type of family and relationships within the family helps to understand the status of women. The family structure study area is given in the following table.

Table 05: Family Structure of the Respondents

S.No	Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Nuclear	28	56.00
2.	Joint	22	44.00
Total		50	100

Above table shows that 56.00% of respondent prefer nuclear family and 44.00% of the respondents prefer joint family.

3.4 Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status makes the different in women's status. Marriage changes the status of daughter into daughter-in-law, wife mother etc. Marriage also changes the role of women and increases their duties and work loan. After the marriage, normally there will be less chance of continuing the education as well as she has to look after her in-laws and babies. So marriage plays the important role in the life of women. The marital status of the study areas is as following table.

Table 06 Marital Status of the Respondents.

S.No	Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Ever Married	41	82.00
2.	Widow	9	18.00
Total		44	100

In this study only married women are taken as a responded of study area, there are 41 respondents include and take idea with them to complete this case study. Out of 50 respondents majority 41 people (82.00%) are ever married and remain 9 people (18%) are widow in the study area. Sex of Household Head's. Our society is male dominated, so in the study area few female headed households are found even their husband in alive. Even though, female performs all tasks of house and their male counterpart is in foreign country, they preferred their male as a household head. The household head's of the study area are given in the following table.

Table 07: Sex of Household Head's

S.No	Sex	No. of Household	Percentage
1.	Male	39	78.00
2.	Female	11	22.00
Total		50	100

The above shows that, majority of the household are headed by male. Out of 50 households, 39 household (78.00%) are headed by male and remain 11 household (22.00%) are headed by female in the study area.

3.5 Religion of the Respondent

Historically, Nepal us a multi-religions, languages and cultural traditions. Religion helps the society for its proper regulation. It plays the major role in social aspect so it has been a powerful agency I society and performed many social functions. The religion of study area in the following table.

Table 08: Religion of the Respondents

S.No	Religion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Hindu	41	80
2.	Chamar	8	16
3	Dom	1	4
Total		44	100

This study consists only three dominant religions namely Hindu, Chamar & Dom. Amount the respondents by religions depicted a high majority (80%) of Hindus, Chamar have 16% and remaining 4% follows Dom. During the field survey, it was found that Hindu, Chamar and Dom respect each other's religion and go to temples no matter whether it is Hindu god. They never discriminate each other.

Table 09: Decision of Pregnancy and Family Planning

S.No	Decision	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Self	4	8.00
2.	Husband	32	64.00
3	Mutual	14	28.00
Total		50	100

Decision about Property Mobilization of the Respondents. Decision making power is great and it shows the identity of an individual. In many society women are far from decision making. The decision about property mobilization of the study area is given in the following table.

Table 10: Decision about Property Mobilization

S.No	Decision	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Husband	29	58.00
2.	Self	7	14.00
3	Both	14	28.00
Total		50	100

In the study area out of 50 respondents 29 person (58.00%) told husband decide for property mobilization, only 7 respondents (14.005) told self-decision for property mobilization and remain 15 respondents (28.00%) told mutual decision for property mobilization.

Table 11: Income Sources of the Respondents

S.No	Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Service	8	16.00
2.	Business	6	12.00
3	Household work	11	22.00
4	Daily wages	10	20.00
5	Agriculture	15	30.00
Total		50	100

Above table shows large number 15 respondents (30.00%) engage in agricultural work. Then 11 respondents (22.00%) in household work and and 10 persons (20.00%) engaged in daily wage. Out of remain 14,8 persons (14,8 persons (16.00%) have service and 6 persons (12%) have their own business.

Table 12: Distribution of Respondent by family landholding

Size	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below 1 Ropani	10	20.00
1.	20	40.00
2	11	22.00
3	7	14.00
4	2	4.00
Total	50	100

The above shows large number 20 respondents (40.00%) have holding 1 Ropani land. Then 11 respondents (22.00%) have holding 2 Ropanis land and 10 persons (20.00%) have holding below 1 Ropani land.

3.6 Separate Property of the Respondents

Economic status and separate property are interrelated to each other. If women have self-property they fell secure in their life

Table 13: Separate Property of the women

S.No	Property	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
1	Have separate property	23	46.00
2	Do not have separate property	27	54.00
3		50	100

Ownership of property by women in representing in the dichotomous answer. Above table shows that 23 respondents (46%) have separate property in other hand majority 54 respondents (54.00%) answered do not have separate property. Labor Division of the Respondents. Labor division shows the gender differences and gender inequality in economic sector. Male and female labor is identified the social values, norms and ideology. The following table shows the labor division of respondents.

Table 14: Distributions of Work between Male and Female

S.No	Activities	Male only	Female only	Both
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		No. of Res	%	No. of Res	%	No. Res	%
1.	Cooking	-	-	41	82	9	18
2.	Cleaning & Washing	-	-	43	86	7	14
3.	Care of dependent	-	-	35	70	15	30
4	Shopping/ Marketing	18	36	5	10	27	54
5	Child Education	8	16	4	8	38	76
6	Medical Treatment	29	58	6	12	15	30
7	Celebration of any occasion	4	8	5	10	40	80

Among the respondents in study area, in cooking 82.00% female participate and 18.00% give answered both involve in kitchen. For cleaning and washing clothes 86.00% respondent give only female do this work and remaining 14.00% give both participate .For the care of dependent 70% respondent give female do this work and remain 30% give both male and female do this work. For shopping and marketing 36% male, 10% female and 54% give answered both do this work. In the case of child education 16% male do these works, 8% female and 76% female do this work? For medical treatment majority 58% work. For celebrating of any occupation only 8% male do these works, majority 80% work both and remaining 10% told female told do this work. Involving in development programs means to build up the capacity of participants and to increase decision making power. Participation is sharing of idea. Physical involvement towards activities, sharing responsibilities, sharing benefits and feeling of togetherness in every activities. Participation strengthens the capacities of individuals and communities to mobilize and help them. The participation in development program by respondents of the study area are given in the following table.

Table 15: Participation on the Development Program

S.No	Participate in development program	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	12	24.00
2	No	38	76.00
	Total	50	100

Above table shows only 12 persons (24.00%) respondents participate in development program. Majority 38 respondents (76.003%) are out of development program in the study area. The reason are mostly they are busy on household as well as agricultural work. Poor economic statuses of the respondents are daughter as female participants in programs responding mother and feeling shy. Changes in Respondent's Life after involving in Development ProgramsBy involving in development program, the effects of development program by respondents of the study area are given in the following table.

Table 16: Effects of Development Program

S.No	Changes	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	9	18
2.	No	41	82

Total	50	100
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Above table shows only 18.00% of the total respondents feels chances come in their life after involving in development programs. Majority 82.00% of the total respondents does not feel change after involving in program. After involving such programs they are able to take self-decision, able to take loan, able to teach society what they learnt, they increased knowledge development skill and known about how to save.

Table 17: Ideas about Programs

S.No	Ideas about	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	21	42
2.	No Idea	29	58
Total		50	100

Above table shows out of 50 person 21 respondents (42%) gave positive response saying the women of this area needs more sustainable income generation programs, skillful training and equal participation and family support to develop their status and rest majority 29 person (58%) said no idea about this. They are satisfied on existing condition or no more idea.

3.7 Discussion

Nepal is one of the countries in the world where sons are preferred more. From the very first day of marriage, a Nepalese couple starts thinking about having a son [18]. It is believed that a boy baby causes less morning sickness than a girl baby. So as soon as the family members learn of the pregnancy [19], they start behaving well or badly towards the mother on the basis how much she suffers from morning sickness. Modern technology x-ray has contributed further. Now people can even abort (illegally), if the fetus is female. So, the Right to life of a female fetus is threatened. At home, the birth of boy brings prestige, identify entity and dignity to a mother and the family in the Nepalese society, and welcome by celebrating and rejoicing at the occasion. In Maithili also there is a proverb: "When a girl is born, the earth is sinks by foot; but when a boy is born, it rises one foot to greet him "The Status of Women in Nepal a multi-volume series based on both primary and secondary data which examined the status of the women of eight ethnic groups in eight areas of rural Nepal and with the help of the United States Agency for International Development .Shrestha, and Hachhethu state that gender relation and legal situations [20]. The state of a public forum for citizen's action, state women in Nepal have changed at three major historical Junctures [21]. Although the unification of the country in was said to make the emergency of Nepal as a nation, the country largely operated as a primitive state until the mid-twentieth century [22]. Women were completely excluded from the public domain and consequently, the new state was concomitant with its limited responsibility (college of taxes, maintenance of the law and order, and protection of the people from outside intervention) state citizen relations were minimal. Their role outside did not extend beyond the boundary of community [23]. The law too discriminated against women. Nepali state formalize and limited patriarchy through the promulgation of Muluki Ain, which was based on the Hindi ethos. Hinduism is , the most part discriminatory against women and so was it the civil code; by enforcing Muluki Ain as a state protected ideology [24], the Nepali state excluded women entirely from public domain. The role of media today is to be a means to liberate men and women from the biased attitude towards women and men. But the daily national newspapers like. The Rising Nepal, Gprkhatra, Kantipur, Republica, Kathmandu post don not write addressing about the pressing issues of women [25].

4. CONCLUSION

Women constitute more than 50% of population. Demographically, the status of women is higher than men. Even women are left behind in every field like education, occupation, participation in social activities and development activities, decision making etc. They are mostly busy on household work as well as agriculture i.e. mostly women are busy inside the home and men are busy outside the home. So that they can earn money. Women who are busy on household work don't get money as salary, just get certain pocket money. Also household works are not taken as economic activities by government. From this point of view women should spend more time on work rather than men and work done by men gets prestige in the society and household work done by women need more labor and time are not given value in the society. Out of 50 respondents in the study area 44 persons (88%) are literate and remain 6 persons (12%) are illiterate. It shows high literacy status of study area caught of semi-urban and lots of schools and college facilities in the study area. Out of 88% literate, 25 % complete primary education, 13.64% have secondary, 34.09 are SLC passes, 18.18% have Intermediate level education and remain 9.09% have bachelor and above. In the study area, 56.00% have Nuclear family structure and remain 44.00% have joint family. It clears Newar community give emphasis to joint family. In other hand study area is an agrarian society which is depend on labor force possible in Joint family. Our society is male dominated, in this study out of 50 household 78.00% houses are headed by male and remain 22.00% houses are headed by female. Few proportion of households are found even their husband is alive. Even though, female performs all tasks of house and their male counterpart is in foreign country, they preferred their male as a household head. About the marital status of respondents, we take only married women, among the respondents, 82.00% are ever married and 18.00% are widow. In the study area, view on remarry of widow, have unique answer. More than 3 quarter (78.00%) respondents answered widow can remarry themselves. 16.00% are against of remarry of widow and remain 6.00% have no idea about this questions. This study tries to find out present socio economic status of women of Durga Bhagwati Rural Municipality ward no 3. In this study majority respondents are Bahun. It clearly shows majority of Hindus in the study area. In the case of decision on pregnancy and family planning, 8.00% respondent own decides, majority 64.00% answered husband decides on pregnancy and family planning and 28.00% have mutual decision. In this case, only 8.00% respondent can decide independently which shows study area is male dominated society. Property has great value for every individual. Mobilization of property is rights for women like men but in the study area, only 14.00% respondent gives answer they have decision to mobilization the property. Majority (58.00%) respondent answered their husband have decision to mobilize their property and 28.00% told mutual decision on property mobilization. Under the title of occupation, 30.00% are engaged on agricultural works, 22.00% involved on household work, 20.00% work in daily wages, 16.00% have service and 12.00% have their business. Proportion of agricultural and household works have greater than other. These works are far from income generation which has more than 50% respondents. It clears lower level of economic status of women in the study area. In the case of separate property of the women, 46.00% answered in the study area. In the case of separate property of the women, 46.00% answered have separate property and majority 54.00% do not have separate property. In this case near about half respondents have their own separate property which shows the good socio-economic status of women in the study area. In this study few question were asked to take information on labor division. In cooking 82.00% respondents told do only female and 18.00% told both involving in cooking. For cleaning and washing 86.00% answered only female do this work and 14.00% told both do this work. In case of care of dependent, 70.00% answered female do this work and 30.00% answered both do this work.

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