

A Note on Women in Handloom Industry in Kirtipur

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INTRODUCTION

Nepal is one of the world's least developed nations with an economy based on agriculture and characterized by increasing poverty, illiteracy, and underdeveloped resources. Traditionally, the poor are working with agricultural labour, working in weaving, construction, brick making etc. in off-season wage employment. In this background, in Kirtipur, one of the village town of Kathmandu district, the role of handloom textile in household economy is of important one. A large number of people are engaged in handloom textile. Cottage and small scale industry is widely scattered in this village and is still popular as the biggest centre of handloom textile in Nepal. Women are involved in all the production activities of the cottage industries such as textile, hosiery, carpet, match, bamboo work and other. But in the cotton handloom textile they have a special role. In this context the UNFPA (1982) is extending its help by supplying raw materials, machines, equipment and market for the finished products of the cottage and rural industries, bulk of which consists of mainly the cotton yarn and to some extent synthetic woolen yarn, since 1982.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE KIRTIPUR TOWN

Kirtipur is well-known for handloom industry. People here are engaged in governmental service, contract work, shop-keeping, paper making, craft work, poultry farming, carpentry and so on, but the housewives here contribute their labour to handloom cotton textile industry to a considerable extent. It is one of the beautiful Newar people majority village in the Kathmandu valley having light cluster. The houses mostly are old and reflect the typical Newar house and the handloom textile units are spread in different places. There are only few households which do not possess handloom to supplement their income.

Women of the village are more active in production of handloom cloth. If they do not have their own loom, they go to work on wages in other's looms. A few males and children are also engaged in handloom industry. Occasional shortage of threads is frequently realized and in such situation mostly the workers go in other places in search of work.

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BASIC INFORMATION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HANDLOOM

Cotton handloom textile in Newar community of Kirtipur town is very old profession. This occupation occupies a major position of occupation among women in Newar community. It is one of the most ancient traditional and popular cottage industry in this community. This type of occupation also plays a vital role in the handloom textile industry of the country.

The analysis based on the secondary data reveals that the industry produces various materials, such as, saree, plain cloth, shirtings, shawals, *dhaka*. The market price of these commodities ranges from Rs. 10-20 per metre. The market price of saree ranges from Rs. 50 to 120 per piece (CME 1992). All the raw materials needed for cotton textile are easily available locally, although they are imported from India, China and other overseas countries.

People of town engaged in the cotton textile produce saree, Nepali *dhaka*, shirting of grade I, II, III, coat cloth, plain cloth, *khasto* and others. Profit generated through these different products are not uniform. It depends upon the nature of products. The table 1 shows the difference of profit generated by various products.

The available information regarding the production figures has been classified into eight different products, which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Production and Cost of Cotton Textile

(Quantity in Meters and Cost in NRs. at Factory Rate)

S.N.	Particular	Enterprises	Production	Percentage	Cost	
					Minimum	Maximum
1.	Saree	54	4000	49.04	4.60	10
2.	Nepali <i>Dhaka</i>	28	100	1.23	10	50
3.	Shirting-I	16	1800	22.07	8	13
4.	Shirting-II	21	1200	14.72	8	12
5.	Shirting-III	5	500	6.13	8	12
6.	Coat cloth	2	56	0.68	20	25
7.	Plain cloth	14	—	—	—	—
8.	<i>Khasto</i>	13	500	6.73	10	12.5
Total		153	8156	100.00		

Source : CME, 1992.

The Table 1 clearly shows that saree is one of the most popular products among the different cotton textiles. Out of total production, 49k percent was found to be saree followed by shirting which was about 42.9 percent of three different qualities. It can be seen from the table that

very few producers produce coat cloth. The table also shows that production of the cotton textile by 450 handlooms and powerlooms have been of 8,156 meters a day. Based on this data, it also reveals that the average production of the cotton textile cloth is also 18.12 meter per loom per day. This figure seems to be quite low. It may be due to the fact that all the looms were not operating properly during the census period.

Regarding the prices of the different products, Nepali *dhaka* is very expensive compared to other products (minimum price per meter Rs. 10 and maximum price Rs. 50). There is minimum price difference in shirting cloth. On an average the price differences in the shirting is about Rs. 3.33 per meter. Thus, it can be considered as the cheapest product. (CME 1992).

Out of 56 establishments only 10 have secured loans from different financial institutions and organizations and private party and the rest have started business on their own finance. Most of the entrepreneurs are not interested in borrowing the loan from the financial organization. As, it can be seen from the table 2, about 82 percent of the entrepreneurs raised the capital requirement by themselves, and most of the capital requirements for handloom powerloom are generated by the entrepreneurs themselves.

Among the various types of financial institutions, commercial bank has been found to be more popular than other banks. Very few people borrowed the loan from the local money lender. Regarding the interest rate of loan amount, Agricultural Development Bank charges only 4 percent, local money lender charges very high interest rate, i.e. 18 percent. It may be due to the fact that the process of obtaining the loan from the commercial bank is easier than other sources (Table 2.).

Table 2
Sources of Finance

(in NRupees and Percentage)

S.N.	Organization/Bank	Units	Loan Amount	Interest Rate	Types of Collateral Security
1.	Nepal Rastra Bank	2	4,800	11	House
2.	Agricultural Development Bank	1	19,000	14	House
3.	Commercial Bank	5	73,000	11	Land
4.	Cottage Industry Development Department	1	21,000	11	House
5.	Self Finance	46	—	—	—
6.	Local Money Lenders and Others	1	11,000	18	Mobile and Immobile Property
Total		56	172,000		

Source : CME 1992

DIFFERENT TYPES OF LABOUR ENGAGED IN COTTON TEXTILE

The labour engaged in handloom textile industry of Kirtipur is presented in the Table 3.

Table 3
Labourer Engaged in Cotton Textile

Types of Labourer	Permanent		Temporary		Total		Total	Percent
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Skilled	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Semi-skilled	7	30	—	50	7	80	87	30.74
Unskilled	—	49	24	123	24	172	196	69.26
	7	79	24	173	31	252	283	100.00

Source : CME 1992.

Regarding the different types of labourers engaged in the cotton textile industry in kirtipur, the data reveal that no skilled labourers are engaged in this industry. The percentage share of unskilled labourers are just double than that of semi-skilled labourer. It also clearly shows that few labourers are permanent, out of total labourers, only 30.4 percent labourers (male and female) are permanent. It is also seen that out of 283 persons 252 are female which account about 89.04 percent. Similarly, in use of temporary labourers, 88 percent were found to be female. Only 12 percent are male. This analysis shows that the contribution of the female laborers for the promotion of handloom textile industry is very significant is comparison to the male labourers.

CONCLUSION

In the Kathmandu valley, cotton textile industry is widely scattered and most of them are established in Kirtipur area. The holistic feature associated with the handloom textile of Kirtipur shows that the textile products face problem basically in the field of quality and price. The Newar people possess traditional characteristics, and majority of people are illiterate and not included in development streams. Skill in the field of waving and dying of handloom textile is in existence since long back, each house possesses a traditionally weaving shuttle and people are also engaged during the agriculture slack season and most of the factories are registered in the name of the head of household and 17.86 percent of their total production is consumed in local market which is the only easily accessible market.

Women play a crucial role for the promotion of cottage industry. It is seen that out of 283 labourers in 56 establishments 252 are female which accounts about 89 percent. Similarly, in the use of temporary labourers, 88 percent were found to be female. The analysis shows that

the contribution of women labour for the promotion of cottage industry is very significant in comparison to the male labourers.

These establishments are not operating in full capacity and running only as a part-time or on seasonal basis, as looms operate only 5-6 months a year.

Efforts to strengthen the production credit for the local women have not been effective so most of the women of Kirtipur are deprived of credit.

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Book Review

Damodar Gyawali (1994) *Population Education* (in Nepali) Vidhyarthi Publishers, Kathmandu, pp. 173 Price NRs. 110.

Over the past few decades many demographers have tried to explain the population dynamics : fertility, mortality and migration. The continuing flow of such volume of thought is an indicator that this grand demographic puzzle remains a puzzling as ever. In this context Mr. Gyawali, a lecturer of Tribhuvan University, has contributed a valuable asset in population studies for Nepalese students. He has written a book of population education in Nepali language – an equivalent of text book for Intermediate and Bachelor level.

This book contains 16 chapters. One to eleven chapter provide the theoretical and basic principles of population studies, twelve and thirteen provide population situation of SAARC countries, chapter 14 provides a research work on *Kumal* community, chapter 15 is intended to provide a basis knowledge in research methodology and chapter 16 provides some of the development indicators.

He has taken population education synonymous to population studies while the former indicates the teaching methodology required to teach in Secondary School Level on population education, the later by its definition is broad and covers a multi-disciplinary facets from the estimation and projection of demographic processes to interrelationship between population phenomenon and socio-economic and cultural milieu. The writer under the sub-topics of population education of Nepal says that population education is taught as an optional subject in Intermediate and Bachelor level in 13 campuses under Tribhuvan University while Master Level is only in Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur Campus. But there are no campuses under faculty of Humanities and social sciences where population Education is taught rather than population studies.

In the introduction chapter Mr. Gyawali explains the population education in terms of importance of demographic analysis, history of demography, population geography, meaning, definition, objectives and contents of population education. In second chapter, he introduces the sources of population data in brief, however, he fails to include history and uses of population census, vital registration and sample survey giving examples from Nepal. In third chapter, he maintains the population situation of the world with respect to population distribution, and fertility and mortality situation. From the point of demography, several shortcomings can be seen in this chapter. First, the

writer just maintains the level of world population, fertility and mortality situation at a point of time (1993) instead of explaining the changes of these phenomenon over time. Second, comparison of population distribution among continents or subcontinents without their areas does not provide the real demographic situation. Third, the writer has shown CBR and CDR in continent basis instead of sub-categorizing continents to represent the reality.

Fourth chapter is concerned with the major theories on population : Malthusian Theory of Population, Demographic Transition Theory, Theory of Optimum Population. There is redundancy with earlier chapter. Some of the examples given to criticize the Malthusian Population Theory seem to be completely irrelevant and gloomy. The writer also fails to explain how these theories were developed, what were the basis of these theories and principles. Were they developed on an isolated phenomena ? Or were they due to the past contribution in population areas ? The questions are not answered.

In the fifth chapter, the writer has give population composition in terms of biological, cultural and economic one. He has explicitly maintained the measures of age-sex structure : sex ratios, age-structure with population pyramid and dependency ratios. However, he does not explain the implication of measures on population dynamics. For example, changing age-sex structure of population not only affect the fertility and mortality level but also alters the population growth.

Fertility, one of the major components of population change, has been introduced in chapter six. He begins this chapter with factors affecting fertility and ends with its measurements. This chapter would have been much valuable if the writer had included the concept and meaning of fertility, fecundity and reproduction in general and with data support for the sub-chapter of factors affecting fertility in particular. Nowhere writer tries to show shape or pattern of fertility by age of women.

Chapter seven provides information on mortality in brief. This chapter consists of factors affecting mortality, causes of mortality decline in the world and measurement on mortality. Again, this chapter does not provide the revolution of mortality in developed and developing countries separately : were the causes of mortality decline the same for both reasons ? Was not mortality decline in developed countries accompanied by socio-economic development rather than technological innovation in developing countries ? The writer is silent in this respect. Further, this chapter would have been much valuable for a Bachelor Level student had he included how to standardize the death rate for making it comparable to anyone population.

Chapter eighth is related with migration which covers the determinants of migration, measurement of migration, migration in the past, types of migration and theories of migration. Despite the errors committed in the definition of term of migration, this chapter is rich enough to provide the theoretical concepts of migration. However, the lack of information on causes and consequences of rural to rural, rural to urban and urban to urban migration in Nepal still makes this chapter insufficient and needs to be added, if possible.

In the ninth chapter, the writer has presented the population growth and its measurement : rate of natural increase, arithmetic growth, exponential growth, geometric growth and population doubling time including the exercises. Still the writer would have been better position if he had distinguished these measurements of population growth.

Chapter tenth provides information on urbanization. The sub-topics included are metropolitan area, urbanization in different regions, situation of population growth in urban and rural areas, 1950-2025, projection of giant cities, changing pattern of urbanization and growth of cities in developing countries. Despite the low reliability and consistency of data used, this chapter seems to be well-equipped with enough materials. Still he should have introduced the process of urbanization in Nepal.

Population policies and programmes have been presented in chapter eleven of the book. This chapter consists of meaning and objectives of population policy, features of population policy, types of population policy, evolution of population policy, steps for formulating population policies, integration of population policy into development planning and a review of population policies and programmes in Nepal. The write has beautifully organized the population policies and programmes in Nepal : beginning from the Third Five Year Plan (1965-1970) to Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-1997). However, this chapter would have been much comfortable, valuable and informative if the write had tried to review the principles of World Population Conferences. In most of the countries population policies and programmes have been shaped by the principles of these conferences. It is the World Population Conference, Bucharest, 1964 that explicitly shifted the demographers from social scientists to policy scientists.

Chapter twelve is on the population situation of the SAARC countries. In this chapter, he includes the size and growth of population, population distribution and density, fertility, mortality, population structure and dependency ratios and expectation of life in the SAARC countries. He has described these phenomenon on the basis of the

ESCAP population data sheet, 1993. The writer again fails to provide the trends of these phenomenon over time. In the absence of changes of population dynamics in a particular population over time, analysis will just be diagnosing the population phenomenon at a point of time but not evaluating and projecting.

Chapter 13 provides a brief description of population of Nepal in terms of size and growth of population, causes of population growth, population distribution, population composition, fertility and mortality situation. Chapter 14, the demographic analysis of *Kumal* community, was developed on the basis of the writer's mini-research work during 1986, however, the writer does not provide the rationale for selecting the *Kumal* of Baddanda and whether 52 households' demographic and economic indicators are enough to generalize for all *Kumal* living in Nepal. Moreover, the researcher has tried to analyze fertility situation in terms of macro fertility measures rather than number of children ever born. The former measures in small universe do not provide real fertility situation as does number of children ever born on the other side, the researcher, without trying to see the effect of family planning programmes on fertility concludes that family planning programmes do not have any effects on controlling fertility of *Kumal* community. Finally, he has given no recommendation for policy purposes as well as further research. Despite the various unanswerable questions committed in his research work, this chapter would be much valuable for beginners in conducting research work in any community through primary data collection.

Chapter 15 provides information on research on population related issues. In this chapter, writer has given all the steps needed to prepare a research proposal in a beautiful way. However, he fails to provide information that all problems existing in the universe are not researchable one, because a research problem is embodied with three characteristics; (1) a discrepancy between what is and what should be (2) a question why the discrepancy exist; and (3) at least two or more reasonable and plausible answers of the question.

He has also given the basic indicators of development. He has tried to compute the rank correlation coefficient between per capita income and crude death rate among the SAARC countries in appendix 3 which is methodologically questionable since crude death rate is affected by age-sex structure of a population.

Despite the several weakness committed in the book, *Population Education*, written by Mr Gyawali, his contribution on population studies can not be underestimated. His contribution would be valuable for Intermediate and Bachelor Level students including teachers and

researchers and he will keep on producing more readings in population studies in years to come.

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