

Old Age Allowance and Gender Inequality in Decision Making among Dalit in Pokhara

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Abstract: The main aim of this paper is to explore gender inequality in decision making role among Dalit community getting Old Age Allowance (OAA) in Pokhara. For this purpose, out of 553 Dalit respondents who were getting OAA, 131 respondents have been proportionately distributed in randomly selected four wards (13, 16, 26 and 29) of Pokhara. Information was collected from these respondents using structured questionnaire. A multistage sampling technique was applied during the sample collection. Chi-squared test was applied to find the association of different decision making role of the respondents with gender. The indicators of the decision making role of the respondents taken in this study are 'The voice is heard more and given more importance', 'Advice is sought on important affairs' and 'Actively involved in the decision making'. The information of these indicators of decision making role of the respondents was collected before and after getting OAA among friends, in family and in society. It is found that the proportion of male is higher than the female in all the indicators of decision making role of the respondents before and after getting OAA. However, the percentage of the male and female was increased after getting OAA. Further, the decision making indicators like actively involved in the decision making in Society' before and after getting OAA, actively involved in the decision making among friends after getting OAA, and advice is sought on important affairs in society after getting OAA have significant association with gender.

Keywords: Dalit community, decision making, gender, old age allowance, proportion

Introduction

Nepal is a post-conflict country with a highly unequal social structure. Social exclusion in Nepal reflects the hierarchies of the Hindu caste system that divides the population into 'upper' and 'low' caste people (World Bank, 2006). The caste system divides the population into the 'upper caste' Brahmin, Chhetri and Newar groups, the 'middle caste' Tarai and the 'low caste' Dalits.

Dalits are those communities who, by virtue of atrocities of caste based discrimination and untouchability, are most backward in social, economic, educational, political and religious fields, and are

deprived of human dignity and social justice (NDC). Dalit comprise 13.2% of the total 26494504 population of Nepal (CBS, 2011). There are 26 castes under Dalit including 7 Hill Dalit castes and 19 Tarai / Madhesi Dalit castes (NDC, 2014). Almost half of Nepal's Dalits live below the poverty line. They are landless and much poorer than the dominant caste population.

Nepal's Old Age Allowance is considered a core pillar of the state's social protection system as old Age Allowance helps poor households meet basic subsistence needs (Consortium, 2014). The conference paper of (Uprety, 2006) shows that provisions for

the protection and advancement of senior citizen, however, fall far short of rapidly growing needs.

In the existing inequality based on castes, another type of inequality also exists which is found in almost all of the class and castes of human hierarchy is gender inequality. Gender inequality acknowledges that men and women are not equal and that gender affects an individual's lived experience. These differences arise from distinctions in biology, psychology and cultural norms. Some of these distinctions are empirically grounded while others appear to be socially constructed. Studies show the different lived experience of genders across many domains including education, life expectancy, personality, interests, family life, careers and political affiliations. Gender inequality is experienced differently across different cultures. Due to gender inequality, women are mostly the suppressed and dominated group in the context of our country. Women experience inequality in various aspects like education, access to financial and other resources, decision making in various aspects of their life etc. All these aspects play an important role in enhancing gender inequality.

According to the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (2011), husband or male counterparts are heavily involved in decision-making on issues related to women. In the case of women's health care, the decision is made jointly by husband and wife, while for men's health care; it is largely the husband who makes the decision (MoPH, 2011).

The participation of women in decision-making roles as members of the Constituent Assembly has increased dramatically from 2000 to 2012, in line with the constitutional provision of 33 percent female representation. The percentage of women in parliament in 2000 was only 6 percent which has increased after 2007,

the revolutionary movement in the country. By the year 2012 the representation has become 33.2 percent (UNSC, 2017).

In Nepal, due to various reasons like lack of higher education, access to employment and other skill development activities gender inequality is in higher rate in Dalit communities in comparison to the higher castes. Poverty also plays an important role to enhance the gender inequality by depriving the Dalit from education and to understand the importance of equality in the upliftment of their lifestyle and livelihood. This study aims to explore gender inequality in decision making role among Dalit community getting Old Age Allowance (OAA) in Pokhara.

Data and Methods

Multistage sampling technique was applied for the selection of samples. At first Pokhara Metropolitan city was selected purposively. At second stage, out of 33 wards of Pokhara Metropolitan city, four wards i. e. 13, 16, 26 & 29 were selected randomly. At final stage, out of 553 respondents, 131 respondents (at 7.5% margin of error and 5% level of significance) have been proportionately distributed in four wards (Table 1) for further study. The respondents from each ward were selected purposively (Dalit who are receiving old age allowance). Then the information was collected by using structured questionnaire. The sample size from each ward is as follows:

Table 1: Sample Size Distribution

Ward no.	Senior Citizen Dalit (Population)	Population %	Sample Size
13	246	44	58
16	151	28	36
26	56	10	13
29	100	18	24
Total	553	100	131

(Source: Department of Civil Registration and Self Calculation, 2018)

Findings

Based on the information collected from 131 respondents, this study has the following findings:

It is found that the proportion of male is high for the positive reply of the statement that their voice is heard more and given more importance among friends, in family and in society before and after getting old aged allowance (OAA). Statistically it is not significant. However, the percentage of male and female under these indicators has been increased after getting OAA.

The proportion of male is higher than the female in the positive response of the statement that their advice is sought on important affairs among friends and in family before and after getting OAA. Statistically it is not significant. However, the percentage of male and female under these indicators has been increased after getting OAA.

The proportion of male is higher than

the female in the positive response of the statement that their advice is sought on important affairs in society before and after getting OAA. Statistically before getting OAA is not significant with gender and after getting OAA is significant at 5 percent level of significance. However, the percentage of male and female under this indicator has been increased after getting OAA.

The proportion of male is higher than the female in the positive response of the statement that they are actively involved in the decision making among friends before and after getting OAA. Statistically before getting OAA is not significant with gender and after getting OAA is significant at 5 percent level of significance. However, the percentage of male and female under this indicator has been increased after getting OAA.

The proportion of male is higher than the female in the positive response of the statement that they are actively involved in the decision making in family before and after getting OAA. Statistically it is not significant. However, the percentage of male and female under this indicator has been increased after getting OAA.

The proportion of male is higher than the female in the positive response of the statement that they are actively involved in the decision making in society before and after getting OAA. Statistically it is also significant at 5 percent level of significance. However, the percentage of male and female under this indicator has been increased after getting OAA.

Table 2: Decision making role of the respondents before and after getting OAA by gender

Variables	Before getting OAA				After getting OAA			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
The voice is heard more and given more importance among Friends								
Yes	26	49.1	32	41.0	30	56.6	35	44.9
No	27	50.9	46	59.0	23	43.4	43	55.1
	P=0.364				P=0.187			
The voice is heard more and given more importance in family								
Yes	37	69.8	52	66.7	39	73.6	55	70.5
No	16	30.2	26	33.3	14	26.4	23	29.5
	P=0.705				P=0.701			
The voice is heard more and given more importance in society								
Yes	17	32.1	19	24.4	21	39.6	23	29.5
No	36	67.9	59	75.6	32	60.4	55	70.5
	P=0.332				P=0.228			
The advice is sought on important affairs among friends								
Yes	26	49.1	28	35.9	30	56.6	32	41.0
No	27	50.9	50	64.1	23	43.4	46	59.0
	P=0.133				P=0.080			
The advice is sought on important affairs in family								
Yes	37	69.8	52	66.7	38	71.7	55	70.5
No	16	30.2	26	33.3	15	28.3	23	29.5
	P=0.705				P=0.883			
The advice is sought on important affairs in Society								
Yes	17	32.1	14	17.9	21	39.6	18	23.1
No	36	67.9	64	82.1	32	60.4	60	76.9
	P=0.062				P=0.042			
Actively involved in the decision making among friends								
Yes	25	47.2	25	32.1	29	54.7	29	37.2
No	28	52.8	53	67.9	24	45.3	49	62.8
	P=0.080				P=0.047			
Actively involved in the decision making in family								
Yes	37	69.8	52	66.7	38	71.7	55	70.5
No	16	30.2	26	33.3	15	28.3	23	29.5
	P=0.705				P=0.883			
Actively involved in the decision making in Society								
Yes	18	34.0	14	17.9	21	39.6	17	21.8
No	35	66.0	64	82.1	32	60.4	61	78.2
	P=0.036							

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Conclusion

It is concluded that the proportion of male is higher than the female in all the indicators of decision making role of the respondents before and after getting OAA. However, the percentage of the male and female under these indicators has been increased after getting OAA. Further, the decision making indicators like actively involved in the decision making in Society before and after getting OAA, actively involved in the decision making among friends after getting OAA, and advice is sought on important affairs in society after getting OAA have significant association with gender.

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