Factors Determining the Involvement of Women in Income Generating Activities: A Case Study in Pokhara Metropolitan City, Nepal

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ABSTRACT

Women's participation in income-generating activities (IGAs) appears to be limited in communities of Nepal owing to a variety of socio-cultural and socio-economic variables. Despite the deliberative efforts by governmental and different developmental agencies for the empowerment of women to be participated actively in income generating activities (IGAs), it is unclear yet what factors stimulate Nepalese women's engagement in various earning activities. Against this backdrop, the purpose of this study was to investigate the variables that stimulate the participation of Nepalese women in IGAs in the Pokhara Metropolis. For this purpose, a systematic survey form was used to gather data. A total of 130 individuals were interrogated, comprising 65 women engaged in IGAs (selected purposively) and 65 women, who are not involved in IGAs (selected conveniently and purposively) for making the study more comprehensive. A Binary logistic regression model was applied for finding the factors determining the involvement of women in IGAs. The result of the analysis revealed that literacy status, occupational status and monthly income of family affect the women's involvement in IGAs significantly while age, marital status, caste, family type, number of a family member and age at first marriage do not have any effect on it. The study suggests that it is imperative to make women aware about the importance of involvement in IGAs as this will help them to be self-dependent. The Government of Nepal should focus

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on women's education to ensure the necessary knowledge and entrepreneurial skills needed for their effective participation in income-generating activities.

Keywords: Determinants, empowerment, imperative, involvement, poverty, resources

INTRODUCTION

Prevalence of various socio-cultural and socio-economic factors seem to be crucial for limiting the participation of Women in income generating activities (IGAs) in Nepalese. Over a long period of time, women were at a disadvantageous position due to a gender imbalanced relationship that stems from cultural orientation.

Most of the rural women in Nepal are found to be engaged in unpaid works in a private sphere such as caring for children, cooking, feeding, washing, cleaning, nourishing and other household activities. The goods and services that are produced by women are generally consumed within the household, their production does not go through the market mechanism, hence, women's roles in Nepalese communities are found to have only the 'use value' rather than the 'exchange value'.

The majority of work performed by women such as helping extended families and/ or neighbors, management of natural resources for collective consumption and use, or for community development, participating in religious, cultural or social occasions in the community etc. remains unpaid and women performed these activities as volunteer labors. All of these activities can't be counted in the country's national production because they can't be accounted for; through a monetary exchange (buying and selling). These activities are assumed to be recreational, performed as leisure in their free time. Nonetheless, women have to perform these activities by extending their working hours for the shake of establishing and affirming social relations, conserving social goodwill or fulfilling social obligations, and conserving and maintaining natural resources. These activities are crucial for maintaining social harmony, for the effective operation of social institutions and networks, and for the management of natural resources that are essential to sustain the local livelihood. Hence women's works are considered to have 'Social Values' rather than 'Economic Values'.

Agriculture accounts for one-third of Nepal's Gross Domestic Product, and around three-quarters of the Nepalese works in the sector (FAO, 2019). In Nepal, the feminization of agriculture is marked by a growing tendency of females in the agrarian work force, with the most of females working on farm and livestock raising. According to the report by FAO

(2019), "The role of women in the sector is crucial, given that over 80 percent of women are employed in agriculture." However, because the majority of rural women labor as subsistence agriculture producers, their working conditions are precarious. Due to employment- related out-migration of pastoral menfolk, there have been a shifting of the traditional division of labors, with several females taking on extra obligations such as plowing and marketing. The agrarian land has been abandoned, resulting in a decrease in farm productivity due to the scarcity of work force in the rural areas. In Nepal, shreds of evidences suggest that female-managed farms yield less value per hectare than male-managed farms, implying that gender disadvantages persist, especially in terms of accessing, adopting, and utilizing technology. Man and woman agricultural producers frequently have significantly different sets of farming know-how, abilities, and criteria when it comes to picking kinds of crop and executing activities like planting, growing, harvesting, and processing crops (FAO, 2019).

According to the Nepal economic survey report (2019) shows that 16.67 percent of Nepalese people are still living at the absolute poverty line. To begin with, and most importantly, the burden of poverty falls unfairly on females leading to humanitarian deficiency, in terms of nutritional food, schooling, as well as humanitarian advancement possibilities as well as unnecessary work load. There is a significant financial disparity between males and females, together in the form of job/income generating prospects and the share of received money; consequently, female remain to live in poverty. According to Nepal Labor Survey Report (2018), "There were approximately 20.7 million people of the working age and approximately 7.1 million were employed while 908 thousand were unemployed. This translated into an unemployment rate of 11.4 percent. Females reported a higher unemployment rate of 13.1 percent, which is 2.8 percentage points higher compared to males (i.e., 10.3 percent). There are huge disparities in other labor market indicators between females and males, such as; female employment-to-population (EPR) is 22.9 percent, which is 25.4 percentage points lower than male EPR and female labor force participation rate (LFPR) was 26.3 percent compared to the male LFPR (53.8 percent)." Females make up 31% of all paid workers, while men make up 69 percent (CBS, 2002a).

For their family's survival, females from ultra-poor homes typically engage outside the home as haired laborers (ADB, 2001). However, despite legislative regulations for pay equity for male and female, research has revealed a significant gender-biased wage difference across the nation, which is notably noticeable in the agriculture sector: females earn roughly 25% less than males (FAO, 2019). Nepal labor force survey report (2018) also shows that "Nepalese

employees earned an average (mean) of Rs.17,809 per month. However, gender disparities were obvious in the mean monthly earnings gap between males and females, on average male earns 19,464 per month and a female earns 13,630 per month i.e., Rs. 5,834 in favor of males. Women also remain poor due to the lack of access to and control over productive resources (such as land, natural resources, financial and entrepreneurial capital).

Women's business potential has yet to be fully realized. In a country like Nepal, where acceptable jobs and agricultural land are rare, creating self-employment options will be the most crucial method for families to increase earnings and thus increase their chances of meeting basic needs. Women's engagement in IGAs is projected to help households in coping with financial distress, ensuring food sustainability, escaping poverty, and prevent susceptible families from sliding underneath the severe poverty. Women's income is imperative for economic prosperity and the long-term development of the nation, so policymakers should prioritize their economic contributions (Kabeer, 2003). Unfortunately, Women have been prevented from fully participating in IGAs by prevailing sociocultural possibilities and structures. To alleviate rural women's anguish and bring them into the mainstream of development in order to achieve a sustainable livelihood, they must become much more actively involved in income-generating activities. Furthermore, they must ensure the improvement in a variety of areas, including earning, know-how, awareness, skills, schooling, access to capital, and using the facilities of intermediary organizations.

Beside official programs, a lot of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are operating in the countryside of Nepal, focusing on rustic womenfolk to help them transform their lives. Despite many purposeful attempts by various development organizations to empower women and enable them to actively engage in earning activities, it is still unclear what factors influence Nepalese females' participation in various IGAs. Given this context, this study intends to determine the variables influencing women's engagement in earning activities in the study area, as no previous research has been done on the subject.

DATA AND METHODS

This study has adopted the multi-stage sampling technique. At first stage, Pokhara Metropolitan City was selected purposively. At second stage, two wards i.e. ward 30 and ward 31 of this Metropolitan City were chosen purposively for this study. At third stage, information was collected from 130 respondents i.e. 65 (45 from Ward 30 and 20 from Ward 31) women who were involved in some sort of income generating activities and get registered in Lekhnath

Chamber Commerce and Industries (LCCI) and 65 (45 from Ward 30 and 20 from Ward 31) women who were not involved in such type of income generating activities. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Binary logistic regression analysis was carried out to find the determinants of women's engagement in earning activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basic Information of Respondents

Basic information of respondents includes frequency and percentage distribution of the categorical variables related to the demographic (such as; age, marital status, caste/ethnicity, religion, family type and size, literacy level, No. of children, age at first marriage, sources of income, occupational status etc.) and economic (such as; monthly income, ownership of house, land and others assets, control over capital and other resources and investment etc.) characteristics of the women. Table 1 shows the basic information of respondents in the study area.

Table 1 reveals that a great majority of women get currently married (81.5%). A relatively higher percentage of such women (41%) are Janajati followed by Brahmin (38%), Dalit (13%) and Chhetri (8%) respectively. A significantly great majority (94.6%) of women are Hindu. Three fifth of them (60%) were residing in a nuclear family. More than half of them have completed formal schooling (55.4%) followed by literate/informal schooling (36.2%) and illiterate (11%) respectively. Relatively a higher percentage of them have business/ industry as their main source of family income (36.9%) followed by agriculture (25.4%), remittance (19.2%), service/job (6.2%), daily wages (5.4%), others (4.6%) and pension only (2.3%) respectively. A relatively higher percentage of women are found to be skilled (42.3%).

Table 1 also presents that nearly a quarter of them have ownership of a house (23.8%). Relatively a higher percentage of women have control over capital in association with their husband (38.5%) followed by self (26.9%), other members of the family (17.7%) and their husband (16.9%) respectively. Comparatively a higher percentage of women have control over their own income in association with their husband (40.0%), followed by self (32.3%), other member of family (16.2%) and their husband (11.5%) respectively. A Relatively higher percentage of women have ownership in land and other assets controlled by other members of family (29.2%) and their income get used by them in association with their husband mostly (42.3%). The majority (60%) of women don't have any investment in any kind of income

generating activities.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents by Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Marital status		
Never married	14	10.8
Currently married	106	81.5
Widow	10	7.7
Caste/Ethnicity		
Brahmin	49	38
Chettri	11	8
Janajati	53	41
Dalit	17	13
Religion		
Hindu	123	94.6
Buddhist	4	3.1
Muslim	3	2.3
Family type		
Joint	52	40
Nuclear	78	60
level of literacy		
Illiterate	11	8.5
Literate/Informal schooling	47	36.2
Formal schooling	72	55.4
Income source of family		
Agriculture	33	25.4
Business/Industry	48	36.9
Service/Job	8	6.2
Daily wage	7	5.4
Pension	3	2.3
Remittance	25	19.2
Others	6	4.6
Occupational status		
Unskillful	36	27.7
Semi- skilled	39	30.0
Skillful	55	42.3
Ownership of house		
Yes	31	23.8
No	99	76.2
Control over capital		

Self	35	26.9
Husband	22	16.9
Self and husband	50	38.5
Other member of family	23	17.7
Control over own (respondent's) Income		
Self	42	32.3
Husband	15	11.5
Self and husband	52	40.0
Other member of family	21	16.2
Ownership of land and other Assets		
Self	27	20.8
Husband	31	23.8
Self and husband	34	26.2
Other member of family	38	29.2
User of respondent's income		
Self	41	31.5
Husband	15	11.5
Self and husband	55	42.3
Other member of family	19	14.6

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	No.	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Stat	SE	Stat	SE
Age	130	19	78	36.48	11.465	1.138	.212	1.726	.422
Family size	130	1	12	4.97	1.876	.718	.212	1.446	.422
Age at first marriage	130	11	35	17.41	6.917	-1.220	.212	1.947	.422
Monthly income	130	1500	600000	21723.08	57709.042	8.256	.212	79.798	.422
Monthly income of family	130	5000	1000000	71207.69	96714.612	7.350	.212	67.247	.422

From table 2, it is observed that the minimum age of women is 19 yrs. and the maximum age is found to be 78 yrs. The average age is 36.48 years. with a standard deviation 11.46 yrs. The family size of women ranges from one to twelve members. On average each family consists of 4.97 members with a standard deviation 1.87. During the study, it was found that some of the ladies were wedded at their lower age so age at first marriage ranges from 11

yrs. to the maximum of 35 yrs. On an average these women married firstly at an age of 17.41 yrs. with a standard deviation of 6.91 yrs. The maximum level of monthly income among the women is NRs. 600000 and minimum level NRs. 1500. On an average they earn NRs. 21723.03 with standard deviation of 57709.04 Nepalese rupee. Similarly, the monthly income of each family ranges from NRs. 5000 to NRs. 1000000. On an average, each family earn NRs. 71207.08 with a standard deviation of NRs. 96714.612.

Standard deviation statistics of some of the variables (monthly income and monthly income of family) being greater than the value of respective mean statistics show that there is a significant variation in monthly income and monthly income of the family (Table 2). It means some women have maximum monthly income while others have minimum or even zero and some women's families have maximum income while others' have a minimum income.

Skewness and kurtosis statistics of most of the variables (age, monthly income and monthly income of family) being significantly greater than 1 reveal that the real value of the variable is not normally distributed (Table 2).

Factors Determining Women Involvement in Income Generating Activities

The predicted variable i.e., involvement in IGAs has two options i.e. Yes or No. for the purpose of finding the determinants of involvement, No is used as reference category.

Table 3 provides the odds ratio of logistic regression coefficients, associated p values, and 95 percent confidence interval for each variable. From the fitted model, literacy status, occupational status and monthly income of a family of the respondents had a substantial influence on the involvement of ladies in IGAs. The odds ratio of literacy status is 4.85 which indicates that as the formal schooling level of women increases, there is 4.5 times more likely to be involved in IGAs. This could be due to the fact that with formal education, women will be able to better comprehend and execute their tasks, which could lead to an increase in their earnings. Education improves women's status by giving them autonomy for decision-making, exposing them to the contemporary world, and providing them with knowledge (Jejeebhoy, 1992; Kishor & Guptha, 2004). With education, women's ability to comprehend and be aware of their position improves substantially (Rahman & Naoroze, 2007). Higher education, on the other hand, has the impact of diminishing traditional conservative standards and taboos that obstruct the lives of rural women (Parveen & Leon hauser, 2004). Women may be empowered by educational outcomes to seek and preserve their privileges so as to alter and progress their current circumstances.

Similarly, skilled woman has 5.5 times more likely to be involved in IGAs than unskilled

woman. This result is similar to the study of Dangol (2010). Likewise, as the monthly income of the family increases, women are 8.2 times more likely to be involved in IGAs. Furthermore, age, marital status, caste/ethnicity, family type, no. of family member and age at first marriage do not have significant effect on involvement in IGAs.

For the goodness of fit, Hosmer Leeshaw's chi-square statistic is 9.55 with P value 0.298 which implies that the model fits the data at an acceptable level. Here Cox & Snell $R^2 = 0.431$ and Negelkerke $R^2 = 0.575$ which indicates that (43.1 to 57.5) % of the variation in the degree of involvement has been explained by the covariate.

Table 3

Odds Ratios from Logistic Regression Models of the Degree of Involvement of Women in IGAs (n= 130)

Factors		B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)	
						Lower	Upper
Age		-.013	.028	.641	.987	.935	1.042
Marital status	Unmarried (RF)						
	Married	-.001	.932	.999	.999	.161	6.208
Caste/Ethnicity	Others (RF)						
	BBrahmin/chhetri	.434	.569	.446	1.543	.506	4.705
Family type	Nuclear (RF)						
	Joint	.467	.673	.487	1.596	.427	5.963
Family size		-.085	.183	.644	.919	.642	1.315
Literacy	Informal schooling (RF)						
	Formal schooling	1.579	.603	.009*	4.848	1.487	15.814
Occupational status							
	Unskilled (RF)						
	Skilled	1.713	.549	.002*	5.546	1.891	16.268
Monthly income		2.109	.738	.004*	8.244	1.940	35.032
Age at first marriage		.077	.052	.141	1.080	.975	1.197
Constant		-5.938	2.082	.004	.003		

-2 Log likelihood=106.698; Cox & Snell R^2=0.431; Nagelkerke R^2= 0.575; H and L Chi-square=9.553 and P=0.298, RF = Reference category, *p<.05

Source: Field Survey, 2019

It is found that literacy status, occupational status and monthly income of a family of the respondents had a significant effect on the involvement of women's in IGAs. However, age, marital status, caste/ethnicity, family type, no. of family member and age at first marriage do not have a significant effect on involvement in IGAs. It shows that literacy status, occupational

status and monthly income of family are the major determining factors for women's' involvement in IGAs.

CONCLUSIONS

Literacy, occupation and monthly income of family have direct and substantial effect on women's participation in income-generating activities, whereas age, marital status, caste/ethnicity, family type, number of family member and age at first marriage do not have significant effect on involvement in IGAs. it is imperative to make women aware about the importance of involvement in IGAs as this will help them to be self-dependent. The government of Nepal should keep women's education in a priority to ensure necessary knowledge and entrepreneurial skills needed for their effective participation in income-generating activities.

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