



NJ: NUTA

## A General Review on Women Empowerment in Nepal

**Sharmila Acharya**

Department of Economics, Tri-Chandra Multiple Campus, Tribhuvan University Nepal

Email: sharmilaacharya75@gmail.com

DOI: 10.3126/nutaj.v10i1-2.63045

---

### Abstract

In developing nations like Nepal, gender equality and women's empowerment are always burning issues. Most of the indicators of women empowerment in Nepal are found below the standard. Thus the study, tries to explore the condition of women at home and their socioeconomic challenges. In many studies on the present era, the causes of gender inequality and remedies for women empowerment are the needed in the modern world including Nepal. The study is a general review of available resources on internet about the issues (needs and solutions) of women empowerment in Nepal. The study analyses the inequality of women and its solution in Nepalese society. The study concludes that the review identifies, inequality between men and women, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and illiteracy are the major problems. In conclusion, the opportunity for education, health, job and entrepreneurship access are the basic tools of women's empowerment to mainstream gender inequality in Nepal.

---

*Keywords:* empowerment, entrepreneurship, gender inequality, status, women

### Introduction

Women in Nepal are worshiped as goddesses of creation. Feminism in Nepal is the movement or analysis of power or Shakti- Mahakali, Mahadevi. A review of women's empowerment is a study of the social, economic, and political status, strength and respect of women in Nepal in general. However, due to the lack of public awareness of philosophical discourse and materialization of womanhood in the market as a product of economic modernization on women, the norms and values of women are decreasing. Nepal is the land of Mother Shakti (Power of Universe) – Goddess Parvati, Sita, and Bhrikuti. Women's dominance in society – such a powerful practices, norms and values of their respective mothers power- seems decreasing in the world. In developing economies, including Nepal, women's position is in changing some scholars claim that women have equal opportunities in many sociocultural aspects, while in developing countries discrimination still exists in societies. In the reign of Shaha about 240 years significantly queens have ruled the Nepal. Constitutionally, discrimination has been secured for 33 percent women's participation in Nepal (Upadhyaya, 2019).

Since the 1950s, donor organizations have made it a priority to enable women to participate in developing nations' development with equal chances, but the situation is still the situation is not satisfactory. The ability to ensure one's own choices, demand, and right to influence social changes and development are all components of women's empowerment, which is generally defined as "an

increasing women's sense of self-worth." Women's Empowerment (WE) is influenced by a variety of variables, including geography—in the case of Nepal, the Himal, Pahad Tarai—education, society, and age (Shrestha, 2017).

Currently, Nepalese society are fighting to protect women's rights and status at the national, provincial, and municipal levels. Women's empowerment is actively being worked on in several development-related fields. In order to empower women to make a better society, numerous policies on women's empowerment have been made and are being made, including in the areas of education, economic opportunity, gender issues, domestic violence, and participation (Babbar, 2022). However, the activities are not able to strike and the situation of women empowerment is still in serious condition.

Empowering women is a tool to balance gender equality, it means, in general, equipping and encouraging them with socioeconomic opportunities (Dhamala, 2019). To lead society, women must be in charge of their own lives and social status (Shrestha, 2017). Women who are empowered enjoy independence, equality, and the authority to decide what to do with their lives (Upadhyaya, 2019). Freedom denotes victory against any kind of tyranny. Women are the base of humanity. Women must have the equal value in every section of the society.

In Nepal, the literacy rate of girls is lower than boys in general. In rural areas, the figure is more dangerous, and most of the girls have difficulties getting sufficient education (Yuvaldevis, 1997). For the last 25 years, the situation has been almost the same. They must be forced into early marriage and forced to perform family chores like labourers. They lack any decision-making autonomy and are subject to social pressure. They receive lower pay for the same task, which is a significant economic concern (Dhamala, 2019). Agencies work to provide rural women with gender education and occupational skill training, yet the situation is still unsafe as a result of societal wrongdoing.

Empowerment means power sharing some freedom for underprivileged communities. It is the basic fundamental rights, power or authority of a human. Women's empowerment means sharing equal power in the hands of women and men. Regardless of any form of discrimination, women and men must be treated equally and given equal opportunity in every sector. Women are empowered once, the situation changes, they will be ready to access and perform perfectly in developing society.

### **Problem statement**

Even in the 21st century, women are suffering from different kinds of malpractice. Even the Nepalese constitution secures 33 percent of women representation in every section of government and nongovernment sectors but in this election, only 11% of women got the election ticket. Why? Why the situation of women is so miserable in Nepal? Women are seriously victimized socially, economically, culturally, physically, and politically as well (Dhamala, 2019). More than half of the world's population are women, who dedicate their lives to raising their families and raising their children. Family ties are formed by women. They serve as the focal point of love and adoration. Mothers are both the family's and the country's main candlelight.

Mother gives the martyr to the country. It is a severe social malpractice because, despite their tremendous value, many individuals around the world treat them poorly, creating a destabilising social structure. Both lethal and non-fatal acts of violence against women have the potential to destroy a person's life as well as the foundation of society. As internal cancer is spreading, it has taken a toll on

mankind and productivity. It exposes the risk of women's anxiety and the whole world's vulnerability (Paudel, 2018). Policymakers must think about it seriously in Nepal.

A Constituent Assembly was established in 2008 after an election, and it was given the task of crafting a new constitution that would uphold the principles of equality and inclusion (Dhamala, 2019). The Assembly, however, was unable to finish the Constitution's drafting within the allotted two years. As a result, the deadline was repeatedly extended until the Constituent Assembly finally disbanded in 2012 in response to a Supreme Court directive. A new constitution was successfully promulgated in 2015 after a second Constituent Assembly election was held in 2013. The instability and a kind of anarchy ended.

As a result, Nepal is a republic democratic country, it has assured the rights of the people and equality constitutionally. Nepal assured democracy in 1990 in the full-fledged condition of human rights. But the situation in 2022 is still the same. Women's empowerment is a latent feature that may be studied using a variety of metrics. Control over resources, involvement in family decision-making, mobility in the public sphere, sentiments of better self-worth, and respect both inside and beyond the community are important indicators of women's empowerment. It is the feeling of women as natural real human beings in full form. But why is it so male-dominated? Still, the situation of women in society is questionable. The study tries to answer the questions and finds the gaps.

### **The objective of the study**

The socioeconomic status of rural women in Nepal is considerably low. Due to a lack of motivation, empowerment, and education, the status is not able to be upgraded (Dhamala, 2019; Upadhyaya, 2019; Paudel, 2018). The objective of the study is to find out the causes and remedies of discrimination and a review has been conducted.

### **Research method**

It is a general review and analysis of recent works of literature on the issues of women's empowerment in gender discrimination in Nepal. The article has adopted an internet-based library method to find out the development trends of women's empowerment in Nepal. According to Creswell (2014), a research design is a framework developed to address specific research issues. Thus, the study is based on the qualitative research design prescribed by Creswell on the framework of women empowerment. The study's research topic is to determine the level of women's empowerment in Nepal. It is a descriptive qualitative review of available sources. The discussion and analysis of the study are based on the study of Babbar (2022).

### **Results and discussion**

The points identified by Babbar (2022) are causes of gender inequality, economic status of women, humanity, family dreams, marketing, emotionality, insurance of women's safety, education, voice against inequality, and women's entrepreneurship. The results of Babbar (2022), are the basic terms to analyze the status of women's empowerment in Nepal. So gender inequality, economic status of women, humanity, family dreams, marketing, emotionality, insurance of women's safety, education, voice against inequality, and women's entrepreneurship seem relevant in the gap of women empowerment in Nepal.

### **Causes of gender inequality**

Women are the most responsible, dignified, and sensitive part of the Nepalese community. We respect women as mothers. However, mothers are treated differently by the influence of male chauvinism.

The Nepalese constitution allows citizenship to its citizens in the name of Mother. But still, it is not common in practice. Even though the Interim Constitution of Nepal from 2007 was thought to be more progressive in terms of women's rights, the Nepalese Constitution still has discriminatory citizenship provisions that conflict with one another and limits mothers' ability to confer citizenship on their children on their own (Shrestha & Mulmi, 2016). Additionally, a thorough examination of the constitution reveals that Article 11(5) conflicts with Article 11(2)(b). Additionally, they go against Article 18's guarantees of equality and the prohibition of governmental discrimination based on gender and Article 38(1)'s stipulation of women's equal lineage rights. Thus all these discriminatory notions (equal rights in lineage property, 50 percent security in participation) must be addressed.

The constitution was created with the acceptance and embracement of Nepal's multi-caste, multi-lingual, multi-cultural, and various ethnicities with regional diversity. It is declared illegal to discriminate on the basis of class, caste, region, language, religion, or gender. To safeguard and advance unity in diversity, it is vital to include all manifestations of racial untouchability. In order to maintain an equal economy, prosperity, and social justice in Nepal, social and cultural solidarity, tolerance, and peaceful attitudes are expressed as a commitment to establishing an egalitarian society based on the ideas of proportional inclusion and participation. In the areas of education, health, the workplace, and even at home, she must deal with numerous obstacles and exploitation. Women must raise their voices against discriminatory society (Babbar, 2022). Women have to speak their voices against injustice and start a business to enhance their economic status.

### **Economic status of women**

Human beings, either male or female characters in human society, must complement and supplement each other. It is cooperation, that is the process of making a better happy life. The cordial relationship reciprocates mutual respect, neediness and harmony among them. It is a move toward the perfection of relations based on the theory of equity and equality (Pandey, 2016). However, the monetary responsibility is assigned to males and household work is assigned to females in Nepal.

Thus, the main issue with inequality is the financial role of women. This is the material world; money, is everything. If you earn money you will be recognized. Women must earn equal to be equal to men in the modern world. Women can do good business, make good deals, and be more responsible than men but society has not given them opportunities because they have to marry. Women must be able to prove it with genuine action. The current working status, asset ownership, education status, and decision-making autonomy in the household are the basic standard indicators of women's empowerment (Dhamala, 2019) and men should be improved. Women must be empowered by themselves. They must cut their dependency on for financial issues. To empower women must first be involved in economic activities.

## **Humanity**

The concept of male and female is a problem in Nepali society. There is nothing different socially and economically between men and women. We are all human beings. However, women typically experience fewer possibilities, less decision-making power, and more movement limitations than men in conservative high-caste families, such as those in the Terai (Shrestha, 2017). Women are viewed as "homemakers" rather than "businesswomen" who can go out and face the challenges of running their own businesses and handle all the stress. They must stay within the boundaries of their home. It is advised to mainstream humanization rather than feminization.

## **Family dreams**

Babbar, (2022) has given a variable called family dream. Society is the group of family. Every human being has a dream of having a good family. But the dream breaks into pieces when it comes into practice. The practice of a male-dominated citizenship policy has consistently prevented the ambitions of gender equality from being realized. In particular, male lineage, the dilemma faced by single moms, and marriage have all been made worse by the citizenship question (Upadhyaya, 2019). It means that the sociocultural practices regarding women's concerns in Nepal are dominant.

Almost all respondents agreed that women can be empowered only if they have their own businesses. Women business owners must, however, manage the tension between their personal and professional lives. The main issue they encounter is how to manage their children and family while gaining the support of their family because, in the end, it is up to the mother to raise the children. If the mother has a satisfactory level of income she can manage the home, the child as well and her business effectively and fulfil family dreams.

## **Marketing**

Discrimination can be seen in marketing strategies between man and women. According to most of the respondents, Men are perceived as having greater authority in this area to advertise their products, thus even the most knowledgeable women struggle to leave their mark. Women should have equal right to start business and market their products for self-sustenance. This makes it challenging for them to market and advertise their goods and expand their enterprises. They therefore contact the middlemen who consume a substantial portion of the profit (Shrestha, 2017). Women should be treated as equal to men. Women should be able to bargain the capacity must be built.

## **Competition**

The another indicator prescribed by Babbar (2022), is the competition. Competition in business is normal phenomenon but domination through gender discrimination is acceptable. Competition for women entrepreneurs is the dominating rich male. Women entrepreneurs must be resolute in their endeavors to succeed in the face of fierce competition. They are stopped by a variety of restraints. When women leave the house late at night, they are still met with suspicious looks. Because of the harsh attitudes of officials and the arduous labour needed to launch a firm, women confront a significant challenge. Most of the stories claim that they can manage the market and competition if they could have a supportive and conducive environment in their home, parents or partner to reduce inequality.

### **Emotionality**

Women are more sensitive than men in family affairs. These sensitivities or family responsibilities have made them weaker in external economic activities. When facing situations that can occasionally be difficult, women are perceived as being emotional and temperamental. Women business owners are stigmatised as being unable to take risks and absorb losses. It is anticipated that well-informed, mentally capable adult women will make the final decision regarding what is in their own best interests. Liberal feminists therefore tend to oppose legislative action that would contest women's judgement (Yuvaldevis, 1997). Most of the respondents agree that emotionality is the responsibility and that the male-dominated society must assimilate it as the strength of women. It means male needs women's education to enhance women's empowerment.

### **Remedies for women's empowerment**

Many development policies worldwide therefore call for strengthening women's rights to property, especially to physical assets such as land and livestock. However, the relationship between property and women's empowerment is more complex than generally assumed because of the overlapping and dynamic nature of property rights (Shrestha, 2017). How property rights affect the empowerment of women at different stages of the life cycle and different social locations, ethnicities, household structures, and social class, using the lens of intersectionality should be considered. Increases in asset ownership, investment, savings, and business turnover are all results of microfinance institutions or cooperatives.

Similar improvements were observed in the social characteristics of female entrepreneurs who participated in microfinance initiatives. Women's ability to make decisions, social and familial ties, mobility, and the educational and physical well-being of children (Thapa & Chowdhary 2022). Despite feminists' accusations that it is exclusive and discriminatory on the basis of gender, some members of the general public favour this clause as being in favour of the state's sovereignty (Koirala, 2022). When the Government of Nepal launched Grameen Bikash Bank (GBB) as a microfinance institution in the 1990s, women's empowerment through microfinance was encouraged in Nepal. GBB organised poor women into groups with the goal of giving them non-collateral loans while assisting them in finding self-employment opportunities that would improve their financial situation.

### **Insurance of women's safety**

Regarding the wage level of women, almost every day we can see conflict on the streets. However, bargaining power is increasing. Some people are abused, assaulted, and violated. Since the majority of these horrifying incidents take place in homes and offices, there is actually no place where women may feel safe (Koirala, 2022). While the government must enact strong rules to protect women's safety and security, we must also keep an eye out for wrongdoers. Fighting crime is only one aspect of safety; another is providing a secure atmosphere for women worldwide. Maintain a healthy, holistic atmosphere and schedule routine physicals. Through finance, women were able to make better decisions about household spending, asset ownership, the health and education of their children, as well as about their standard of life, ability to save money, and social standing.

## **Education**

The next indicator of women empowerment is the education of women. A girl with an education can not only live her life on her terms, but she also has a good chance of affecting global change. It is our responsibility as accountable citizens to make that first move. Every girl needs and deserves an education, whether she is a rag picker living beneath a bridge or an urchin girl begging for alms. Teach everyone, including yourself, and create new paths for her promising future. Access to financial services has benefited women's economic empowerment by increasing their business opportunities, elevating their social position, and enhancing their entrepreneurial abilities (Upadhyaya, 2019). For a woman to launch her profession, a little skill is sufficient. Their efforts and education in crafts, sewing, or gardening could help them launch a small business.

## **Voice against inequality**

Above everything else, we must speak out against discrimination. Defending women's rights and working to reduce the pervasive gender gap in all spheres of society. Women who start their own businesses and homes are expected to have better decision-making skills in domestic and professional settings, as well as improved social and familial ties, more freedom to move around, and better educational and physical health status (Thapa & Chowdhary 2022). Most of the time, women made more decisions than their husbands did on business and household matters. It implies that the growth of women's entrepreneurship is the only way to empower women.

## **Women entrepreneurship**

It might be assumed that after obtaining microloans, women business owners' familial and social interactions strengthened. In other words, responders had a favourable effect on the social and familial ties of female business owners. Women's entrepreneurship is a potent tool for the social and economic empowerment of women (Thapa & Chowdhary 2022). Utilising microfinance institutions' credit, savings, and other related services has a positive effect on women's business metrics. The findings also demonstrated that, as a result of women's freedom, their social and economic circumstances had improved. The government and international development agencies should concentrate more on increasing the services offered to women entrepreneurs in order to encourage inclusive growth in the country. A well-educated woman is like a magic wand that makes society prosperous, healthy, and proud. It is imperative that society and the government take ownership of the task of eradicating gender inequality and ensuring that women have full opportunities to make their own decisions and participate in the social, political, and economic life of the nation on an equal footing.

## **Conclusion**

The topic of women's empowerment has grown to be one of the most crucial issues in the modern world, both nationally and internationally. The most effective means of empowering women and eradicating all of their economic and social suffering is education. Regardless of gender, women must have equal opportunities in all fields. Women's entrepreneurship is a potent tool for the social and economic empowerment of women. Additionally, using credit, conserving money, and other pertinent services have a good impact on women's business indicators. It is true that today's women have more independence than ever before. However, various social ills, such as child marriage and gender discrimination, continue to exist today. To turn the goal of women's empowerment into a reality

through the advancement of educational, medical, and entrepreneurial opportunities, it is necessary for government agencies to take this issue seriously as well as for societal and individual women to modify their attitudes. Women must start a new business and start to increase their income. Women must realize their inner strength as the symbol of power *Shakti* – the power within as recognized by the sociocultural history of women in Nepal.

**Acknowledgement:** This article is based on the part of the mini-research that was awarded me from UGC. I owe my heartfelt thanks to University Grant's Commission for providing me a mini-research Grant's.

### References

- Babbar, J. (2022). Women Empowerment. *Research Journal of English*, 7(1), 118-121.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods approaches*. Singapore: Sage Publications; Asia-Pacific Pte. Ltd.
- Dhamala, R. (2019). *Gender and Citizenship in the Constitution of Nepal, 2015* (Master's dissertation, Virginia Tech).
- Koirala, S. (2022). Women's Land Ownership and Gender Equality in Nepal. *Journal of Applied Social Science*, 16(2), 533-547.
- Paudel, B. (2018). Impact Analysis of Physical Violence on Women. *Research Nepal Journal of Development Studies (RNJDS)*, 1(2), 116-130.
- Pandey, B. (2016). Feminist Standpoint and Question of Women's Participation in Decision- Making in Nepal. *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 10, 202-220.
- Shrestha, S. (2017). *Report on Citizenship Law: Nepal*. Badia Fiesolana: Global Citizenship Observatory (GLOBAL CITY), Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.
- Shrestha, S., & Mulmi, S. (2016). *Nepal Legal Analysis of Citizenship Law of Nepal: A Comparative Study of the Nepal Citizenship Act 2006 with the Constitution, Precedents, International Human Rights Obligation and the Best Practices*. Kathmandu: Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD).
- Thapa, B. S., & Chowdhary, S. (2022). Impact of Microfinance on the Empowerment of Women entrepreneurs in Rupandehi District, Nepal. *Journal of Business and Management*, 6(02), 101-116.
- Upadhyaya, R. (2019). The problem of statelessness in Nepal. *NUTA Journal* 6(1&2), 64-69.
- Yuvaldevis, N. (1997). Women, Citizenship and Difference. *Feminist Review* 057 Autumn, 4-27