

Socio-Economic and Demographic Study in Majhi Community

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Abstract

Majhi community is completely socio-economically backward community. This article is focused on social-economic and demographic study in Majhi. The sample size is selected all (41) HHs of study area (ward no 4 and 5 of Aatharai Rural Municipality) by using census sampling. Both primary and secondary sources have been used. The open ended and closed ended questionnaire were designed to complete this study. The collected information were analyzed and interpreted with quantitative way by mean, ratio and percentage using SPSS (Statistical package for social science). The data were collected through head of household or responsible person of household. The Majhi people of study area have poor educational status, they changed their occupation boating, fishing to agriculture, foreign employment which changed their income level. Demographically, the numbers of female are more than male; life expectancy is very low due to few number of age over 60 and high number of less than age 15 population. The study help to find the real socio-economic and regional situation of Majhi people in regional or of specific area.

Key words: Majhi community, socio-economic, demographic, education

Introduction

Majhi is a minority as an indigenous caste / ethnic community among the 125 castes / ethnic groups of Nepal. There are 206000 Majhi are living in the world (Surya, 2018). The 83727 Majhis are one of the indigenous peoples in Nepal who are living in their own language, dress, culture, etc (GoN, 2014). Majhi is not only polite and shy but also very much friendly and helpful. Majhi have had a special and intimate relationship with the rivers of Nepal. The main traditional occupation of the Majhi people is boating, building and river transportation services in Nepal. (<http://www>.

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indigenousvoice.com/en/indigenous-peoples/13/majhi.html). The fertility behavior is determined by their social and cultural norms and values as well as education and economic status. Education plays a vital role in human life. The Majhi have limited educational opportunities. They have very low literacy level, no Majhi has a Master's degree, only 15 have bachelor's degrees, 35 have certificate level qualifications and 130 have the qualification of S.L.C. (School Leaving Certificate) (Surya, 2018). Millennium development goals and sustainable development goals focused in zero hunger, no poverty good health, education for all, reduced inequality among the all people of the world (UNDP, 2020).

The study, only Majhi has been taken which is completely socially and economically backward community. In general, educational attainment, occupational and income status, age at marriage, child loss experience determined the status of Majhi people. The CBS (2014) studied the socio-economic situation of Majhi at National level. But there is not properly studied about it in the regional or specific area. Therefore, this study aims to identify the demographic and socio-economic characteristic of Majhi community.

Methods and Materials

In the study area was purposively selected the Majhi community in ward no 4 and 5 (Iwa and Chhatedhunga) Aatharai Rural Municipality of Terhathum District. All of the Majhi HHs (41) of the study area were selected as a study population by census methods. The nature of the study is used descriptive. Both primary and secondary sources have been used. The open ended and closed ended questionnaire were designed to complete this study. The collected information were analyzed and interpreted with quantitative way by mean, ratio and percentage using SPSS (Statistical package for social science). The data were collected through head of household or responsible person of household.

Results and Discussions

This study deals the general demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Majhi people in Aatharai Rural Municipality, which may represent socio-economic status among Majhi community.

Results

Age and sex structure of the study population

Age and sex structure of population are important variables for studying socio-economic and demographic impact on fertility because age and sex structure not only reflect the present demographic scenario of population, but also provide the basis for the study of the past as well as future demographic scenario of the population. The table shows that age and sex structure of the study population in Majhi community.

Table 1: Age-Sex Distribution of Study Population

Age group	Male		Female		Total		Sex Ratio
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
0-4	14	9.72	20	12.20	34	12.04	70
5-9	20	13.89	21	12.80	41	13.31	95
10-14	18	12.50	19	11.59	37	13.01	94.7
15-19	14	9.72	17	10.37	31	10.06	82.35
20-24	11	7.64	15	9.15	26	8.44	73.33
25-29	14	9.72	16	9.76	30	9.74	87.5
30-34	11	7.64	11	6.71	22	7.14	100
35-39	12	8.33	10	6.10	22	7.14	120
40-44	9	6.25	9	5.49	18	4.84	100
45-49	9	6.25	11	6.71	20	5.49	81.8
50-54	5	3.47	6	3.66	11	3.57	83.3
55-59	3	2.08	4	2.44	7	2.21	75
60+	4	2.78	5	3.05	9	2.92	80
Total	144	100.00	164	100.00	308	100.00	87.8

Source: Field Survey, 2018

This study covers the population of 308 taken from 41 HHs. Out of the total population, 47 percent were males and 53 percent females. Table no.1 indicates that the highest proportion of population lies in age group 5-9 (13.31%) followed by age group 10-14 (12%). This indicates that higher proportion of population in the lower age indicated the high fertility. The lowest proportion of population was found in age group 55-59 (2.27%) and age group 60 above (2.92) of study population. It is indicating low life expectancy at birth. In age group 0-14 and 60 above is found 36.36 percent and 2.92 percent respectively whereas the population in age group 15-59 is found as 61 percent which is higher than the earlier two age groups (0-14 and 60 years above).

Educational status of study population

The education is considered as the main element to determine socio-economic and demographic status of fertility. According to census 2011 in Nepal literacy rate is 65.9 percent (75.1% male and 57.4% female) which was 53.74 percent in 2001.

Table 2: Distribution of Population of 6 years and above by Sex and Educational Status

Level	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Literate	94	65.28	94	57.32	188	61.04
Illiterate	50	34.72	70	42.68	120	38.96
Total	144	100.00	164	100.00	308	100.00
Among Literate						
In-formal	11	11.70	37	34.04	48	25.53
Primary(1-8)	65	69.15	55	53.19	110	58.51
Secondary(9-12)	18	19.15	12	12.77	30	15.96
Total	94	100.00	94	100.00	188	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table no. 2 depicts that a large number of people are illiterate 120 (38.96%), among them female illiteracy rate 70(42%) which is higher than male i.e. 94(35%), furthermore among the literate 188 people, the highest percent 110 (58.51%) is found in primary level of education whereas male 65(69%) and female 55(53%). Similarly in-formal education is higher women 37 than male 11. The lowest proportion is found in the secondary level. It is interesting that there are no more Majhi people involved in higher education.

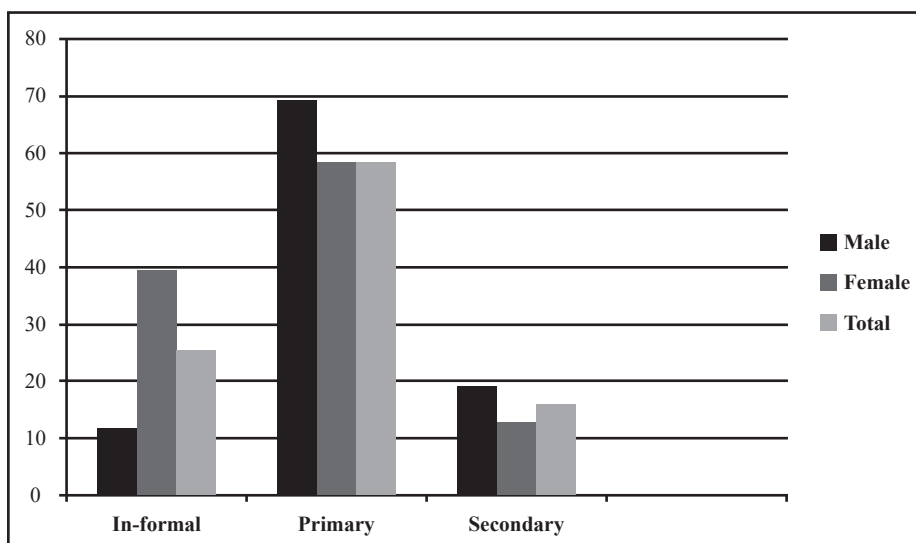


Figure 1: Distribution of Literate People by Educational Level

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Marital status in study areas

This study deals the frequency, characteristics and dissolution of marriage in Majhi community in the study area. It plays a vital role in determining the fertility because family function is started after the marriage where birth is impossible without marriage. It directly affects fertility of everywhere population and the marital status in the study area is given below.

Table 3: Distribution of Population of 15 years & above by sex and Marital Status

Marital Status	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Unmarried	56	38.89	79	48.17	135	43.83
Married	83	57.64	72	43.90	155	50.32
Widow/Widower	4	2.78	11	6.71	15	4.87
Separated	1	0.69	2	1.22	3	0.97
Total	144	100.00	164	100.00	308	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The table no.3 shows that highest proportion of the married people 50.32 and little bit difference of unmarried population 43.83 percent and only 5 percent widower/widow and 0.97 percent separated. Female are excess in both widow/widower and separated.

Religion and mother tongue in study area

Nepal is ethnic diverse country, it is influencing after the onset of multiparty democracy in Nepal since, 1990. Society information on religion was started to take from 1952/54 census in Nepal. The study population was only found Hindu. Similarly, their mother tongue is Majhi but all of them used the Nepali language.

Type of family in study area

Type of family is one main socio-economic variable which plays the role indirectly in their fertility behavior. In joint family, child bearing and take caring responsibility complete by senior members but in nuclear family such type of responsibility is with child's parents themselves. So, obviously joint family has high fertility rather than nuclear family.

Table 4: Distribution of Type of Family

Family Type	Number	Percent
Nuclear	20	49.2
Joint	21	50.8
Total	41	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table number 4 shows that, out of total 41 (50.8 %) people are in nuclear family and 49.2 percent people are in joint family at study area.

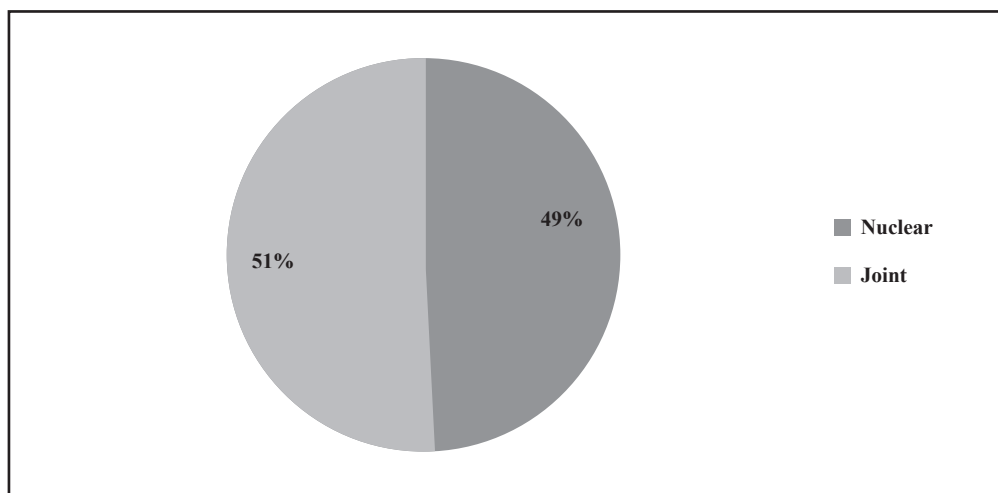


Fig. 2: Distribution of Type of Family

Main source of income in study area

Economic status of household is that factor which determined the children's education, health as well as for their quality of life which directly or indirectly affects on fertility. The Majhi have own specific sources of income from the historic movement. They involved in boating and fishing in the ancestral occupation. But, now they completely have changed their occupation of sources of income. The distribution of main income source of household in study area is given below table.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents' Households by Main Source of Income

	Past income sources		Current income sources	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Fishing	13	31.71	4	9.76
Agriculture	5	12.20	20	48.79
Both agriculture and fishing	10	24.40	-	-
Boating	10	24.40	-	-
Daily wages	3	7.32	2	4.88
Foreign employment	-	-	15	36.58
Total	41	100.0	41	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The table 5 presents that the agriculture is the main source of Majhi community in present but fishing was highest occupied of these people in the past. Also foreign employment is an attractive source of income of Majhi people in present. Most of the respondents deal that fishing (31.71%) and boating (24.40%), agriculture and fishing (24.40%) and agriculture only (12.20%) were main sources of household income in the past. But, now days agriculture is about fifty percent sources of income of households, the foreign labour Migration is (36%) and little bit people are involving fishing (10%) and daily wages (5%) express their main source of income. This fact presents that changing the dimension of sources of income in Majhi household from boating fishing to foreign labour migration and agriculture.

Annual income in the study area

Annual income is a main indicator of poverty. The National Planning Commission (2073) identified that 21.6 percent of the people are living under the poverty line. The main indicators of the poverty are also annual income and sufficiency of food. In this study, respondents were also asked about the annual income. Table 4.6 shows that only (7.32%) household do not have any annual income in the past years. But 66 percent house hold head have reported less than one thousand annual income in past year and 27 percent have 1-5 thousands annual income in past years. Majority 43.9 percentage of respondents reported that they have saved 5-10 thousands annual income after shifting occupation now a day. Similarly, above 10 thousands saved

annual income from 29.27 percent and 27.0 percent have less than 5 thousands annual income . These result proved that changing the annual income of the Majhi community with the changing the occupation status of Majhi people and also it focused that the changing the socio economic status of Majhi people.

Table 6: Distribution of Households by Annual Income level

Past annual income of household			Present annual income of house		
	Number	Percent HH		Number HH	Percent
No	3	7.32	less than 5000	11	26.83
less than 1000	27	65.85	5000- 10000	18	43.90
1000-5000	11	26.83	10000 above	12	29.27
Total	41	100.00	Total	41	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Size of land holding

It has already stated that agriculture is main occupation of Majhi households in this study area. The size of their land holding is given below the table.

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents' Households by Size of Land Holding

Area	Frequency	Percent
Yes	38	92.68
No	3	7.32
Total	41	100.00
If Yes		
less than 10 ropani	16	42.10
10-20 ropani	17	44.73
More than 20 ropani	5	13.16
Total	38	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2018

From the above Table 7, it was found that among 41 household in study area, 38 houses (92.68%) have land holding. Among the 38 respondents house (42.10%) have the size of land holding less than 10 ropani, 44.73 percent respondents house have the size of land holding 10-20 ropani and (13.16%) percent respondents house have more than 20 ropani size of land holding in study area.

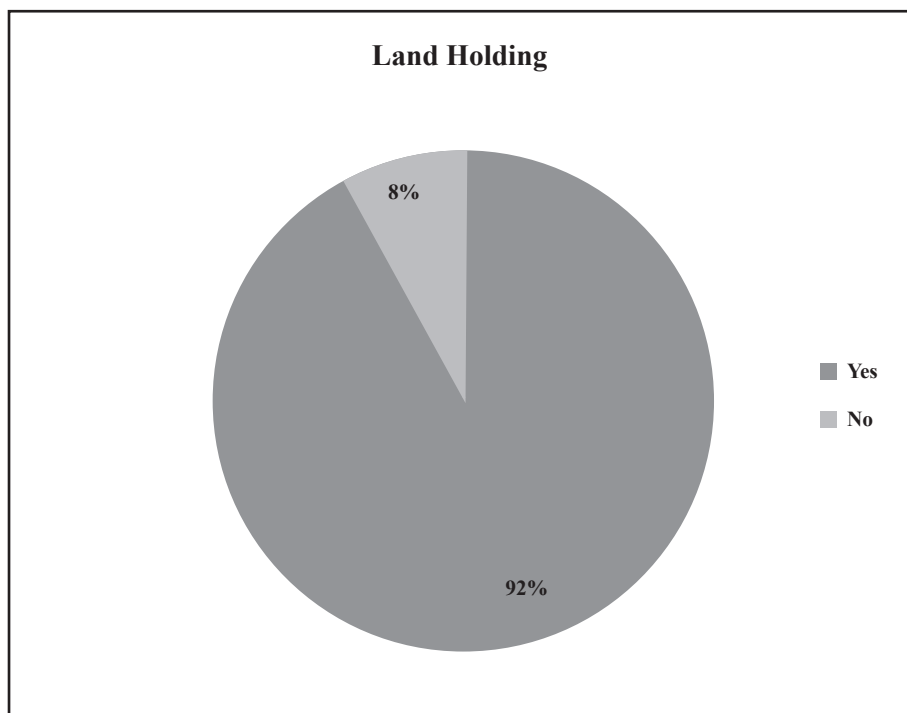


Figure 3: Distribution of Land Holding

Food sufficiency of household from own farm land

Food sufficiency of household is a main indicator for good health. In general, if the households do not have sufficient food from their own land, then people are compelled to engage in any type of activity. Their economic condition may be poor and pathetic. They do not have any means of relax.

Table 8: Distribution of Households by Food Sufficiency from Own Land

Food distribution	Frequency	Percent
Yes	16	39.02
No	25	60.98
Total	41	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2018

According to table no. 3.8 out of 41 house of respondents 60.98 percent have not sufficiency of food from their own farm land for the whole year and 39.02 percent respondents house have sufficient food form their own farm land.

Discussion

Majhi people are one of the backward caste among the indigenous peoples of Nepal. They have own language, dress, culture. They have close relationship with the rivers of Nepal. In the study area, 308 Majhi people have 93 sex ratio which is less

than national level of sex ratio 94. Nearly fifty percent people are in nuclear family. Similarly, their mother tongue is Majhi but 80 percent Majhi people speak in national level. All of the Majhi people of the study area is used the Nepali language but only 29 percent speak Nepali language in national (CBS, 2014).

The main traditional occupation of the Majhi people is boating and fishing in Nepal. The study populations were engaged in agriculture (30%); fishing and boating (19%) in the past. But, now they are working for main sources of household income are agriculture (71%), the foreign labour migration (17%) and fishing (10%) and daily wages (5%). CBS, (2014) denoted that the 64.08 percent people are occupied in agriculture. Also annual income, land holding is increasing and occupation is continuously shifting. NLFS II estimated that “self employed without regular paid employees” accounted for 45% of the total people engaged in informal employment (CBS 2009). Gov of Nepal (2076) determined the poverty rate of Nepal is 18.7. These fact denoted that the living condition of Majhi is gradually improving but could not reached as same as national level. It is interesting to notify that their old occupation, the boating is completely replaced by others resources. The 24422 Majhi people have own language (CBS, 2014) but the study areas’ people speak Nepali language. The Majhi people 61.4 percent are literate which is lower than national level 65 percent but higher than national literacy rate of Majhi 58 percent aged 6 and above (CBS, 2014).

Conclusion

The study is based on socio-economic study of Majhi community at Aatharai Rural Municipality of Terhathum District. The educational status is poor and higher level education (campus level) enrolment is completely zero. The Majhi people have been changed their occupation boating, fishing to agriculture, foreign employment which is changed their income level in positive direction. The Majhi community has high proportion of child population and low proportion of ageing population and early marriage that drive the low life expectancy of people and low status of Majhi people.

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