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by Maninder Naro

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Female Participation in Higher Education in the Context of Nepalese Society

Devi Kumari Neupane¹

Abstract

Female participation in higher education in the context of Nepali society is research with aim to identify women's status to their Higher Education in Lalitpur district and how the socio-economic and cultural status of women influences their educational attainment. This is quantitative research accomplished in survey design. The study tools used in this research were twenty-one closed-ended questionnaires. The questions were of the objective answer type and multiple-choice items. The population of this study was the people living in one Rural Municipality, one Municipality, and one Sub-Metropolitan City. The numbers of research participants were 379 female families' heads of the three local level government of Lalitpur district. This research shows the significant relationship between qualification and different factors of female heads such as residence, caste, marital status, knowledge of ICT, and the knowledge of legal provision to their education and there are statistical differences between income and female engagement in higher education.

Keywords: *Empowerment, Family Head, Female, Higher Education, Participation,*

Introduction

Education holds a distinguished position in society and is a key determinant of a nation's progress and development. None can deny that in the life of an individual as well as sociality education has a vital role (Baum & Payea, 2013)). According to Nath, (2014) Education is the nourishment of the mind with knowledge and as such it helps in the formation of an integrated personality of an individual. Higher education includes education beyond secondary school. Higher education is often expected to spread through colleges and universities. The role of education in general and of higher education is now regarded as being more influential than ever in the construction of knowledge-based economies, and democratic and socially cohesive developed societies (Välimaa, & Hoffman, 2008).

Participation refers to a person who participates in an activity or event meaningfully. Participation stands mainly for the involvement of intended beneficiaries in the planning, design, implementation, and subsequent maintenance of the development intervention where people are mobilized, manage resources, and make decisions that affect their lives (Brett, 2003). Female enrollment and pass out rate in higher education are indicators of female engagement in higher education. In facts, as pointed out by Jalan (1992) a striking feature of growth record of developing countries is that most of the consistently fast-growing countries also show a high literacy. Higher education is a reflection of the nation's social and economic progress. In the worldwide context, it aids in the production of skilled human resources and supports and fosters research in various educational fields.

Despite having a very brief history, Nepal's higher education system has grown quickly since democracy was established. Modern higher education in Nepal began in 1919 with the establishment of Tri Chandra College, the nation's first university. Initially affiliated with Calcutta University, it later partnered with Patna University in India. With the 1951 political shift, an atmosphere was created that was conducive to the growth of higher education. After establishing TU, the institution of higher education was reputable promptly. Till past few years, the higher education was known from 10+2 and above. But nowadays, higher education starts from bachelor's degree and above. The total female participation in higher education is about 52 percent in 2018/19 but the substantial participation from all the deprived communities and classes signs the unsatisfactory situation (UGC, 2020).

Women's empowerment through education has become the focus of considerable discussion and attention all over the world as well as associated with research in educational disciplines (Mosedale, 2005). In the past women, education was not considered as a compulsion aspect. It was thought as no essential to educate the women, wherever they should conserve in household act and childbearing. The need for higher education is the same for both men and women. But the fact is that women's education is more important than men. More than half of Nepal's population is made up of women, and half of the human resources. But it is very unfortunate to say that for long years there have been a strong bias against women and a tendency to deny equal socio-economic opportunity for them (Bickmore & Parker, 2014). This disregard for women is particularly evident in the sphere of education, in many ways. There is no denying that education is a vital part of a nation's socioeconomic growth. But women are not treated equally when it comes to schooling. Nath (2014) indicates that it is education which increases women's abilities to deal with the problems of her life, family, society, and nation. The negative effects The negative effects of early marriage and high birth rates are easily understood by an educated woman. They treat their kids equally in all areas, including careers, education, nutrition, and health care.

¹ Devi Kumari Neupane , Ph.D. Scholar, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur Kathmandu

However, when half of its members are behind, development is clearly hampered. The promotion of gender equality and empowerment as a recent phenomenon is affected by systemic cultural biases against women (Mugambwa, Mwebaza& Namubiru, 2017). In the same vein, Mukadasi & Nabalegwa (2007) argue that the principle of gender equality and empowerment is the foundation on which gender equality policies in higher institutions of learning were laid. The reality in Nepal is poor female enrollment and attainment at all educational levels, despite government policies and rhetoric that support the idea of equal educational opportunities for women. DiPrete & Buchmann (2013) mentioned that only 0.4 percent of educational programs were geared toward girls and women. With the growing number of girls entering education, it is important to create opportunities for girls to successfully persist through the system. According toYusof, Alias, & Habil (2012), in making way to women involvement in the decision making, access to higher education has been widening. Higher education has rarely been mentioned in conversations regarding gender, development, and education in the past. Based on the hierarchy of needs method, which assumes that higher education is at the "luxury" end of the educational market, gender has started to be analyzed at the basic level of education in lower-income nations. The qualitative component of gender analysis is still unclear. It was only utilized as a category of study in relation to access and quantitative representation. At the same time, economics emerges as a key field impacting research in higher education. The literature focuses on how patriarchal organizations of women in higher education provide significant structural, psychological, and attitudinal barriers to gender equity. Brown (1990) stated that there has been little evidence to show that entry to the higher education is discriminated by gender, but to certain extent the lower threshold applies to male applicants as compared to females.

Therefore, there were more qualified women than men who were able to gain spots in higher education institutions. The socio-cultural perspective of women's participation in education has not been adequately explored explored in the context of Nepalese society, despite the fact that there are few research on the subject. The primary goals of this study were to assess the current state of female higher education participation, determine the impact of socio-cultural factors on female higher education, and explore future directions for addressing inequities in women's higher education participation.

Methodology

The study is based on descriptive type of survey method. A descriptive design is the one in which data is gathered without changing the environment. According to Salancik, & Pfeffer, (1978). Descriptive surveys aim to determine the distribution and range of specific social variables, it includes such as geography, occupation, and level of education or training, as well as any potential relationships between these characteristics and particular attitudes or patterns of behavior. The entire home population of the Lalitpur district served as the study's population. And the study population was 6700 household of six wards of same district, which are from Metropolitan city, two from Godawari Municipality and rest of two wards from Konjosom Rural Municipality. Those wards were selected using stratified random sampling method and 425 household were selected using simple random sampling method and using Slovin's formula and PPS sampling method. In the simple random sample, every case of the population has an equal probability of inclusion in sample. The tools used in this study was questionnaire, which was developed and validated by different experts and used as pilot study. Before data collection the questionnaire was oriented to the enumerators. Data was collected from 25 oriented enumerators from 379 households and 46 households did not give any response.

The collected data from the field was coded and categorized in tabular form. The data was analyzed using SPSS software for descriptive analysis, that frequency and percentage, T-test, Chi-square test and simple ANOVA of the independent variables and discussed using theories and literatures according to the result of the analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis: There is total 379 respondents to this research. The table presented below shows the values of educational level, residence, caste, religion, and marital status of the respondents.

Table 1: Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

Category	Total (n = 379)	Percentage
Education Level		
Literate	114	30.08
SEE	79	20.84
10+2	67	17.68
Batchelor	59	15.57
Masters	31	8.18
MPhil/PhD	7	1.85
Others	22	5.80
Residence		
Metropolitan	165	43.54
Municipality	161	42.48
Rural Municipality	53	13.98
Caste		
BCT	160	42.22
Janajati	203	53.56
Madhesi	4	1.06
Dalit	10	2.64
Others	2	0.53
Religion		
Hindu	286	75.46
Buddhist	83	21.90
Muslim	2	0.53
Christian	4	1.06
Others	4	1.06
Marital Status		
Unmarried	29	7.65
Married	331	87.34
Divorced	9	2.37
Widow	10	2.64

Among 379 respondents 114(30.08%) family heads are only literate. In the same way, 79 (20.84%), 67 (17.68%), 59 (15.57%), 31 (8.18%), 7 (1.85%), 22 (5.82) are SEE, +2, Bachelor, Masters, MPhil/PhD, and others respectively. Out of 379 respondents, 165 (43.54%) live in a metropolitan city, 161 (42.48%) in a municipality, and 53 (13.98%) live in the village municipality. The majority of the respondents 203(53.56%) belong to Janajati while Brahmin/Chhetri belongs to 160 (42.22%). In the same way, the number of Madhesi is only 4 (1.06%), Dalit is 9 (more than 2%) and remaining others are only 2(0.53%). Among 379 the Muslims belongs to 2(0.53%); Christian and others belongs to 4(1.06%); Buddhists are 83(21.9%) and the majority of the religion belongs to Hindu 286 (75.46%). In the same way, 30 (8%) are unmarried; 323 (86.1%) are married, 14 (3.7%) are the widow, and only 8 (2.1%) are divorced.

The following Table shows the professional characteristics of the respondents. The professional characteristics of the respondents are viewed by knowledge of ICT, Training taken by the respondents, involvement in female network, job discrimination between son and daughter and the knowledge of legal provision of the respondents.

Table 2: Professional Characteristics of Respondents

Category		Total (n = 379)	Percentage
Knowledge of ICT			
	Yes	244	64.38
	No	135	35.62
Training			
	Yes	144	37.99
	No	235	62.01
Involvement in Female Network			
	Yes	68	17.94
	No	311	82.06
Occupation			
	Job	120	31.66
	Business	111	29.29
	Agriculture	88	23.22
	Retired	10	2.64
	Others	50	13.19
Discrimination between Son and Daughter			
	Yes	96	25.30
	No	283	74.70
Knowledge of Legal Provision			
	Yes	140	36.94
	No	239	63.06

The value presented in Table 2 shows that out of 379 respondents 244 (64.38%) have the knowledge of ICT. Likewise, majority of respondents 235(62.01%) have not any kinds of training and only 144 (37.99%) respondents have different types of training. Among 379 respondents, only 68(17.94%) involve in female network and 311(82.06%) do not involve in any kinds of female network. Among 379, 130 (34.7%) involved in Job, 102 (27.2%) in business, 86 (22.9%) in agriculture, 10 (2.7) in retired and 47 (12.5 %) in others. Further, it presents that 283 (74.70%) households have not any discrimination among their sons and daughters whereas 96 (25.30%) households have still discrimination among sons and daughters in education. Among 379 respondents, only 140 (36.94%) respondents have knowledge of legal provision while 239 (63.06%) respondents don't know about legal provision. The table 3 presents the values of the number of female children studying in higher educational institutions whose mother belongs to different groups.

Table 3: Cross Table of Age and Number of Child studying in Higher Education

Child studying in HE	Less than 30 Years	30 to 39 Years	40 to 49 Years	50 and Above	Total
0	34	26	37	25	122
1	23	25	33	39	120
2	22	30	29	26	107
3	6	2	6	4	18
4	2	1	1	4	8
5	0	0	0	1	1
6	0	1	1	1	3
Total	87	85	107	100	379

Out of 379 respondents 122 family don't have any female children studying in higher education. 120 parents have only one female child studying in the HE. Likewise, 107, 18, 8, 1, 3 family have two, three, four, five and six female children studying in higher educational institutions.

A sample correlation coefficient, or r , is generated by the bivariate Pearson Correlation and indicates the direction and strength of linear correlations between continuous variable pairs. By extension, the Pearson Correlation assesses whether the same pairs of variables in the population, as shown by a population correlation, have a linear relationship based on statistical evidence, ρ ("rho"). The Pearson Correlation is a parametric measure. The table 4 shows the values of chi square test. It shows the test statistics of the female's education with their different personal and professional characteristics.

Table 4: Chi-Square Test Statistics of Qualification

Category	Chi-Square Value	DF	Significance
Residence	31.684	12	0.002
Caste	52.079	24	0.001
Marital Status	57.084	18	0.000
Knowledge of ICT	116.584	6	0.000
Training	26.747	6	0.000
Occupation	143.809	24	0.000
Knowledge of Legal Provision	27.229	6	0.000

From the data presented in table 4, it shows that among the 10 variables the Chi-square test shows the significance relationship between seven variables i.e., residence, caste, marital status, knowledge of ICT, training, occupation and knowledge of legal provision with educational level of the female participation in higher education in the context of Nepal. Further it was analyzed the ANOVA test along with income of family head and the number of female children studying in higher educational institutions. The output of the ANOVA analysis is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Output of ANOVA Analysis of Income and No. of Female Children studying in HE

Income	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Less than 15000	109	0.86	0.88	2.768	0.027
15000 to 29 thousand	101	1.13	0.95		
30000 to 44 thousand	104	1.19	0.93		
45000 to 59 thousand	40	1.18	0.75		
60000 thousand and above	25	1.36	0.95		

From the data presented in table 5, the mean value and the value of standard deviation of the different income level of the family head shows that there are no variations between the income level. The ANOVA value of income level ($f = 2.768, p = 0.027$) shows that there is statistical differences between the income level and number of female children studying in higher educational level.

Findings and Discussion

This paper provides evidence about female participation in higher education in Nepal. First, it presented a descriptive analysis and then investigates the chi square and ANOVA analysis along with female participation in higher education in Nepal. The test statistics of Chi-Square test shows that there are significance differences between women qualification along with residence, caste, marital status, knowledge of ICT, training, occupation and knowledge of legal provision. The education is the ornament of the individual and it has vital role to change the society (Majhi, 2016). The systemic cultural biases against women (Mugambwa, Mwebaza & Namubiru, 2017) in equality and empowerment impacts to change the society. Further, the ANOVA test statistics shows that there is a significance difference between the female children studying in higher education along with the income of the family head in the context of Nepal. It further indicates that the qualification of female head matters in knowing of legal provision of Nepal. The residence in urban and rural area is matter by the qualification of the female. Likewise, the qualification is determined by the different caste. Having the different caste of female head, it impacts on the different qualification level. In the same way, the marital status, knowledge of ICT, training and occupation of the female also determined and different by the qualification of the female head in Nepal. There is strong commitment of developing countries to focus principally on primary education, sometimes at the cost of higher education, has been increasingly coming under scrutiny (Olson-Strom & Rao, 2020). The researcher further explains women's increasing enrolment in higher education makes the better performance in their job. Gender disparity in family's investment is much less pronounced in certain countries, particularly East Asian nations, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Thailand

(Sahni & Shankar, 2012). This research can be implied to the Nepalese context as well. The creation of anti-discrimination structures, and the promotion and institutionalization of women's studies (Wroblewski, 2019). The qualification of the women is matters in nurturing in administrative positions in any institutions (Schnackenberg & Simard, 2018). The different literatures show that the qualification of the female is matters to enhance the personal and professional capabilities.

Conclusion

The female participation in higher educational level in Nepal is determined by the income level of female head. The female participation in higher education institution further impacts by the qualification of the family head. The qualification of the family head (female) is directly impacting on the current residence of their family as well. The knowledge of legal provision and ICT also matters by the qualification of the female family head. The qualification and income of the female family head impacts on the migration process from rural to urban areas. Those families who have the more educated female head their children are more likely to go to the higher educational institutions.

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