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Relation between Caste and Household Level Decision of Gender

Gehanath Poudel

Ph. D. Scholar, Mewar University, Rajasthan, India

Abstract:

Caste and gender both are the socially constructed terminology used by generation to generation as the cultural of social stratification. The study has focused to identify the relation between caste of respondents and household level decision of gender. The study was based on the cross-sectional descriptive design. Study was conducted in Ilam district of Nepal. Simple random sampling was used to select the household who were involved in Small Farmer Cooperative Ltd. (SFCL). Women were the primary respondents of this study. Result shows that among the 6 variables (household expenditure, selling of domestic animals, finalizing the business plan, marriage of family members, participation in social activities and saving money in bank), except saving of money in bank, more than 50% respondents said that they mutually decided on rest five household level activities. Regarding the saving of money in bank, around 80% said that wife has authority to decide about the saving of money. In conclusion, it is found that both male and female has equal rights to decide in majority issues of household level decision also.

Keywords: Caste, decision, gender, household, relation

1. Introduction

Nepal lies on the lap of the great Himalayas range of mountains. Nepal is famous because Mount Everest; the world's most imposing mountains is located here. Nepal is a mystic and sacred land, where lord Buddha was born over 2500 years ago, has one of the most unique and exotic culture. Nepal is located into three geographical regions; Himalayas, Mountain and Tarai. Each region is stretching from east to west across the country. It is divided into 5 Development Region (Eastern, Western, Central, Mid-Western and Far-western Region), 14 zones and 75 districts. There are 125 caste/ethnic groups reported in the census 2011. Chhetri is the largest caste/ethnic groups having 16.6% (4,398,053) of the total population followed by Brahman-Hill (12.2%; 3,226,903), Magar (7.1%; 1,887,733), Tharu (6.6%; 1,737,470), Tamang (5.8%; 1,539,830), Newar (5.0%; 1,321,933), Kami (4.8%; 1,258,554), Musalman (4.4%; 1,164,255), Yadav (4.0%; 1,054,458) and Rai (2.3%; 620,004).

In Nepalese societies, gender relation can be observed differently on the basis of caste and ethnicity of communities. Socio-cultural context are different among the different castes within the same region also. Caste and gender both terminology are socially constructed and its social meaning is continuously transforming from one generation to next. In general, gender refers to the biological and social differences between men and women. Gender is a socio-economic and cultural construct for differentiating between roles, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities and needs of women and men in a given context. A basic distinction between men and women which is socially and culturally determined creates unequal power relation in our social life. Thus, an understanding of the unequal power relations between women and men is necessary to be familiar with the basic problems in gender relations. Power is directly related to gender with regard to the access, distribution and use of resources, which are unequally distributed between women and men (Lazim, 2011, p. 168).

Gender empowerment is necessary to access the power of decision. Lynn has developed a framework in which "empowerment" and "social inclusion" are closely related but separate concepts. Bennett describes empowerment as "the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions which affect them." Social inclusion is defined as "the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of diverse individuals and groups to assets and development opportunities"(Bennett, 2002). Micro credit program has played the significant role to enhance the capacity of communities. In case of Bangladesh, Professor Yunus, who is also the novel peace prize laureate states that "... microcredit means the loan of very small amount to people who cannot access to traditional lends. The working is simple: borrowers have to pay back frequently (generally every week) small refunds during a short time (a year) with high interests"(Leo, Aurore, & Anals, 2010). The main objective of such microcredit is to empower the marginalized, disadvantage groups, poor and women. The Grameen Bank of Bangladesh is perhaps the best-known example of small-scale production credit programs for the poor, and over 90% of its clients are women (Jennifer Cartwright, 2006). Muhammad Yunus for his work understood as a pioneering and promoting microcredit. Yunus is recognized as founding the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which granted institutional credit to landless creditors to encourage self-employment and economic independence (Fermon, 1998).

Social exclusion on the basis of gender, caste and ethnicity is highly pervasive throughout Nepal. As in elsewhere of the world, ladies have always been excluded from social, political, economic and cultural aspects in Nepalese society. Women from ethnic, Dalit and Madhesi backgrounds are highly marginalized in all respects. The Government of Nepal has been giving attention on the

need of women empowerment since 1980. Though the government has divulged the need for women empowerment, it has failed in action to acknowledge addressing the existing situation of exclusion and discrimination against caste and ethnicity. More emphatically, almost all women from Dalit and ethnic communities have received less priority in any development program. Women are found in less priority even in the decision of household level decision also so keeping this situation in mind; this study has focused to identify the caste wise gender role on household level decision.

2. Methodology

The study was based on cross-sectional descriptive design. Study was conducted in Illam district (Eastern Development Region of Nepal) among the 52 respondents. Random sampling techniques was used to select the household who were involved in Small Farmers Cooperative Ltd. (SFCL) and taken benefit from SFCL. Self-reported structured questionnaires were administered in the field to collect the data. Females were the primary respondents of this study. It was the pilot study of PhD research to test the reliability and validity of instruments. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 117 items of questions is .836 found from the test of internal consistency of data through SPSS. The study was conducted from Oct – Dec, 2014.

3. Results

The pilot study was conducted among the 52 respondents where caste-wise distribution shows that in total 44.2% were Janjati (Ethnic groups) followed by 42.3% Brahmin/Chhetri and only 7.7% were Dalit (marginalized groups).

Caste of Respondents		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Dalit	4	7.7
	Janjati	23	44.2
	Brahmin/Chhetri	22	42.3
	Total	49	94.2
Missing	System	3	5.8
Total		52	100.0

Table 1: Caste wise Distribution of Respondents
Sources: Field study, 2014

In this study, researcher had analysed the relationship between the caste and household level decision.

3.1. Relation between Caste and Decision on Routine Household Expenditure

Routine household expenditures are known as the general expenditure which is mostly decided by the females in most of the communities of Nepalese societies. On the basis of this assumption, the study collected the information from the major three communities; Dalit, Janjati and Brahmin/Chhetri. In total, 51% respondents said that both wife and husband mutually decide the routine household expenditure.

		Caste of respondents			Total	
		Dalit	Janjati	Brahmin/Chhetri		
Routine household expenditure	Wife	Count	0	3	4	7
		% within Routine household expenditure	0.0%	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	0.0%	13.0%	18.2%	14.3%
		% of Total	0.0%	6.1%	8.2%	14.3%
	Husband	Count	4	6	5	15
		% within Routine household expenditure	26.7%	40.0%	33.3%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	100.0%	26.1%	22.7%	30.6%
		% of Total	8.2%	12.2%	10.2%	30.6%
	Both	Count	0	14	11	25
		% within Routine household expenditure	0.0%	56.0%	44.0%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	0.0%	60.9%	50.0%	51.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	28.6%	22.4%	51.0%
	Other	Count	0	0	2	2
		% within Routine household expenditure	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	4.1%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	4.1%
Symmetric Measures						
		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.	
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.121	.128	.834	.408 ^c	

Table 2: caste and decision on routine household expenditure, Sources: Field study, 2014

Caste wise data shows that in total 14.3% said that wife is responsible to decide the household expenditure where within caste groups; wife of 13% Janjati followed by 18.2% Brahmin/Chhetri decide the household level expenditure. Comparatively, 100% responsibilities of decision of household level expenditure are taken by husband of Dalit communities followed by 26.1% Janjati and 22.7% Brahmin/Chhetri. Within the 3 caste groups, female of Brahmin/Chhetri were found more responsible than Janjati and Dalit to decide the household level expenditure. Dalit women were found still back to take the decision within the household level discussion and decision also so concerned stakeholders are requested to support to enhance their decision capacity.

There is no relationship found between the caste and decision on household level expenditure at $r = .121$, $p = .408$ which is greater than .05.

3.2. Relation between Caste and Decision on Selling of Domestic Animals

Being an agricultural country; Nepalese societies mostly involved in rearing of domestic animals. It is the sources of income for rural people also. Table no. 3 shows that in total 63.3% respondents said that mutually they decided about the selling of domestic animals followed by 24.5% husband had decision power and only 8.2% wife had decision.

		Caste of respondents			Total	
		Dalit	Janjati	Brahmin/Chhetri		
Domestic animals	Wife	Count	0	1	3	4
		% within Domestic animals	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	0.0%	4.3%	13.6%	8.2%
		% of Total	0.0%	2.0%	6.1%	8.2%
	Husband	Count	2	7	3	12
		% within Domestic animals	16.7%	58.3%	25.0%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	50.0%	30.4%	13.6%	24.5%
		% of Total	4.1%	14.3%	6.1%	24.5%
	Both	Count	2	15	14	31
		% within Domestic animals	6.5%	48.4%	45.2%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	50.0%	65.2%	63.6%	63.3%
		% of Total	4.1%	30.6%	28.6%	63.3%
	Other	Count	0	0	2	2
		% within Domestic animals	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	4.1%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	4.1%
Symmetric Measures						
		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.	
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.076	.142	.521	.605 ^c	

Table 3: caste and decision on selling of domestic animals

Sources: Field study, 2014

The total data found vary within the caste wise response. Within the caste of respondents; 4.3% wife of Janjati followed by 13.6% wife of Brahmin/Chhetri did decision on selling of domestic animals. Similarly, regarding the decision power of husband, 50% husband of Dalit followed by 30.4% Janjati and 13.6% Brahmin/Chhetri had power of decision on selling of domestic animals. Data shows that 65.2% Janjati followed by 63.6% Brahmin/Chhetri and 50% Dalit said that they mutually (both husband and wife) decided about the selling of domestic animals. In Brahmin/Chhetri communities; in some household, other members like mother or father-in-law or son or daughter had authority to decide about the selling of domestic animals.

In Nepalese culture, there is one system is called 'pewa' (personal property). If domestic animal is reared as 'pewa' of somebody of family members then in such case; selling decision can be taken by concerned people only.

There is no relationship found between the caste and decision on selling domestic animals at $r = .076$, $p = .605$ which is greater than .05.

3.3. Relation between Caste and Decision on Business Plan

Developing and finalizing the business plan are known as the big task so in such cases, male participation found high in most of the communities. Regarding the gender relation in this issues, table no. 4 shows that in total 75% respondents said that they mutually decide the business plan whereas 18.8% said that husband has right to decide about the business plan and only 2.1% wife alone decide. 4.2% said that besides wife and husband, other people of house also responsible to decide about the business plan of family.

		Caste of respondents			Total	
		Dalit	Janjati	Brahmin/Chhetri		
Bussiness plan	Wife	Count	0	0	1	1
		% within Bussiness plan	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	2.1%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	2.1%
	Husband	Count	0	6	3	9
		% within Bussiness plan	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	0.0%	27.3%	13.6%	18.8%
		% of Total	0.0%	12.5%	6.2%	18.8%
	Both	Count	4	16	16	36
		% within Bussiness plan	11.1%	44.4%	44.4%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	100.0%	72.7%	72.7%	75.0%
		% of Total	8.3%	33.3%	33.3%	75.0%
	Other	Count	0	0	2	2
% within Bussiness plan		0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
% within Caste of respondents		0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	4.2%	
% of Total		0.0%	0.0%	4.2%	4.2%	
Symmetric Measures						
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.	
		.023	.130	.159	.874 ^c	

Table 4: caste and decision on bussiness plan
Sources: Field study, 2014

Caste wise data shows that only 4.5% wife of Brahmin/Chhetri has rights to take decision of their family bussiness plan whereas no right was found in Dalit and Janjati communities. 100% Dalit communities said that they mutually (both wife and husband) decide the preparing and finalizing the bussiness plan followed by 72.7% Janjati and 72.7% Brahmin/Chhetri finalized the mutually. Comparatively, 27.3% husband of Janjati followed by 13.6% Brahmin/Chhetri decides the bussiness plan. The data shows that more husband of Janjati has rights than Brahmin and Chhetri communities. There is no relationship found between the caste and decision on preparing and finalizing the bussiness plan at $r = .023$, $p = .874c$ which is greater than .05.

3.4. Relation between Caste and Decision on Marriage of Family Members

Culturally also, there is stratification between the male and female's decision and rights. Marriage is the typically the cultural activities so regarding the cultural issue, researcher had come up with the data that caste wise decision holders of marriage of family members. In total, 89.4% said that both (wife and husband) mutually decide the marriage of family members followed by 8.5% wife decide it. From the finding, it is known that both male and female has hold the right to say 'yes' or 'no' regarding the marriage of son or daughter in family. This is the life-long important decision of individual so it may be that only female or male alone do not like to take risk of future of other's relation. But it became interesting that no one husband alone has right to take the decision on marriage of family members.

		Caste of respondents			Total	
		Dalit	Janjati	Brahmin/Chhetri		
Mariage of family members	Wife	Count	0	3	1	4
		% within Mariage of family members	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	0.0%	13.6%	4.5%	8.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	6.4%	2.1%	8.5%
	Both	Count	3	19	20	42
		% within Mariage of family members	7.1%	45.2%	47.6%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	100.0%	86.4%	90.9%	89.4%
		% of Total	6.4%	40.4%	42.6%	89.4%
	Other	Count	0	0	1	1
		% within Mariage of family members	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	2.1%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	2.1%
	Symmetric Measures					
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.	
		.110	.112	.743	.461 ^c	

Table 5: caste and decision on marriage of family members Sources: Field study, 2014

Caste wise data shows that 13.6% wife of Janjati followed by 4.5% Brahmin/Chhetri has right to decide about the marriage of family members. Similarly, 100% Dalit, 90.9% Brahmin/Chhetri and 86.4% Janjati said that they both; wife and husband decide the marriage of family members.

There is no relationship found between the caste and decision on marriage of family members at $r = .110$, $p = .461c$ which is greater than .05.

3.5. Relation between Caste and Decision on Participation in Social Activities

Social relation is established from the social contact and interaction. Social groups are formulated to run the social activities. Social and cultural activities built the positive relation between the individual and communities. So, participation in social activities is important to adjust in society. Regarding this issue, data shows that 14.3% wife decide in comparison of 4.1% husband about the participation in social activities. This data shows that women are more empower than male to decide in participation in social activities. In the Nepalese context, abroad migration of male may be one cause. In communities, we found majority of household are managed by the female because the migration of male for the search of job.

		Caste of respondents			Total	
		Dalit	Janjati	Brahmin/Chhetri		
Participation in social activities	Wife	Count	0	5	2	7
		% within Participation in social activities	0.0%	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	0.0%	21.7%	9.1%	14.3%
		% of Total	0.0%	10.2%	4.1%	14.3%
	Husband	Count	0	0	2	2
		% within Participation in social activities	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	4.1%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	4.1%
	Both	Count	4	18	18	40
		% within Participation in social activities	10.0%	45.0%	45.0%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	100.0%	78.3%	81.8%	81.6%
		% of Total	8.2%	36.7%	36.7%	81.6%
Symmetric Measures						
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.	
		-.006	.115	-.038	.970 ^c	

Table 6: caste and decision on participation in social activities

Sources: Field study, 2014

Caste wise, 21.7% wife of Janjati and 9.1% Brahmin/Chhetri take decision about the participation in social activities. Only 9.1% husband of Brahmin/Chhetri has right to take decision about it.

There is no relationship found between the caste and decision about the participation in social activities at $r = -.006$, $p = .970c$ which is greater than .05.

3.6. Relation between Caste and Decision on Saving of Money in Bank

Economic access is one of the major causes on conflict between the male and female. Gender empowerment is related with economic empowerment also.

The data of table no. 7 shows that 79.6% said that wife decide about the saving of money in bank whereas only 2% husband decides. In total, 18.4% said that both wife and husband mutually decide about the saving of money in bank. It is interesting that operating the bank account is decided by the wife in majority of household of different communities. It can be assumed that, daily household activities are managed by female in most of the house so to control the expenditure, wife decide about the saving of money for future.

		Caste of respondents			Total	
		Dalit	Janjati	Brahmin/Chhetri		
Saving of money in Bank or cooperatives	Wife	Count	3	18	18	39
		% within Saving of money in Bank or cooperatives	7.7%	46.2%	46.2%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	75.0%	78.3%	81.8%	79.6%
		% of Total	6.1%	36.7%	36.7%	79.6%
	Husband	Count	0	0	1	1
		% within Saving of money in Bank or cooperatives	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	2.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	2.0%
	Both	Count	1	5	3	9
		% within Saving of money in Bank or cooperatives	11.1%	55.6%	33.3%	100.0%
		% within Caste of respondents	25.0%	21.7%	13.6%	18.4%
		% of Total	2.0%	10.2%	6.1%	18.4%
Symmetric Measures						
		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.	
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.083	.143	-.568	.573 ^c	

Table 7: caste and decision on saving of money in Bank
Sources: Field study, 2014

Caste wise data shows that 81.8% wife of Brahmin/Chhetri, 78.3% Janjati and 75% Dalit has right to decide about the saving of money in bank. Regarding the decision of husband, only 4.5% Brahmin/Chhetri decide the saving of money in bank. Comparatively, women of Dalit and Janjati were found using more freedom and right than the Brahmin/Chhetri regarding the use of money.

There is no relationship found between the caste and decision about the saving of money in Bank at $r = -.083$, $p = .573^c$ which is greater than .05.

4. Discussions

Discrimination starts during socialization processes from the very early age in the name of sex segregation and is well established during the middle childhood (Barrie, 1993). Given the preference for boys over girls that characterizes many male-dominated societies, gender inequality can manifest itself in the form of parents' wanting a baby to be a boy rather than a girl (Sen, 2001, p. 466). In many societies, the root structure of gender inequality is often visible at household levels and this creates many problems in family especially violence against women. It is an ancient and universal problem occurring because of patriarchy. Power inequalities between women and men and the negative masculine culture are the major sources of this violence. It can be said that patriarchal ideology and cultural practice in the masculinity is an important reason for men's violence against women (Lazim, 2011, p. 171). In the primary data, it is found that in general power if equally used by both male and female in household level discussion and decision. Caste wise, women of Dalit communities were found less empowered in comparison of others communities.

Nepal is a multicultural, multi-lingual, and multi-religious country. It is a religious and male dominated society where women are considered as secondary to men. Preference of son is more common and deeply rooted value in every community. Gender based discrimination irrespective to caste and ethnicity, starts right after the birth in different forms and it continues throughout the life for most of the women. There are different sets of behaviours for boys and girls to perform. Such discrimination has also helped to establish the hierarchical relationship between men and women in the society and also helped to create many rigid gender norms that restrict women's opportunities and stifle their development in the private and public sphere (Pokharel, 2009, p. 86). Regarding the issue of social participation, the primary data of this study shows that 14.3% wife decide in comparison of 4.1% husband about the participation in social activities. The finding shows the different result than the previous study. Women were found more empowered and active to participate in the decision level.

A previous study conducted among the 200 women of Brahmins and Tamangs communities of Ichangu Narayan VDC of Kathmandu district shows that majority of the family had male (36%) with compared to 16.5% female as the decision maker of the family. Whereas 47.5% reported that both male and female make the decision jointly for the family. When analyzed according to caste/ethnicity major decisions in Brahmins family are done jointly as reported by 57% of the respondents, followed by 29% male and 14% female. In Tamangs family large number of respondents 43% reported male as the decision maker of the family, followed by 38% jointly and 19% female (Pokharel, June 2007). The above previous finding of Pokharel found similar result with this study that comparatively, 100% responsibilities of decision of household level expenditure is taken by husband of Dalit

communities followed by 26.1% Janjati and 22.7% Brahmin/Chhetri. Variation of male power between the Janjati and Brahmin/Chhetri is found less in primary study than the study finding of Pokharel.

A study conducted among the 110 women from different ethnic groups of Kailali district of Nepal found that 29.7% Brahmin/Chhetri followed by 18.9% Tharu, 32.4% Magar, 18.9% Dalit women reported that the daily household level expenditure was managed by self. Similarly, this study also revealed that in comparison of different caste and ethnicity, Brahman/Chhetri female has highest rate of land and house ownership (38.5%), which is followed by Tharu (25.6%) and Magar (23.1%) respectively. Very few Dalit female are enjoying with land and house ownership which consists 12.8% only and it is nearly three times less than Brahman/Chhetri and more or less 2 times less than Tharu and Magar (Bhandari, June, 2012). As the finding of Bhandari is compared with this study found that Dalit women are less empowered to take the decision in household level discussion. In this study, Dalit women have no right to take single decision to sell the domestic animals without consent of husband.

5. Conclusion

Nepalese society is mixed with different cultures, castes, ethnicities and religions. Traditionally, caste system develops the social hierarchy and stratification between the one and next caste. We can observe the caste wise cultural variation. Gender relation can be observed differently in different castes and ethnicities. The whole discussion of primary and secondary data shows that female of Brahmin/Chhetri castes were found more empowered than the other ethnic groups. Basically, women of Dalit communities are found more marginalized and backward. Cultural of mutual participation in decision making process found progressive in all caste groups which can support to empower the capacity of women in future. Education, economic empowerment and awareness about their rights are the major cause of their marginalization. Future research can be focused to explore the strategies to empower the women of all caste in all dimension of development and change of society.

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