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Comparative Study on Freedom and Mobility of Male and Female

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Abstract:

Sex is the biological origin and gender is the socially constructed terminology. On the basis of sex; concept of gender is developed by the society. The main objective of this study is to describe the status of freedom and mobility of male and female in selected ethnic groups of Nepal. The study had adopted the cross-sectional descriptive design. Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents from five ethnic groups; Newar, Magar, Tamang, Rai/Limbu and Brahmin/Chhetri. Result of this study shows that not more than 35% male and female of all ethnic groups had right to choose their life partners and around 2% experienced the sexual violence. Perceptually, around 60% believed that women should have equal right of free movement as men. Similarly, around 78% respondents said that women should involve in decision making process as men. In conclusion, it can be said that because of the long history of social stratification and Hindu philosophy, equality of male and female is still questioned in Nepalese society. So, before doing advocacy of equality, approach of equity (need base approach) should be practiced.

Keywords: Freedom, Female, Gender disparity, Male, Mobility

1. Introduction

Freedom and mobility is the right of every people; but we can observe gender disparity in certain communities regarding their freedom of mobility. Because of the socio-cultural orientation; society has made their rules of social activities.

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). It is customary everywhere to classify the human community on the basis of sex into groups of 'men' and 'women'. The biological fact of sex has created much difference between them. The aims and objectives, desires and aspirations, duties and responsibilities, dress styles and behavioral patterns, roles and statuses of men and women are different. Nowhere in the history of humanity were men and women treated alike and assigned statuses alike. Women have not been able to lead a life exactly on par with men in spite of their urge for equality (Rao, 2008, p. 813). There are two ways masculinity and femininity can be viewed such as "traditional" and "conservative". We use the terms "traditional" and "conservative" to describe the belief that men's and women's roles are distinct, and the terms "modern" and "liberal" to describe the belief that roles are not ascribed according to sex. According to the traditional point of view, men are more assertive, competitive, decisive, confident, ambitious, and instrumentally oriented, whereas women are more nurturing, empathetic, helpful, sympathetic, gentle, affectionate, and expressively oriented (Lueptow, 2001). Because of such thought, men have more freedom and right of free mobility in many societies.

In the context of Nepalese societies, Nepalese culture is dominated by the Hindu philosophy where females' activities are considered within the boundaries of house. Patriarchy society is in practice so males have power of decision making. Considering these facts, this article is going to explore the status of freedom and mobility of male and female in certain ethnic communities of Kathmandu valley.

2. Methodology

The study was based on the descriptive cross-sectional research design. Total 390 respondents were selected for the study, among them respondents were equally distributed in three districts; Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur. So, 130 respondents were selected from the each district. The main purpose of the study was to identify the gender disparity in relation to the freedom and mobility so researcher had equally divided the sample into male and female to compare their perception. Following the objectives of this study, researcher had collected data from the 5 different ethnic groups; Newar, Magar, Tamang, Rai/Limbu and Brahmin/Chhetri. From the each group, 20% participants were participated. Simple random sampling technique was applied to select the respondents.

3. Results

In this study, 50.3% male followed by 49.7% female were participated. Data shows that 4.6% wife were illiterate followed by 1.8% husband. Similarly, regarding the higher degree, 7.7 husband had master and above degree followed by only 2.1% wife, 24.9% husband had Bachelor degree followed by 9% wife, 27.9% husband had Intermediate level education followed by 30.3% wife, 19.5% husband had secondary level education followed by 26.7% wife, 6.2% husband had lower secondary education followed by 11.4% wife and 9% husband had primary level education followed by 14.4% wife. The data shows that in general around 32% husband had bachelor, Master and above education as compared with only 11% wife had similar level of education. It shows that husband had higher level of education than wife. In the study, the age distribution of wife shows 20 to 60 years followed by 24-60 years of husbands. Mean age of wife was 35.46 years followed by 39.13 years of husband. Marriage age of wife was found in between the 15-31 followed by husband had in between 16-35 ages. The mean age of wife during her marriage was 21.53 years followed by husband had 24.84 years. There was significant difference found between the average marriage age of wife and husband.

3.1. Choice of Life Partners

Sex of respondents and choice of life partners			Caste of Respondents					Total
			Newar	Magar	Tamang	Rai or Limbu	Brahmin or Chhetri	
Male	Personal choice	Count	15	15	11	13	14	68
		% of Total	7.7%	7.7%	5.7%	6.7%	7.2%	35.1%
	Guardian's choice	Count	9	13	12	6	7	47
		% of Total	4.6%	6.7%	6.2%	3.1%	3.6%	24.2%
	My and guardian's choice	Count	17	10	15	22	14	78
		% of Total	8.8%	5.2%	7.7%	11.3%	7.2%	40.2%
	Other choice	Count	0	1	0	0	0	1
		% of Total	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
	Total	Count	41	39	38	41	35	194
		% of Total	21.1%	20.1%	19.6%	21.1%	18.0%	100.0%
Female	Personal choice	Count	13	13	10	9	11	56
		% of Total	6.7%	6.7%	5.2%	4.7%	5.7%	29.0%
	Guardian's choice	Count	10	18	12	11	15	66
		% of Total	5.2%	9.3%	6.2%	5.7%	7.8%	34.2%
	My and guardian's choice	Count	14	7	17	16	17	71
		% of Total	7.3%	3.6%	8.8%	8.3%	8.8%	36.8%
	Total	Count	37	38	39	36	43	193
		% of Total	19.2%	19.7%	20.2%	18.7%	22.3%	100.0%
Total	Personal choice	Count	28	28	21	22	25	124
		% of Total	7.2%	7.2%	5.4%	5.7%	6.5%	32.0%
	Guardian's choice	Count	19	31	24	17	22	113
		% of Total	4.9%	8.0%	6.2%	4.4%	5.7%	29.2%
	My and guardian's choice	Count	31	17	32	38	31	149
		% of Total	8.0%	4.4%	8.3%	9.8%	8.0%	38.5%
	Other choice	Count	0	1	0	0	0	1
		% of Total	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
	Total	Count	78	77	77	77	78	387
		% of Total	20.2%	19.9%	19.9%	19.9%	20.2%	100.0%
Chi-Square Tests								
Sex of respondents			Value		df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		
Male	Pearson Chi-Square		12.921 ^b		12	.375		
Female	Pearson Chi-Square		8.770 ^c		8	.362		
Total	Pearson Chi-Square		18.989 ^a		12	.089		

Table 1: Choice of life partners

Regarding the freedom and mobility of male and female in different ethnic groups, 35.1% male followed by 29% female reported that they had selected their life partners from their own personal choice. Similarly, 24.2% male followed by 34.2% female had selected life partners from guardian's choice and 40.2% male followed by 36.8% female had selected their life partners from their own and guardians choice.

Ethnic group wise; comparatively, gender disparity was found similar in Brahmin/Chhetri and Rai/Limbu regarding the personal choice of their life partners. Around 2% males were high in number than female who had selected their life partners in personal choice. Similarly, level of gender disparity was found similar in Magar and Newar communities. Around 1% variation found

between the male and female to select their life partners in personal choice. In both communities, 1% more male were enjoying high freedom than female. The above data shows no gender disparity in Tamang community regarding the freedom to choose own life partners.

There was no significant association found on perception of male ($p = .375$) and female ($p=.362$) of different ethnic regarding the choice of life partners.

3.2. Forceful Sexual Activity

Sex of respondents and forceful sexual activity		Caste of Respondents					Total	
		Newar	Magar	Tamang	Rai or Limbu	Brahmin or Chhetri		
Male	Often	Count	4	0	0	0	2	6
		% of Total	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	3.2%
	Rarely	Count	3	2	8	6	3	22
		% of Total	1.6%	1.1%	4.2%	3.2%	1.6%	11.6%
	Never	Count	34	37	30	31	29	161
		% of Total	18.0%	19.6%	15.9%	16.4%	15.3%	85.2%
Total	Count	41	39	38	37	34	189	
% of Total		21.7%	20.6%	20.1%	19.6%	18.0%	100.0%	
Female	Often	Count	0	0	1	0	1	2
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.5%	1.1%
	Rarely	Count	6	4	5	4	8	27
		% of Total	3.2%	2.1%	2.6%	2.1%	4.2%	14.2%
	Never	Count	30	32	33	33	33	161
		% of Total	15.8%	16.8%	17.4%	17.4%	17.4%	84.7%
Total	Count	36	36	39	37	42	190	
% of Total		18.9%	18.9%	20.5%	19.5%	22.1%	100.0%	
Total	Often	Count	4	0	1	0	3	8
		% of Total	1.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.8%	2.1%
	Rarely	Count	9	6	13	10	11	49
		% of Total	2.4%	1.6%	3.4%	2.6%	2.9%	12.9%
	Never	Count	64	69	63	64	62	322
		% of Total	16.9%	18.2%	16.6%	16.9%	16.4%	85.0%
Total	Count	77	75	77	74	76	379	
% of Total		20.3%	19.8%	20.3%	19.5%	20.1%	100.0%	
Chi-Square Tests								
Sex of respondents		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)				
Male	Pearson Chi-Square	16.503 ^b	8	.036				
Female	Pearson Chi-Square	4.496 ^c	8	.810				
Total	Pearson Chi-Square	11.342 ^a	8	.183				

Table 2: Forceful Sexual activity

The above data presents that in total respondents, 85% reported that they had never faced the forceful sexual activity. Among them, out of 190 female, 84.7% female followed by out of 189, 85.2% male replied 'never'. Similarly, 11.6% male followed by 14.2% female said that they had rarely faced forceful sex and 1.1% female and 3.2% male shared that often they had face forceful sex. Ethnic group wise, 2.1% male from Magar community followed by 1.1% Brahmin/Chhetri community and .5% female of Tamang community and .5% Brahmin/Chhetri community reported that often they had to put the forceful sexual relation without their sexual interest.

There was significant association found among the male ($p = .036$) of different ethnic group regarding the forceful sexual activity. Similarly, there was no significant association found on perception of female ($p=.81$) and in total ($p=.18$) regarding the forceful sexual relation without their own interest of sex.

3.3. Exposure Visit Out of Home

In total 379 responses, 60.8% male followed by 56.8% female said that they had visited alone out of home in last 1 year.

Sex of respondents and exposure visit out of home alone			Caste of Respondents					Total
			Newar	Magar	Tamang	Rai or Limbu	Brahmin or Chhetri	
Male	Yes	Count	23	22	21	26	23	115
		% of Total	12.2%	11.6%	11.1%	13.8%	12.2%	60.8%
	No	Count	17	17	16	13	11	74
		% of Total	9.0%	9.0%	8.5%	6.9%	5.8%	39.2%
	Total	Count	40	39	37	39	34	189
		% of Total	21.2%	20.6%	19.6%	20.6%	18.0%	100.0%
Female	Yes	Count	16	22	17	29	24	108
		% of Total	8.4%	11.6%	8.9%	15.3%	12.6%	56.8%
	No	Count	21	14	22	8	17	82
		% of Total	11.1%	7.4%	11.6%	4.2%	8.9%	43.2%
	Total	Count	37	36	39	37	41	190
		% of Total	19.5%	18.9%	20.5%	19.5%	21.6%	100.0%
Total	Yes	Count	39	44	38	55	47	223
		% of Total	10.3%	11.6%	10.0%	14.5%	12.4%	58.8%
	No	Count	38	31	38	21	28	156
		% of Total	10.0%	8.2%	10.0%	5.5%	7.4%	41.2%
	Total	Count	77	75	76	76	75	379
		% of Total	20.3%	19.8%	20.1%	20.1%	19.8%	100.0%
Chi-Square Tests								
Sex of respondents			Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)			
Male	Pearson Chi-Square		1.985 ^b	4	.739			
Female	Pearson Chi-Square		12.892 ^c	4	.012			
Total	Pearson Chi-Square		10.783 ^a	4	.029			

Table 3: Exposure visit out of home

On the basis of ethnicity of respondents, female of Rai or Limbu (15.3%) were found higher in number than male (13.8%) regarding the exposure visit out of home. Similarly, degree of freedom to visit alone out of home was found similar between the male (12.2% and 11.6%) and female (12.6% and 11.6%) of Brahmin/Chhetri and Magar community respectively. Male (12.2% and 11.1%) had more exposure than female (8.4% and 8.9%) in Newar and Tamang communities respectively.

There was significant association found among the female (p=.01) and in total (p=.02) of different ethnic group regarding the exposure visit out of home. Similarly, there was no significant association found on perception of male (p=.73) regarding the exposure visit out of home.

3.4. A Woman Should Be Free As A Man To Get Second Marriage

Perceptions of respondents were collected in Likert's scale to know the understanding of respondents regarding the equal freedom of male and female.

Responses		Caste of Respondents					Total
		Newar	Magar	Tamang	Rai or Limbu	Brahmin or Chhetri	
Strongly Agree	Count	64	60	62	63	55	304
	% of Total	16.6%	15.6%	16.1%	16.4%	14.3%	79.0%
Agree	Count	10	16	12	8	19	65
	% of Total	2.6%	4.2%	3.1%	2.1%	4.9%	16.9%
Neutral	Count	1	2	2	4	1	10
	% of Total	0.3%	0.5%	0.5%	1.0%	0.3%	2.6%
Disagree	Count	1	0	1	1	0	3
	% of Total	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.8%
Strongly Disagree	Count	0	0	0	0	3	3
	% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.8%
Total	Count	76	78	77	76	78	385
	% of Total	19.7%	20.3%	20.0%	19.7%	20.3%	100.0%

Table 4: A woman should be free as a man to get second marriage

Out of 385 responses, 79% participants strongly agree that a woman should be as free as the male to get their second marriage followed by 16.9% reported agree on the same statement. In total, more than 95% respondents were found positive to provide the equal freedom of second marriage to women as male. On the basis of ethnicity of respondents, 16.6% Newar followed by 16.4%

Rai/Limbu, 16.1% Tamang, 15.6% Magar and 14.3% Brahmin/Chhetri had reported strongly agree. Comparatively, second marriage system of women was found difficult to openly agree in Brahmin/Chhetri community because only 0.8% Brahmin/Chhetri had reported strongly disagrees on second marriage of woman.

3.5. Women Should Have Rights Of Free Movement

In general, respondents were asked about the degree of rights of women for free movement in comparison of male. The data shows that 59.1% said that women should get right of free movement equal to male followed by 40.6% said less than male. Only 1 (0.3%) respondents of Rai/Limbu community among 384 respondents said more than male.

		Caste of Respondents					Total
		Newar	Magar	Tamang	Rai or Limbu	Brahmin or Chhetri	
Less than Male	Count	25	42	30	33	26	156
	% of Total	6.5%	10.9%	7.8%	8.6%	6.8%	40.6%
Equal to Male	Count	53	36	46	44	48	227
	% of Total	13.8%	9.4%	12.0%	11.5%	12.5%	59.1%
More than male	Count	0	0	0	1	0	1
	% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%
Total	Count	78	78	76	78	74	384
	% of Total	20.3%	20.3%	19.8%	20.3%	19.3%	100.0%

Table No 5: Women should have rights of free movement

From the different caste groups, 6.5% Newar followed by 6.8% Brahmin/Chhetri, 8.6% Rai/Limbu, and 7.8% Tamang and 10.9% Magar reported less than male. Similarly, 13.8% Newar followed by 12.5% Brahmin/Chhetri, 12% Tamang, 11.5% Rai/Limbu and 9.4% Magar reported that women should have rights of free movement equal to male.

The data shows the patriarchal conception of respondents that people are not ready to give rights of free movement to women more than male. It became interesting that in this study around 50% participants were female but even females were not ready to seek the rights more than male.

3.6. Women Should Have Right To Participate In Decision Making Process In Social Work

Regarding the freedom of male and female, question was asked from the female perspective regarding the rights of participation of female in decision making process in social work.

		Caste of Respondents					Total
		Newar	Magar	Tamang	Rai or Limbu	Brahmin or Chhetri	
Less than Male	Count	11	33	12	9	13	78
	% of Total	2.8%	8.5%	3.1%	2.3%	3.4%	20.2%
Equal to Male	Count	65	44	64	67	63	303
	% of Total	16.8%	11.4%	16.6%	17.4%	16.3%	78.5%
More than male	Count	2	1	0	0	2	5
	% of Total	0.5%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	1.3%
Total	Count	78	78	76	76	78	386
	% of Total	20.2%	20.2%	19.7%	19.7%	20.2%	100.0%

Table 6: Women should have right to participate in decision making process in social work

The data shows that 78.5% reported that female should have equal rights of participation in decision making process in social work to male followed by 20.2% reported that the rights of female should be less than male. Very few (only 1.3%) said that female should be given more rights than male. Ethnicity wise, only 0.5% Brahmin/Chhetri followed by 0.5% Newar and 0.3% Magar were said that female should be give more rights than male. There was significant difference found on the perception of different ethnic groups regarding rights of women in participation in decision making process in social activities.

3.7. Practices of Watching TV

Researcher tries to connect the media exposure of male and female with their freedom and mobility. Respondents were asked about the practices of watching of TV in three scales (often, rarely and never). Data was compare between the male and female which shows that 85.1% male followed by 89.2% female reported that they often watch the TV.

Sex of respondents and watching of TV			Caste of Respondents					Total
			Newar	Magar	Tamang	Rai or Limbu	Brahmin or Chhetri	
Male	Often	Count	36	29	30	38	32	165
		% of Total	18.6%	14.9%	15.5%	19.6%	16.5%	85.1%
	Rarely	Count	5	11	8	3	2	29
		% of Total	2.6%	5.7%	4.1%	1.5%	1.0%	14.9%
	Total	Count	41	40	38	41	34	194
		% of Total	21.1%	20.6%	19.6%	21.1%	17.5%	100.0%
Female	Often	Count	34	34	32	36	37	173
		% of Total	17.5%	17.5%	16.5%	18.6%	19.1%	89.2%
	Rarely	Count	3	4	6	1	6	20
		% of Total	1.5%	2.1%	3.1%	0.5%	3.1%	10.3%
	Never	Count	0	0	1	0	0	1
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
Total	Count	37	38	39	37	43	194	
	% of Total	19.1%	19.6%	20.1%	19.1%	22.2%	100.0%	
Total	Often	Count	70	63	62	74	69	338
		% of Total	18.0%	16.2%	16.0%	19.1%	17.8%	87.1%
	Rarely	Count	8	15	14	4	8	49
		% of Total	2.1%	3.9%	3.6%	1.0%	2.1%	12.6%
	Never	Count	0	0	1	0	0	1
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Total	Count	78	78	77	78	77	388	
	% of Total	20.1%	20.1%	19.8%	20.1%	19.8%	100.0%	

Table 7: Practice of watching TV

14.9% male reported that they rarely used to watch TV followed by 10.3% female. As a reason, they explore that they had very busy schedule so they had no time to watch TV regularly. Similarly, some of them also said that due to high load-shedding (electricity cut off) also they had problem to watch TV. Group wise, very ignorable data found from the female of Tamang community; 0.5% (1 out of 77 responses) reported that she never watched TV.

4. Discussions

The finding of this study shows that only 35.1% male followed by 29% female had selected their life partners from their own personal choice. Around 65-70% respondents had married either in guardians' choice or other relatives. Basically, still society has not allowed females to choose her life partners; it becomes issue of culture rules.

As stated in Article 16 of the Universal Declaration is about the equality in marriage: "Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses". In many cultures, arranged or forced marriages are still very common, often resulting in sexual abuse. Women often do not have the same rights regarding divorce or inheritance. Polygamy is also a cause of discrimination (Spagnoli, 2008).

Family laws that force arranged marriages often lead to gender discrimination. The women in these marriages are often abused both physically and sexually. In this study also 11.6% male followed by 14.2% female said that they had rarely faced forceful sex and 1.1% female and 3.2% male shared that often they had face forceful sex. Ethnic group wise also, 0.5-2.1% reported that they had faced forceful sexual activities from their life partners. Sex is taken as the private issue of life-partner so they do not want to disclose their sexual behaviour in majority society of Nepal. But we can assume that many divorce and conflict are the cause of forceful sex.

In Nepalese culture, rarely male or female used to go out of home alone after marriage. In most of the time, they spend their time with family. As the data of present study shows that that 60.8% male followed by 56.8% female said that they had visited alone out of home in last 1 year proceeding of this study.

According to the United Nations, there is not a single society where women are not discriminated against, or have equal opportunities as men. Even in countries in the West where women's emancipation has bettered the lives of countless women, they still experience the unfairness of the 'glass ceiling', wherein women just do not get promoted beyond a certain level. According to the Glass Ceiling Commission in the U.S., about 95-97% of the senior managerial posts in country's largest corporations are held by men (Putatunda).

Still in rural society of Nepal, women have no full right of do second marriage. Perceptually, people agree that women should have right to do second marriage but in practice; society is not open to permit women to do second marriage. The present study shows that in total 79% participants strongly agree that a woman should be as free as the male to get their second marriage followed by 16.9% reported agree on the same statement. If we discussion the issue of second marriage of women, we can analyse the rule of 'Sati' system of Nepal. The Sanskrit word 'sati' means a chaste and virtuous wife (Stachbury, 1982). The rationale behind sati in Hindu ideology can be inferred not from a single perspective but from numerous ways of viewing women in society.

First, woman and her sexuality were seen as a temptation to the other-worldly Hindus. Primary goal in life of a Hindu was to gain moksha and renunciation was advocated as the means to gain moksha (Swain, 2009, p. 443). Since 'woman was, for men, Nature's normal means for the satisfaction of his sexual desire, she became synonymous with Desire. For such philosophies and ideals, which emphasized celibacy, Brahmacharya, and required that one should conserve one's vital fluid and so build up stocks and reserves of energy, woman became an enemy' (Allen, 1982).

Hence sexuality of a woman without a husband had to be kept under control. Problem with this explanation is that: 'Neither in real life nor in the traditional postulates has Hinduism denied materialism or pursuit of pleasure in life. Emphasis has always been on a healthy combination of the material pursuit, artha-kama, with the moral-transcendental goals or dharma-moksha. The latter was given a theoretically higher place than the former but in practice the major preoccupation of all sections of the Hindus was pursuit of material goals and a robust practical attitude towards life' (Singh, 1986, p. 111).

The study found from the perceptual analysis of data that in total 78.5% reported that female should have equal rights of participation in decision making process in social work to male. The finding is discussed with the previous study of Nepal. According to the one study related with Gender and Social discrimination in Nepal shows that the role of female guardians in decision making at the household level is minimal. Among 130 respondents, only 13 (10%) female guardians have made decision relating to the marriage of their subordinates, 15% in the case of participation in social community work, and 6% in the case of employment. Most of the female guardians involved in decision making were single women. In case of economic activities, male members in the family are the key decision makers in most cases (SAMUHIK ABHIYAN, Mar 2008, p. 27).

5. Conclusion

From the discussion of primary and secondary data, it is found that in real practice; female are using less power and authority than male in each ethnic communities of Nepal. Perceptually, both male and female are interested to give equal authority to female also in every sector of development, family, social and individual life. Choice of life partner, sexual activity, decision making and participation in social activities are the common and fundamental rights of every people. Data shows that even females are also not ready to hold more authority than males. In free time, both males and females are interested to use the luxurious goods; watching TV. This study was based on the descriptive analysis so further researcher can explore the determinants of gender disparity in different culture from the exploratory design.

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