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Gendered Realities in the Teaching Profession: Opportunities and Challenges Faced by Women in Haldibari Rural Municipality, Jhapa

Abstract

The Paper is an anthropological narrative on the ideological imaginary of professional identity, opportunities, and the challenges faced by women teachers in Haldibari Rural Municipality, Jhapa, Nepal. Although not all women teachers have a weak professional identity, mixed-methods approaches such as interviews, focus group discussions, and observations reveal that many women teachers express high levels of professional identity, manifested through both affective and technical competence. In the focus groups, respondents also pointed out that communication skills, tolerance, empathy, creativity, and caring about children are societal notions of female characteristics, based on the belief that these qualities are immutable elements of femininity that represent key teacher professional competencies. While brushing aside an assertion about the theory of emotional labor dependence on women, they pointed out new demands on modern teachers for teamwork across contexts, flexibility, and mental toughness. Women teachers are also affected by the competence and capacities of women teachers. The failure of women teachers to perform well is due to factors such as leadership, training, classroom size, lack of resources, low salaries, and policy neglect. However, the study also shows how patriarchal ideology is internalized, at times even by other women (particularly in leadership roles). Emerging — work and family balance influenced by distance and family obligations.

Introduction

A national system of formal education is the most institutionally bound and structured means through which individuals – and, in the aggregate, society – gain knowledge, attitudes, skills, and other essential cultural tools necessary for personal development and the intergenerational advancement of a nation. Education has, therefore, more than just an individual benefit: it builds social capital, accelerates economic growth, and consolidates democracy (Sen 1999; UNESCO 2015). A significant body of evidence shows that education makes a key contribution to poverty reduction by enabling individuals to make better-informed decisions, increase income-earning opportunities, and meaningfully engage in social, economic, and political life (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018; World Bank, 2020).

Education and literacy are two interdependent terms; as literacy helps people gain information, leading to access, interpretation, and use of that information in daily living, employability, and professions (Bhusal, 2015; UNESCO, 2016). For example, in Nepal, literacy has been identified as a basic need that leads to increased labor productivity, better health and social circumstances, and promotes economic advancement (ADB 2010). This means that quality education is the backbone of technology-based and skilled human resources; without durable investment in educational quality and accessibility, sustainable development will always be structurally limited (UNESCO, 2015; World Bank, 2020).

Nepalese society is historically patriarchal in nature and rooted in a binary relationship of men as the primary decision makers, main wage earners, and women only being limited to the unpaid household work, care giving (Acharya 2003; Bennett 2005). This gendered division of labor has begun to change in recent decades, and women have had greater access to education, migration opportunities, and policy changes (ADB, 2010; Kabeer, 1999). The involvement of women in the formal and organized economy has reached a significant level, thereby their economic input into family income and national economies is very noticeable (CBS, 2012; ILO, 2019). But this shift has not been accompanied by an equivalent reshaping of home life. This has left women workers with a higher burden of unpaid domestic work, in addition to the responsibility at their workplace, which feminists have identified as “double burden” or dual responsibility (Kabeer, 1999; UN Women, 2018). This trend is even more pronounced among women teachers, particularly in private and community schools, where strict schedules, increased accountability measures, and output-based evaluation mechanisms are prevalent (Bista 2006; Raggl & Troman 2008). In these circumstances, a marketized, profit-driven management exacerbates work-related stress and limits the professional autonomy of women teachers, thereby compromising their well-being (Apple 2005; Ball 2012).

Nepalese women are still more economically insecure than men. Despite their major economic contribution, the social roles of these women as wives or daughters-in-law limited their mobility and engagement beyond the domestic sphere. The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) (2012) reports that women’s contribution to household income is slightly less than in every two households. For all of this, women’s work is still profoundly undervalued on both social and economic grounds. Over time, more and more women have entered non-agricultural jobs that are relatively prestigious, especially in cities and semi-urban areas. Women are also employed in different sectors such as education, health, collection centers of the agricultural cooperative, social work, public administration, law and order/security agencies, including non-governmental organizations and small-scale enterprises (Shrestha 2012). However, women workers continue to be found in larger numbers in the service sector of developing countries, at an average rate of 27 per cent, compared to developed countries.

In the education sector, women teachers contribute significantly to building new generations. They are particularly powerful in helping students succeed academically and emotionally, especially girls. But women teachers also face numerous problems with workload, job security, career growth, and the like. Teach, as Raggl and Troman (2008) suggest, is a potentially useful focus through which to understand how professionals mediate their career decisions and re-create occupational identities. Structural determinants of the choice to enter teaching as a career may include individual factors, pathways through institutions, or external influences such as unemployment (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997). The impact of gender on professional career paths is also considerable, and especially for women, the decisions they make about their careers are tied closely to family and social responsibilities.

Although it has been recognized that education can change a society, gender differences remain in the educational and labour policies that hinder women's full participation. Discrimination against women in the labor market has important implications not only for these groups of workers but also for overall national prosperity and economic development. It is therefore critical that the promotion of gender equity, equal educational opportunities for all, and women's professional development solutions become part of sustainable development goals. "Women teachers have a critical and vital contribution to make to an inclusive, equitable education system" (CEE&GWG 2018), however the voices and experiences of these women are not broadly represented in education research.

This study probes the experiences of women teachers in community, private, and government-regulated schools practicing a service-based work culture in wards 2 and 3 of Haldibari Rural Municipality, Jhapa district. These wards are illustrative of the rural schooling situation in Nepal, where traditional socio-cultural practices, resource scarcity, and institutional inertia combine with new opportunities offered by changing educational policies and reforms. For generations of women in Nepal, teaching has long been considered a socially respectable and appropriate area of work, particularly outside the capital. Variables such as perceived work stability, social service orientation, and career advancement are reasons why women take up teaching (Kazi, 2013).

Naik (2008) offers a mix of opportunities and challenges that have a significant impact on women's work lives. Though measures such as reservation quotas, scholarships, and local recruitment have given them access to teaching positions across different types of schools, obstacles still exist. These issues are gender-based discrimination, service and promotion opportunities, infrastructure shortfalls, heavy workloads, and lack of access to training. A lot of women teachers already have many household responsibilities but get very little time for training, personal updates, leadership positions, or self-care. Mobility, travel security, and social taboos also limit women's autonomy and job satisfaction.

The socially constructed gender gives men and women different roles and expectations (Wijethunga & Jayarathne, 2021). From an anthropological point of view, female teachers are expected to shoulder a "triple burden" of reproductive, productive, and professional work in rural Nepal. This paper aims to investigate these social realities through the following research questions.

- What are the challenges women teachers encounter in their professional lives?
- How can working women handle competing responsibilities at Home and school?

Through this analysis, the paper seeks to deepen understanding of the professional experiences of rural women teachers and to inform policy dialogue on gender equity and educational advancement in Nepal.

Review of Literature

To lay a solid foundation for the paper, several books, reports, research articles, and studies on women in the teaching profession are reviewed. This paper reviews the anthropological and socio-cultural issues faced by working women teachers and discusses the everyday efforts of women balancing the interplay of professional and home-front challenges. Theoretical perspectives and empirical studies are discussed to position women teachers within the broader contexts they navigate, including the local context in which the research was conducted, in a rural setting such as Haldibari Rural Municipality.

One of the critical theoretical issues in the literature is the dual role—the expectation of high

performance for women teachers both at school and at Home. The theoretical framework by Atteh et al. (2020) clearly explains that when work is demanding, and we also have a domestic role with a clear intersection, this creates work–family conflict. This, if not appropriately managed, can cause stress, emotional fatigue, and burnout. One of the key contributions of the framework has been to highlight the interactive nature of job stressors and family demands in shaping job satisfaction and well-being. In the absence of clear demarcation and institutional foundation, female teachers might not be adequately engaged or motivated. Gender is a fundamental issue in contemporary anthropology and in sociologists' differing views of women's daily experiences in professional spaces. Similarly, it is well established that gender is more than a biological construct. It is a socially built and culturally appropriate script that mimics the roles and expectations deriving from agents and structures, which, by nature, is deeply rooted in power relations. Gender dynamics have increasingly appeared in the literature as a way to consider educators' career trajectories, identities, and struggles.

The rise in numbers is a good sign of social change, and in recent years, efforts to improve women's access to education have now begun to pay off (Li, Xue, & Li, 2023). However, this does not mean that the structural inequalities between women teachers have been solved, but rather it disguises them through workload burden, leadership opportunities, and recognition. Nepal has a robust culture, and the critical role of female teachers is closely connected to this. Because teaching is often perceived as aligned with ideas of care, nurturing, and duty, it is deemed an appropriate profession for women. Family support is the most important factor for female doctors to enter and stay in the profession. This acceptance may be the case, but the gendered attitudes have continued to play an essential role in how teachers interact with students, parents, and each other. The same kinds of trends have been seen globally. According to Mollel and Tshabangu (2014), clients of women educators, people in authority, may be biased against female leaders due to the social-cultural nature in which men are traditionally bred to be leaders rather than women. Many other scholars argue that this tension is not something a person or a few bad apples carry; it is a structural issue. For example, Addi-Raccah (2006) and Barmao and Mukwana (2013); Booth (2005) demonstrates how established cultural norms and gendered expectations create barriers for women seeking leadership opportunities in the education sector. If one has to say in Nepal, leadership is purely masculine, and the commitment of women to family life is a basis for not giving them a chance to enter into such higher decision-making positions. These kinds of findings show that the connections between women as professionals and issues beyond school are part of larger social structures.

Teaching is a profession where specialized content knowledge and pedagogy preparation, as well as teaching service commitments, are engaged world-wide. Teaching is a profession, a vocation rooted in ethical dispositions, lifelong education, and civic engagement. From an anthropological standpoint, career choice indicates national culture, masculinity-femininity, and social obligations individualism. Booth (2005) contrasts career planning in a multiple role context -- something that women teachers in Nepal can certainly identify with. With various recent trends, numerous careers – teaching included – have both professionalized and formalized required both standardized training and ongoing professional development. Teaching today could pass many of the criteria for the delivery of education and training. It is the element of prestige and authority of other occupational professions, especially when it is performed by women. Policies may

promise equality, but women still lag far behind in opportunity and recognition. In Nepal, men are always prioritized first in education as they are considered the future provider of the family while women are expected to take care of household chores. According to Booth (2005) differences in educational outcomes are constructed through social expectation rather than ability. It used to be believed that having more women teachers would help attract more girls to school and even do better in studies. In the context of providing a safe learning space, especially for girls, female teachers serve as role models (World Economic Forum, 2021). While gender disparities have reached almost universal enrolment ratios, UNESCO adds that regional variations persist, with gender gaps prevailing in regions with fewer female teachers.

Teachers are affected to gender inequality in society. Women teachers face low payment and heavy workload. It offers them fewer opportunities. There should be a balance between home and work responsibilities. As Makhija, Naidu & Rakesh (2016), Rani and Sharma (2021) pointed out economic stress and multiple roles cause female teachers' fatigue and dissatisfaction. These obstacles have become even more pronounced with age, marriage and motherhood (Desouky & Allam, 2017). Female teachers say that male teachers by far command greater respect among students, parents and the community as a whole. Women feel that in staff structures that are male dominated they are isolated, or they are even reluctant to raise their head above the parapet over discrimination. On a more theoretical note, a major factor in the way that women experience education is gender stereotypes. According to Mateo-Orcajada et al, OCHA (2021) and OHCHR (2013), stereotypes are deeply held beliefs in the existence of restrictions and perpetuation of conventional roles. Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD) and Gender and Development approaches (GAD) are sequentially time-bounded developmental strategies to correct these differences in status. As a result, both liberal and Marxist feminist theories have focused more on equal opportunities and structural change (Ritzer, 2000). This from also fits with the kind of thinking along which this study has lined up, since it is aimed at the real situation of the women teachers in rural Nepal.

Nepal has undergone an immense educational evolution in the past couple of decades. Women have shown a considerable increase in teaching in the year on account of government drive to improve illiteracy and democratization As Pradhan (2017) puts it, where national development goals, which are imbued with political visions, are placed, education becomes a site of this contractual implementation discourse. The rise of private schools in the wake of the restoration of democracy has also thrown open additional space for the employment of women teachers. Even so, Nepal continues to struggle with issues of quality, access, and equity in education. As Shrestha (2012) states women empowerment requires a substantial involvement in the planning as well as the decision-making processes. Bhusal (2015) states that even if women are essential in the contributions in Nepal's formal and informal sectors, labor policies often makes them peripheral to or part-time workers in qualifying women. Numerous studies also show that female inequities in education are linked with economic, social and cultural issues. Female teachers serve as essential agents in increasing girls learning in Pokhara by providing role models and providing a supportive and challenging learning environment (Gurung, 2018). Similarly, the United Nations Development Group (2010) and UNESCO (2018) have considered female teachers a major factor in the pursuit of equity in education and the attainment of national development targets.

A review of the relevant literature shows that female teachers are faced with interrelated, complex

issues influenced by societal constructs, and gender roles, and institutional systems. Westerners typically view the teaching profession as a female-dominated industry, yet empirical research has demonstrated that inequalities in recognition of work, leadership opportunities, and working conditions for women put women at a disadvantage, despite their high participation in these professions (Woodfield, 2006). It is well documented the extent to which women teachers produce role models and agents of social change. It has made a little progress in virtual terms in many respects but huge gaps still remain- especially in rural setting like Haldibari Rural Municipality. Hence this review suggested that we need to go beyond the current relatively shallow research about women teachers in the context under review and promote the need for more contextualized policy-relevant research into the realities of women teachers.

Methodology

This article spells out the methodological approach adopted to conduct the study, with specific emphasis on the research design, sampling strategy, and tools used for data collection. It has selected the research area, i.e., Haldibari Rural Municipality, to ensure the reliability, and contextual sensitivity of information about women teachers working in selected schools. In this research, an exploratory and descriptive research design is considered appropriate the paper aims to explore and describe the real-life conditions and experiences of female teachers. Contemplating age, educational qualification, marital status, family size, caste, residence, income level, access to property, and length of teaching experience allow to have a clear vision of the various aspects of women teachers' professional lives and level of job satisfaction. In capturing both measurable patterns and lived experiences, the methodological approach was mixed-methods. Rana and Chimoriya states "Mixed-methods research has emerged as a highly effective approach" (p. 1). It is applied; and more emphasis is placed on qualitative methods to ensure that the voices and narratives of women remain at the core of the study.

The research is limited to wards 2 and 3 of research area. This is based on a feminist approach to anthropology, which is post-positivist in nature. The universe of the observations included female teachers working in schools of wards 2 and 3 of the Haldibari Rural Municipality. Out of 10 chosen schools from research area, 8 are community and 2 are institutional or private schools. The target sample size is 71 female teachers. Purposive sampling of the schools and random sampling of participants have contributed to understanding the notion of the research questions.

Results and Discussion

Teaching has, historically, been seen as one of the most desirable and accessible professions for women. An element of showcasing mothering, part of caring, moral awareness. It allows women to step out to their workplace while fulfilling all the demands at Home as well. The deep roots of these attributes, particularly in the rural city where no other job prospects have existed, make it all the more impressive. Atteh et al. (2020) provide a framework to understand these events and gain insight in family problems and job satisfaction as they relate to female teachers in particular. Further principles in their theories showed how the intersection of professional and personal roles contributes to layered psychological burdens through stress, burnout and job dissatisfaction but also through resilience and organizational level developments the burdens can be mitigated. This theory seems to be an illusion of Haldibari level reality. Again, female teachers observe that

teaching does not take place in vacuum and therefore teaching occurs in relation to broader roles and responsibilities of women both in and outside school. Support systems that are functioning well—whether in their homesteads or at schools, enable women to navigate the pressures to fulfil duties and remain loyal to their role.

Professional Competence

The problem that arises in the research on the anthropological aspect is that women teachers have a high professional identity and quality. The common thread among all the participants' statements is the teaching method, which consists of the following characteristics: communication, patience, imagination, empathy and a so-called innate love for children. Things which society sees as feminine, thus making teaching a 'natural profession' for women. On the other hand, the teachers themselves admit that the contemporary professional qualification is not only emotional work but turns to technological literacy, class management, team spirit, psychological endurance, and flexibility when there are some presumptions that female teachers rely only on emotional work when they teach, as they are meeting with the usual problems in modern teaching.

However, on a structural level, there are still a few things that challenge professional growth. Reasons cited by respondents include poor leadership, weak training programs, overcrowded classrooms, budget constraints, and what might be called "weak delivery" of policies. Despite the myriad of professional development opportunities, in terms of innovation in pedagogy, ICT skills, professional networking and so on, contributing to this, it is partly a case of capability and constraint; which is a key element in appreciating the nature of women's experiences in rural schools.

Table 1: *Career Progression and Professional Role as a Teacher*

Satisfied with career progression	Frequency	Percent
Very satisfied	25	35.21
Somewhat satisfied	32	45.07
Neutral	9	12.68
Not satisfied	5	7.04
Total	71	100
Confident in profession as a teacher	Frequency	Percent
Yes, very confident	68	95.78
Somewhat confident	3	4.22
Neutral	0	0
No, not confident	0	0
Total	71	100

Source: Field study, 2025

Most teachers are satisfied with their career progression (80.28% combining very and somewhat satisfied) and overwhelmingly confident in their profession, with 95.78% expressing strong confidence in teaching. For instance, we can base this revelation observation and focus group

discussion (FGD) conducted with Menaka Sharma, who is the head teacher of Rameshwar Primary School in Ward 3. In the teaching profession, traditional societal attitudes create certain distinctions between male and female teachers. This school has only female teachers and 138 students are studying there. She observes as:

Many women also believe that good work can only happen if a man, even one less competent than themselves, is in the leadership position. Because of this mindset, women tend to lag behind in many sectors. In Rameshwar Primary School, where I am in a leadership role, all the teachers and staff members are women. After the school had remained closed for some time, I was assigned here. (Source: interview) 2025

Competence is certainly a desirable quality in this scenario. The female teachers teaching in this school are competent as male counterparts. Some of them regard as less respected, and it reveals that the challenges and hardships that women leaders go through. In this context, Sharma lets out that even women have similar thoughts like the male teacher's state that the females in particular are incompetent in comparison to the women themselves. It has just come to confirm what patriarchal society had already proved us—i.e. the marginalization of women teachers and it so beautifully expresses what feminists have been arguing for so many years now—i.e. the discrimination is no more just limited to discrimination but in ingrained convictions of cultures. It gave her the ability to show the world that women's leadership is something that is not only attainable, but a powerful force when given confidence and faith from the people. It also emphasizes the extra burden on women leaders to prove themselves in ways that may not be true for male leaders.

Balance between at Home and Teaching Profession

The standardization of the focus group dialogue and observation demonstrates that a recurrent theme emerges – a 'dual responsibility' of a career, on the one hand, and a home, on the other. Not only females feel this way, as mentioned by Mamata Rajbanshi, an indigenous teacher of Haldibari Secondary School, "It is a common experience in our school, especially among female teachers." Rajbanshi believes that she is enjoying her job. She is also always concerned about maternity leave, distance to home and distance to school, and in all that use of time. Her observation:

Looking at it purely as a profession, I am satisfied. But when comparing it with other professions, I feel somewhat dissatisfied. Although I have not achieved complete satisfaction, I am still content with what I have so far. I have been able to manage household responsibilities and still make time for school duties. (Source: interview, 2025)

As female teacher, some male teachers have mentioned challenges when their wives or daughters-in-law are teachers, which reflects societal attitudes we still need to address. For those whose homes are far from school, it's even more difficult. Managing family responsibilities alongside teaching is definitely challenging.

Table 2: *Balance of Time in Teaching and Household Activities*

Balance of work & family activities	Frequency	Percent
Very easy	7	9.86
Somewhat easy	43	60.56
Difficult	19	26.76

Very difficult	2	2.82
Total	71	99.98
Teaching job allows time for household works	Frequency	Percent
Yes, completely	14	19.72
Yes, but with difficulty	34	47.88
No, I struggle to manage time	21	29.57
No, I have to rely on other	2	2.828
Total	71	99.97
Biggest challenge in balancing work and home life		
Time constraints	53	74.65
Lack of family support	5	7.04
Workplace pressure	6	8.45
None	7	9.86
Total	71	99.98

Source: Field study, 2025

Most teachers (70.42%) find balancing teaching and household activities somewhat easy, yet time constraints remain the biggest challenge (74.65%). Nearly 30% struggle to manage time, highlighting persistent work-life pressures despite partial ease in balancing responsibilities. The gap between policy and practice is further demonstrated by the fact that maternity leave either is not available to women teachers (such as at the outset of the pandemic) or is not taken by women teachers (if they cannot afford to stop losing their salary) even if it is available in principle. Likewise, Uma Bhattraï, another teacher of Haldibari School considers teaching as a profession that is unique for women owing to their inherent nurturing instincts towards children. Her statement being time management is the only thing that needs critical attention which is really pitiful depending on what point in motherhood someone has reached. Bhattraï optimism these days, however, is based on the projection of her own grit and determination, while she seeks forward-looking government policies, too, to help spruce up the profession. The worst situation for the candidates and the scholars in host countries' universities is the work and life balance. The respondents diagnosed this issue, but also said that the time pressures are the biggest component of the troublesome context for them. Members of the research are found to regard the institutional environment as regional and secured from the threat of discrimination. But members of the study group view the policies on gender equality as a problem since they are inconsistently applied.

We add a new variable to the equation: the case study of Sarwari Bhattarai. As an unmarried teacher, she has less family commitments at Home. Plus, as a teacher, she has more freedom. This instance of Sharma very clearly demonstrates the impact that the marital status has on the lived experience of a female teacher. Another element is she won't like to voice her opinions as that woman in positive environment. Self-confidence, she says, is 'this is one more significant area in which empowerment needs to be done.' Cultural and social support systems add context to these issues. Indeed, consider that most respondents found the support of their family for their occupation to be positive which reflects a remarkable shift in the family attitude of rural women

with respect to the employment of women. The bright side is that family support is a work-family conflict mitigating factor. Cultural factors also impacted their family support as did their career choices, although the latter comes with more autonomy than the former, but this only affirms that family support doesn't necessarily mean independence.

This discussion brings in the intersectional perspective of gender, and ethnicity, primarily through the voice of Siwi Kumari Jha, a Madeshi teacher. Her teaching is convenient in such a way she can manage her household work and paid jobs together. However, she really rips the economic situation behind her job. It is less still, as it continues to rise, NPR 18,500 is not even enough to run a household on a monthly basis. Jha points to the issues arising out of the varied cultural and geographical background of the students and the non-availability of teaching material in the class. In her story, Morris also highlights how the issue of gender is inextricably linked to ethnic and class determinants and not simply a problem involving only one of those factors. It underscores that the issue of addressing gender equity in education cannot be looked in isolation, from other socio-economic reforms.

It also embodies a critical complementarity to women's stories in that the perspective of male school heads. Haldibari Secondary School's headmaster, Tank bahadur Pakhrin, is an enthusiastic advocate for employing more female teachers and is confident in their ability to get the job done. At his time, the number of women teachers are good enough to make an ideal institution. Yes, he sees that teaching is an intellectual profession, and women have the same abilities; and more women should take part in the administration. For Ram Prasad Ghimire of Laxmi Secondary School, female and male teachers perform equally well. He has served in various parts of Nepal for years and what he said rings true that the professional mindset of women is unmatched. His endorsement of the teaching profession shows that the attitude of the school leadership largely creates school spaces which can be for empowerment.

Economic growth prospects provide a level of security and autonomy, but not economic sufficiency. Only a handful of them were very content with the income they were receiving. Once more the restrictions on women in terms of promotion opportunities hurt their ability to increase long term earnings. This speaks to the gendered understanding of labor hierarchy around education. However, women have pretty much high professional confidence in schoolteachers. An enormous, mind-boggling number of them reported their confidence in their occupation. Job satisfaction is also high, which reinforces the argument that teaching provides some sort of intangible reward in relation to helping the development of children – which may or may not be supported by tangible benefits. And this shows—and perhaps no one else demonstrates that better than teachers, who see their profession as not only a viable way of spending the rest of their working days earning a paycheck but in many ways a calling.

Views on government support vary. However, while some would agree there is some delivery in terms of quotas and government provisions, the dominant opinion is that the delivery is poor. The interviews echo calls for better maternity entitlements, postings and salaries. Not that these teachers are looking back - they have their eyes on the future. A lot were positive minded towards the future, albeit the blockade by the system had stunted few. The study itself indicates that opportunities and challenges are intertwined. Teaching dignifies and directs women; this is true, but despite these, the balancing act between the professional pursuit of success and social commitments is a work in progress in this profession. Development and empowerment of women teachers cannot

take place by mere inclusion-symbolic only, it needs a structural change and change in culture. And certainly, the female teachers of Haldibari Rural Municipality have shown power, adaptation and commitment towards profession. The stories make the important point that gender equity in education is not just a women's issue but that gender equity is an essential piece of an efficient, effective and 21st century educational system.

Conclusion and Implications

This paper integrates both types of data to examine the intersecting onsets experienced by the teachers in the professional domain in wards 2 and 3, in the Haldibari Rural Municipality, Jhapa. The only strong piece of good news from this evidence is that over 88 percent of those teachers who took time to respond for this paper said family support for women teachers was high. More strikingly, there seems to have been a significant cultural shift in terms of perceptions of teaching and whether it suited women roles in rural community's lives. Cultural norms are clearly at play in many female career decisions as well. Not even 39 percent acknowledged that social norms were a consideration in the choice of profession or thus effectively demonstrate a dissonance between community encouragement and traditional concerns about individual aspirations for women and men respectively. The vast majority regard female teachers as being no less competent as their fellow male both in teaching but a consistent minority regard power and dominance as inseparable from males.

Social constraints and stereotypes have reduced significantly, over half of the respondents do not have any such constraints. Yet from an anthropological perspective, it is also just as important to recognize the minority in this case that are stereotyped. These subtle biases, largely seen in the aspects of visibility and decision making, plague their work lives every day. Economically the profession is secure and regarded, but not without non-economically independence. Despite general agreement on the problem of pay equity, only one in three teachers feel economically independent. The teaching profession nonetheless continues to be a dual role profession, where the profession and the economy is uncertain, and so are the household responsibilities.

Amidst all this lady teachers possess high degree of confidence and dedication. Their moral obligations towards children/students and communities is highlighted by the high level of professional confidence, high sense of commitment etc. The number one big challenge is balancing work and family, "time constraints are as much a product of cultural barriers as they are of practical ones." The organizational contexts provide a degree of security about a partially implemented "gender equality policies and some selectivity of government intervention in the conditions of service of teachers". Small slice of the teachers looks to be keeping at 'cautious optimism'— as it's set more 'solidly anchored in belief in self and in common hopes for better going forward.' despite all the hardships they are experiencing. This paper highlights that gender equality is necessary at teaching profession. Family supportive measure to women teachers are important to reduce work-life stress. They should be encouraged to take on decision-making roles through leadership and confidence-building programs. Salary structures and benefits need to be improved to ensure financial independence. Community engagement is also essential to challenge subtle gender stereotypes and normalize women's leadership in education.

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