

Effect of Gender, Migration, and Family Support on Socio-Economic Well-Being of Nepalese Youth

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Abstract

This study explored the interplay between gender dynamics, migration experiences, and family support and their impact on the socio-economic well-being of Nepali youth. A structured questionnaire was administered to 384 Nepali youth aged 18-34 years using a convenience sampling design. With the diversified participant profile, the descriptive analysis found that there is negative impact of traditional gender norms on welfare, while migration experiences and strong family support had positive socio-economic effects. Empirical correlations supported the hypotheses, emphasizing the need for gender-specific interventions and policies. The study advocates for approaches that consider migration experiences, family support, and the reconfiguration of traditional gender roles. It provides valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners, emphasizing the importance of addressing gender inequalities, formulating migration policies, and strengthening family support systems. Specific strategies, including counseling programs and services, are necessary to alleviate the socio-economic challenges faced by Nepali youth. The study offers a framework for designing effective programs and interventions that consider the complex relationship between gender development, migration experiences, family support, and the socio-economic well-being of Nepali youth.

Keywords: gender, migration, family support, socio-economic well-being, Nepalese youth

Introduction

Gender, migration, and family support significantly affect the socio-economic well-being of Nepali youth. Understanding the interactions of these factors is important for designing effective programs and interventions. Gender refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, expectations, and societal norms that cultures and societies consider appropriate for all gender identities. It encompasses a range of identities that do not necessarily fit into binary male or female categories (American Psychological Association [APA], 2023). Gender inequality in Nepal affects youth outcomes in terms of education, employment, and access to resources. Migration in search of economic opportunity negatively affects adolescents. In such cases, girls especially often face

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barriers to schooling. To improve the rate of educational attainment and career development of youths, family support, financial support, emotional support, and access to resources to them is necessary.

Social work is essential in promoting health and well-being across various settings, extending beyond healthcare alone. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) highlights that social workers engage in healthcare across all environments, emphasizing the significant impact of physical and mental resilience on service users' lives. Drawing from global literature and research, including Beddoe and Maidment (2013), the multifaceted dimensions of health and well-being—social, political, cultural, emotional, spiritual, economic, and spatial—are explored. This comprehensive view underscores the unique challenges and strengths of working with diverse populations and communities, emphasizing the need to understand systemic inequalities, oppression, and stigma. This perspective is crucial for practitioners and researchers interested in social work, public health, and social inclusion.

Graham and Shier (2010) examined the work experiences of social work professionals concerning psychological well-being (SWB) and happiness. Interviews with Canadian social workers revealed that high SWB scores were linked to career opportunities, professional boundaries, specific social work practices, social entrepreneurship concepts, and self-awareness. This research has implications for workplace practice, social work concepts, and future studies.

Montano (2021) built on this foundation by encouraging consideration of the various dimensions of health and well-being and their impact on specific populations. The report is divided into three parts: theoretical paradigms and debates on social work and well-being; diverse approaches to meeting health and well-being needs based on culture, identity, spirituality, and health; and examples of social work research with specific populations.

Social Capital Theory provides insights into how social relationships, networks, and resources impact socio-economic well-being. It emphasizes the importance of social connections, trust, and cooperation in accessing resources, opportunities, and support systems. This theory is particularly relevant for exploring the effects of gender, migration, and family support on the socio-economic well-being of Nepalese youth. Gender roles and expectations, shaped by social capital, significantly influence educational and economic outcomes for Nepalese youth (Shakya & Gurung, 2020). Migration experiences also impact socio-economic well-being by building social networks that provide access to job opportunities and resources (S. Sharma, 2017). Family support, another form of social capital, plays a crucial role in shaping the socio-

economic well-being of Nepalese youth through financial assistance and emotional support (Joshi & Pant, 2019).

Incorporating Social Capital Theory into this study allows for a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between gender, migration, family support, and socio-economic outcomes. This theoretical lens helps identify factors that enhance or hinder the socio-economic prospects of Nepalese youth and informs the development of effective strategies to promote their well-being.

Despite extensive research on gender norms, migration, and family support, gaps remain in understanding how these factors influence Nepalese youth's socio-economic well-being. There is a need for a holistic approach that considers the interconnections among these variables and the role of social capital. Previous studies have not fully explored the specific socio-economic challenges youth face in these contexts. This study aims to fill these gaps by investigating the combined effects of gender norms, migration, family support, and social capital on youth outcomes. This comprehensive analysis will inform targeted interventions and policies to enhance the socio-economic well-being of Nepalese youth, contributing to evidence-based decision-making and advancing knowledge in the field.

Methods

The study used a quantitative research design to examine the impact of gender, migration, and family support on the socio-economic well-being of Nepalese youth. This approach facilitated numerical data collection and statistical analysis, enabling the identification of patterns and relationships among variables. Data were gathered through surveys and questionnaires distributed to a representative sample of Nepalese youth, supplemented by existing datasets. Statistical software (SPSS) was used for data analysis, employing descriptive and inferential statistics to explore the relationships between the variables. The target population comprised Nepalese youth aged 18-34, a critical period for socio-economic decisions. Convenience sampling was employed, aiming for a sample size of 357 participants to ensure statistical power. Data were collected primarily through structured questionnaires using a 5-point Likert scale. Analysis methods included descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, ANOVA, and regression analysis to understand the socio-economic well-being of the youth. Reliability and validity were ensured using Cronbach's alpha, with ethical considerations addressing informed consent, confidentiality, cultural sensitivity, and transparency in disseminating findings.

Influence of Gender Norms on Socio-Economic Well-Being

Previous research has shown that traditional gender roles and expectations in Nepalese society can lead to disparities in educational and economic opportunities among youth (Gurung, 2017; Shakya & Gurung, 2020). It is hypothesized that adherence to traditional gender norms will hurt the socio-economic well-being of Nepalese youth.

H 1: Gender norms significantly influence the socio-economic well-being of Nepalese youth.

Impact of Migration Experiences on Socio-Economic Well-Being

Studies have demonstrated that migration, particularly international migration, can have varying effects on the economic outcomes of youth in Nepal, influenced by factors such as remittances and access to resources (Adhikari & Hobley, 2020; S. Sharma, 2017). It is hypothesized that youth with migration experiences will exhibit different levels of socio-economic well-being compared to non-migrant youth.

H 2: Migration experiences significantly affect the socio-economic well-being of Nepalese youth.

Role of Family Support on Socio-Economic Well-Being

Research has highlighted the positive impact of family support, including financial assistance, emotional support, and access to networks, on the socio-economic outcomes of youth in Nepal (Bhandari & Gurung, 2021; Joshi & Pant, 2019). It is hypothesized that higher levels of family support will be associated with better socio-economic well-being among Nepalese youth.

H 3: Family support significantly influences the socio-economic well-being of Nepalese youth.

Effectiveness of Gender-Sensitive Interventions and Policies

Existing literature suggests that implementing gender-sensitive interventions and policies can help reduce gender disparities and promote better socio-economic outcomes for youth in Nepal (Bhandari & Gurung, 2021; Tulasa, 2020). It is hypothesized that the implementation of gender-sensitive interventions and policies will positively impact the socio-economic well-being of Nepalese youth.

H 4: Gender-sensitive interventions and policies can address socio-economic challenges faced by Nepalese youth.

Strengthening Social Support Networks and Services

Studies have indicated that enhancing social support systems, including mentorship programs, counseling services, and community engagement, can contribute to improving the socio-economic outcomes of youth in Nepal (Adhikari & Hobley, 2020; Gurung & Paudel, 2021). It is hypothesized that by strengthening social support networks and services, the socio-economic challenges faced by Nepalese youth can be effectively addressed.

H 5: Strengthening social support networks and services can mitigate socio-economic challenges faced by Nepalese youth.

Results

Correlation Analysis

Age exhibits a significant positive correlation with socio-economic well-being ($r = .268$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that older individuals tend to experience better economic outcomes and overall well-being. Age also shows positive correlations with the degree of education ($r = .288$, $p < 0.01$) and family support ($r = .147$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that higher education levels and increased family support are associated with improved socio-economic well-being among Nepalese youth. There were no significant correlations observed between monthly family income and socio-economic well-being, highlighting the need to explore other socio-economic determinants. As stated earlier, education and family support positively correlate with socio-economic well-being, emphasizing the importance of supportive family environments and educational opportunities.

Table 1

Correlation Matrix

	SEW	Gen	MI	FS
SEW	1			
Gen	.014	1		
MI	-.082	-.083	1	
FS	.581**	.072	-.138**	1

Regression Analysis

The regression analysis examined the predictors of socio-economic well-being, showing that Gender (Gen), Monthly Income (MI), and Family Size (FS) significantly influence

the outcome (Table 2). The model's intercept is 1.35, indicating the baseline level of well-being. Gender has a negative effect ($B = -0.09$, $p < 0.05$), meaning being male or female affects well-being negatively by 0.09 units. Monthly Income positively impacts well-being ($B = 0.159$, $p < 0.01$), and Family Size has the strongest positive effect ($B = 0.495$, $p < 0.01$). All three predictors—Gender, Monthly Income, and Family Size—are statistically significant in predicting socio-economic well-being. The model explains a substantial proportion of the variance in socio-economic well-being (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.353$), and the overall model is significant ($F = 65.635$, $p < 0.01$). The result suggests their relevance in understanding and predicting the economic outcomes and well-being of young individuals in Nepal.

Table 2
Regression Coefficients Taking Socio-Economic Well-Being as Criterion Variable

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.35	0.219		6.161	0.000**
Gen	-0.09	0.043	-0.091	-2.124	0.034*
MI	0.159	0.058	0.144	2.742	0.006**
FS	0.495	0.052	0.501	9.563	0.000**

$R^2 = 0.358$, $Adjusted R^2 = 0.353$, $F-stat = 65.635$, $F-sig = .000$

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

Discussion

The study found a negative correlation between adherence to traditional gender norms and socio-economic well-being, aligning with the literature that suggests that rigid gender roles can hinder personal and economic development. This finding is similar to the finding of (R. Sharma & Adhikari, 2020), who highlighted that gender roles often limit educational and employment opportunities for females, impacting their economic independence and overall well-being.

Migration status was positively correlated with socio-economic well-being. This supports previous findings (S. Sharma, 2017), that migration can offer better economic opportunities and access to resources, although the literature also highlights potential challenges such as social isolation and exploitation.

Family support emerged as a crucial positive factor for socioeconomic well-being, consistent with a study mentioned by (Joshi & Pant, 2019), emphasizing the role of familial networks in providing financial assistance, emotional support, and social capital.

The study underscores the critical need for gender-sensitive interventions that challenge and reshape traditional gender norms. Promoting gender equality can foster a more inclusive environment, leading to improved socio-economic outcomes for both males and females. Given the positive impact of migration on well-being, policies should facilitate safe and beneficial migration experiences. This includes providing support systems for migrants and leveraging remittances to improve local economies. Furthermore, enhancing family support through policies that promote economic stability, education, and social services can significantly boost the socioeconomic well-being of youth.

The regression model, incorporating gender, migration, and family support, explained 35.3% of the variance in socio-economic well-being, highlighting the substantial influence of these factors while indicating that other elements also contribute to well-being. The study's cross-sectional design and specific sociocultural context limit its generalizability, underscoring the need for future research to adopt longitudinal approaches and explore diverse socio-cultural settings. This will deepen the understanding of factors affecting youth well-being, enabling the development of more comprehensive and effective interventions and policies.

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