

# Globalization, Migration and Gender Equality

## A Case from Okhaldhunga Village of Gorkha District

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### Abstract

Globalization is an intense of social relationship and closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world as well as it is a process involving increasing liquidity and growing multidirectional flows of people, objects, places and information. To become global is to be worldly and to be conscious of the current scenario of the present. The main objective of this paper is to analyze the effect of globalization on gender equality in rural society of Nepal. For the same, the study limits on the changing gender roles of 50 respondents have been analyzed in Okhaldhunga Village of Palungtar Municipality word no.4 of Gorkha District. Theory of globalization is applied and primary and secondary sources of information are used in this study. One of the result of this paper is women are enjoying modern technology and are increasing involvement in various local institutions and governance. Even though they are not aware about education and to be more advance life like men but they claim that they are more advanced than the previous generation women.

**Keywords:** Globalization, Migration, Remittance, Gender equality and Social change.

### Introduction

The word globalization has been used by various scholars in various time and space. 'Globalization has become an increasingly important topic both in sociology and in wider public debate' (Haralambos et al., 2017 : 1006). However, about the coin of the term globalization, Fisher (2011) writes, 'Globalization, a word first coined as recently as 1950, but which has achieved such common currency that one can hardly avoid it now in any newspaper, magazine, TV programme, or even internet blog' (Fisher, 2011 : 4). Meanwhile, various scholars have defined it differently. 'It might be defined as the expansion and intensification of social relations and consciousness across time and space (Stager, 2009 : 15). Some sociologists-as explained by (Haralambos et al., 2017)-go so far as arguing that 'globalization is instrumental in creating a new type of society, whether that is defined as

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high modernity (Giddens), liquid modernity (Bauman) or network society (Castells)' (p.1006).

Giddens (1990) defines globalization as 'the intensification of worldwide social relationship that link distance localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa' but later he adds 'Globalization should not be thought of simply as the development of worldwide networks—social and economic systems that are remote from our individual concerns. It is a local phenomenon, too—one that affects all of us in our daily lives' (Giddens, 2002 : 51). Meanwhile, Siglitz (2006) writes that globalization is the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world...brought about by the enormous reduction of the cost of transportation and communication and the breaking down of artificial barriers to the flows goods, services, capital, knowledge and people across borders (Siglitz, 2006). However, Robinson (2011) opines globalization is "a shift from international market integration to global productive integration" (p.17).

Even though some scholars define globalization as intensification of social relationship, high modernity, liquid modernity, network society, takes place in various spaces, closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world. However, some scholars define globalization as 'processes.

Ritzer (2010) defines globalization as a transplanetary process or set of processes involving increasingly liquidity and the growing multidirectional flows of people, objects, places and information as well as the structures they encounter and create that are barriers to, or expedite, those flows. However, 'the concept of liquidity used in Ritzer's definition is taken from the work of Bauman' (Haralambos et al., 2017 : 1006).

From above discuss, we can say that globalization is the intensification of social relationship, high modernity, liquid modernity, network society, takes place in various spaces, closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world as well as it is a process involving increasing liquidity and growing multidirectional flows of people, objects, places and information, becoming global, slightly more restricted and exclusive.

The world has witnessed an enormous economic transformation over the past three decades, foster by growing global flows of goods and services, technology, and information (World Bank, 2012). Various studies in different parts of the globe on globalization and development show that this transformation helps to reduce inequality, increased women's access to economic opportunities and promoted more egalitarian gender roles and norms etc. Meanwhile, Gordon et al. (2012) studied the factors contributing the gender earnings ratio as well as the median earning of men and women for 271 U.S. metropolitan areas. The result

indicates that occupational segregation is still the leading determinant of gender earning inequality, that its effects are only slightly diminished by the presence of globalization and that various aspects of the global economy independently influence the gender earning gap. They further found that gender equality is higher in metropolitan areas incorporated into the global economy. Mills (2009) found that 'there is evidence that large change in much society across the world such as migration internationalization, financial openness, and new ICTs are generating specific patterns of inequality industrialized and developing economies' (p.7). A study based on Asian countries – by Gills (2002) – found that Women are responding in a wide range of ways and at levels. They are supported by formal and informal organization and founded various groups which support to promote gender equality in different parts of Asia. The author further found that union for friends groups in Thailand, Women Shelters, national network for solidarity migrant workers, the working Women's Network in Japan, and various Women's supports groups and watchdog organization in Asian countries, represent different levels and channels of resistance. From this study, we can say that globalization helps to promote gender equality in Asian countries. However, some scholars argue that women are participating in export-oriented production. For the same, Bair (2010) found that 'in numerous monographs and articles published over the two and half decades, scholars have examined the participation of women workers in export-oriented production across the global south, documenting the diverse and manifold ways in which the internationalization of production mobilizes material and discursive forms of social differences' (p.203). However, some studies found that globalization continue to increase inequalities between women and men in Indian communities. Radcliffe et al. (2004) found that 'transnationalism as forged by neoliberal globalization on the one hand has designed new types of development, while on the other hand it has restructured Indian communities and national societies. Neoliberal restructuring and transnationalism thus continue to differentiate between women and men and to increase inequalities between women and men' (p.388). As cited by Buchholz et al. (2009) found that – 'the GLOBALIFE project is the first empirical study of the effects of the globalization process on individual life course, and thereby on the development of social inequality in a range of societies in Europe and North America' (p.56) – the globalization process has impacted very differently on different phases of life course: qualified men in mid-career are broadly protected from the effect of globalization and has in no way led to the frequent assumed increase in the erosion of traditional male employment relationships or to a massive spread of 'Patchwork careers'. In contrast, the employment careers of well qualified (male) persons who have established themselves on the labour market continue to be very stable in modern societies. In contrast, youth adults, women in mid-life, and people approaching retirement have had to

accept a clear change in their life courses as a result of globalization process, although the ways in which the life courses of groups have changed vary greatly. But, there is explicitly contradict the frequent assumption in globalization research of a decline in the significance of national state regulation in the course of globalization process leading to the same outcome in different countries (Treiman and Yip, 198; Ohmae, 1991; Meyer et al., 1992; Beck, 2000) (p.67).

Ganguly-Scrase (2003) examined the experience of women in lower class in West Bengal in a globalizing Indian economy. The author's concern is to determine prevailing attitude towards gender equality under globalization. His study reveals that women themselves do not perceive globalized situation to be detrimental to their lives. Instead, they consider themselves to be more powered to an earlier generation of women.

Moreover, despite increasing household inequalities they feel women's equality has not been compromised and this is largely due to class position. Few studies on impact of globalization in gender discrimination in manufacturing industries were done in U.S. and elsewhere. One of them is the study of Sandra and Brianerd (2004) where they found that although trade may increase wage inequality by modestly reducing the relative wages of less-skilled workers, at the same time it appears to benefit women by reducing the ability of firms to discriminate (Sandra and Brianerd (2004)). Some scholars focused their studies in urban areas. Shu, Zhu and Zhang (2007) examine the effects of economic globalization on gender inequalities in urban China. They found that economic globalization profoundly influences gender inequalities by changing the nature of jobs queues, and men and women are sorted and matched into jobs accordingly. It also contributed to and perpetuated a gendered distribution of male and female workers in the Chinese urban labour market in the late 1990s (Shu et al., 2007). Sachs and Alston (2010) found that globalization and the changes in Sri Lanka, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Canada affect women's disempowerment in multiple ways. Corporate agricultural producers and processors use labour market segmentation as a major strategy to compete in the global market place. By creating labour markets segregated by gender, race, citizenship, age and ethnicity, corporations compete in a global environment to extract as much profit as possible.

### **Understanding Social Change**

Social change is the core area of sociology from the beginning of sociology. Auguste Comte used the term social dynamic for the social change that is the law of human progress and laws of succession over time in all society. He theorized that three stages of progress pass successively through theological stage, metaphysical stage and scientific stage (Ritzer, 1996).

Herbert Spencer proposed the social Darwinism and evolutionary change of society from simple to complex forms like organism. Growth and development of society leads to structural differentiation and structural complexity of society by combining functional integration. Compounding and de-compounding process determines the growth of society. Society compounds from simple societies to compound societies, doubly compound societies, trebly compound societies (Adams & Sydie, 2001).

Emile Durkheim proposed that the division of labour brings social change, more specialized tasks and functions help to making organic solidarity, which is the social change from mechanical solidarity (Ritzer, 1996). He further says that moral density and technology are the main factors of social change. Increase of the different moral groups, division of the more specialized work and tasks lead to change the social process that is mechanical solidarity toward organic solidarity (Ritzer, 1996). Specialized economic activities and increasing division of labour are the factors of modernization.

World system theory explains that interaction between different societies can be an important factor for social change. World integrates only by single division of labour. It is the tie of single division of labour that means one Nepali unskilled labour is the world unskilled labour. Core produces the expert and highly skilled labour and periphery produces the unskilled worker so the labour exchanges necessary in the world-systems. These conditions help to international labour movement. It can be argued that the core countries import labour intensive goods which cause an increase in employment of unskilled workers in the less developed countries. Core and semi periphery provide the skilled labour to periphery and periphery provides the cheap and unskilled labour to core and semiperiphery. So the foreign labour is the essential in the modern World-systems (Ritzer, 1996).

The above available literature review shows the research gap in foreign labour migration. Foreign labour migration is not only an economic phenomenon; it is a social and cultural phenomenon. It brings changes in social structure.

### **Migration and Gender Equality**

The history of labour migration from Nepal dates back to the period of unification, more than 300 years ago. The mass migration from the unified territory to the neighboring countries to escape the new State's taxation system, which was often exploitive, could be considered the first incidence of outmigration of labour from Nepal (Gurung, 2006).

The induction of young Nepal individuals into the colonial British army in the early nineteenth century appears to be the first instance of the State's involvement in formalizing labour migration through treaties between two governments. The treaty between East Indian

Company and Nepal gave formal approval for foreign employment and opened doors for such engagement beyond British India to other colonial territories (Kansakar, 1984, Sijapati and Limbu, 2012).

However, Gorkha recruitment, agricultural labour migration to Assam, Darjelling, Burma from Nepalese Hill areas. Later, many people also started and still continues going India to work as Watchmen (guards), hotel boys etc. now international labour migration is practicing to join European, American and Arab (UAE-United Arab Emirates) countries for skilled and unskilled jobs (Singh, 1998). Meanwhile, Seddon et al. (2001) found that foreign labour migration and the income that returns to the rural household of Nepal as a result of employment abroad, while tending consolidate existing inequalities, for a significant majority of individuals and households, work against that trend and generate a real improvement in living standards. The very poor are relatively little involved in foreign labour migration.

K. C. (2003) says that some resources are likely to seek foreign employment and some are likely to migrate within the country and subsequently add to the present level of poverty in their destination. The analysis also suggests that emigration trends to be good for the country by reducing unemployment and increasing remittances. However, Department of Foreign Employment (2014) estimates that the numbers of labour migrants leaving Nepal continued to gradually increase until 1999, at which time the labour permit records reflect a sharp rise. The most attractive destination countries for Nepali foreign labour migrants since 1993 have been Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. As of 2013/14, Malaysia had become the destination country with the largest number of Nepali migrants (Department of Foreign Employment, Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2014). Garner and Gurung (2003) suggested that the crucial role of remittances at household level. Rural households are supported from various sources of remittances. Value of remittance range from an annual average of 8000 (for far west) to above NRs.30,000 (in Kathmandu). Remittances from foreign countries come mainly from India. It has been easy due to the regional inter linkage of origin and destination places (Garner and Gurung, 2003).

### **Statement of the problem**

The scene of standing in waiting line in front of EPS office and the line of making Machine Readable Passport in front of Department of Passport generate the first research idea how it affect in social change. Then the BBC Nepali Sewa 'Sajha Sawal Programs' and Kantipur Aaja 2013 Feb 6 broadcasted on the impact of foreign labour employment helps to generates specific research idea such as foreign employment impact on gender equality. These

research idea changes into the research problems from the theoretical orientation and empirical research as follows:

Emile Durkheim saw the division of labour determines the mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. Marx gave highly attention toward the labour value and exploitation and revolution. Max Weber saw the labour as develop the formal organization. World system theorist Immanuel Wallerstein direct linked with World society and Single division of labour. So the impact of foreign employment social institutions is the substantive issue in sociological research, but researchers give a little attention in Nepal.

Some literature shows the labour pattern change the religion and language like Banskota (1994) and Gurung (1998) shows the British Gurkha soldier have disseminated the Hindu religion and Nepali language. Now, there is no study of the religious and social changing situation of international labour migrants. So it is need to explore the impact on marriage institution of foreign employment.

Foreign labour related literatures are mostly concerned on the economic aspect but not focusing on the social and cultural process. Few literatures examine the social and cultural dimension of labour migration. Bhadra (2008) examines the labour migration Nepalese women and impact of remittance but not focus on the impact on social institution like marriage. Sharma (2014) also describes in the ethnicity and foreign labour migration but not explore the impact of social institution like marriage.

Macfarlane (2001) argue that migration controls the environmental disaster; social and cultural practices are decreasing and improving debt condition of Gurung. Now, there is little attention to social and cultural change bring by foreign labour migration.

Sidiqi and Ennaji (2004) argue that the effect of labour migration on the family left behind include higher probability of divorces but not research on these issues in Nepal.

Researcher's related experience and perception, theoretical and empirical reviews help to generate the research questions and above mentioned arguments help to raise the research questions of this study as follows:

- What is the role of foreign labor migration in gender equality?
- How does remittance promote in social change?

#### **The Objective**

- To describe the impact of foreign labour migration on gender equality
- To analyse the role remittance in social change

### **The Methods and the Area selection**

Descriptive and analytical research designs as well as primary and secondary information/data were used in this study. Primary data were collected by observation, Focus Groups, key informants interview were the techniques. Likewise, secondary data were collected from published and unpublished literature, official records, books, and other materials relevant to the study. This study is limited in Okhadunga village of Palungtar Municipality of Gorkha District. The distance between Palungtar Municipality and Kathmandu is about 150 km.

### **Findings**

There are various caste/ethnic groups such as Brahmin, Chhetri, Newar, Dalit etc. - who have foreign labour migration experience- are found in this municipality. However, this study covers only changing gender roles in Okhaldhunga Village of Palungtar Municipality ward no. 4. Due to the access of technology, economic opportunities, migration, and contract with other people who had labour migration experience, the gender roles have been changing ever before. The visible changes in socio-economic and cultural aspects can be observed. The researcher observed that this affluence being slowly affected the traditional norms and values, occupation, decision making process, education etc. Through key informants' interview, observation and Focus Groups, the researcher examined the following sectors and found new type of society is creating in Okhaldhunga Village of Palungtar Municipality by globalization.

#### **1. The Family**

The traditional roles of rural women in Nepal were cooking, cleaning, washing, farming etc. It is said that familial roles of rural women were not breadwinner and decision maker. During Focus Groups, majority of participants say that, - taking iPhone on her hand, a women says that '*we are not the women of past*', -now, women can decide within and outside the family in every decision for the betterment of their family. By giving reason of this are greater access to technology, economic opportunities, migration and contract with other people who had labour migration experience etc. some respondents are political and social activist. Now-a-days, women become breadwinner, active participants in socio-political and economic phenomenon. This shows that gender roles are changing in Okhaldhunga village of Palungtar Municipality in Gorkha District.

#### **2. Education**

Traditionally in Nepal - especially in rural Nepal- girls enrolment in government school was preferable and boys were in private school. The situation is now rapidly changed. A key informant - one of the returnee from Kuwait - says that migration and contract with other people who had labour migration experience that helps to equal behaviour to girls and boys



in education. The parents those who have access to technology and network, they enrolled their children in private school and non-remittance receivers are doing still gender bias in education. Thus, it can be said that globalization helps to promote gender equality.

### 3. Economy

In many cases, women, particularly rural women, were willing to reduce expenditures on other items to have access to a mobile phone, suggesting that the perceived benefits outweighed the costs, which averaged 3.5 per cent of household income among those surveyed (World Bank, 2012). It also reported that thirty-four per cent of women in rural Bolivia, Egypt, India, and Kenya reallocated resources away from other items to pay for a phone subscription, compared with 20 per cent among all women surveyed and 12 per cent among women who do work (p. 262). In this study area, women are actively participating in *Aama Samuha*. *Jagriti Aama Samuha* is providing loan to the member women in low interest rates. During the Focus Groups, they reported that through the media and internet they knew the benefits and necessary for gender equality of *Aama Samuha*. Now, women are enjoying with iPhone and other phones and able to buy recharge cards and others monetary purchases. On the other hand, they are involving in income generating activities like; shop, livestock, cash crops, etc. Besides this, sometimes, women took loan for health purpose while they have to take costly treatment. All 38 members of *Jagriti Aama Samuha* are enjoying with modern technology and internet. This shows that traditional ascribed gender roles are changing day by day.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Now-a-days, rural women also become breadwinner, active participants in socio-political and economic phenomenon. The parents those who have access to technology and network facility, they enrolled their children in private school and non-remittance receivers are doing still genderly biased in education. Thus it can be said that globalization helps to promote gender equality. Now, women are enjoying with iPhone and other phone and able to buy recharge cards and others monetary purchases. On the other hand, through *Aama Samuha*, they are involving in income generating activities like; business, livestock, cash crops, etc. Besides this, sometimes, women took loan for health purpose while they have to take costly treatment. Even though they are not aware about their own education and to be more advanced life like men but they claim that they are more advanced than the previous generation women.

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