

Women empowerment through entrepreneurship: A case study of Dalla Gaaun home stay

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Abstract

In countries like Nepal women are confined with the four walls of their homes. In ethnic community of rural area women are deprived from social, economical, political and personal rights. Women entrepreneurship is one of the many tools to empower not only economically but also personally, socially and politically. This study was conducted in one of the least developed district of Nepal, Bardiya. Study was focused on Tharu community Dalla Gaaun Home stay. . Study was conducted in November (5-7) 2020 for three days. These home stays are operated by Tharu community which is indigenous community of Nepal. Researchers used number of tools to collect the data of population. Unstructured questionnaire were also prepared for the evidence and were filled by closely observing the respondents. Entrepreneurship really empowered the women of Dalla Gaaun home stay economically, personally, socially and politically.

Keywords : *Nepal, Dalla Gaun Home Stay, Women Empowerment, Women Entrepreneurship, MUSOM.*

Background of the Study

In today's world women's entrepreneurship has become the buzzword and is directly connected to empowerment. However it might not be universal. In western countries empowerment is more likely related with income or earning. It might not be true in eastern countries. The significance of and access to resources such as education and microfinance, economic, social and individual freedom as enabling factors, or means, of empowerment that stimulate the empowerment. Kabeer (2012) said that women's empowerment is about expanding women's capacity to make strategic life choices in situations where they were once denied. Essentially, it is about women developing the agency to act effectively within the existing system and structures of power (Inglis, 1997). So many scholars have tried to intertwine the

economic liberation is empowerment but in case of women primary objective is family welfare. (Sarfraz et al., 2014)

Nowadays women are considered as nuclei of nation and builder and molder of its destiny. They are the catalyst of development and with them we prosper, but without them we are poor. There was a time when Indian women were confined to four walls of their homes with their immense strength and potential. Now they are the important part of economic development. (Madan, Gulyani, & Benson, 2014) In India, early phases of women entrepreneurship was regarded as extension of their kitchen activities mainly to 3 Ps, viz. Pickles, Powder and Pappad. He added in countries like India with such a huge population and problems of unemployment, women entrepreneurship happens to be one of the best tools for women empowerment. It is not necessary that women entrepreneurs need not to be highly educated. What is more important is they take, lead and organize a business or industry. Basargekar (2010) emphasized that stimulating entrepreneurship among women especially is seen as an effective tool to alleviate poverty, reduce gender bias and empower them. He studied the relationship between micro-entrepreneurship and economic empowerment.

Morshed (2015) has studied women entrepreneurs and their control over resources, social mobility, social activities, participation in household decision, participation in health related decision, and knowledge about women's right etc. Definitely, women entrepreneurs can make better decision in the family than housewife as entrepreneur will get more power in every sector of life.

It is a universal phenomenon that the holistic development of a place or the nation at large requires a thoughtful and through development of each sub sector of the local, regional and national economy. Equally, among numerous approaches, development and promotion of entrepreneurship has proved highly instrumental in this process. In Pfeifer and Sarlija (2010), entrepreneurship has been recalled as the ability to start a new enterprise to make more profits by way of producing or marketing goods and services to meet the needs and requirement of customers. Entrepreneurship creates job, stimulate markets by introducing innovation, and enhancing efficiency through more competition and poverty reduction by self-employment options.

The significance of entrepreneurship development has been presented as one of the powerful instruments for holistic and sustainable development. Chhitij Bashyal (2018) established a holistic framework for analyzing and designing growth promotion strategies embeded with four Es- entrepreneur, enterprise, ecosystem, and economy with focus on customized inputs to empower the prospective entrepreneurs, particularly the women. In this respect, Karki (2014) performed a systematic inquiry to confirm the significance of promoting cottage and small industries as more alternatives to enhance their livelihood and income generation through utilization of local resources, skills, and labor with investing a little capital, with directed emphasis on exploring the significance of private sector promotion.

Sivanesan (2014) focused on age, marital status, education and size of family while comparing rural and urban women entrepreneurs of India. Tende (2016) did focused study about women entrepreneurs in Taraba state of Nigeria. Researcher mainly focused on control to finance and skill knowledge of women entrepreneurs to see the differences. Women entrepreneurship constitute the most viable and veritable vehicle for self sustaining industrial development. While studying about women entrepreneurs, variable of interest are need for independence and self fulfillment, financial constraint

and Government regulations, Job creation and poverty (Deborah & Everistus, 2015). More women entrepreneurs are getting involved in economic activities of the country especially in the small scale of business and more or less they are playing a significant role to boost up our economy. IssaAhhammad & Huq, (2013) attempts to disclose the major barriers and challenges towards women entrepreneurship development, major problems faced by women entrepreneurs in bangladesh.. Besides, institutional support from different government and non-government institutions women entrepreneur needs legal and insitutional guidelines.

Statement of the Problem

Not only in developing country but also in developed country women are politically socially and economically far behind than man. In this patriarchy society women need to face number of problem while engaging in business. In developing country like Nepal women are married at an early age and their focus is centered on their family. Literacy rate of women is far below than man literacy rate. According to recent reports, the Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010-2011 (NLSS- III) has found out that Nepal has an adult literacy rate of 56.6% with a huge variation between men and women. While male literacy rate is 71.6%, it is only 44.5% for women. In recent years Government of Nepal has witnessed remarkable improvement in women's education.

In Khaniya (2010) socio economic conditions of the tharu community in Patihani VDC, Chitwan, Tharu Community is one of the major ethnic groups in the Tarai and it represents 13 percent of the total population in the region. The Tarai communities constitute 7.9 percent of Nepal's total population of which the Tharu forms one of the largest groups. The Tharu is the single largest ethnic group that represents 13 percent of the total population in the Tarai and inner Tarai districts. Nowadays there are cultural changes among the Tharus as lots of people from mountains and hilly region have migrated to low land.

This study is focused on the Tharu community of Bardiya who are conducting home stay under the name of Dalla Gaaun Homestay. Dalla village is a small Tharu village situated in the south of Bardiya district four kilometer south of Tiger Top of Bardiya national reserve. It is located at Suryapatuwa village development committee. According to National Population & Housing Census, 2011 published by Central Bureau of Statistics, the total population of Suryapatuwa VDC is 9947 (1761 households) in which people of Tharu caste are 7665 (77.06%). Similarly, ward no. 4 of Suryapatuwa VDC has 353 households (population of 2022) out of which 105 households of Dalla village are members of Shiva Community Forest Consumers' Committee (SCFCC). Among the 105 households, 22 households have been engaged in home stay activity. (National Population & Housing Census of Nepal (2011).

Significance of the Study

Researchers chose the Dalla Gaaun Home stay to see whether real empowerment comes from entrepreneurship. This study has been conducted to know what real empowerment means to women of Dalla Gaaun Home stay. Most of these home stay are run and managed by women. These home stay are the symbol of their personal, economical, social and political empowerment.

Objective of the Study

1. To understand the reason behind starting the business of women of Dalla Gaaun Home stay Bardiya.
2. To study the socio-economic condition of women entrepreneurs in Dalla Gaaun Home stay Bardiya.
3. To examine the relationship between entrepreneurship and empowerment in terms of decision making, social and political involvement.
4. To offer viable suggestions to promote women entrepreneurship and thereby empowerment of women in Dalla Gaaun Home stay Bardiya district.

Literature Review

Ojediran & Anderson (2020) studied about women's entrepreneurship and emancipation. Women emancipation through entrepreneurship is not the new concept but culture values norms and social aspects can't be ignored. Entrepreneurship offers limited form of empowerment. Regardless, women need to continually chip at the glass ceilings to slowly modify the structures for emancipation. Entrepreneurship does offer some power to challenge male hegemony and oppression, power imbalance, but the formal and informal institutions that characterize these societies adversely influence and shape what women can legitimately do and how they restrict their business. The gendered cultural allocation of household responsibilities has major influence on both the perceived legitimacy and practice of entrepreneurship. It is thus little surprise that most women's entrepreneurship is at a micro level, informal, and unlikely to grow. Entrepreneurship gives some relative independence. In some places women entrepreneurship is perceived challenge to pre-existing social order and value system.

Banik & Bai (2018) conducted a study in Agartala of India to see women empowerment through entrepreneurship. Scholars noticed that women entrepreneurs are contributing a lot in economic development in India. However, it is potentially empowering and liberating only if it provides women an opportunity to improve their well being and enhance their capabilities. Most of the unorganized women entrepreneurs are rural area and they lack basic entrepreneurial skills and traits. They are here to not only for their survival but also to satisfy their inner urge of creativity and to prove their capabilities.

Khan et al. (2016) concluded that "micro credit is effective in empowering women entrepreneurs to participate fully in social and economic life across all sectors to build stronger economies, achieve goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of their life, their families and the community." Skills development and entrepreneurial training are very important to enhance their confidence and improved their skills in establishing small scale businesses. Mazumdar & Ahmed (2015) concluded that women participation in the field of entrepreneurship is satisfactory as efforts are being made in global as well as local level to increase the quantity and quality of women entrepreneurs. This study concluded that there was an increase in self-confidence, self-reliance and independence of rural women due to the involvement in the entrepreneurial activities. Yeasmin & Yasmin (2020) realized that enterprise where women are involved are better off compared to those who are not. Despite numerous barriers, women's entrepreneur are challenging male dominated, competitive, and complex economic and business environment. Despite these, not only have the women's entrepreneurship improved their living conditions and earned more respect in the family and the society; but they have also contributed to business and export growth, supplies, employment generation, productivity, and skill development.

Conceptual framework

Entrepreneurship

According to Shane and Venkataraman (2000) the entrepreneurship is the discovery, assessment and exploitation of opportunities, new products, services or production process; new strategies and organizational forms and new markets for products and inputs that did not exist before. Alvarez and Busenitz (2001) said that entrepreneurial opportunity is an unexpected and unvalued economic opportunity that exists before but was not realized. It is the discovery of opportunities and creation of new economic activity.

The creation of business is the main objective of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs motivated to start the venture because of certain psychological and social variables. Psychological variables include need for achievement, the capacity to control, tolerance of ambiguity and a tendency to take risks. Social variables includes education, experience, networks the family etc. Environmental variables like culture, shared values in society, institutions linked to the legal framework, variables of the economic environment also played important role in entrepreneurship process.

Empowerment

Empowerment is power, power to make your own decision. Women empowerment is being able to make decision about the different aspects of life without any interference. According to Kabeer (2005) "The concept of empowerment can be explored through three closely interrelated dimensions: agency, resources, and achievements. Agency represents the processes by which choices are made and put into effect. It is hence central to the concept of empowerment. Resources are the medium through which agency is exercised; and achievements refer to the outcomes of agency. These dimensions are considered in turn, as is their interrelationship in the context of empowerment."

Shariff (2009) identified six dimensions of women empowerment. They are literacy, work participation rate, decision making power, ownership of resources, reproduction and care and political participation. This is in case of Indian women which may vary with the concept of empowerment with women from different culture and country.

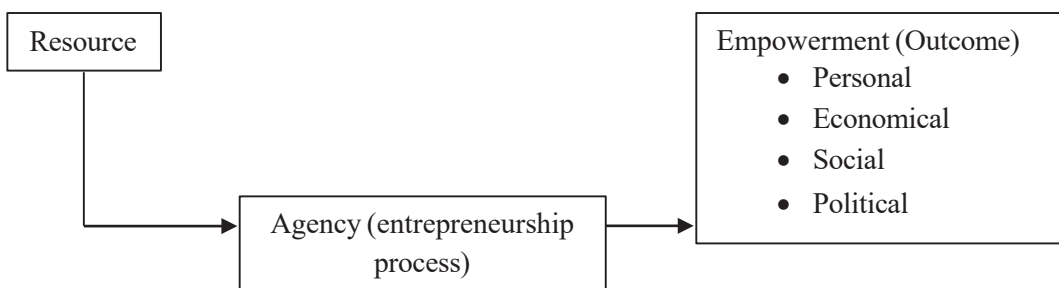


Figure 1: A framework for understanding women empowerment in Dalla Gaaun Home stay, Bardiya using the concept of Kabeer (2005).

This study was conducted in south of Bardiya district four kilometers south from Bardiya national reserve. There are 22 houses in Dalla Gaaun Homestay. The study was conducted in November (5-7) 2020 for three days. These home stays are operated by Tharu community. Tharu community is an indigenous community of Nepal. They usually live in Tarai area of Nepal. This Dalla Gaaun home stay is very unique and successful home stay of Nepal. They have set the example for all the indigenous community by preserving their unique culture and tradition. Researchers used number of tools to collect the data.

Researchers collected both primary and secondary data. For the purity of data researchers spend 3 days in Bardiya Dally Gaaun Home stay with respondents. Unstructured questionnaire were also prepared for the evidence and were filled by closely observing the respondents. This is a population study as all the women who were running business in home stay were interviewed and observed. For secondary data numbers of articles published in similar topics were referenced to conceptualize the overall idea of entrepreneurship and empowerment.

Observation

This is a qualitative study. To understand the livelihood, social structure, culture values and norms of Tharu community we decided to stay in Dalla Gaaun home stay for three days. All the scholars actively observed the activities, dialogue with family members, culture and values of respondents. How do they talk with family members? How do they run their family? How do they handle the daily issues of family members and home stay? We recorded the video too when possible.

Group Discussion

Every evening four researchers conducted the group discussion in small groups. Researchers talked about their past life, problems and challenges they faced, condition of women of Tharu community outside of home stay, differences in their life style and present scenario. Respondents were very excited to share their feelings and past and prospects of life.

Survey

Researchers prepared the unstructured questionnaire to collect the data. We handed all printed documents to respondents one by one and explained the questionnaire and discuss the importance of research and their response. We fill up the questionnaire according to their responses. We were very worried about the purity of data that's why we stayed there for three days and participated in daily activities. We build certain rapport with the respondents in three days. While returning back we request them to answer our questions.

Discussion

The survey was designed to get personal information through structured questionnaire. Unstructured questionnaire were designed to get more insights of the women of Dall Gaaun Home stay. Most of the women entrepreneurs were of 36-45 years. There were 4 entrepreneurs who were below 25 and five above 45. Majority of women respondent said that they used to make 30 -40 thousands per month before Covid-19 pandemic. This study was conducted at the end of 2020 we could see the pain of Covid-19 in their face. Now it was even difficult to make even 10 thousands per month.

It was very surprising to know that seven women running Home stay are illiterate. They are running their business very smoothly. Other ten women were literate and could read and write basically. Remaining five young women entrepreneurs have gone to college but not completed. These young girls were very aspiring and positive about coming days. Though these home stay is community based individual home stay are of sole proprietorship type. Most of the women said that main reason of running Home stay is for extra income, social engagement and keep them busy. Among them three young aspiring ladies got this business from their family. As there was not much opportunity in market, they choose these home stay for their career.

Only fifty percent of entrepreneurs have received formal training form government, INGO's and NGO's to run the business. Remaining fifty percent developed skills by observing other entrepreneurs. In other words these female entrepreneurs act only naturally and did what they were doing from long time. All respondents said that they did not get any subsidies from government or any agency. They put their own money borrowed from family friends and Shiva Community Forest Consumers' Committee (SCFCC). Almost all the respondents were satisfied as they were able to change their life and family in a good way.

Personal Level Indicator

On the basis of observation, group discussion and unstructured questionnaire researchers categorized the personal level responses in five categories: Physical mobility, education level, Health and sanitation, family relationship and carrier choice. All respondents replied that they have made significance differences in physical mobility, health and sanitation and family relationship. Scholars also observed that houses in home stay were cleaner, their kids also look more clean and healthy while comparing with other villages. Ironically, no one was able to enhance their academic career. Once they involved in home stay it was a full stop for academic enhancement. Among 22 households, 21 believe that they can not do anything more challenging than running home stay.

Economic Level Indicator

Similarly, responses about economy were categorized in four different categories: Income level, Purchasing power (business use), Purchasing power (personal use) and Savings level. As main objective of running home stay was earning extra income, it looks like main objective was fulfilled. Most of the homes were able to make 30-40 thousands per month. Now their income level is increased their purchasing power for both business and personal use was also increased. They have bank accounts and some savings too. These women entrepreneurs look more optimistic and cheering.

Social Level Indicator

Social level indicators were categorized into social participation in local institution, running social development institution like NGO, School, fighting against social violence through women's forum and creating social awareness (AIDS, Sanitation, Education etc). most of the women were socially active. They were participating in local institution like microfinance. They are strongly raising voices against human violence through women's different women's forum. However they were not able to start social development institution because of lack of education and as their primary objective of purchasing power was fulfilled. Though they participate in social awareness program too but most of them are unaware of what are they doing?

Political Level Indicators

Political level indicators were participation in local council, participation in local election, undertaking government project, conducting government programs and developing Nations economy through participating in political activities. A political aspiration is very low among Tharu women. Only two young women who have graduated from high school showed some interest in running for some office someday in future. All of them have participated in local election as voters but none of them have ever run for office. Very few have experience of undertaking government projects but all of them believe that they are contributing somehow in developing nation's economy.

Findings and Conclusion

It is very difficult to define empowerment. Its definition may vary from place to place, culture to culture, community to community. If empowerment means only economic improvement so do our respondents believe than entrepreneurship is really empowering women of Dalla Gaaun home stay. As their primary objective of running home stay was to boost their economic condition and home stay is able to fulfill that objective. Literacy rate among respondents was very low that's why they could not extend the boundary of their expectation. Whatever they have achieved they look happy and satisfied. Personal level, economic level and social level indicators show that women respondents are empowered but political level indicators shows the opposite. Hence the team of researchers concluded that entrepreneurship really empowered the women of Dalla Gaaun home stay but if they had better education the definition of empowerment would be different for them.

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