

Local Government and its Role in Women's Empowerment

Okil Sunar

sunamokil@gmail.com

Abstract

This study entitled "Local Government and its Role in Women's Empowerment" was conducted at Brindranagar 3 Surkhet. The main objectives of the study was to find out the existing condition of Women's empowerment and identify the role of local level government of Women's empowerment. The study had applied descriptive types of research design with quantitative data. This study was based on primary data. Among 1120 married of age 15-60 years Women's out of 112 Women's were taken systematic sampling method.

Majority of 39 percent of respondents were involved in service. Similarly, 30 percent of respondents were associated with business. On the other hand so the present position of participation of local government of Women's in self decision making power is very poor. Most of the Women's depend decided to their husband and other person. They had mainly faced lack of decision making power in the social, economic, political. Participation of Women's in every sector is essential to achieve national goal and in order to make society civilized. Manage the maximum quota of scholarship in secondary, higher secondary level with the Women's of donor agencies and government authorities. Make a strict rules and regulation about the Women's empowerment by the government.

Key words: Local Government Role, condition of Women's empowerment, Social-economics Status,

Introduction

Local government is basically an organized social entity with a feeling of ownness. By definition, local government means an intra-sovereign governmental unit within the sovereign state dealing mainly with local affairs, administered by local authorities and subordinate to the state government.

Local government is a generic term for the lowest tiers of public administration within a particular sovereign state. This particular usage of the word government refers specifically to a level of administration that is both geographically-localised and has limited powers. Local governments generally act only within powers specifically delegated to them by law and/or directives of a higher level of government. In federal states, local government generally comprises a third or fourth tier of government, whereas in unitary states, local government usually occupies the second or third tier of government.

Holland (2006) defined that Women's's empowerment means creating the conditions for Women's to be able to make choices, which implies that Women's may have different preferences than men, but also different abilities to make choices because of gender inequalities in bargaining power and access to resources (these constraints will be reviewed in the next chapter). Economic empowerment involves improving the ability of Women's to access resources and employment, higher productivity and earnings, and increases in the income, assets, expenditure, and consumption they control. The legal and institutional barriers in the labor market and the way unpaid domestic work and care work are shared at the household and societal levels heavily influence this domain. Political empowerment is about

participation and decision making in formal institutions, including local government, interest groups, and civil society and Women's ability to set and influence the political discourse. Social empowerment refers to Women's status in society, which depends on social norms, gender roles within the household and the community, and social capital.

Saying that the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) has for the first time in the history envisaged equal rights to Women's without discrimination the directive principles and policies of the State as enshrined in the Constitution have explicitly underscored Women's participation on the basis of proportionate inclusion which provides for special measures for education, health care and employment for Women's and the girl child. Gender equality and social inclusion policy, 2010 is being implemented to ensure gender mainstreaming and elimination of discrimination in all aspects of life. More than half of the total populations of Nepal are Women's. The contribution of the Women's in household works and agriculture is more than men. But their contribution is not accounted in the economy. Their participation on decision making, infrastructure building and any public program is very low. Women's role in socio-economic development has not been properly recognized. In our country, Women's are as the traditional procedures and manager of the domestic and subsistence sector only. Women's issues and legal process not follow up. The word 'empowerment' took its birth during 1960s. The feminist activities developed this word to address the inferior status of Women's due to traditional and superstitious values of the society. The empowerment approach was adopted by the feminist attacks on the feeling of inferiority, superstitious beliefs and traditional values of the society which hinders the development of Women's. Empowerment as a process that enhances the ability of disadvantaged individuals or groups to challenge and change in their favor existing power relationships that place them in subordinate economic, social and political position. For Nepali Women's, life is a complex web of constraints, obligations and sacrifices (UNIFPA, 2011).

One of the fundamental aspects of modern democratic governance is gender equality wherein both men and Women's should have equal rights and opportunities to participate fully in all the endeavors and especially at political process, with respect to decision-making capacity. There is a growing momentum among the government and civil society to foster and ensure Women's participation, leadership and empowerment in the political arena specifically with local governance structures, Gender Empowerment Measure, there is a list of 93 countries and they are ranked according to their Women's empowerment level in the country. Surprisingly, there is no place for India in the list of those 93 countries, which clearly shows that the level of Women's empowerment in the country is not much remarkable compared to the other countries of the world (United Nations, 2013).

Empowerment is typically conceptualized in three domains: economic, political, and social. Economic empowerment refers to the market domain, in which a person is an economic actor. Political empowerment refers to the state domain, in which a person is a civic actor. Social empowerment refers to the society domain, in which a person is a social actor (World Bank, 2014).

The empowerment and autonomy of Women's and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status is a highly important end in itself. In addition, it is essential

for the achievement of sustainable development. The full participation and partnership of both Women's and men is required in productive and reproductive life, including shared responsibilities for the care and nurturing of children and maintenance of the household. In all parts of the world, Women's are facing threats to their lives, health and well-being as a result of being overburdened with work and of their lack of power and influence. In most regions of the world, Women's receive less formal education than men, and at the same time, Women's own knowledge, abilities and coping mechanisms often go unrecognized. The power relations that impede Women's attainment of healthy and fulfilling lives operate at many levels of society, from the most personal to the highly public (UNFPA, 2016).

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More than half of the total populations of Nepal are Women's. The contribution of the Women's in household works and agriculture is more than men. But their contribution is not accounted in the economy. Their participation on decision making, infrastructure building and any public program is very low. Women's role in socio-economic development has not been properly recognized. In our country, Women's are as the traditional procedures and manager of the domestic and subsistence sector only. Women's issues and legal process not follow up. The word 'empowerment' took its birth during 1960s. The feminist activities developed this word to address the inferior status of Women's due to traditional and superstitious values of the society. The empowerment approach was adopted by the feminist attacks on the feeling of inferiority, superstitious beliefs and traditional values of the society which hinders the development of Women's. Empowerment as a process that enhances the ability of disadvantaged individuals or groups to challenge and change in their favor existing power relationships that place them in sub ordinate economic, social and political position. For Nepali Women's, life is a complex web of constraints, obligations and sacrifices (UNIFPA, 2011).

Objective

The main objective of this study is to identify the "Role of local level government and its impact on Women's empowerment" of Surkhet district.

Literature Review

The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists. This study conducted to the role of local government and its impact on Women's empowerment. The study related theoretical literature are given below: Khadka, (2014) stated that 'Gender discrimination gap in Nepal'. Most Women's are low, working house is longer, and working condition is poor. The lack of access over productive resources, mainly land property and credit none deprived Women's of gainful

self employment opportunities NHDR, 1998. The time Women's spend on paid and unpaid work is typically greater than the time men spend in the labor narrate on the whole labor force participation rate for Women's are lower than those for man because the definition of the participation work, particularly time spend on child rearing and their other household task Women's are generally responsible for collection fuel wood and looking that dominates Women's time. Lack of design making power has deprived Women's more than men of the basic elements of a decent life such as food and nutrition, education and skill development and health and family planning. This has ultimately undermined their access to gainful employment opportunities, participation in professional tubs and main stream in the development and political processes NHDR, 1998. A pioneering study on the status of Women's in Nepal revealed that 86 percent of all domestic work and 57 percent of subsistence agricultural activities were under taken by Women's.

Macmillan, (2018) stated that 'Puts emphasis on collective action and change in power dynamics of men and Women's'. Empowerment was the Politics of Alternative Development, promotes a much broader understanding of empowerment than those focusing on the entrepreneurial self-reliance of individuals. His definition of empowerment includes three different aspects of power: social, political, and psychological. Social power means having access to resources such as information, knowledge, and skills. Political power refers to participation in decisionmaking in particular, those decisions that affect a person's own future. Psychological power is defined by an individual's sense of potency and self-esteem, which may positively influence his or her access to social and political power.

Aakanksha (2018) stated that 'Gender based elected representative' local government is often, but not necessarily, related to the former; local self-government to the latter. These distinctions are important, even if they are blurred. Deconcentration broadly means that, for the sake of convenience, some functions have been devolved from a central government to administration on the spot. Power is still administered through officials appointed by and responsible to the centre, and authority and discretion are vested in the centre. On the other hand, decentralization represents local government in areas where the authority to decide has been devolved to a council of locally elected persons acting on their own discretion with officials they themselves freely appoint and discipline. The term *local self-government* has been traditionally used of local government in the United Kingdom and Germany. Thus, the Basic Law (the constitution of Germany) says, "Municipalities must be guaranteed the right to regulate all local affairs on their own responsibility, within the limits prescribed by the laws." On the other hand, the amended constitution of the French Fifth Republic says, "In the conditions provided for by statute, these shall be self-governing through elected councils and shall have power to make regulations for matters coming within their jurisdiction."

Method

The chapter deals with the methodologies to apply to carry out this study which includes design and method population. Sampling and strategy study area, data collection tools and techniques data collection procedure and data analysis and interpretation procedure which are presented below. Study design is a framework, or the set of methods and procedures used to collect and analyze data on variables specified in a particular research

problem. This study followed descriptive type of research design and its nature quantitative. The study area was capital of Karnali province in Birendranagar Municipality ward no. 3 of Surkhet district. The population of ward no. 3 is 14,003. There are 7,232 males and 6,771 females. The number of households here is 3250. There is 1 primary school and 1 secondary school in this area. The Jaleshwar Temple, Uttarganga is a historical, tourist and religious site. This site of North part linked Latikoili, The part of East linked Uttraganga. The part of South linked Latikoili. The part of West linked Arichock area (Municipality Profile, 2018). The total number of married Women's who were living Birendranagar Municipality ward No. 3 Surkhet. In the study area there were 1120 married Women's. Among them, 10 percent i.e. 112 married Women's was selected by using systematic random sampling method.

Data processing and analysis had most important task in the research. After collecting the necessary data from the respondents, collected information were edited classified and tabulated after the field work, the data were analyzed using frequency distribution and percentage.

Data and Interpretation

Socio-economic Status

Social-economic status is the properties that studies about the human social interaction. This sub section of the study is concerned with the analysis and interpretation of social economic demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age, caste, and religion educational status, types of family, and number of children, occupation and monthly income of respondents.

Age of respondents

In course of data collection about this study, the respondents were divided into different category. All of the interviewed marital Women's were from the age of between 15 to 59+ years.

Table 1

Distribution of respondent by age

Age	No. of respondents	Percent
15-25	17	15.71
25-35	24	21.42
35-45	37	33.03
45-55	20	17.85
55-59	11	9.82
Total	112	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Above table reveals that among 112 respondents, 33 percent of respondents belonged to age group 35-45 years. Likewise, 21.42 percent of respondents associated with age group 55-59 years. 17.85 percent of respondents belonged to with age group 45-55 years. Among them, 15.71 percent of respondents associated with age group 15.25 years. Likewise, 9.82 percent of respondents belonged to with age group 55.59 years. It can be concluded that most of the respondents were associated with age group 35-45 years.

Educational status

Education play significant role. Education is strong means of social change, and it is also back bone for the prosperity of human life. Education play vital role in human social economic status. The respondents were both literate and illiterate educational status obtained by respondent in the study area is shown the following table.

Table 2

Distribution of respondent by educational status

Educational status	No. of respondents	Percent
Literate	90	80.35
Illiterate	22	19.64
Total	112	100.00
Among the 'Literate' respondents		
Primary	27	30.00
Secondary	17	18.88
Higher secondary	21	23.33
Bachelor	20	22.32
Higher level	5	5.55
Total	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Above table shows that 80 percent of respondents were literate. Similarly, 20 percent of respondents were illiterate in the study area. Among literate, 30 percent of respondents were associated with primary level education. Likewise, 23 percent of respondents belonged to higher secondary level education. Similarly, 22 percent of respondents had Bachelor level education. Likewise, 19 percent of respondents had secondary level education. Rest of them five percent of respondents had higher level education.

It can be concluded that from the above interpretation substantial numbers of respondents were literate which is very high than national figure (57 percent).

Have any job of Women's

In the study participation respondents in different type of job which decide different person i.e. self, jointly, other. The respondents have any job has been shown in the table given below.

Table 3:

Distribution of the respondents by have any job

Have any job	No. of respondents	Percent
No	97	86.60
Yes	15	13.39
Total	112	100.00
Among 'Yes' respondents		
Jointly (Husband and wife)	10	66.66

Family member	3	20.00
Self	2	13.33
Total	15	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Above table shows that information is plotting according to their job, 13 percent of respondents had any job. Nearly 67 percent of respondents reported that they decided jointly (Husband and wife) to do job. Likewise, 20 percent of respondents followed depending on family member person decision for it. Among them, 13 percent of respondents belonged to decided themselves to do job.

It could be generalized that nearly 67 percent respondents were both (wife and husband) decision to do job. More than one in ten 13 percent respondents belonged to decided themselves.

Participation of Vote in election

Vote in election also important of government policy. So, information respondents was asked four categories i.e., self, husband, relative, other, respondents has been shown in the table given below.

Table 4

Distribution of the respondents by vote in election

vote in election	No. of respondents	Percent
Yes	97	86.60
No	15	13.29
Total	112	100.00
Among the 'Yes' respondents		
Self	35	36.09
Husband	27	27.83
Other (Family)	19	19.59
Relative	16	16.49
Total	97	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Above table shows out of 112 respondents 87 percent of them cast the vote in election. Similarly, 36 percent of respondents belonged to decide themselves for what party to vote. Among them, 16 percent of respondents followed by depend for decision relative what party to vote. It could be generalized that 36 percent of respondents decide them self it is highest percent for vote in election.

Knowledge of Governmental Provision for Women's in Local Body

It intended to explore the understanding and knowledge of Women's about their rights and special privileges and allocation of budget in local body as well as provision which is given by the governmental of Nepal.

Table 5
Knowledge of Governmental Provision for Women's in Local Body

Knowledge	No. of Respondents	Percent
Know	41	36.60
Don't Know	50	44.64
Not Interested	21	18.75
Total	112	100

This data has tried to explore the knowledge of Women's about governmental provision in local body about special privileges for Women's. It intended to explore the understanding and knowledge of Women's about their rights and special privileges and allocation of budget in local body as well as provision which is given by the governmental of Nepal. For example, Nepal government has made its policy to allocate 10% of total budget on favor of Women's as directed by the Village Development Committee Operation Procedure (2067) in grassroots level. The tabulated data revealed 36.60 percent did have superficial knowledge, 44.64 percent didn't have any knowledge and 18.75 percent respondent didn't have interest of that matter.

It means that only countless Women's were interested in governmental policies and provision for Women's. Maximum percentages of Women's were not aware about policies and special privileges which are make mandatory in behalf of Women's.

Respondent's Sensitization about their rights

The respondents were asked to the question about the respondents sensitization about their rights. The Respondents are given to answer respondents sensitizations about their rights are as follows:

Table 6
Respondent's Sensitization about their right

Knowledge	No. of Respondents	Percent
Good knowledge	63	56.25
Little knowledge	29	25.89
No Knowledge	20	17.85
Total	112	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Human rights are universal and inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. Everyone has political, civil, social, cultural and economic rights and is equal in importance and none can be fully enjoyed without rights. They apply to all equally and all have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. They are upheld by the rule of law and strengthened through legitimate claims for duty-bearers to be accountable to international standards.

The table clearly revealed the actual condition of Women's regarding to their rights. The knowledge about Women's rights is not satisfactory. In the table, no one respondent have good knowledge about the Women's's rights, 112 out of 25.89 respondents have a little knowledge about Women's's rights and 56.25 percent was good knowledge and out of 17.85

respondents have no any idea about their rights.

So, the level of knowledge of respondents is pathetic and poor. They are not aware about their fundamental rights which are guaranteed by constitution and national and international conventions. They were found not aware of wage discrimination, gender equality, mobility, reproductive rights etc.

Decision making position of team leader

Decision-making position is an important position of operational team leaders. Applying a systematic method to solve problems is critical to team performance and the safety of operations. Team members share the responsibility for solving problems by contributing timely and valuable information to the team leader in the community and society.

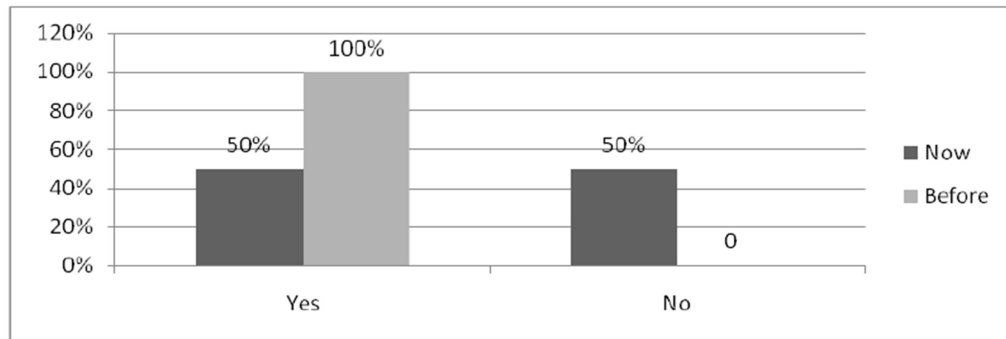


Figure 1

Decision Making Position of Team Leader

The decision making position of the respondents were analyzed, they were asked whether they are in position where they can make important decision in the community. It was found that entire Women's respondents were in position where they can involve in important decision making position in their community. This change of empowerment was brought by the intervention of the micro enterprises. Out of total 50% person was not in that position but now they claim that it became possible due to their involvement in enterprise that is what made them capable and strong.

Social Mobilization of Women's

Social mobilization is a process that raises awareness and motivates people to demand change or a particular development. It is mostly used by social movements in grassroots groups, governments and political organizations to achieve a particular goal, and in most cases, the process of social mobilization takes place in large gatherings, such as processions, demonstrations, marches and mass meetings. Social mobilization is also used by organizations to facilitate change. The respondents were asked about the status of socialization and meeting friends and relatives and family member in a meaningful way.

Table 7
Social mobilization of Women's

Responses	No. of respondents	Percent
Before	42	37.75
Now	70	62.5
Total	112	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The status was analyzed of before and now after the social mobilization of Women's. Out of total only 37.75 percent of respondents had before mobilization of Women's and 62.5 percent of respondents had now effect of social mobilization used to have meaning social mobilization before but now takes part in the social mobilization.

The article investigates the socio-economic and decision-making roles of Women's in a predominantly Hindu community, with a few Christians. It highlights that many Women's belong to joint families and experience lower middle economic and educational status, resulting in social discrimination. A notable portion of these Women's were married before 20 and lacked autonomy in decision-making, with husbands and parents often making family choices. While most Women's engaged in household duties, 87% reported using family planning methods.

The study also evaluated the impact of micro-enterprise initiatives on Women's socialization and interpersonal skills. It found that these programs significantly enhanced Women's empowerment and decision-making participation, fostering improved interpersonal skills through increased social interactions. The local government played a crucial role in facilitating Women's involvement in agriculture and providing technical training to enhance their capabilities. Overall, the findings underscore the challenges Women's face in decision-making and social engagement, while also highlighting the positive effects of micro-enterprise initiatives in promoting empowerment and improving their socio-economic status.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the article underscores the significant socio-economic challenges faced by Women's in the studied community, characterized by early marriages, limited decision-making power, and low educational and economic status. The predominance of joint family structures often exacerbates social discrimination, restricting Women's autonomy and participation in family matters. However, the introduction of micro-enterprise initiatives has emerged as a transformative force, fostering Women's empowerment and enhancing their interpersonal skills through increased social interaction and engagement. These programs not only provide Women's with opportunities to participate in economic activities but also encourage their involvement in decision-making processes, thereby challenging traditional gender roles.

The support from local government in facilitating agricultural participation and offering technical training further amplifies the positive impact of these initiatives. Overall, while the article highlights the persistent barriers to Women's empowerment, it also illustrates the potential for change through targeted interventions. By investing in micro-enterprise

programs and supporting Women's skills development, communities can pave the way for greater gender equality and improved socio-economic conditions. The findings advocate for continued efforts to empower Women's, ensuring they have a voice in both family and community decisions, ultimately contributing to a more equitable society.

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