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Interrelation between Education and Livelihoods: A Study of Tamang Community in Kathmandu

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Abstract

This study attempts to explore the relationship between education and livelihood of Tamang people of residing Gokarneshwor municipality, Kathmandu district. Thirty six head of households have been selected by simple random sampling techniques and 4 by purposive. The quantitative and qualitative both data have been collected using structured questionnaires, interview and observation tools. The descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. It was found that literacy rate of head of households was below the national literacy rate and literacy of all members of the family was above it. The access to natural capital was in diminishing trend. The livelihoods of Tamang people is still in traditional pattern. The average income of the households was found near to the national per capita income with no saving and Gini coefficient of income distribution was 0.269. There was positive relationship of education attainment with income and livelihoods of people. The sustainability of livelihoods of people has been found unsecured.

Keywords: Community, education, livelihood, sustainability, & asset.

Introduction

People choose various occupations for their living. Agriculture is fundamental source of the people in many developing countries. It is also the source of livelihoods of Tamang community in Nepal. The situation has been changed now with the involvement in other industrial and services sectors. The transformation from primary sector to another signifies the diversification of livelihoods of the people. Education is one of the important ways to transform the people's means of living. Education gives the opportunity to acquire specific skill and knowledge compatible to the labour market, whether it is in civil service or any other fields of job inside and outside the country. It also enhances quality of lives of people. Livelihood is means of living of people. It also can be said as the way of survival of people. Different scholars have different views in defining livelihoods but Robert

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Chambers is often called father of the concept of sustainable livelihoods. A livelihood in its simplest sense is a means of gaining a living. However, the definition put forth by Chambers and Conway in 1991, captures the broad notion of livelihoods. In this regards, Chamber and Conway (1991) defined it as “a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contribute net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term” (Chambers & Conway, 1991).

The definition covers the livelihood capabilities comprising the ability to gain a livelihood, including abilities to cope with stress and shocks and to explore and exploit opportunities. Assets include the livelihood capabilities comprising the ability to gain a livelihood. Assets include all the available resources as well as stores and claims along with access, which a person or a household commands and can use for livelihood. Stores of resources are tangible and access to it is intangible in nature. The term ‘activities’ includes all sorts of livelihood strategies or “range of combination of strategies and choices that people undertake in order to achieve their livelihood goals with available assets as well as existing capabilities”(Koirala, 2006).

There is change in way of living of rural people because of increase in access to education with the increase in literacy rate from 54.1 percent to 65.9 percent in the period of 2001 to 2011 (CBS, 2011). Agricultural and forest based activities were the main source of livelihood in the past. Now, the situation has also been changed after the changes in political, administrative, economic and social dimension in Nepal. The absent population of Nepal is 1,921,494 (CBS, 2011). It means the Nepalese youth are residing outside the country for better opportunity of working and studying. The remittance has become the important base of economy as it contributes 24.07 percent in GDP in the year 2020 (MoF, 2022) which was about 30 percent before some years.

Urbanization and modernization is also going side by side in Nepalese society. Traditional working culture is also being changed. There was ‘parma’ (labour exchange system) in the community. It can rarely be observed now. It is being replaced by wage labour. The land holding by household is also in diminishing trends. Some decades ago, people were enjoying in agriculture and it was main source of income and livelihood. Government forest was also important source of livelihood. Firewood, fodders and timbers were collected from it. The entry for the collection purpose has been completely halted to local people (Lama, 2017). These situations have compelled to change the livelihood strategies by local people in Nepal.

Objective

The objective of this study is to examine the interrelation between education and livelihoods of Tamang community in the focused area.

Literature Review

The concept of sustainable livelihood was put forward in the report of Advisory Panel of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987) and was made central to its report “Our Common Future”. It defined livelihoods as adequate stocks and flow of food and cash to meet basic needs. Similarly, the panel refers livelihoods security to secure ownership of, or access to resources and income earning activities.

Chambers (1988) advocated addressing the wants and needs of the very poor and poor rural people for sustainability. According to Chambers only secured and adequate livelihoods allow and encourage the poor people for the long-term view of resource use and to maintain and improve their condition. Chambers even criticized the Population, Resources, Environment and Development (PRED) paradigm and the Brundtland Commission for failing to start with the poorer section and put their priorities first. According to him, none of the 24 items of the standard agenda of the commission started with the poor – for example, the pastoralists, female headed households, the landless, those who rely on common property resources, forest-dwellers, marginal and small farmers. Chambers argues for Sustainable Livelihood Thinking (SLT) that takes sustainability from environmental thinking (ET), linking with the needs of the poor for long-term security for themselves and their children; productivity from development thinking (DT), linking it with the needs of the poor for more food and incomes; and primacy of poor people’s livelihoods from livelihood thinking (LT). Therefore, it is the sustainable livelihood with secure rights and ownership which can integrate what poor people want and need, with those concerned with population, resources, environment and rural development (Koirala, 2006).

DFID (2001) developed a sustainable livelihoods framework in order to understand and analyse the livelihoods. The framework has provided a checklist of important issues and sketches the link among each other; draws attention to the processes; and emphasizes the multiple interactions between the factors that affect livelihoods. The people-centered analysis begins with simultaneous investigation of people’s assets (human, natural, financial, social, physical capitals as well as influence and access), through the livelihood strategies to achieve the objectives (the livelihood outcomes). DFID emphasized

on feedbacks that are likely between: transforming structures and processes and the vulnerability context; and livelihood outcomes and livelihood assets.

Adhikari (2009) presented that human capital theory of Shultz (1961) includes human skill, education, knowledge, ability, experiences as human capital and are of economic value for people and organizations. Human capital includes both present and potential capability of people working in an organization. Thus, unlike other assets, the potential capability of people can be fully realized only with their cooperation.

Acharya (2017) found that the various factors related to school, household, parents and children themselves revealed by earlier research studies as cause of school dropout are simply the enabling factors, which in combine, construct a more abstract dynamics, i.e. educational ceiling. The educational ceiling refers to the minimum level of education the people think that they must attain in their life. Actually, this dynamics guides individuals in evaluating the relevance of education in their lives and to take the decision of dropout accordingly. This finding was explored from the cultural artifices of the Tamang community and their way of setting their educational ceiling, employing the inter-actionist approach.

Likewise, UNDP (2018) reported that the human development is fundamentally concerned with expanding people's choices, which has multiple dimensions and can be quite complex. The human development index (HDI) is a summary measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living. A long and healthy life is measured by life expectancy. Knowledge level is measured by mean years of education among the adult population, which is the average number of years of education received in a life-time by people aged 25 years and older; and access to learning and knowledge by expected years of schooling for children of school-entry age, which is the total number of years of schooling a child of school-entry age can expect to receive if prevailing patterns of age-specific enrolment rates stay the same throughout the child's life. Standard of living is measured by Gross National Income (GNI) per capita expressed in constant 2011 international dollars converted using purchasing power parity (PPP\$) conversion rates. The human development index of Nepal for the year 2020 was 0.602. The concept of HDI was developed by the Pakistani economist *Mahbub Ul Haq* working alongside Indian economist *Amartya Sen*.

Methods and Materials

This study was carried out in Gokarneshwar municipality, Kathmandu. The Tamang and Newar are ancient inhabitant of Gokarneshwar municipality. It is new municipality

connected with Kathmandu Metropolis but the indigenous local people have traditional ways of living. The population of Tamang in the ward no. 2 is 2025 (CBS, 2011). The universe of the study was the 65 households of Tamang people of ward no. (2) belonging to same traditional Tamang Guthi (Bhumthali Galamati Tamang Samaj) headed by a *Choho* (head of the Tamang community) of the Tamang of Gokarneshwar Municipality. Out of 65 Tamang households 36 households were selected by simple random sampling technique and 4 households were taken purposively. Both the quantitative and qualitative tools were used for data gathering. Face to face interview, structured questionnaires and observation were the tools used for data gathering. Frequency distribution, percent table, and Gini coefficient (Bhatta et al., 2069 BS) were used for data analysis. The privacy was maintained by verbal consent between researcher and respondents.

Results and Discussion

Access to Education or Human Capital Enhancement

The main focus of the study was to examine the interrelationship between education and livelihoods of Tamang community. It has attempted to give the aspects which influence the access to formal education of Tamang community. Education is taken as the power. It has capacity to cultivate and mobilize the available resources. It is also a kind of awareness. It has a strong linkage with the activities and behavior of a person too. An educated person acquires capability to develop awareness towards the national influence the way of good governance in a region. It was found that the literacy rate of the study area was 73.97 percent and the focused area constitutes two community schools (one primary and one secondary), three private schools (one primary and two secondary). Education is a social and developmental indicator which enables people to take participation in concerned affairs.

Table1: Distribution of the respondents by literacy of head of the households

Literacy	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
Literate	22	55	1	2.5	23	57.5
Illiterate	10	25	7	17.5	17	42.5
Total	32	80	8	20.0	40	100

Source: Field Study, 2018

Table 1 shows that, out of 40 respondents there were 32 male and 8 female. Among these households 57.5 percent were literate and 42.5 percent were still illiterate. Likewise, out of 8 females only one or 2.5 percent female was literate and 17.5 percent was found

illiterate. Higher rate of the parental literacy causes higher the access to education of Tamang children. The literacy of parents (57.5%) was significantly low as compared to the scenario of the national since national literacy rate was 65.5 percent with male literacy rate 75.1 percent and female literacy rate 57.4 percent as per the national census report 2011.

Table 2: Educational attainment of all members of households

Educational status	Population (a)	Percent (c)	Educational status	Population (b)	Percent (d)
Illiterate	51	24.63	Below SLC	24	11.59
Infant (below 5)	11	5.31	SLC	33	15.94
Literate only	23	11.11	10+2	22	10.62
Class (1-5)	24	11.59	Bachelor	3	1.44
Class (6-8)	14	6.76	Master & above	2	0.96
Sub Total	123	59.40	Sub Total	84	40.60
Total	a+b= 207	c+d=100.0			

Source: Field Study, 2018

Apparently as the table (2) shows the total members of the 40 households except infant were 196. The number of illiterate members was 51 and that of literate members $\frac{145}{196} \times 100\% = 73.97\%$ by considering the family members above the age of 5 years. This rate is near to the national literacy rate (75.1%). It was in increasing trends because of growing awareness to parents by their literacy and educational attainment, increasing access to schools by the Tamang students, and influence of other communities (Brahmins and Chhetris) of the society.

The literacy rate of the Tamang (73.97%) indicated the remaining 24.63 percent members were still illiterate. There were 11.11 percent members who are ‘literate’ only and who can read and write the names and digits, 18.59 percent were those who have education below basic level (1-8), 11.59 percent were ‘below SLC’, 15.94 percent were those who have passed SLC, 10.62 percent have passed 10+2 level, 1.44 percent have passed Bachelor’s level and only 0.96 percent have passed Master’s level of education. Among the 22 members of 10+2 graduates; only 4 students have studied science and technology and two of them were studying in MBBS (one student in scholarship of ministry of education and one in paying in abroad). Further, the members with education above SLC

were 28.96 percent and above Bachelors and Masters could be counted in the fingers. It shows, there was less access to higher education which has affected the access to higher level governmental jobs and other national/international institutions by Tamang people.

In this regards, Tamang (2006) presented the educational figures that even in twenty first century, the literacy rate of Tamang is 34.4 percent i.e. 65.6 percent are illiterate. 38.1 percent of school going age children does not go to school. Only 17.3 has completed the secondary level, 0.7 percent has completed higher secondary level (intermediate level) and 0.7 has completed Bachelor's and above. This is due to the poor economic condition. Educational status is directly related with economic and health status. This indicates that Tamang people are suffering inside the *vicious circle of poverty*. This is the main cause of backwardness. Unless and until this situation is not broken, the mainstreaming of Tamang is not possible. If vicious circle of poverty is broken by empowering the community, they will be capable to overcome the challenges of globalization moving parallel with the existing elite groups (Tamang, 2006). Although this was quite older figures, this was improved in the case of Tamang people of the study area.

Likewise, the share of *Janajati's* (Indigenous people) enrolment is 34.4 percent (33.9 percent in the last school year) at primary level, 38.6 percent (38.7 percent in the last school year) at lower secondary, 38.4 percent (38.6 percent in the last school year) at secondary and 29.3 percent (29.8 percent in the last school year) at higher secondary level (DoE, 2015). Likewise, Lama (2017) found that Tamang students' share of enrollment was 28.29 percent out of 2170 total enrolled students and Tamang teachers' employment in school was 8.69 percent, out of 92 teachers in the four schools of the same study area. The figure of the study area was below the *Janajati's* student of nation. That's why there was need of special program interventions by the government to enhance enrollment.

Access to Natural Capital: Land and Forest

The Tamang people in the study area were ancient inhabitants. Land is the basis for agriculture. They possessed much land in the past but now they are losing their holdings day by day due to various reasons. They sold most of the land for household purpose. And they fragmented lands for sharing to more numbers of brothers in the past. From the discussion with elders, it was found that there were many problems about losing their land holdings. Many of the elders argued that most of the Tamang kept in collateral to get loan from the money lenders and those lands could not be refunded due to misuse of loan amount and most of the lenders did not show the interest of refund. The lenders multiplied the loan amount by placing more zeros after the sum. Further, it was the ignorance among

the Tamang people. They did not think about their new generation. The ownership of land reflects the economic condition of the Tamang people.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by landholding pattern

Land size (Ropani)	No. of respondents	Percent
0-2	23	57.5
2-5	9	22.5
5-10	7	17.5
10 & Above	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Study, 2018

Table 3 shows that, 57.5 percent had land 0-2 ropani and only one respondent or 2.5 percent had the land above 10 ropanis. This indicates that the land holding was decreasing day by day which had directly affected to the production from the agriculture. The holding of 0-2 ropani category means that the respondent has only residential house and few areas of kitchen gardens only. There was insufficiency of agro product to their households and they have to seek alternate way of livelihood for their subsistence. From the field survey, it was also found that 10 percent (4HHs) had been farming in rented land.

It was observed that there was no community forest but was Shivapuri-Nagarjun National park just beneath one kilometer from the resident of Tamang people. The entry and use of forest resources was restricted to all local people. No buffer zone was demarcated till date. People were continuously receiving drinking water without any treatment from the forest of national park.

Modes of Livelihoods

Occupation is basis of livelihood. The main occupation is agriculture. The table 4 shows that the Tamang people have low access to business and government job due to lack of business culture and education. But some head of household were involved in government jobs too. Their community supplied wage labour to agriculture for other communities. The detail modes of livelihoods has been presented in the table 4.

Table 4: Distribution of head of households and active population by occupation

Occupation	No. of HHs	Percent	No. of active population	Percent
Agriculture	11	27.5	11	5.31
Animal husbandry	1	2.5	2	0.96
Wage labour	4	10	11	5.31
Government Job	8	20	19	9.17
Private job	5	12.5	13	6.26
Business	2	5	5	2.41
Mason	5	12.5	5	2.41
Foreign employment	2	5	19	9.17
Home based activities	1	2.5	17	8.21
Housewife	1	2.5	20	9.66
Students	0	0.0	50	24.15
Infants+ dependent	0	0.0	35	16.90
Total	40	100.0	207	100.00

Source: Field Study, 2018

Table 4 shows the modes of livelihoods of head of households and other active members of the family. Almost all head of households were engaged in income generating activities. The Tamang people were involved in government job, business and foreign employment. These were new areas for them. The table shows that about 49 percent active populations were engaged in income generating activities and rest 51 percent were not working category like housewives, students, infants and senior citizens. Most of the government job holders were retired army or police. Among them, only two head of households were sub-inspector of the police, rests were in junior post. They were receiving pension as social security. It was observed that, the access to jobs in police and army also was also increasing trend, although there was low motivation towards government job among the Tamang youth. By observation it was also noticed that home based income activities were concerned with the domestic liquor production. It was traditional income activities that have been practiced by the Tamang community in the study area. Drinking and selling of alcohol and domestic wine were very common. There was excessive use of alcohol in various feasts and festivals. Most of the food grains were fermented to produce alcohol. This trend has been reduced but continuing till.

The study has also shown the trend of dependency to head of the household has been reducing and other members of the family also were engaging in income generating activities to overcome from the poverty line but not in satisfactory level. To improve economic condition, wage labour was also a means of earning. Those who possessed low land, they work on farm as wage labourers in farming activities. They did not have special and technical knowledge in other field and they were compelled to be involved in labour in farm and off farm activities. There was discrimination in wages in between male and female laborers. Females were getting half wages that of male. Generally, males were getting Rs.600-800 and females were getting Rs.300-400 per working day. In the case of animal husbandry, the Tamang in the study area were keeping chicken, goats, and cows for income generation but not in advanced way of farming. They keep chicken in their house for meat in different ritual purposes. They sell goats, cows, and chicken at market and buy their essential things like salt, sugar, oil and clothes. Only 9.66 percent women (or 20 members) were doing nothing other than household work.

It was found that different occupations were the modes of livelihoods but at the scale of subsistence level. Their occupations have not improved the living standard significantly which has encouraged to get technical and vocational education for their children.

Access to Financial Capital

The economic condition of the Tamang covered by the study was not so satisfactory as compared to other community of the country. They were not able to fulfill their demands for daily life. Their total annual expenditure was greater than that of annual income. Their survival was running with deficit from generation to generation. The labour wage was insufficient to maintain their foods and clothes for the whole year in their families. The food grain production was not sufficient to them throughout the year. There were very limited irrigation facilities. Agriculture was depended upon monsoon. The method and tools of agriculture were traditional. Due to faster population growth and inheritance practice, land has been fragmented into smaller segments. This has showed that there was lack of capital formation and investment opportunity. Table 5 has displayed the annual income of the Tamang people of the study area.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by annual income

Income (in NRs.)	No. of respondents	Percent
0-60,000	8	20.0
60,000-120,000	11	27.5
120,000-180,000	18	45.0
180,000-240,000	1	2.5
240,000-300,000	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Study, 2018

The figures in table 5 show that out of 40 respondents 20 percent earned Rs. 0-60,000, and another 5 percent Rs. 240,000-300,000. The average annual income was NRs.117,000. Its range was from rupees 5,000 to 300,000. Most of them were using modern appliances in their households and large portion of income were being consumed. On the basis of respondents perception, that there was no any surplus. The GDP per capita income of Nepalese in the year 2021/22 was Rs 146,521.00 or (MoF, 2022). The average annual income of the Tamang people was quite above the per capita income. The *Gini coefficient of income distribution* was 0.269 which was small. As the Gini coefficient is small, there is less inequality in distribution of income. It shows the 26.9 percent of the inequality and low as compared to the national Gini coefficient of consumption was 0.328 (CBS, 2022).

Relation between Educational Attainment and Income

Education and training are the sources of human capital. Education helps to yield knowledge, skills and competencies of any person. Human capital can be used to generate income. Generally, higher level of educational attainment provides the opportunity of getting job of high pay scale. It also helps to start new business by capital mobilization.

Table 6: Distribution of respondent's income in relation to education

Educational attainments	No. of respondents	Income range (NRs)	Average income (NRs)
Illiterate	17	5,000-150,000	75,192.00
Literate	14	45,000-150,000	118,889.00
Below SLC/SEE	3	150,000	150,000.00
SLC/SEE	5	80,000-300,000	152,000.00

Intermediate/+2	0	0.00	0.00
Bachelor & above	1	300,000	300,000.00
Total	40	5,000-300,00	117,000.00

Source: Field Study, 2018

The figures in the table indicate that the average earning of head of households. It shows that average earning of illiterate HHs was NRs. 75,192.00, average earning of literate HHs was NRS 118889.00, HHs with below SLC/SEE had NRs. 150,000.00, HHs with SLC/SEE had NRs. 152,000.00, HHs with Bachelor and above education had NRs. 300,000.00. The average earning was NRs. 117,000.00. This figure reveals that the average income has increased with higher level of educational attainment it means the average income positively correlated with the educational attainment. The reason behind it was that higher educational attainment provided better opportunities of earnings.

Conclusion

Education is taken as the means of cultivation of opportunities. It enhances the human capabilities and increases access to opportunities. It also helps to determine the better occupation which yields higher returns and uplifts the livelihood pattern of the people. Tamang’s educational attainment is increasing in recent period. Education to the people does not mean only to increase the literacy percent only but also to enhance the better access to opportunities of increasing livelihoods by knowledge, skills and other competencies. Access to natural capital especially land holding is decreasing because of division among the more beneficiaries from the past and losing ownership due to various reasons. Average income of the Tamang people is also close to the per capita income of the country but it is not sufficient for continuation of daily lives and capital formation for other income generating opportunities. There was increase in average income with the increase in level of educational attainment. The livelihoods of Tamang community were found in unsecured condition.

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