

## **Development in Social Cultural Status of Tamang Women**

(A Brief Study of Phungling Municipality Ward No. 10, Taplejung, District)

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### **Abstract**

*There is great values of development of socio-cultural and economic status of indigenous women like Tamang, limbud for the holistic development in Nepal. The perfect socio-cultural and economic status only can determine the level of development. This paper tries to carry out the sketch of developing condition of socio-cultural status of Tamang women in Phungling Municipality Ward NO. 10. The paper is based on both primary and secondary data. Most of the data are taken from interview questionnaires. The relevancy of this paper goes to find out the developing stages of socio-cultural and economic status of Tamang women for the better livelihood of Tamang community.*

**Key Words:** *Tamang, Women, Development, Cultural, Social*

### **Introduction**

Women play an important role in the formation of the civilized society and are considered one of the two wheels of the same cart. The other is the man and just like a cart cannot move without either of the wheel, the cart like society also can't formulate without either of man or woman. They both are equally needed in the society. But women who represent more than half of the total population have been largely ignored. In every types of society males have more power, prestige, rights and privileges than females in Nepal (Shrestha, 1991).

The role of women in economic development and the sustainability of the country are most important. That is why, the women play significant role in the development of a nation.

Though in the past, women were considered as second grade citizens in most fields of the countries and this perception still prevails in many developing countries including Nepal. In recent years people have started realizing the importance of women's participation in the economic as well as socio-culture development. Most of the cultural practices based on religion are not gender familiar especially on the behalf of women. Some religious society like Buddhist women are seems in better positions rather than the Hindu, Muslim and some other religious societies (Tamang, 1998).

Gender issue is specially related on different aspects of male & female activities in society, e.g., socio-cultural, economic, political, biological, religious, psychological, and historical aspects (Acharya, 2008). Gender division and issue are also spread in every ethnic group of Nepal. Among them in Tamang community is seen gender discrimination on the sector of male and female status. Along with the impacts of modernization the socio-cultural and economic status of Tamang women is in developing phase. Similarly, the socio-cultural and economic status of Tamang women of the Phungling Municipality Ward No. 10 is also in developing way.

### **Rational of the study**

As Nepal is the place of multi-cultural diversity, dress, lifestyle, and ethnicity etc. the varieties of the cultural status influence to the development of their lifestyle and the other groups of people as well. The history of human being has carried out by passing lots of the stages from primitive to modern age. Which, is strongly supported by the development of education, transportation, new technologies, ideas of living, and controlling over the resources? These facilities and changes have also influenced the ethnic groups like Sherpa, Thirus, Limbus, Rais, Dhimals, and Tamangs.

The Phungling Municipality Ward No. 10 of Taplejung district is famous for cultural diversity. This study site has a lot of opportunity for the cultural development of the local people especially the Tamang community. The Tamang women of the community are more backwarded by the means of accessibilities of the development. However, Tamangs are changing by their day to day life due to modernization and westernization. Their language, culture, dress, lifestyle etc are influenced by the climate, economic conditions and development programs. Tamang culture like *Sonam Losar* is found quickly changed under the impact of external influences such as industrialization, new communication links, tribal welfare schemes, and community development projects. So, this study basically centers on and around the development of the Tamang women. This article will be supportive for readers to know about the developing status of Tamang women. Likewise, this article will help to understand the socio cultural and economic development among Tamang community for developing new plans and programs by policy makers.

### **Methodology**

This research has followed descriptive and exploratory research methods. Descriptive mainly refers to the records of all the observed events through the study site. Especially focus is given to explore the changes in development of socio-cultural status of Tamang women.

### **Sampling and universe**

The study area is covered by the heterogeneous culture. The universe of the study is total 70 households of Tamang community of Phungling Municipality Ward No. 10. Out of total 42 households are selected as sampling population by the purposive sampling method.

### **Types of data**

More qualitative data are used for this study than quantitative. Both primary and secondary data are used. The primary data are collected through focused group discussion, key informant interview, observation, and questionnaire. These tools and techniques are selected for the relevant and authentic data's and information.

### **Data processing, analyses, interpretation, and presentation of data**

Required informative data's collected through focused group discussion, key informant interview, observation, and questionnaire and analyzed by using simple statistical tools and techniques, which, includes tabulation and percentage. Other qualitative data's are analyzed in descriptive form.

### **Limitations of the study**

This study focuses only the Tamang women of Phungling Municipality Ward No. 10 of Taplejung district. It examines the development of socio-cultural and economic status of Tamang women of the study area. Therefore, it may not include all the aspects of gender and caste relations. But certainly gives the scenario of the socio-cultural and economic development of the other Tamang women.

### **Developing socio-cultural and economic status of Tamang women**

The development of the socio-cultural and economic status of the Tamang women was tried to find out through some parameters of socio-cultural aspects of the respondents on the following way.

### **Marital status of the respondents**

Marriage is one of the universal social institutions. In our society, marriage is essential to give legitimate to the birth, legal relationship between husband and wife according to the Hindu religion. Marital status determines the role and responsibilities of people in the society and their level of development. The following table shows the marital status of the respondents.

**Table 4.1: Distribution of respondents by marital status**

S.N.	Status	Candidates	
		Number	Percentage
1	Unmarried	6	14.29
2	Married	32	76.19
3	Widow	2	4.76
4	Divorced	2	4.76
<b>Total</b>		<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>

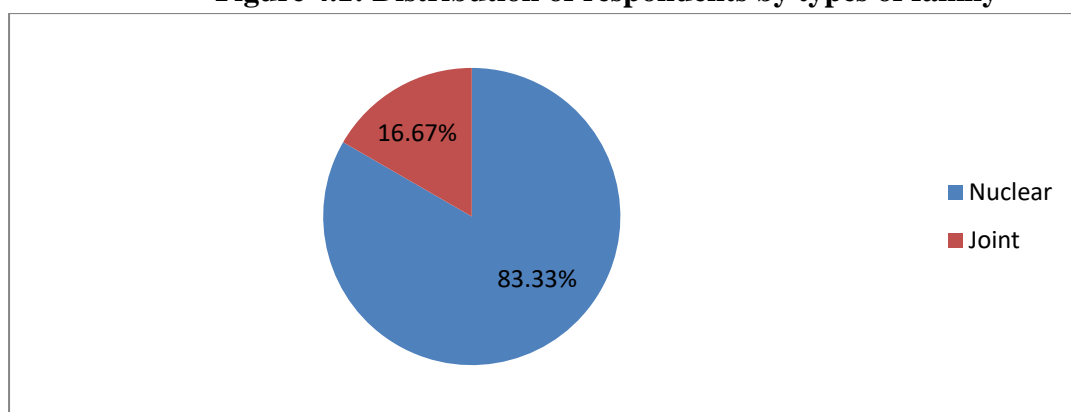
Source: Field Survey, 2021

Presented table shows that most of the women 76.19% are married. The number of unmarried respondents is just 14.29% and the widow and divorced/separated respondents are distributed equally 4.76% percent of the total.

### Types of Family

Family is the basic and universal institution of the society. Definitely the structure of the family play vital role in the adaptation of new activities of development. The actions of the development of socio-cultural and economic status of women are influences by the structure of the family. The following table shows the distribution of the respondents according to the type of family.

**Figure 4.1: Distribution of respondents by types of family**



The above figure shows that out of 42 households 83.33 percent of respondents live in nuclear family and only 16.67 percent are in Joint family. According to the above figure there are 35 households that have 5 or less than 5 members in their family and 7 households of joint family with 6 members and above.

### Education Status

Education is the basic requirement for development of the human communities. Educated person can identify social opportunities and problems. Illiterate person cannot handle the duty actively. The educational status of respondents is given below.

**Table 4.2: Educational status of respondents**

S. N.	Level	Number	percentage
1	Illiterate	3	7.15
2	Below Primary	10	23.80
3	Below Secondary	25	59.52
4	Above SLC	4	9.53
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2021

From the above table, we can conclude the majority of female representative 59.52 percent are from below secondary education level and 7.15 percent are illiterate. Among the literate majority respondents are in below secondary level where 9.52 percent respondents are from SLC and above. Although to build competent women there is necessary of higher level education.

#### **Places used by Tamang women for medical treatment**

The choice of place for medical treatment is most important for the healthy life. it determine health access of people. It is important to know the medical treatment pattern for development scenario of socio-cultural and economic status of the Tamang women. The distribution of respondents regarding health treatment is shown in the following table.

**Table 4.6: Respondents by the places used for medical treatment**

S. N.	Place for Treatment	Number	Percentage
1	Medical Store	7	16.67
2	Natural Herbs/Priest	5	11.90
3	Health Post	27	64.28
4	Anywhere	3	7.15
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The above table shows that Tamang women of the community because of the modernization and people awareness about health, 64.28 percent respondents goes to health post, secondly 16.67 percent goes to medical stores, thirdly 11.90 percent use natural herbs and lowest 7.15 percent of respondents goes to anywhere out of local areas. It shows the socio-cultural and economic status is developing gradually.

#### **Interactional relationship of Tamang women**

Tamang women have interactional relationship between other caste women like Limbu, Rai, Chhetri, Gurung Dalit and Brahman women in the community. They also have relations to youth club, NGOs, *Tamang Ghedung Association* and other programmer and persons in the local area. They have also a good relation with community forest committee and Ama Samuha in the village.

The women have a very rich close concept of their male counterpart. They say had it not been for them, they alone would never have managed the entire family. None of the women here feel being dominated by their husbands. The interactional male-female relationship is a sign of family stability for long lasting. Thus, it helps to development of socio-cultural status of the Tamang women

### **Women's role in household decision making in the society**

In our society, men's and women's work are socially and culturally differentiate. Most of the household works are related women but women generally don't have access household decision making process. However, Tamang women are free to sell *Pewa-pat*, own livestock, along with impact of modernization women are getting excess to involve in decision process as their male partner.

### **Participation in community activities of Tamang women**

Women's involvement in community activities is increasing day by day. Because of the association of women they have to start some important works like money collect, saving money. According to the existing new policies, women are encouraged to participate themselves in all community activities and meetings. Therefore, Tamang women in the study area also increasing their community activities.

### **Food habits of Tamang community**

The Tamang women make bread, *Phulaura*, *Babar* from the rice and wheat flour. They make *Dhindo* from the maize and millet flour. *Dhindo* is their more favorable food than rice. They mostly like to collect *Sisno Sag* from the jungle. *Hurrle*, *Jirma*, *Chhyang* are used as a drinks. Buffalo, fish, ox, goat, cock, and other animals also are used as meet. Milk and milk products also *Mohi* and *Dahi Ghee* also used by the Tamang communities. Common food items like, *Daal Bhat*, *Tarkari*, radish, onion, garlic, millet, honey etc. are used.

### **Dresses and ornaments of Tamang women**

Tamang women have their own dresses and ornaments. The Tamang women wear simple cotton saris and blouses. They wear golden *Dhungri*, *Marbadi*, *Tilahari* as an ornament of their body. They wear fewer ornaments. Tamang women make half-sleeved or sleeveless open fronted woolen jackets. In this study area, the Tamang women's fundamental cloths, dress and ornaments are influenced by present economic condition and changeable modern situation. Only some especial occasion they used to wear their traditional dress and ornaments. Modern type of dresses like *Kurta*, *Suruwal*, Pant, Skirt, *Choli* and Blouse, *Gaun*, *Phariya* and *Butte Choli* also use to were.

### **Festivals of Tamang women**

Tamang women celebrate their own Buddhist cultural festivals like *Lochhar*, *Buddha Jayanti*. Except these they also celebrate the *Dashain*, *Tihar*, Holi, *First Baisakh*, *Maghe Sangkranti* etc.

### **Lochhar**

*Losar* is one of the great festivals of Tamang. It is known as the New Year of the Tamang culture. According to Tibeto Burman calendar *Lo* means *New* and *Chhar* means Year. So combination of the both terms *Lochhar* means New Year according to Tibetan calendar. Thus, Tamang and Tamang women celebrate with much joy this festival. They gather in a fixed place and sing *Tamang Selo* with the music set of *Damphu*. They also take participate to dance with joyful condition.

### **Buddha Jayanti (Baisakh Purnima)**

Lord Siddhartha Gautam Buddha was born in 563 BC at Lumbini Palace from the womb of Mayadevi on Baisakh Purnima, that is called Buddha Jayanti. On this day the Tamang women and people go to the Buddha's *Stupa*, *Boudha Bihar* and *Gumba* to pray and worship to Lord Buddha. Lord Buddha had given the 8 fold path principle and 4 *Arya-truth* points by his holy spell on *Tripitak* to all people.

### **Tihar (Deepawali)**

This festival is known as the second great festival of the Hindu. But it is not only Hindu's festival, it also celebrate by other religious group. Tamang people celebrate this Deepawali festival with great joy. They also garlanded them as well as fed them with delicious dishes and brother them gift. Tamang women play *Deusi* and *Bhaili* all five days for entertainment.

### **Holi (Phagu Purnima)**

It is the festival of colour. It held in the day of Falgun Sukla Purnima of every B.S. It is especial festival for youth. Tamang community of the study area Tamang youth are equally participate in holi festival to play holi colour. The gangs of youth play the holi to present loves with their friend. In this festival Tamang people sing Tamang typical song and dance with the music set of *Damphu*.

### **First Baisakh (New Year)**

This is the day of New Year of *Bikram Sambat*. It is started at Baisakh 1 every year. So it is celebrated as a festival of New Year. Government of Nepal has given public holiday for the New Year celebration on first Baisakh. So, Tamang women also participate with their male counterpart to celebrate happy New Year with different joyful activities on the first Baisakh.

### **Sharawan Sangkranti and Maghe Sangkranti**

Shrawan Sangkranti is called first Shrawan and Maghe Sangkranti is called first Magh. Shrawan Sangkranti is celebrated by Tamang people and other Nepalese as a sign of starting time happy day. Maghe Sangkranti is celebrated by Tamang women and Nepalese people every year as a sign of cultivating period and day of rainfall and working time. In Shrawan Sangkranti they eat delicious food with different food types. But in Maghe Sangkranti the Tamangs people eat *Tarul*, meat and other delicious food.

## Rituals of Tamang women

Tamang community have different kind of cultural rituals. It is in birth rituals, marriage rituals and death rituals. Brief description of the birth rituals, marriage rituals and death rituals of the Tamang community which, are developing according to the time.

### Birth rituals

Tamangs are the indigenous and native community of the study area. Their rituals are also native and unraveled which are distantly different than others. On the arrival (birth) of a new born, within 11 days of a baby born they keep a name for the newly baby. That is called *Nuwaran*. After *Nuwaran* the baby is given new cloth by relatives and parents. In the day of *Nuwaran* of this baby, they invite their relatives and make delicious food also. The Tamang priest (*Lama*) gives the sacred name for the new baby on the occasion of name giving ceremony (*Nuwaran*).

### Marriage rituals

Except *Kartik*, *Poush* and *Chaitra*, *Baisakh* to *Phalgun* are period for marriage of Tamangs. Marriage style of Tamang community is very different than other community. *Pong/Syalgar* takes an important place in the case of marriage rituals. If *Pong* accepts by girl's parents there will acceptance of marriage, but if girl's parents don't accept the bride's *pong* marriage programme will not accept. Marriage especially, done with cross cousin as the right of the Tamang family.

### Death ritual

The death ritual is very typical in Tamang community. When anybody goes to death, the family members of the dead man have been impure. Other people in the community think it is so critical and hard time to the family and everybody help them in every aspect, economically, mentally and physically.

When a man or a woman goes to death they covered the dead by the *Kafan* (White Markin Cloth) and then they keep the dead body in a *Khatkola* (a big pot made by copper) with colourful flower. By the *Lama's* traditional activities the *Sinte* (dead soul) of the house should keep in peace position. Then *Lama* play funeral drum to escape out the evil soul from the dead person's house. The length of the *Kafan* should be used according to age of dead person. Men carry out the dead body in near hillock side as a funeral place. The elder son of the dead person will have given responsibility for *Kriya*. *Ghewa* is the death rituals of Tamang people. When, people arrive to the *Kriyaputri's* house, they started to recite the *Tripitak* and *holyspell* to get free from the evil soul in the house.

### Conclusion

This study is carried to find out the development of socio-cultural and economic status of the Tamang women in Dhap and Gadidada clusters of Phungling Municipality in Taplejung district. 42 households were selected as sample size for the survey.



Tamang communities, have a greater degree of socio-cultural value in comparing to other community of the study area. Tamang women's freedom to participate in income generation and decision making process is developing phase. The research indicates especially in Tamang community cross-cousin marriage practices are still remaining in their marriage system but somehow it is changing along with modernization of cultural norms and values. Tamang women have freedom to re-marriage and widow marriage. Family types also affect for the development of the social and cultural status of women in Tamang community. Large number of the family is living in joint family system in the community. The interactional relationship of Tamang women's with men and other communities' also good. Legal and political rights of 33 percent which is given by the constitution should be improved and increased equally as male rights in the legal and political sector in Tamang communities.

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