

## Urban Youth Perspectives/ Urban Youngsters' Perspectives on Family, Work and Society in the Future: A Study of Social Science Students in Kathmandu, Nepal

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### Background

The challenges of balancing work and family life are as diverse as the families experiencing them, and they evolve in nature over time (Waldfogel & McLanahan, 2011: 3). Some working parents are better positioned than others to meet their family's care needs because they have higher incomes, more access to informal support from family members and others, or more support from employers or public policies. But hardly any families, either middle- or high-income families, are immune from balancing work and family obligations. As a result, declining birth rates have become obvious for almost all of society, posing a common demographic challenge for countries worldwide (Jones, 2007; Karabchuk et.al 2021). An increasing number of people are not only postponing childbearing, which leads to a higher risk of not achieving the ideal (or desired) number of children for their families by the end of their reproductive lifetime, but also choosing to remain child-free (OECD, 2011). As a result, fertility rates have fallen below replacement levels, leading to growing aging populations, increased pension and healthcare budgets, and a declining labor force, all of which challenge sustainable economic growth (Karabchuk et.al. 2021).

In general, the ideal number of children closely aligns with the actual number of births over a lifetime. (Iacovou & Tavares, 2011; Morgan & Rackin, 2010; Karabchuk et.al 2021). The desired number of children is determined by the occupation and lifestyle of a family (Pyakurel 2006; Pyakurel 2009), value systems and social norms (Morgan & Bachrach, 2011), which, in turn, reflect a balance between the driving forces of modernization and the persisting influence of tradition or the cultural setting (Inglehart, 2018). Industrial and postindustrial modernization, along with technological advancements and evolving cultural values, are often cited as key factors driving a significant reduction in the ideal number of children that families desire (Goldstein et al., 2003). However, this value system is now being adopted by "premodern" or developing societies like Nepal. Once there is a shift in family occupation from subsistence farming to an urban dweller, a large number of children which was very much essential for the previous one, are no longer needed for survival (Pyakurel 2024). Many global south countries witnessed that governments of these parts of the world compete declaring those areas as urban even if there are no such features i.e. industrial aspects, changing family relations, and infrastructural development<sup>7</sup>. Then, people start migrating to those parts making a population concentration zone. The main reason behind this shift of territory by the people could be to taste fruit of 'urbanization'. If one is forced to believe that he/she is in the urban area, the tendency is such

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<sup>7</sup> An example of this haphazard way of urbanization could be seen in Nepal while the country went through the restructuring of government structure in 2017. There were some 18% population living in the urban areas before the government declared new municipalities in 2017 for the election process of the local government. Next day the urban population got increased many times and reach 64% along with the declaration of many rural set ups under the different municipalities. For more details, see Bhattarai, K., Adhikari, A. P., & Gautam, S. P. (2023). State of urbanization in Nepal: The official definition and reality. *Environmental Challenges*, 13, 100776.

that they behave as if they are urban dwellers, doing away from farming activities, start living in a housing-like environment, etc. Due to all reasons, including the constraint of space, downsizing the number of families become obvious.

Given this background, the study aims to gather young people's opinions on issues related to family, work, and society. Youths, viewed as key determinants of future society, were surveyed for this study, with respondents primarily being undergraduates in social science disciplines. -There was an attempt to bring this study as a part of a comparative survey titled 'An empirical study about children, families and work', and this survey was also partly supported by the UPAIR grant of the United Arab Emirates University (31H176-UPAR (1) 2018A<sup>8</sup>). As a similar survey was done in the UAE before, the research team decided to conduct a similar survey only by revising the questionnaires in the Nepali context. The initial UAE survey brought very important aspects from youth about how they think about their future family and society; it had encouraged researchers to conduct a similar survey in other countries so that the data would be available for a comparative study and analysis. However, Nepal survey, even if data was collected in April 2019 along with the timeframe of the Russia Survey, analysis got delayed due to reasons while other counterparts could already collect data from Germany, Japan, Russia, Ukraine, and the UAE. Data from five different contexts, each with distinct economies, political regimes, cultural and religious backgrounds, and population structures, were used for comparison<sup>9</sup>. Initial plan was to include Nepal as well but eventually data processing took time in Nepal and the report was prepared excluding the data collected in Nepal. While planning for the study, seven vignette-level and four respondent-level factors were assumed to affect the conditional ideal number of children, and questionnaires were designed accordingly.

To administer the questionnaires, a convenient sample of 322 undergraduate students was selected, comprising 156 males (48.4%) and 166 females (51.6%). As mentioned earlier, the survey questionnaire, initially administered in the UAE after several rounds of reviews and pre-tests, was slightly modified for the Nepali context and used as a tool for data collection. The survey featured 32 distinct question designs and addressed major concerns such as the ideal age for marriage, preferred number of children, ideal parenting roles, and desired job types. The data was entered to the SPSS, and tables were generated for further analysis.

The first part of the survey conducted in Nepal dealt with the demographic information of all 322 respondents. The proportion of male and female participation matched almost with the sex ratio of Nepal. Survey respondents were nearly homogeneous in age and they aged from 17 to 22 years old, and all of them were single and unmarried living with their parents. However, the size of the respondents' households varied widely; some came from large families with up to 12 members, while others were from households with only two members. The following section presents the data from this survey.

**Table 1: Are you planning to be employed after you receive your BA diploma?**

Indicators	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Yes, I will be employed Male	21.10	19.90	20.50

<sup>8</sup> The contributor expresses my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Tatiana Karabchuk, United Arab Emirates University for her support and guidance without which the survey would not have been thought of.

<sup>9</sup> The Fertility attitudes of highly educated youth: A factorial survey by Tatiana Karabchuk and others is one of the outcomes of the study.

Yes, I will be employed while studying for an MA Female	66.30	62.20	64.30
No, I will not be employed while studying for an MA	6.60	15.40	10.90
No, I am not going to be employed at all	6.00	2.60	4.30

Source: Fieldwork 2020

The survey also explored respondents' future employment plans, which showed considerable variation even within the same age group. Generally, it is understood that the youngster has a realization of earning after completing their study. The concept of completing education first and then competing in the job market is high as the study shows that there are clear returns to education in terms of better wages and quality work (International labour Office, 2015) though the high unemployment rate is witnessed in the country. However, less than 5 percent of respondents indicated that they do not plan to enter the job market even after completing their studies. The number of female students was slightly higher than that of boys who said they would join the job just after their diploma and even while studying M.A. Contrary to this, more than double the male respondents (15.40 percent against 6.60 percent female students) replied saying that they will not be employed while studying for their M.A. The willingness of female students to earn while studying suggests a gender-based financial pressure, indicating that they may feel this burden more acutely than their male counterparts. They are the ones who must demonstrate to society that their formal degrees will also contribute to the betterment of their families. Also, a gender-based interpretation may be drawn here out from the responses of those who do not want to be employed at all even after the completion of their study. The number is not big i.e., only 4.3 percent. However, the proportion of female is more than double (6.0% instead of 2.6% male students) to state so. This data sheds light on the societal belief that the male must be the breadwinner of the family and the female confines only to look after the household chores. However, such perception of society is being changed steadily and the education of females is picked out first in case household resource constraints arise (Asian Development Bank, 1999).

**Ideal age of marriage, number of children and gender preference**

Marriage is a longstanding institution in our society, still upheld with numerous rituals and traditional beliefs. Marrying younger females is another tradition that seems to be still highly considered. In parallel, older men can be seen as financially secure to bear the expenses of their families including their children (Bista D. B., 1991).

A study by Ariho & Kabagenyi (2020) quantified the contribution of age at first marriage, age at first sex, family size preferences, and contraceptive use to the change in fertility observed between 2006 and 2016. It highlights the four factors and states that age at sexual debut made a significant contribution to the family size preference. The contribution of other factors such as education attainment by women and place of residence and their relationship with changes in fertility (ibid). The following table states the opinions of the urban young generation on the ideal age for marriage.

**Table: 2: In your opinion when is ideal marriage age for a man and women?**

	The ideal marriage age for a woman			The ideal marriage age for a man		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Median	Mean	Std. Deviation	Median
Female	27.92	2.08	27	28.33	2.348	28

Respondents						
Male Respondents	30.01	2.704	30	30.03	2.884	30
Total (Male and Female)	28.12	2.22	28	30.02	2.788	30

Source: Fieldwork 2020

On average, they ticked 30 as the ideal marriage age for men with a deviation of 2.884 for males and 2.704 for females whereas the reported age for women is 28 with 2.788 for males and 2.22 for females. Some 37.9% had chosen 30 years as the ideal marriage age for a man followed by 28 by 23.9% and 35 by 17.40% of total respondents. Similarly, while 33.5% selected 30 years of age as the ideal marriage age for females, there were 25.2 % that chose 27, and 9.6% that chose 26 as the age for females to marry.

Universally, above 18 year is considered as the right age to get married (UNICEF, 2007). Both males and females agreed that the ideal age for females to marry should be younger than that for males. According to the Hindu tradition, particularly females are encouraged to marry in their early teens by their parents as early marriage is rooted in the concept of purity of the female body (Asian Development Bank, 1999). However, a larger number of female respondents in this study indicated that the ideal age for women to marry is younger than the average of 28 years. For example, 25.9% of females mentioned 27 years against 24.4% male to respondent the same year, 12.0% females stated 26 years than 7.10% of male, and 6.0% females than reported 24 years of age while only 4.5% male stated the same age as ideal age for marriage.

Regarding children in a family, they are often viewed as a source of invaluable satisfaction for parents, and nearly all cultures highlight the positive aspects of having children. People believe that parenting is the most rewarding part of life, in fact, central to a meaningful and fulfilling life (Hansen 2012). Previous research i.e. Sahoo (2014) identified that the decision of parents to have a subsequent baby is influenced by their caste, religion, education, place of residence, the economic situation of the family, occupation, number of existing children, sex of each child born and so on. These factors influence the parents' demands for subsequent births and prompt couples to change their reproductive goals during their childbearing period (Lee 1980). The following data reflects young students' perceptions of the ideal age to have their first child. **Table 3: Ideal age to give birth to a first child**

Gender	The Ideal age to give birth to a first child (%)									
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	35
Male	5.10	0.60	1.30	13.50	9.60	31.40	10.90	17.90	5.80	3.80
Female	6.00	1.80	3.60	13.30	10.80	32.50	12.00	16.30	3.60	0.00
Total	5.60	1.20	2.50	13.40	10.20	32.00	11.50	17.10	4.70	1.90

Source: Fieldwork 2020

Regarding the ideal age to give birth to a first child, the average age set from the data for males is 30.15 with a deviation of 2.109, and for females, it is 29.7 with a deviation of 1.946. A total of 84.2% of respondents referred between age 28 to 32 as an ideal age to give birth to a first child. While 32% of them picked 30, the suitable age was 32 for 17.1% 28 for 13.4%,

and 32 for 11.5% respondents as an ideal age to give birth to a first child. When comparing the responses of female and male respondents, females were more to mention 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, and 31 years as ideal ages whereas males are big in number to state the ages 32, 33 and 35. The question here is whether female respondents are still more likely to rely on traditional belief systems i.e. a girl should be marriage at an early age to maintain family affairs.

Generally, the age of marriage and an average age of first-time mothers are interlinked. In countries like the USA, the average age of first-time mothers has increased from 21 to 26. If this age is further delayed, there may be significant pressure from family and society. Pozniak (2019) rightly states that pressure comes through family gatherings or public holidays, with a barrage of seemingly innocent questions from relatives about boyfriends, wedding bells and babies. Growing up in such an environment and observing these influences around them may have impacted the young respondents as well. Also, the perceived biological constraints<sup>10</sup> might have been considered particularly by the female respondents as they were found more conscious of the ideal age to give birth to a first child. Given the circumstances, youngsters in Nepal appear to be more perceptive than those in many 'developed' countries when determining the ideal age for first-time mothers.

On the question of 'How important is religion in your life?' the majority (almost 58%) of respondents state the importance of it in their life. While 21.1% of respondents considered religion to be very important, 42.3% stated that it holds little or very little importance in their lives. Nepal being a society with traditional Hindu caste system (Pyakurel 2021, Pyakurel 2015), it is not unnatural for respondents who are pursuing only an undergraduate level of education to value the religion in their life.

When urged to give their opinion on the general economic situation of this country to develop over the next 12 months, the responses indicated that the youngsters did not believe any development plan and policies of Nepal that would bring positive change in the near future. It indicates that the young generation is dissatisfied with the current situation in the country due to the self-centered politics of party leaders. The desired family size is based on a compulsive choice of the optimal size of the family and this choice is based on a long-term evaluation of their economic aspirations and on the perceived costs and benefits of having children (Cochrane et.al., 1990). Sahoo (2014) identified that the decision of parents to have a subsequent baby is influenced by their caste, religion, education, place of residence, economic situation of the family, occupation, number of existing children, sex of each child born and so on. Below is the preferred number of sons and daughters according to the young generation respondents.

#### **Table 4: What is the ideal number of sons and daughters for you to have in your family?**

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<sup>10</sup> The narrative is such that one should conceive as soon as possible if they marry between 25 to 30 years. The reason suggested is that the level of a woman's fertility drops and the chances of her getting pregnant drop by a fourth within a year. For the sperm quality of the man, it majorly depends on his lifestyle. If he is regular drinker, smokes and has any health issues, his sperm quality can bear the brunt of time. It is said that between 20 to 25 is an ideal time frame to conceive as the quality of the mother's eggs is very good in these years, and also the man's sperms are very freshly matured and are perfect for conceiving. For details of such narratives, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/photo-stories/planning-to-have-a-baby-this-is-how-long-you-should-wait-after-marriage/photostory/62381078.cms?picid=62381092>

Only one daughter	Only two daughters	One son and one daughter	One son and two daughters	Two sons and two daughters	Total
5.00%	5.00%	78.90%	5.30%	5.90%	100.00%

Source: Fieldwork 2020

The respondents were asked to choose the ideal number of sons and daughters for them to have in their family: 5 percent of them chose either one daughter or two daughters, while the majority preferred one son and one daughter (78.9 percent), and the remaining respondents chose two sons and two daughters. No single student chooses to have only one son. However, 5% of them have chosen only one daughter. It indicates that the youths try to go beyond the ‘very strong patriarchal social character of Nepali society’. Though the reality is different from this opinion. There were no cases of having only one daughter in this study, and the number of respondents with only one son was also few. According to the data, female births are decreasing each year with potential implications on the sex ratio balance concerning gender discrimination and human rights violations (UNFPA, 2017). Around 90 percent of them choose to have no more than two children contributing to a declining population growth rate (Bista , et al., 2014).

As stated earlier, people believe that parenting is central to a meaningful and fulfilling life (Hansen 2012). Though it is difficult to measure the parental sex preference, as the attitudes may not be easily expressed yet, it is manifested in the advantages and disadvantages of having sons or daughters. Sometimes children are valued for their contribution to food production and other household-related activities. Along with the culture, traditions and other socially rooted values available in the locality; the place of residence contributes not only to changing fertility behavior (Ariho & Kabagenyi 2020:7) but also to how they perceive the meaning of life. Here are data of the surveyed youths on various aspects including having a family, job, income, and house in one’s life

**Table 5: Importance of family, job, income and house in one’s life**

Indicators	Not so important in %			Rather important in %			Very important in %		
	Total	Female	male	Total	female	Male	Total	female	male
To have a family: How much is it important for you in your life?	20.80	20.50	21.20	26.10	24.70	27.60	53.10	54.80	51.30
To have a job: How much is it important for you in your life?	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.30	5.40	5.10	94.70	94.60	94.90
To have good career opportunities: How much is it important for you in your life?	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.30	0.60	0.00	99.70	99.40	100.00
To use your knowledge and	10.90	12.00	9.60	37.30	39.20	35.30	51.90	48.80	55.10

skills acquired from your educational degree: How much is it important for you in your life?									
To have children: How much is it important for you in your life?	42.50	43.40	41.70	41.90	41.60	42.30	15.50	15.10	16.00
To be a good parent: How much is it important for you in your life?	5.30	5.40	5.10	15.50	16.30	14.70	79.20	78.30	80.10
To have enough income to meet all your needs: How much is it important for you in your life?	5.30	5.40	5.10	37.00	36.70	37.20	57.80	57.80	57.70
To have your house/apartment: How much is it important for you in your life?	8.40	10.20	6.40	37.90	36.10	39.70	53.70	53.60	53.80
To travel to different countries: How much is it important for you in your life?	5.30	5.40	5.10	47.20	45.80	48.70	47.50	48.80	46.20

Source: Fieldwork 2020

The above table states that 53.1 percent of respondent thought their family is very important in their life followed by 26.1 percent who said it is rather important. However, the reply of 20.8 percent of them who said it is not so important even if social values and norms are all connected to the families in a traditional society like Nepal offers a new area for social science researchers to study further. Society is shifting from the joint family model to the nuclear family concept and is now moving towards greater seclusion, which is concerning given that humans are inherently social beings. In the present context as well the number of family members are decreasing in every decade (Bista , et al., 2014). Generally, a growing up daughter is taught all the values of family and society, what should be done or what must not be done even by mistake, etc. And males are never bonded in these limitations with a faith that they will learn as the time comes. That seems to be a major reason for females to value family more than that of males with 54.8 percent as patriarchy imposes these values in females much more.

For 94.7 percent of respondents, having a job was considered very important in their lives, while the remaining participants believed it was merely important. To meet their own needs as well as those of their family and society, a job is the primary source of income. The percentage of males who consider having a job to be either 'rather important' or 'very important' is higher than that of females, and some females still do not view it as necessary. Here as well, the patriarchal mindset of a society that suggests that a male member be the breadwinner of the family (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000). Career prospects are closely tied to job opportunities, with 99.7 percent of respondents highlighting the importance of good career opportunities in their lives.

There is no doubt that they are investing their time in their studies to pursue their career. But only 51.9 percent of them verified it's very important to use their knowledge and skills acquired from their educational degree while 37.3 percent of them said it is rather important, and it was 'not so important' for the rest. If those who are investing four crucial years in a particular subject claim that it is not important to apply the knowledge and skills acquired from their education, one might question whether it makes sense to spend time and resources on studying. Or shall we question the educational system and its link with skill and knowledge? According to a CBS monograph (CBS 2014) a typical graduate of the Nepal education system is often educated but not skilled enough to compete in the job market. Shifting from career to personal life, specifically the importance of children, 42.5 percent of youngsters considered children to be "not so important" in their lives, 41.9 percent said they are 'rather important,' and the remaining 15.5 percent deemed them 'very important.' Here too, female respondents are less in number (15.10%) than males (16.0%) to state 'children as very important' in their life. This indicates that society, particularly the perspectives of female members, is evolving along with its values, as are the people within it. Although females are still often responsible for household chores, youngsters are focused on developing their careers, and having a child adds to their responsibilities. Some may argue saying it as the value of having and continuing the family bloodline is being decreased due to the influence of other cultures, but the response of young females seem to have come after their realization to sacrifice and compromise with their career (Asian Development Bank, 1999).

Although 42.5% of respondents did not see the significance of having their own child, 79.2% placed high value on being a good parent, and 57.8% indicated that having sufficient income to meet all their needs is very important. Additionally, 53.7% of respondents considered having their own house or apartment to be very important, while 37.9% said it is rather important, and 8.4% said it is not so important. Interestingly, males valued having their own apartment or house more than females did. 10.2% of women respondents against 6.4% males state that they do not give importance of having their own house.

**Table 6: Gender role-related statements and response**

Indicator	Strongly agree (%)			Agree (%)			Disagree (%)		
	Total	female	Male	Total	female	male	Total	Female	male
A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children	37.30	36.10	38.50	47.20	48.80	45.50	15.50	15.10	16.00
A preschool child is likely to suffer if	10.60	10.80	10.30	26.70	26.50	26.90	10.60	10.20	10.90

his or her mother works									
A job is alright but what most women want is a home and children	16.10	16.90	15.40	37.00	37.30	36.50	46.90	45.80	48.10
Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person	41.60	41.60	41.70	53.10	53.00	53.20	5.30	5.40	5.10
In general, fathers are as well suited to look after their children as mothers	52.80	53.00	52.60	41.90	41.60	42.30	5.30	5.40	5.10
Men should take as much responsibility as women for the home and children	83.90	83.10	84.60	16.10	16.90	15.40	0.00	0.00	0.00

Source: Fieldwork 2020

On the question of whether a working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with their children, 15.5% of them disagreed while 84.5% of them either strongly agreed or simply agreed. The society idealizes mother as a bundle of selfless care and affection for her children. It is usually believed that the employment of a mother has a certain effect both positive and negative on the overall growth of children and it depends on how she is paying attention to her children (Singh, 2019). Responses regarding whether a preschool child is likely to suffer if their mother works need to be analyzed, as genuine love for children, which builds true relationships, has been proven through experiments and research. (ibid).

On the issue “a job is alright but what most women really want is a home and children” female respondents are slightly higher to ‘agree’ (16.9% vs. 15.4% male), and ‘disagree’(37.3% vs. 36.5% male). However, the proportion of males to state ‘strongly disagree is higher (48.1%) than 45.8% females. It may remind us once again about the fact that males as females are brought up with different socialization i.e. and value of family and children be given importance by females and males are brought up with more focus on earning (Bista, 1991).

However, 94.7% of youngsters agreeing that ‘having a job is the best way for a woman to be independent’ and nearly the same proportion stating that ‘a father is well-suited to look after children’ are other indicators that should be analyzed in the new context. The sense of empowering women in the family and mutual responsibility to take care of children was acknowledged here by youngsters. It may led Nepali society to realize that both father and mother have a specific role which depends on their personalities and is equally important to fulfill their role for the adequate physical, psychological, and emotional development of a child (Gezova, 2015) .

**Table 7: Do the respondents agree or disagree with the statements given in the table?**

Gender	Overall	Male	Female
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	Mean	SD	Median	Mean	SD	Median	Mean	SD	Median
When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women	3.12	3.5	2	3.04	3.50	2	3.2	3.52	2
Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay	4.3	3.55	4	4.2	3.48	4	4.39	3.61	4
It is better for a family if husband earns more than wife	2.99	2.84	2	2.9	2.79	2	3.08	2.89	2.5
When deciding about the marriage partner the most important is to follow the advice of the parents	5.59	2.62	5	5.5	2.61	5	5.68	2.64	5
Both husband and wife should equally do the work in the household (cooking, cleaning, shopping, repairing etc.)	8.09	3.16	10	8.19	3.05	10	7.99	3.27	10

Source: Fieldwork 2020

In this table, both males and females have expressed the same belief regarding the statement: ‘When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women.’ They showed their disagreement with the mean of 3.12. However, females tend to slightly disagree more than males. Along with this, the expression was almost neutral with 4.3 mean values on the topic “being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay”. Traditional roles of women are very limited (Hosein & Yadav, 2017). Women performed domestic chores as unpaid labor and not addressed by any nation to reflect in any economic statistics (Asian Development Bank, 1999).

On the issue ‘it is better for a family if the husband earns more than the wife’, they came up with a strong disagreement with the mean of 2.99. Again, females were slightly more likely to agree than males, with mean scores of 3.08 and 2.9, and median values of 2.5 and 2, respectively. Regarding the decision to choose a marriage partner, they expressed that it is most important to follow the advice of their parents with a mean of 5.59. Responding to the last concern designed in the questionnaire, they agreed with the mean of 8.09 to express that ‘both husband and wife should equally do the work on household (cooking, cleaning, shopping, repairing, etc.)’. More important is that there are slightly more male youths to agree on the statement with a mean of 8.19 than females with a mean of 7.99. When respondents were asked about the time (hours per week) their father and mother spend on housework activities, the responses indicated that fathers spend between 0 and 72 hours a week, while mothers spend between 5 and 90 hours a week. A large portion of the respondents (43.78%) stated that their fathers could spend no time on housework activities

whereas the same respondents replied that their mothers spend at least five to seven hours a week for the same. The difference between minimum and maximum hours spends by their fathers and mothers, respectively, clearly shows that the society they are living in and brought up in is still a patriarchal society where looking after household chores belongs to the mother or female despite of their social status. The data shows that mothers in the upper-middle class spend the most hours on household activities, suggesting that they place a high value on the opportunity cost of such chores. In contrast, mothers at both the lowest and highest social strata tend to prefer other work over housework, although their interests may differ between these social extremes.

## **Conclusion**

Nepal, being declared as a secular country recently along with the Interim Constitution 2007, is rooted in Hindu caste tradition in a strong patriarchal belief system. The patriarchy has defined the roles, responsibilities and duties of males and females in which males are portrayed as the leaders of the family and females have to be their subordinates. The strong bias in favor of males is seen from the birth of a child till death and even after that for 'Moksha'. Even though the constitution of Nepal 1990 guaranteed fundamental rights to all citizens without any discrimination based on sex, the society still has its belief system regarding gender which is being poured into the mind in such a way that even the educated fail to detect the way of being discriminated. It is present everywhere, from urban to rural areas, educated to uneducated, high-class to low-class, and rich to poor.

In today's world, a daughter is taught to be an all-rounder and has to manage the home and her job which is yet to be applied to a son. This particular study has highlighted that at least the educated Nepalese young generation is valuing the core of humanity by accepting the flaws of the traditions and moving towards rational decisions. Child marriage used to be one of the major problems of the country is now in decreasing rate along with the decrease in poverty rate and increase in the human development index. The respondents believed in late marriage as no single participant chose below the legal age to get married. In the case of having children as well, they preferred to have a daughter or two daughters only and no one chose to have only one son which also shows that they are debunking the son-preference culture. Even the importance of religion was not highly valued. Having said that, some core values of patriarchy still prevail among them. Though they believed in themselves, both male and female answers were inclined to the stereotypes as defined by patriarchy in the case of earning, household chores, and looking after the children and family. In this study, female respondents expressed opinions that challenge societal perceptions, particularly regarding the importance of having a house and the preference for having sons. For example, nationwide survey data reveal that 27.4% of respondents believe women should not have control over their own incomes, movements, and decisions, while 6.1% think women should not have the right to decide the number of children they should have. There are still 26.7% of respondents agree (strongly agree and somewhat agree) with the stereotype that a man has to have masculine attributes, and 7.5% (2.10% strongly agree and 5.40% somewhat agree) people to agree with the idea of punishing the daughter in law if she disobeys them (Giri, Pyakurel & Pandey 2020). Compared to the findings of the national survey, there is a change in the young generation's thinking in a traditional Nepali society to mitigate gender-biased treatments and perceptions. All these factors can be considered indicators of a society with an increasing number of educated women in both family and community.

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