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Decision Making Process of Tharu Women in Their Households, Bhimdatta Municipality, Kanchanpur

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Abstract

This sociological study critically examines the decision-making process of Tharu women in the households of Bhimdatta Municipality, Kanchanpur, Far Western Nepal, with a keen focus on understanding the intricate interplay of sociocultural factors that shape and govern these dynamics, as well as Tharu women's educational status and decision-making positions in their homes. Research used qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, as well as descriptive and exploratory research, including in-depth interviews and non-participant observations, to investigate the nuanced dimensions of decision-making roles assumed by Tharu women in their familial environments. We included 250 Tharu households. Data from 50 households were gathered to determine a 95% confidence level, 20% population percentage, and 10% margin of error. The study found that Tharu women face significant educational challenges, including limited school access, financial constraints, traditional gender roles, and early marriages, all of which have an impact on their academic advancement and personal development. As a result, the position of decision-making in the Tharu community is far lower than that of men. In the sociological framework, the research study adds to our understanding of gender roles and power dynamics in indigenous societies. This study has important implications for sociological theories about intersectionality, cultural resilience, and adaptation to changing societal norms. Furthermore, the study's findings have implications for the establishment of more inclusive and culturally responsive policies targeted at promoting gender equity and empowerment in Tharu households and other similar sociocultural settings.

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Key words: Tharu women, education, decision-making, status, empowerment and community.

Introduction

Tharus are Nepal's indigenous people who live in the Terai. They are most common in the Mahakali, Seti, Bheri, Lumbani, Narayani, Koshi, and Janakpur zones, as well as Terai's western, midwestern, and far western sections. They have expanded throughout the northern parts of Uttar Pradesh in India and Nepal's Terai. They frequently live near heavily forested areas. They have distinct dialect conventions, behavioral patterns, lifestyles, and socioeconomic cultures. Their dress style is distinct from those of other ethnic groups in Nepal. The great bulk of Tharus are extremely diligent tenant cultivators. They are always engaged in agriculture. Most of them have been cruelly abused by unscrupulous zamindars and affluent landlords.

Their agricultural professions separate them from the outside world within their own settlements. In Tharus society, women play an important role in decision making. Although senior male members of a household have the final word on family, property, and major household expenses, they do not dare to push their will on the other members. Rather, all adult members of the household; however, in certain cases, the senior males of a home, who are expected to offer the final choice, just ratify the selection of their females (Chaudhary, 2021).

The majority of people in this study region work in agriculture and animal husbandry, and homestays have recently gained popularity. Women play a major part in agriculture, housework, labor employment, and other fields. Women's labor force participation in agriculture is the foundation of the Nepalese economy. In addition to agriculture, they are required to perform a number of other domestic tasks that are not financially compensated. To promote women's participation in Nepal's development, it's crucial to do a detailed study of their situation. However, the majorities of women have no formal education and are illiterate. Education has a huge impact on the socioeconomic position of any nation (Adhikari, 2006).

Males hold a strong position over women. Their decision-making is deemed unimportant. They still haven't met their basic necessities. Because of these conditions, the social state of the study region is dismal. The overall goal of this research is to determine the social status of women in the Tharu community. Strategically, educational, decision making process of tharu women are the burning issues for this study (Thakuri, 2010).

Review of Literature

Tharu are most likely Terai's first and oldest residents. Tharus live near the dense forest zone, and their culture, living standards, and customs differ from western Nepal to eastern Nepal. However, different ethnic groups are culturally and ethnically unique. Tharu are influenced by other groups outside their own, Tharu are traditional peasant farmers who are exploited by 'Zimindars' (landowners) and revenue officials. Tharu are said to be divided into two major types: Pradhan and Apradhan. Tharu marriages are polygamous and patriarchal. Tharu is a broad name for people who follow their own tribal religion, which includes worshipping spirits and some Hindu gods. Those who still follow the original Tharu religion have their own guruva (Prics). Any ritual or religious action inside the family is always performed in the name of the family's senior member. Some Tharu cremate their deceased, while others bury them. Tharu society generally used a joint family system (Bista, 1967).

According to Gurung (1999), Women in Thaur communities have less decision-making power and limited access to resources and land. They are less inclined to conduct business on their families' behalf. Women in the Tharu community make the majority of domestic decisions. Women are unable to play significant roles in this caste group due to the prevalence of polyandry. Women don't even decide what to cook for dinner.

Hender et al. (2000) concentrated on the horrible situation of Tharu women. Tharu society is predominantly male. Where property is handled by men and women are confined to domestic activities, decimation was identified in the study region; the ratio of Tharu girls' students to Tharu boys' students was rather high at the elementary level but rapidly tapered off at the higher levels. Female Tharu students tended to withdraw more frequently than male pupils. Early marriages, linguistic issues, the employment of children in fieldwork, and parental ignorance are all cited as factors for disengagement. Aside from that, bad economic situations have been highlighted as the key factors of Tharu women's low educational attainment.

Due to Nepal's multiethnic and cultural variety, Tharu communities have a worse socioeconomic status than other communities. Women are likewise marginalized in Nepalese society. Even worse is the situation for the ladies who live in that neighborhood and use this facility. In this community, having a woman lead the household is highly uncommon. Men are the most common home heads since they make all of the decisions. In a similar vein, Nepalese women face domestic obligations, unemployment, poverty, and illiteracy. Economic development should address the pressing issues of women's empowerment and national integration. In addition to improving household situations, it can help with decision-making, which is sorely deficient throughout South Asia, particularly in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Nepal. The study looks at how women

compare to men in terms of socioeconomic status, income distribution, and household decision-making power. Women in Tharus make a limited and typical contribution to the economy. As a result of women's situation, backwardness features have had an impact on family and decision-making. Their desires include simple access to health care facilities, education, social involvement, improved income, and a boost in self-confidence when making decisions, and the adoption of policies relevant to family human rights (Khanal, 2021).

The Tharus, an ancient tribe that dwells in Terai, is recognized as one of the primal clans. Their population accounts for 5.86% of the total country and 48.03% of the study VDC. Overall, the Tharus are clear and honest. Their communities are typically situated near forests and rivers. They remain isolated for a long time. This kept them out of the country's conventional educational system. They are indigenous farmers, and livestock is an important part of their livelihood. They are economically disadvantaged and must labor hard to live. Aside from agricultural items and wage labor, their main sources of income are cattle and handicrafts

Tharu women have long been barred from participating in family and community decision-making because too deeply ingrained gender norms. Still, there are signs of improvement. Women's organizations, government programs, and non-governmental organizations are all working to provide Tharu women a voice and the opportunity to advance as leaders. By questioning traditional thinking and supporting increasing involvement and empowerment, these initiatives elevate the stature of Tharu women in decision-making situations (Chaudhary, 2020).

Tharus practice their own tribal religion, which is based on the worship of numerous spirits and assimilated Hindu deities. The Tharu people of eastern Terai maintain tight ties with high-caste Hindus by employing Brahman priests for religious activities, particularly during family pujas such as nuptials. The Tharu society has a mixed family structure in which the father has entire control and, upon his death, the younger brother or oldest son (in the absence of a sibling) takes on the position of heir. This regulation applies to family problem-solving, regardless of the intelligence of a younger family member. Women also follow an ordered hierarchy, with the mother coming first, followed by the wife of the oldest son, and so on. The Tharu community, like many others in Nepal, is undergoing substantial development, with educated youth adopting modern schools, changing food habits, and changing religious views.

Tharus religion is based on a complex mix of animistic teachings and rites, with influences from Hindu epics like as the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Despite their shamanistic beliefs, many Tharus traditions, such as dances, are fading. The process of modernity and economic need is forcing 14-year-olds to integrate into Nepali society.

This transformation is mirrored in the Tharus' migration from traditional village life, where they earned a living, to bigger urban centers (Sharma, 1995).

Comparatively speaking to other Hindu women, Tharu women enjoy a greater standing. In their community, they are free. Their cultural customs, economic situation, and other activities all contribute to their socioeconomic standing. The level of participation of Tharu women in several domains such as politics and education remains inadequate at this point (Adhikari, 2006).

Tharu women in Bhimdatta Municipality ward no. 1, particularly Rajipur, suffer a number of educational challenges, including limited school access, financial constraints, traditional gender roles, and child marriage. These problems may impair their academic progress and limit their opportunities for self-improvement and empowerment. The study does, however, highlight good initiatives that have begun to address these inequalities and improve Tharu girls' access to education, including as scholarships, gender-sensitive education programs, and upgraded infrastructure (Bam, 2013).

The purpose of this study is to examine married Tharu women's socioeconomic status and decision-making role in domestic tasks. The primary data is acquired from the research region via direct interviews with married Tharu women using a questionnaire. In this study, the respondents (married Tharu women) ranged in age from 18 to 60 years. Only a few of the respondents were literate. The bulk of Tharu women don't make their own decisions. Their history and culture urge people to marry young. During the investigation, it was observed that women in the Tharu society make less decisions, whether in political, social, or economic areas. The majority of respondents do not take part in political or social efforts due to a lack of education. The majority of Tharu women are not acknowledged as the heads of their households. Their husband and in-laws were the family's leaders. The respondents' primary source of income is a bank account in which they can save money, but 61 percent have the option to use their own account. Only a few Tharu women were taught about women's empowerment, and in the twenty-first century, they married Tharu. When women become unwell, they continue to seek treatment from the Gurwa (Priest) and other sources. According to the study's conclusions, the key causes of women's deprivation in society include a lack of knowledge and awareness, as well as traditional and cultural evils. This is due to our patriarchal society and the lack of understanding (Gurung, 2022).

Although Nepalese Tharu women actively participate in home and field chores, they are regarded as submissive to men. Most ethnic groups in Nepal consider women to be inferior to men. Customs and traditions involving sexual division of labor limit women's standing to household activities. Household activities do not qualify as economic activity. This norm affects both the distribution of labor and food consumption. Food

consumption is influenced not just by worker productivity, but also by social and cultural variables. Because of these causes, Tharu women have dietary deficiencies. Tharu women are limited to housework and subsistence activities. These women's main jobs are housework and farming. As previously stated, domestic activities are not considered as an economic activity (Dawadi 2005).

This study on changing Status of Tharu Women: A Case Study of Chuwa VDC in Kailali District, Nepal was conducted in Chuwa VDC Ward No. 7. Most Nepalese women are compelled to live in poverty. Traditional societal customs and ideals are some of the barriers to women's advancement. Given this situation, I performed this study to look at the changing position of Tharu women in their socioeconomic contexts. The overarching purpose of this research was to investigate and present the changing position of Tharu women. The figures were acquired in January 2017. Conduct interviews with female informants and other individuals needed for this study. The study was carried out at Chuwa VDC in the Kailali district. Chuwa VDC has a total of 2091 families, including 254 households in Ward 7. Only 47 families were selected for the study. The study includes 117 females from 47 families. Women's literacy is improving; 24.74% of primary school students, 34.54% of secondary school students, and 7.27% of all graduates are female, despite the fact that women are underrepresented in decision-making and income-generating activities. Women used to work as manual laborers for pay, but they do not earn as much as men. They find it difficult to meet their daily needs. They say their primary concern is food and clothes, followed by investments in rites and ceremonies, health, and education. Female awareness is gradually rising, but this is insufficient. Females have also participated in decision-making processes. Female school enrollment will increase in a way similar to that of boys. In this way, ladies' traditionally low social status has been changed. They are currently taking measures toward independence. Nonetheless, educational programs, awareness campaigns, and revenue-generating activities are essential for them. Specifically, their capacity should be increased through capacity building exercises (Thakulla, 2017).

This study underlines the importance of recognizing and addressing the unique challenges that marginalized people, such as Tharu, confront. To empower these women and increase their participation in educational and decision-making processes, it emphasizes the significance of targeted interventions, education, and awareness-raising. With these efforts gaining pace, there is hope for a more egalitarian and inclusive society in which Tharu women's ideas and talents are recognized and valued. Finally, this advancement benefits Tharu women individually as well as the overall growth and prosperity of the research region and the country as a whole (Gahatraj, 2011).

Methodology

The study used qualitative and quantitative research approaches, as well as descriptive and exploratory research, such as in-depth interviews and non-participant observations, to analyze the multifaceted elements of Tharu women's decision-making positions in their familial situations. The research is limited to the Bhimdatta municipality, namely Ward No. 1, Rajipur, which is located in Kanchanpur District. This study takes a descriptive approach to present a complete picture of the situation (Sharma et al, 2021).

The technique of sampling for this study concentrated on Rajipur's Tharu households. All Tharu women living in Rajipur have been considered. The household survey revealed that the research region has a total of 250 Tharu houses. A sample of 50 households was drawn from the population using a 10% margin of error, a 20% population percentage, and a 95% confidence level. This thorough screening procedure ensures that our findings appropriately represent the socioeconomic standing of the greater Tharu people in this local area (Field survey, 2023).

Results and Discussion

Educational Status of Tharu Women

Education is essential for an individual's growth and development. It is an important instrument for assessing a community's social position. Furthermore, education has the potential to increase women's social status, which is why it is so important. In general, women's social status can be determined by their level of education.

The educational status of the sampled households in the study region is provided below:

Table 1

Educational Status of the Household Couple

Educational Status	No. of Respondents				Total	
	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Number	Percent
Illiterate	8	17.85	22	43.33	30	31.03
Primary	15	32.14	17	33.33	32	32.76
Secondary	13	28.58	8	16.67	21	22.41
Intermediate	7	14.29	3	6.67	10	10.35
Bachelor and above	4	7.14	-	-	4	3.45
Total	47	100	50	100	97	100

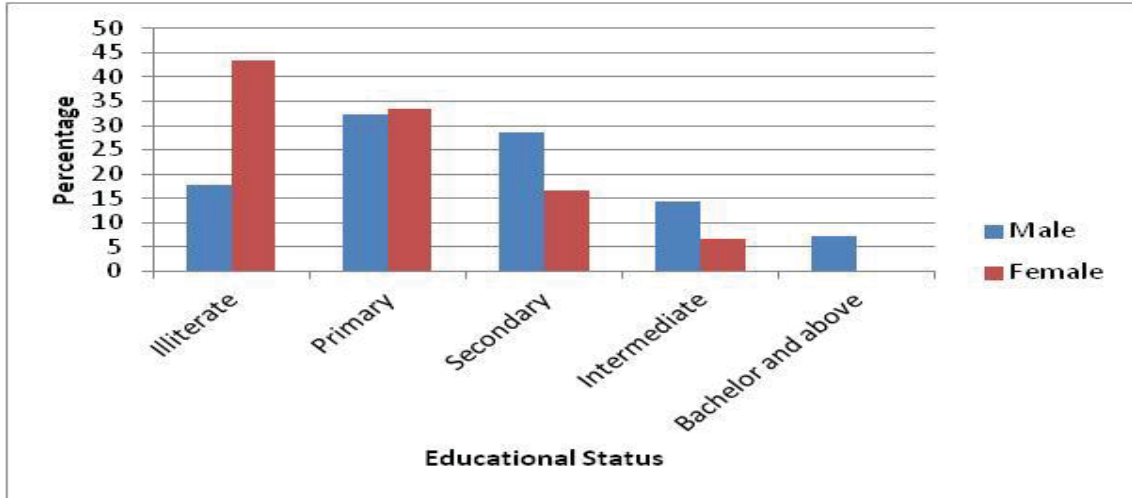
Source: Field survey, 2023

secondary, intermediate and bachelor and above.

Figure 1

Educational Status

According to the above table and figure 1, 17.85% of 47 male populations are



illiterate; 32.14 percent have completed elementary school; 28.58 percent have completed secondary education; 14.29 percent have completed intermediate education; and 7.14 percent have achieved a bachelor's degree or above. Similar data show that of the 50 female participants, 43.33 percent are illiterate, 33.33 percent have completed elementary school, 16.67 percent have completed secondary school, 6.67 percent have attended intermediate school, and none have achieved a bachelor's degree or higher. As a result, it is determined that females are more illiterate than males in the studied location. The table above also reveals that the majority of the population in the study region is literate (32.76%), while 31.03 percent are illiterate.

It was discovered that, in the research area, women in the 35–60 age range were more illiterate than those in the 20–35 age range. However, it is not discovered that any member of the Tharu population in the research region who is married or younger than 20 years of age is illiterate. In primary school, the proportion of female Tharu pupils to male students is significantly larger, but it gradually declines as students go up the grades. Compared to boys, girls from Tharu had a higher risk of withdrawal. The reasons for disengagement include early marriage, language barriers, and parents using their kids for fieldwork, parental ignorance, and low socioeconomic position. It is discovered that these factors, along with unfavorable economic circumstances, are mostly to blame for Tharu women's low educational level in the study area.

Women's Role in Decision-making Process

Making decisions is an indicator of social position. People are powerful because they are able to make decisions. It explains the woman's role in making decisions about numerous aspects of the household and other activities.

Because of the majority of the population in the research area works in agriculture, the decision-making role has been investigated in terms of farm management decisions, such as cropping patterns and livestock management, aspects of children's education, and household elements.

Farm Management

The decision-making role of women in farm management has been described into two categories, which are:

Cropping Pattern

The cropping pattern involves women's decision-making roles in many farm tasks such as seed selection and planting. Spreading manure, watering, and harvesting, the example household's decision-making role regarding cropping pattern is provided below:

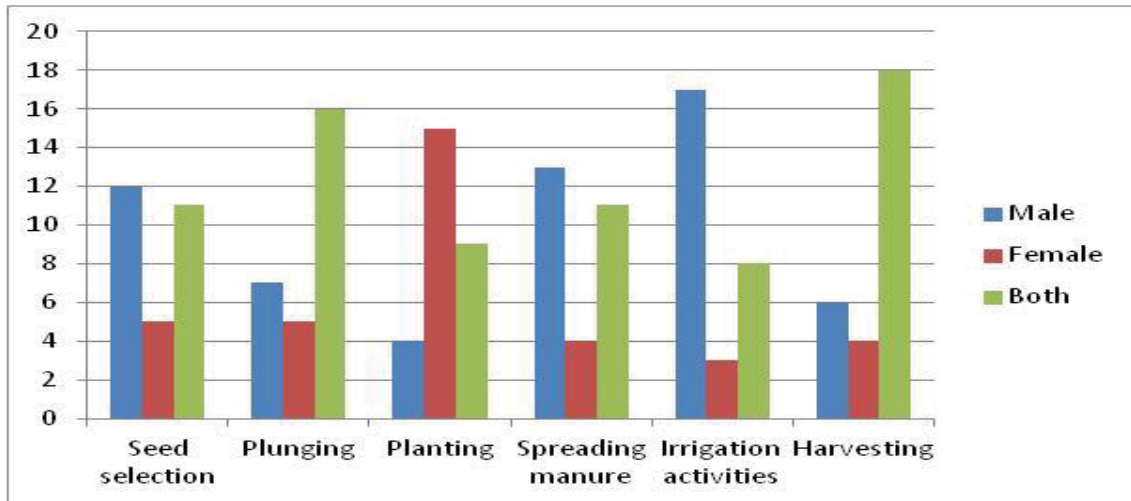
Table 2

Cropping Pattern Decision-Making Process

Farm activities	Decision maker Person						Total	
	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Both	Percent	Respondent	Percent
Seed selection	20	42.86	8	17.86	22	44	50	100
Plunging	12	25	8	17.86	30	60	50	100
Planting	7	14.29	25	53.57	18	36	50	100
Spreading manure	21	46.42	7	14.29	22	44	50	100
Irrigation activities	28	60.71	5	10.71	17	34	50	100
Harvesting	10	21.42	6	14.29	34	68	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

According to the table 2, men (42.86% of the sample population overall) make the bulk of decisions when it comes to seed selection. Women are found to have relatively little influence over decision-making-just 17.86 percent-while joint decisions made by men and women account for 39.28 percent. Consequently, the current study demonstrates that women participate in this activity at a lower rate than males do in occupations involving decision-making.

Figure 2*Decision Making Role in Cropping Pattern*

The aforementioned table and figure further demonstrate that, when it comes to plugging activities, women play the largest decision-making role—contributing 60% of the total. Men and women make up 25% and 17.86% of the decision-making responsibilities in this activity, respectively. As a result, the table shows that decisions about plugging fields are made in concert.

According to the above table, of the 50 people involved in the planting activity, women participated in decision-making positions at a rate of 53.57 percent, men at 14.49 percent, and both genders at 36 percent. As a result, the table showed that, when it comes to making decisions regarding the planting activity, women have the most power over men. Men only make 46.42 percent of the decisions pertaining to spreading manure activities. Men and women decide together on the remaining 44% of decisions, with women making 14.29% of them. The table makes it quite evident that males make the majority of the decisions about spreading manure.

Women account for only 10.71 percent of irrigation decision-makers, whereas men account for the majority (60.71%). The remaining 34% of decisions are made by men and women together. As a result, the table demonstrates that men make the majority of irrigation decisions, rather than women. Men and women make 68% of harvesting decisions as a group. Men make up 21.42% of the remaining decision-making process, while women make up 14.29%. The table shows that when men and women collaborate, they make the most decisions.

Therefore, it is evident from the table that men have a higher decision-making role when it comes to plugging, seed selection, spreading manure, watering, and harvesting; however, women have a higher decision-making role when it comes to planting.

Livestock Management

In the management of cattle, both men and women do have significant roles to play. Agriculture does not provide them with enough income to support their family. Therefore, Tharu women are extremely important in managing livestock in order to fund household expenses. It might be regarded as a crucial component of agriculture. Animals of all kinds, including goats, pigs, ducks, chickens, pigeons, swans, cows, buffalo, oxen, and so forth, are found in every household. They sell the aforementioned animals along with their goods, such as milk, ghee, butter, curd, meat, etc., in order to generate revenue. While both sexes participate in the care and herding aspects of livestock husbandry, women are primarily responsible for gathering grass and fodder, cleaning sheds, feeding, and milking the cattle. These are the main duties associated with raising animals. Both sexes visit the dairy market to sell livestock products in order to gain money. As a result, Tharu women help to both create and appropriately manage revenue.

The function of decision-making in the management of farms is covered in this section in relation to a number of different aspects, including the buying and selling of livestock, the sale of livestock products, and the control of income and expenses.

Table 3

Role of Decision Making in Livestock Farming

Farm activities	Decision make				Total			
	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Both	Percent	Respondents	Percent
Livestock purchase	13	26.67	20	40	17	33.33	50	100
Livestock sale	10	20	22	43.33	18	36.67	50	100
Sale of livestock products	12	25	18	39.29	16	35.71	50	100
Management of money	23	46.67	10	20	17	33.33	50	100

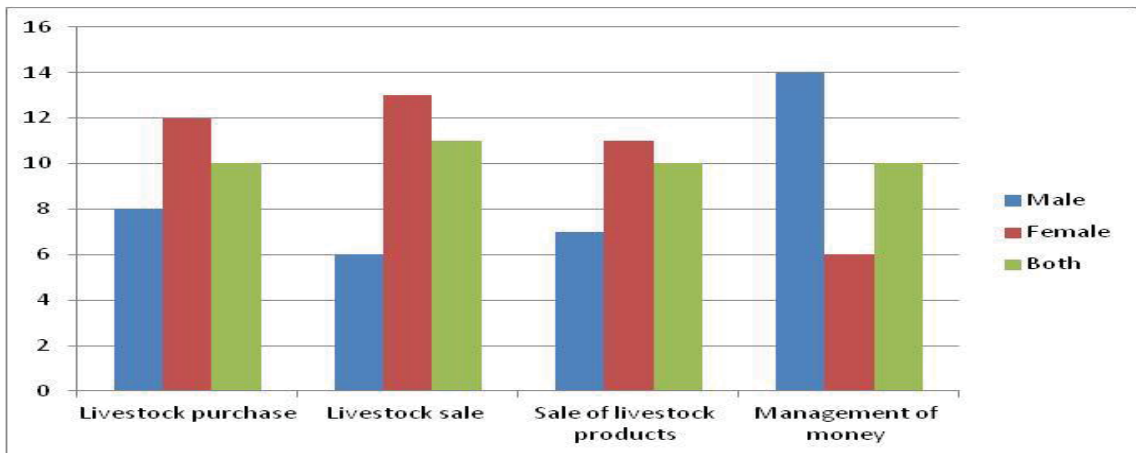
Source: Field survey, 2023.

According to table 3, 40 percent of women, 26.67 percent of men, and 33.33 percent of both sexes participated in the decision-making process for animal acquisition. As a result, the chart shows that women dominate household decision-making when

it comes to purchasing animals. Women make 43.33 percent of decisions on selling cattle operations, men make 6.20 percent, males make 36.97 percent, and men and women collaborate to make 36.67 percent of the decisions. Thus, it is discovered that in livestock sales, women have a prominent role in decision making.

Figure: 3

Decisions Making Role in Livestock Farming



According to the above table and statistic, women make up 39.29 percent of decision-makers in the activities related to marketing animal products, compared to only 25 percent of decision-makers who are men. On the other hand, men and women work together to make 35.71 percent of the decisions. Therefore, it is evident from the table that women play significant roles in decision-making when it comes to the sale of animal products. Men make the most judgments (46.67 percent) about how to manage the proceeds from the sale of livestock and its products, while women make the fewest decisions (20 percent) about this issue. However, 33.33 percent of men and women jointly have the ability to make decisions. Accordingly, the aforementioned table indicated that women make more decisions when it comes to buying and selling cattle and its products. However, it has also been discovered that they play little part in determining financial decisions, as they receive their income from the sale of cattle and its byproducts.

Role of Decision Making Health Condition

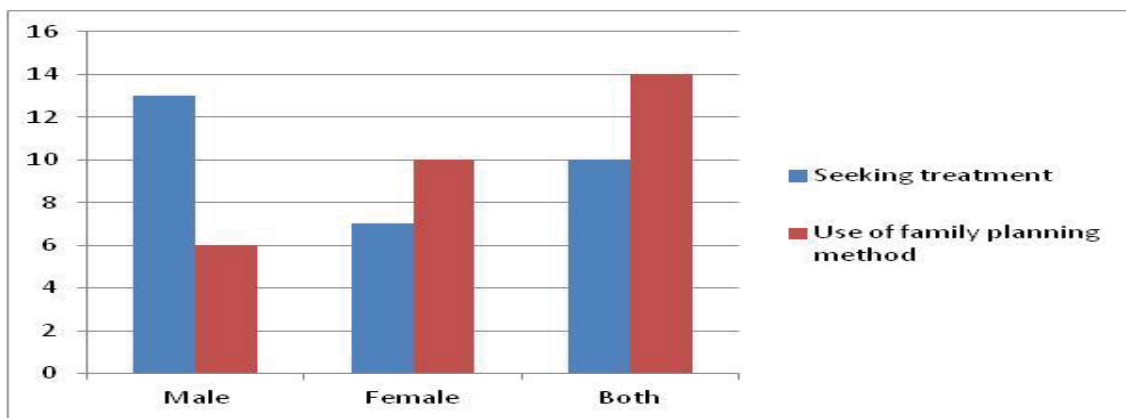
In this area, health-related decision making consists mostly of two components: seeking care for family members and using family planning methods.

Table 4
Decision Making Role in Health Management

Farm activities	Decision make						Total	
	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Both	Percent	No.	Percent
Seeking treatment	22	43.34	12	23.33	16	33.33	50	100
Use of family planning method	9	20	16	33.33	22	46.67	47	100

Source: Field survey, 2023.

Figure 4
Decision Making Role in Health Management



According to the table and figure above, women have the lowest decision-making role in this area, with only 23.33 percent of them, while males have the greatest score, 43.34 percent, when it comes to seeking treatment activities, conversely, 33.33 percent of men and women work together to make the decision to seek treatment. As a result, the above chart demonstrates that, in comparison to women, men play a more significant role in deciding whether to seek therapy for family members.

As can be seen from the above table, only 20% of men have participated in the decision-making process for family planning, whereas 33.33 percent of women hold this authority. However, men and women work together to make the majority of the decisions, accounting for 46.67 percent of the total. In light of this, the table above demonstrates that when it comes to family planning strategies, women are found to be more aware of and in control of the decision-making process.

Role of Decisions Making Process in Education of Children

In this area, health-related decision making consists mostly of two components: seeking care for family members and using family planning methods.

Table 5

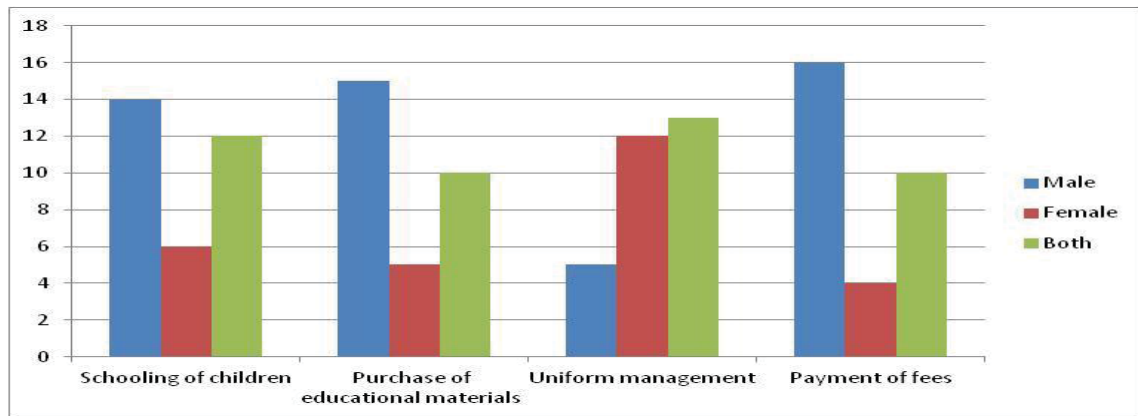
Role of Decisions Making Process in Education of Children

Farm activities	Decision Making						Total	
	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Both	Percent	No.	Percent
Schooling of children	23	46.67	23	46.67	12	40	50	100
Purchase of educational materials	25	50	25	50	10	33.33	50	100
Uniform management	8	16.67	20	40	22	43.33	50	100
Payment of fees	26	53.34	8	16	16	33.33	50	100

Source: Field survey, 2023.

Figure 5

Role of Decisions Making Process in Education of Children



When it comes to a child's education, the aforementioned table and figure demonstrate that, at 46.67 percent, men make the most decisions, while women make the fewest decisions-13.33 percent. However, in the concerning activity, 40% of men and women participate in decision-making. The same table demonstrates that when it comes to acquiring educational resources, men have the greatest decision-making power (50%) and women have the least decision-making power (16.67 percent). However, 33.33 percent of men and women share a joint decision-making role.

The table also demonstrates that, when it comes to uniform management activities, women contribute more to decision-making at 40%, while males have less decision-making authority at 16.67%. However, women and men together account for 43.33% of the upper decision-making role.

The aforementioned chart also demonstrates that, when it came to choosing how much to pay for children's education, men made up the majority of the decision-makers (53.34%), with women making up the minority (13.33%). Making decisions plays a 33.33 percent part in the collaborative work of men and women. The table shows that males make the majority of decisions about children's education, the purchasing of educational materials, and the payment of activity fees, whereas women make the majority of decisions regarding uniform management.

Role of Decision Making Process in Household Management

Women's involvement in home accounting and marketing are prominent in this profession. Women provide supplementary labor for men by performing domestic duties such as cooking, childrearing, general housekeeping, weaving, cleaning, milking, feeding animals, harvesting grass and fodder, and so on. This section discusses income expenditure patterns, loans and borrowing, agricultural product sales, and purchasing and selling items.

Table 6

Decision Making Role in Household Management Aspect

Farm activities	Decision Making Status						Total	
	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Both	Percent	No.	Percent
Purchase of goods	13	26.67	28	56.67	9	16.66	50	100
Lending/ borrowing	15	30	8	16.67	27	53.33	50	100
Sale of agriculture products	14	28.57	9	17.85	27	53.58	50	100
Pattern of income expenditure	28	56.67	12	23.33	10	20	50	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

The data shows that women make 56.67 percent of the decisions when it comes to purchasing items from bazaars. Men hold 26.67 percent of the decision-making power in this regard, whereas the combined gender contribution is 16.66 percent of the population. When it comes to loans and borrowing, males and women have equal

decision-making authority (53.33%), with males possessing 30% and females having 16.67%.

According to the table above, men and women collaborate to make 53.58 percent of agricultural product sales decisions. It has been discovered that men and women have differing decision-making powers in this area, with 28.57 and 17.85 percent, respectively.

In terms of income expenditure patterns, the aforementioned figures demonstrate that men have the most decision-making authority (56.67 percent), while women have the least (23.33 percent). Both men and women contribute 20% of the collaborative effort through their decision-making abilities. As a result, the above table shows that men make the majority of decisions about lending and borrowing, agricultural product sales, and income expenditure patterns. Women, on the other hand, prevail in making purchasing decisions during bazaars.

Cause of Low Social Status of Respondents

The researcher asked some questions to know the opinions of the respondents about the main reason for Tharu women's backwardness in their status. The collected data from the study area is analyzed with their reports.

Table 7

Distribution of Socio-economic of their Low Status

Causes	No. of Respondents	Percent
Lack of education	23	46.67
Patriarchal	8	16.67
Culture	5	10
Inferiority	3	6.66
Lack of awareness	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Field survey, 2023.

The figure depicts the distribution of sample respondents based on their low socioeconomic status. The higher percentage in the research field, according to 46.67 percent of respondents, a lack of education is the biggest reason behind Tharu women's low socioeconomic status. Sixty-six percent mentioned culture, ten percent inferiority, twenty percent a lack of awareness, and sixteen percent the patriarchal system as the causes of their low socioeconomic status.

Traditional gender roles assign specific obligations to men and women in households, with men making decisions and women handling household tasks. Men frequently dominate economic decisions, influencing overall decision-making authority, whilst women handle home responsibilities. In the Tharu society, these traditional positions have an impact on women's participation in important agricultural and educational decisions. Women's engagement is hampered by barriers such as a lack of resources and educational opportunities. Economic reliance further limits decision-making autonomy. Empowering women via education, training, and resource access is essential for establishing equitable agricultural and educational practices. Early marriage is an issue in Tharu civilization, exacerbating gender disparities in education. To address these issues, comprehensive approaches that consider formal education, socioeconomic factors, cultural norms, and health-related challenges are required. Such comprehensive policies are critical for achieving sustainable development and gender equality in the Tharu community.

Conclusion

This study found that Tharu women had varied roles and responsibilities within their families. Despite having more work to do, they spend the most of their time caring for the home. Then, since farming is not considered an income-generating activity, they should dedicate more time to it. They are only suitable for use within the family. Although women from the Tharu tribe have a reasonable literacy rate, their education level is low, and they have limited access to advanced education. They are denied the opportunity to pursue higher education due to a variety of societal, personal, and economic obstacles that are directly tied to their inability to find alternative jobs. As a result, the number of Tharu women working outside the home is relatively low. Few Tharu women own homes, land, banks, or other financial institutions such as sahakari, women's savings associations, or deposits; instead, the vast majority own animals. On the other hand, very few women own property. Most Tharu women are required to work longer hours in agriculture because to a lack of higher education, but they have less decision-making power than their male colleagues. In some activities, women Tharu have significant decision-making authority, while males often have a larger part in decision-making. Only in a few situations can men and women make equal decisions at home. Traditions are the fundamental cause of these events. Men rule the culture and lack information. As a result, Tharu women are classed as having poor socioeconomic status.

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