

## Role of Social Factors in Shaping Women's Involvement in Income Generating Activities in Baneshwar Area, Kathmandu

Raju Bhai Manandhar<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty Member, Public Youth Campus  
Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal

\*Corresponding Author: [raju.pyc@gmail.com](mailto:raju.pyc@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

*Women's empowerment is a broad concept, and it is defined as a multidimensional social process at different levels. The government of Nepal has declared 33% women's participation in various sectors. It has also introduced a female quota for women's participation in various organizations. The study analyzed the role of social factors in women's involvement in income-generating activities for women's empowerment. The study used a descriptive and explanatory research design. The study was conducted among the 60 working women living in the Baneshwar area of Kathmandu by applying the judgmental sampling technique. Primary data was the main sources of information. A survey questionnaire was adopted to gather the required information from respondents. The study adopted mean, standard deviation, correlation, and regression to analyze data to address the research problem. The result shows that the mean value of social factors was 3.0 to 4.6. The average of all social factors was 3.85, close to the agreement point. Hence, it concluded that women were moderately empowered through their involvement in income-generating activities. Social factors significantly impacted women's empowerment, with  $R\text{-square} = .172$ , and  $p\text{-value} = 0.001$ . The future researcher can study strategies to empower women through entrepreneurship skills.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship skills, income-generating, social factors, society, women empowerment

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Background

Nepal has made a lot of progress in recent years toward equal rights for men and women, and many women are working. Nepal, according to the World Bank, is one of the world's poorest nations. Of 189 nations, it came in at 142 on the 2019 Human Development Index (Sharma, Guha-Khasnobis, & Khanal, 2020). Women have extremely limited access to economic, political, and educational resources. Nepal is ranked 101 out of 153 nations in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2020. Caste, religion, geography, ethnicity, and other factors all affect Nepalese women's problems as well as their social and economic circumstances (Schwab, Guinault, Soo, Hausmann, & Tyson, 2019). The sense of empowerment that a person experiences depend on various financial, cultural, and other factors (Dutta, 2014). The empowerment index was made based on a study by Abrar-ul-Haq et al. (2017) on the six main factors affecting decision-making in Northern Punjab, Pakistan.

The most pervasive type of group discrimination in human history is the subordination of women to men (Nolan & Lenski, 1999). Women still have less authority than men in every society (Hurst, 2004). Advances in women's empowerment have recently emerged as one of the most powerful global trends because the degree to which women lack authority in compared to men varies among civilizations (Hakim, 2000; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Paxton, Hughes, & Green, 2008). The oldest kind of prejudice can be stopped by empowering women, and new evidence indicates that this change is also essential to fostering democracy, prosperity, and peace (Sen, 1999; Fish, 2002; Coleman, 2004).

Dey and Khudri (2015) look at how empowered women are by making two indices: women's involvement in domestic violence and PCA-based decision-making. According to the research, women with more education were more likely to stand up against physical abuse than women with less education. Women face various socio-personal issues in countries where men predominate, like In Nepal. Because of domestic duties or early marriage, many rural girls drop out of school early (Tuladhar, 1996). Most women, particularly those who live in rural regions, are restricted to domestic duties and have a higher percentage of illiteracy, less confidence, and little knowledge of their legal rights. Because their work does not directly result in pay, they put in between 15 and 16 hours daily. So, women can't fight for their rights because of the psychological pressures of society (Tuladhar, 1996).

Most people believe that only male children need extensive education and that women primarily care for and assist their male counterparts (Ranabhat, 1995). Women business owners concentrate on finding effective ways to use other women's labor to contribute to their ability to make money. Also, they lessen poverty and the damaging societal impacts of underemployment, unemployment, and relegating women to domestic work (Kumbhar, 2013). According to a study by Rembulan et al. (2016), women who work as employees tend to experience higher conflict than women who operate as entrepreneurs. This contrasts with women who work as employees, who often experience lower conflict in all three areas: time, tension, and behavior.

## **1.2 Literature Review**

In the Nepalese setting, women actively participate in economic activities within and outside the home even though very few have professional jobs. According to national statistics, just 59.72% of women are literate. Due to our society's social conventions and cultural traditions, extremely few women pursue technical and vocational education. Recent data show that 51.6% of women and 84.33% of males are economically active. Most 51.6% of females come from cities (Basnet, 2019). In rural areas, however, the participation of women in income-generating activities is still low even though society and women are gradually becoming more educated. Generally, women engage in tiny trading, vegetable selling, planting, harvesting, and liquor manufacturing in rural areas. However, women work in industries in metropolitan regions (Basnet, 2019).

According to a survey, a significant number of economically active women in Nepal cannot access financial resources. Women make about 75 percent of the unpaid family labor force. Women comprise 76 percent of those working in agriculture, household-based extended economic activities, and household maintenance, compared to men's 50 percent. A lack of formal work or alternate sources of income limits women's participation in and contributions to the country's economic progress.

Due to gender conventions, women continue to perform a disproportionate amount of unpaid caregiving duties, which limits their ability to choose the nature and location of paid employment. At the level of the state and the legal system, patriarchal views are also present. Women do not have access to or control over resources used for production, such as land,

forests, credit, technology, and businesses. Despite the country's constitution protecting the fundamental "right to equality," regardless of race, caste, or gender, the property right is flimsy and transitory. Legally, a woman is entitled to her husband's property not as an independent co-partner but because she is his wife. A daughter is not entitled to family property. However, much effort has been put into reducing gender inequality. Strong women's development programs run by the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare aim to empower thousands of rural Nepalese women. It stands for a targeted, broad-based anti-poverty intervention (Chopra, Upreti, & Catherine, 2017).

Although there has been so much development regarding women empowerment, many still see women should be confined to household only. People in many remote areas, as well as in urban areas, still believe that women should be confined to the home. So, this study will tell us about the real situation regarding the Kathmandu Valley. This study focuses on how women are treated in society in the context of their employment. This study is based on how society views women in terms of employment. This research explores the exact situation of society's acceptance of women. So, this report will help educate people about the importance of women's empowerment. It will also teach society that women should be involved in income-generating activities, not confined to household activities.

### **1.3 Research Objective**

The main goal of this study is to figure out how society affects women's ability to make money in Baneshwar, Kathmandu. The specific objectives are the following:

- 1) To explore the relationship between social factors and women's empowerment) participation in income-generating activities in Baneshwar, Kathmandu.
- 2) To examine the impact of social factors in women's empowerment and participation in income-generating activities in the Baneshwar area of Kathmandu.

### **1.4 Research Hypothesis**

The main goal of this study is to find out how social factors affect how much power women have. So considering this objective, there are two alternative hypotheses for this study, as follows:

- (H1): There is a significant relationship between social factors and women's participation in income-generating activities.
- (H2): There is a significant impact of social factors on women's involvement in income-generating activities for women's empowerment.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

The study was conducted in the Baneshwar area of Kathmandu, Nepal. This area consisted of well-educated and uneducated families and people with working and non-working women. The study selected only working women to measure their level of empowerment. The descriptive and explanatory research design was used to explain several aspects of this research in detail. A correlation was used to see society's relationship with women's involvement in income-generating activities. Overall, regression was used to see how it affects women in the Baneshwar area who worked to make money. A cross-sectional study was pursued as the data were only collected once. The population for this study included all the women in the area of Baneshwar, and due to the limitation of our time, our sample size was 60. First of all, the researcher identified the tentative number of working women living in the Baneshwar area through word of mouth of local people. Then judgmental sampling technique under non-probability sampling was used to select the respondent willing to participate in the study.

Primary data were used as the main source in this research. For this study, data were collected by visiting the field itself. The data were collected through interviews with respondents, supported by questionnaires. The set of questionnaires included 14 questions or statements. These statements were converted into a quantitative form using the five-point Likert scale with 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neither disagree nor agree', 'agree', and 'strongly agree'; close-ended questions were also used. Data were analyzed using the software package "SPSS." At first, 'Descriptive Statistics' was used. This was to find out the frequency and percentage of responses. Then, 'correlation analysis' is used to test the hypothesis. But correlation analysis only shows how two variables relate, so regression analysis was also used to examine how social factors affect women working to make money.

### 3. Result and Discussion

The study included 60 working women, with 80% having regular jobs and 20% owning their own businesses. 28.13% were married, and 71.7% were unmarried. From their educational backgrounds, 15% of respondents fell in the intermediate or below level, 63.3% of respondents fell in the bachelor level, and 21.7% of respondents had cleared the master's level.

#### 3.1 Income of respondents

Monthly income is one of the most important motivational factors for working people. People work to earn enough to maintain their basic needs. The study discussed with working women the monthly earnings/income of the respondents, which are explained below in Table 1.

**Table 1:** *Income of Respondents*

	Frequency	Percent
Up to Rs.20000	29	48.3
Rs.21000-Rs.40000	23	38.3
Rs.41000 and Above	8	13.3
Total	60	100.0

**Source:** *Field Survey (2019)*

Table 1 presents that 29 (48.3%) respondents were earning income up to Rs. 20,000, 23 (38.3%) respondents were earning income between Rs. 21,000 and Rs. 40,000, and 8 (13.3%) respondents were earning between Rs. 41,000 and above.

The Dangol said that society thought that women could work outside the home to make extra money while still doing housework. The added income of the women can help the families to meet family expenses and save some money for future investments or incidents as well (Dangol, 2010).

#### 3.2 Women empowerment factors

In the South Asian setting, women's empowerment is viewed as fighting the prevailing patriarchal norms and ideals to improve their general well-being. It is a continuous process that has to do with women's ability to make crucial decisions and carry those decisions forward (Ghosh & Gondal, 2010). The three main components of empowerment are enhancing women's bargaining power in families and communities, providing a visible framework for income generation, and enabling meaningful engagement at institutional and policy levels. Similarly, women's empowerment involves changing the power dynamics within themselves and social groups. However, it is a complex and delicate process because it is based on social norms and beliefs. One must fight patriarchal ideology in order to change social power relations. Because it justifies social and gender inequality, the current

distribution of resources according to unequal access and control patterns, and the social institutions that uphold unequal social interactions (Kabeer, 2012).

The study used seven statements to measure women's empowerment and asked respondents to agree on a five-point Likert scale based on their experience and current status. The responses are presented below in Table 2

**Table 2: Women empowerment factors**

SN	Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
1.	I am an economically active woman.	0.00	6.67	10.00	43.33	40.00	4.1667
2.	I am happy with my earnings.	10.00	25.00	26.67	31.67	6.67	3.0000
3.	I am benefited by my job/business.	1.67	5.00	13.33	53.33	26.67	3.9833
4.	My society encourages women empowerment.	5.00	11.67	25.00	35.00	23.33	3.6000
5.	My family supports my involvement in income generating activities.	1.67	1.67	3.33	21.67	71.67	4.6000
6.	Because I am economically active, I have a good image in my society.	1.67	1.67	25.00	51.67	20.00	3.8667
7.	My organization has a healthy working environment.	5.00	11.67	15.00	38.33	30.00	3.7667
<b>Average Mean</b>							<b>3.85</b>

Table 2 shows that out of 60 respondents, 43.33% and 40% agreed and strongly agreed that they were economically active women. As well, 10% of respondents neither disagreed nor agreed, and 6.67% felt that they were not economically active women. The mean value was 4.1667, which was close to the agreement, indicating women's moderate level of activeness in income-generating activities.

Similarly, 31.67% and 6.67% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they were happy with their earnings, and 26.67% neither disagreed nor agreed that their happiness was related to their earnings. 25% disagreed that they were happy, and 10% of respondents strongly disagreed about happiness from earnings. The mean value was 3.00, close to the neutral response, indicating that working women were neither happy nor unhappy with their earnings. It means they needed to be managing their basic needs from their earnings.

The table also shows that 53.33% of respondents agreed that they benefited from their job/business, and 26.67% strongly agreed with the same statement. Similarly, 13.33% of respondents neither disagreed nor agreed, followed by 5% who disagreed and 1.67% who strongly disagreed that their job/business benefited them. The mean value is 3.9833, close to the agreed response, indicating a moderate level of benefit from the job.

Regarding statement No. 4, out of 60 respondents, 35% agreed that society encourages women's empowerment, followed by 23.33% who strongly agreed. In the same way, 25% of those who answered neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that being involved in society helps to empower women. Likewise, 11.67% of respondents disagreed, and 5% strongly disagreed, that society encourages women's empowerment. The mean value was 3.6, close to the agreement, reflecting moderate societal encouragement.

My support is a must for women to involve in income-generating activities. So, the study also asked about the support of family. The data presented in Table 2 above shows that, out of 60 respondents, 71.67% respondents strongly agreed that their family supports them for involvement in income-generating activities, followed by 21.67% of respondents who also agreed on the statement. Likewise, 3.33% of respondents neither disagreed nor agreed, relating that their family supports them for involvement in income-generating activities. As



well as 1.67% of respondents disagreed, and 1.67% strongly disagreed that their family supported them in income-generating activities. The mean value was 4.600, which was close to the strongly agree, indicating the high level of family support in their work.

Economic status has become the primary demand of all individuals; it is women's first ladder of empowerment. Women become social empowerment level when they have economic empowerment. In this regard, working women were asked about their social image towards them after their involvement in economic activities. The data showed that out of 60 respondents, 51.67% agreed that they had a good image in society because of their economic activeness, followed by 20% who agreed on the same statement. 25% of respondents neither disagreed nor agreed, 1.67% disagreed, and 1.67% strongly disagreed that they had a good image in society because they were economically active. The mean value was 3.8667, which is close to the agreement, so in general, all working women accepted that there was a moderate level of social image towards them.

The final statement was related to the working environment in their organization. From the above Table, out of 60 respondents, 38.33% agreed that their organization had a favorable working environment, and 30% strongly agreed with the same statement. As well as 15% of respondents neither disagreed nor agreed regarding the healthy working environment of the organization. Similarly, 11.67% of respondents disagreed, and 5% strongly disagreed that their organization had a favorable working environment for them. The mean value was 3.7667, which was close to an agreement; so generally, the organization had a moderate working environment.

The patriarchal social structure, morals, the state's preservation and protection of women's rights, and official policies for women's advancement all influence women's status. However, the relative position of women differed depending on the ethnic group. Since their conventional role was assumed, women's significant economic contribution has gone virtually ignored (Acharya, Mathema, & Birbhadra, 1999). Only 67.9% of adult females in Nepal, compared to 78.59% of all adults in the country, were literate, according to the Nepal living standard survey 2019/2020. This statistic was significantly worse in rural areas, where only 39% of adult females had a high school diploma or equivalent, compared to 67% of men. Like other countries, Nepal had made significant strides toward advancing gender equality and women's political engagement. The inclusion of quotas in the 2015 Nepali Constitution and the adoption of national and international mechanisms focusing on women's rights were only a few examples of initiatives demonstrating progress (Kshetry, 2011).

According to the Asian-Pacific Human Development Report (2012), Nepal's women comprised 63.3% of the labor force, up from 52.4% and 59.9% in 1990 and 2000, respectively. Today's rural women were more mobile than ever and more qualified than ever to own businesses, generate money, and assumed leadership roles within cooperatives and other community interest groups. The position of women had therefore improved to some extent, especially in rural regions, and these advancements had been seen in areas like income creation, businesses, health, education, land ownership, as well as representation in community groups (Rajivan, Wong, Siddique, Sarangi, & Borsatti, 2012).

### **3.3 Correlation between social factors and women empowerment**

The study also employed a correlation test to check the relationship between the social factor and women's empowerment. The analysis supports knowing the role of social factors in women's empowerment as the objective of this study.

**Table 3: Correlation between Society factors and Women empowerment**

Correlations			
		Women empowerment	Social factors
Women empowerment	Pearson Correlation	1	.415**
Social factors	Pearson Correlation	.415**	1
	N = 60		

Source: Field Survey (2019)

Table 3 showed that the Pearson correlation value of social factors and women involved in income-generating activities is 0.415. So, we can say that society had no big and positive effect on women who work for pay. The result indicates that if there was a 1-point change in social factors, then it can bring. Four hundred and fifteen times more changes in women's empowerment. So, the role of social factors was more significant for women's empowerment.

**3.4 Impact of social factors on women empowerment**

The study used regression to determine the level of impact of social factors on women's empowerment.

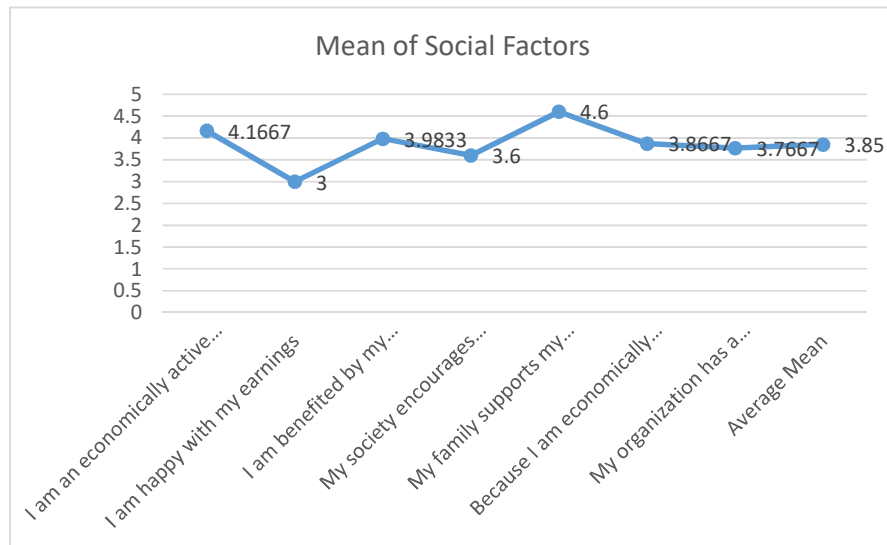
**Table 4: Model Summary for Regression Analysis of Impact of Society Factor on Women Empowerment**

Model	R	R Square	Sig. (p-value)
1	.415 <sup>a</sup>	.172	0.001

Source: Field Survey (2019)

Table 4 showed that R = .415, and the value of R2 was 0.172. It showed that 17.2% of the variance of the dependent variable, i.e., women involved in income-generating activities (women empowerment), was explained by the independent variable, i.e., social factors. The statistical f-value from ANOVA is 0.001, which was less than 0.05. Thus, the model of the study was appropriate. It showed that society, which was an independent variable, had no very big effect on women who worked to make money as the dependent variable.

The statistical result of correlation and regression accepted and established the alternative hypothesis that there is a relationship between social factors and women's participation in income-generating activities. In the same way, social factors had a big effect on women who participate in activities that bring in money to help empower women.



**Figure 1: Mean of Social Factors**

The study showed a moderate level of women's empowerment through their involvement in economic activities.

In this context, one Nepali literature stated that in Nepal's traditionally male-dominated society, biases against women could be found on the social, cultural, and political levels. Women had less access to educational and employment opportunities than their male counterparts. They were less capable and powerful than their male counterparts, and even then, they had the least authority to act on their own initiative. Because men were generally viewed as assertive family providers who were driven by financial success, women were financially dependent on men (their father, spouse, or brother). Women were largely restricted to domestic work and domestically soft farm work. Still, most households and society didn't like it when women made decisions or tried to stop them in some way. Although Nepali women made significant labor and mentoring contributions both inside and outside the home, their work was frequently overlooked and was not recognized as economic activity. Women who were heads of homes must fulfill all of the conventional functions as well as the additional duties of managing the family and production (Kumar, 2014).

### 3. Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, it is found that a minimum 3 to 4.6 mean value was found from the social factors. The average of all social factors was 3.85, which was close to the agreed point, so it was concluded that women were moderately empowered through their involvement in income-generating activities. Among these seven empowerment factors, working women were unhappy with their earnings because it was hard to manage their daily needs from their income. Though, in general, there was a significant correlation between social factors and women's empowerment, it can be claimed that if there were positive changes in social factors, then they could bring about positive changes in women's empowerment. It is the responsibility of the local government to design the program focusing on the economic status of local women working in their areas. The future researcher can study the strategies to empower women through entrepreneurship skills.

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