

**Gender Discrimination and Its Effects on Women's Health:
In the Reference to Barahataal Rural Municipality Ward no. 2, Surkhet**

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Abstract

This study entitled Gender Discrimination and its Effects on Women's Health: In the reference to Barahataal Rural Municipality ward no.2, Surkhet was carried out to analyze the effects of Gender Discrimination and its effects on women's health in Barahataal Rural Municipality ward no-2, Surkhet. In this study exploratory type of research design is carried out by the researcher. In this study respondents were selected by using simple random sampling method. The structure interview schedule was used as the tool for data collection. The interview schedule was divided into three parts. The first part of the interview schedule was related to the knowledge of the gender discrimination, the second part related to the situation of gender discrimination and third part of interview schedule were related to the effects of gender discrimination of the study area.

In the study area, the facing health hazards by the respondents (50 percent), Majority 20 percent of respondents were faced low esteem due to the gender discrimination. Most of the 56.8 percent of respondents were felt maintain strict law and order to solve the problems of gender discrimination. Similarly 50 percent of respondents felt raising awareness to solve the problems of gender discrimination in Barahataal Rural Municipality ward no. 2, Surkhet.

Keyword : Gender Discrimination, Reference, Women's Health, Effects

Introduction

Gender refers to the social differences and relations between men and women which are learned, vary widely among societies and cultures, and change over time. The term gender does not replace the term sex, which refers exclusively to biological differences between men and women. For example, statistical data are broken down by sex. The term gender is used to analyze the roles, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities and needs of women and men in all areas and in any given social context. Gender roles are learned behaviors in a given society, community or another social group. They condition activities, tasks and responsibilities are perceived as male or female. Gender roles are affected by age, class, race, ethnicity and religion, and by the geographical, economic and political environment (Marimuthu, 2008).

Literally, the meaning of discrimination is an unfavorable treatment to anyone based on sex, race and so on. It is considered as an obstacle for the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. Discrimination is recognized as a form of inequality and issue for women around the world. It affects the capacity of women to participate freely and fully in society and in turn brings psychological harmful consequences. Half of the population of the world consists of women, whose large portion is still discriminated in different phase of life directly or indirectly, though there are some differences in each country, society or ethnicity. Gender discrimination in education, employment and health accelerates economic burden. Discrimination against women affects their capacity to participate freely and fully in society and in turn brings psychologically harmful consequences. Due to the fear of being deserted by

husband women don't even hesitate to abort the female embryo inside their womb before it turns into a baby (Pokhrel, 2007).

Gender based discrimination is a cross cutting issue in social discrimination. Focusing on broader social categories like caste and ethnicity can only partially allow us to analyze the discrimination of any one segment of the population. Therefore, it cannot accurately reflect the problems of the totality. Caste and ethnicity-based discrimination do not account for the discrimination faced by the members within the units. Gender based study helps to explore into the discrimination more adequately as it would open up the possibility of analyzing the problems by breaking them down into the context of male and female components of each social unit (Basnet, 2013).

Gender discrimination impacts all aspects of a woman's life, such as limited access to employment opportunities and quality health care, which can result in poor health outcomes. This power imbalance becomes especially troubling in resource-poor areas where multiple disadvantages cluster. In addition to discrimination, women who do not conform to the socio-cultural norms of their gender can face stigma, social exclusion and violence. Women can hold multiple forms of minority statuses (e.g., due to their ethnicity), meaning that they can be subject to discrimination from a myriad of angles, which together leads to greater stress and worse mental health outcomes. There is growing recognition that gender-influenced isolation, social exclusion, bullying and threats all add to the burden and injustice of discrimination. Yet there is a dearth of research that explores gender disadvantage and women's mental health. This discourse should not undermine resilience, fortitude and that action is taking place, but should be taken as an opportunity to raise the profile of these issues.

Objective

The general objective of this study is to find out the situation of gender discrimination on women health of Barahatal Rural municipality, ward no. 2 Surkhet.

Literature Review

Causes of Gender Discrimination

There is no one single factor to account for discrimination perpetrated against women. Increasingly, research has focused on the inter-relatedness of various factors that should improve our understanding of the problem within different cultural contexts. Several complex and interconnected institutionalized social and cultural factors have kept women particularly vulnerable to the discrimination directed at them, all of them manifestations of historically unequal power relations between men and women. Factors contributing to these unequal power relations include: socio-economic forces, the family institution where power relations are enforced, fear of and control over female sexuality, belief in the inherent superiority of males, and legislation and cultural sanctions that have traditionally denied women and children an independent legal and social status. Lack of economic resources underpins women's vulnerability to violence and their difficulty in extricating themselves. Gender discrimination continues to be a global epidemic that kills, tortures, and maims physically, psychologically, sexually and economically. It is one of the most pervasive of human rights violations, denying women and girl's equality, security, dignity, self-worth, and their right to enjoy fundamental freedoms. Discrimination against women is present in every country,

cutting across boundaries of culture, class, education, income, ethnicity and age (World Bank, 2017).

In the context of Nepal, the key structural factor that exacerbates women vulnerability is economic dependency on men, primarily fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons. The violence that women face both in the private and public spheres are consequences of this unequal power relationship as constructed within Nepal social structure. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and in timidities network, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution. Violence against women is a Widespread problem in Nepal (OPMCM, 2012).

Illiteracy is one of the prime causes of gender discrimination, although being a metropolis it has a higher literacy rate as compared to the rest of the province still a bigger population of people especially women are illiterate. Parents especially the illiterate ones and those belonging to the low socio-economic group are not in favor of getting their daughters educated because it brings them no returns. Women are considered inferior to men both physically and mentally and their lives are totally controlled by men. The birth of a son is considered a blessing and is celebrated while a daughter is burden. Wife beating is common and is considered a method of keeping women under control. Daughters are married off at an early age to men much older than them. The family honor is associated with women and their actions and movements are monitored so that they do not bring shame to the family. Women are confined to their houses and can only go out when escorted by a male member of the family. They are also supposed to observe purdah; covering of entire body except eyes when they go out (Baxter, 2000).

Method

This chapter deals with the methodologies to be applied to carry out this study which includes design and method, population, sample and sampling strategy, study area, data collection tools and techniques, data collection procedure and data analysis and interpretation procedure which are this study followed exploratory type of research design because researcher explore the existing situation of gender discrimination on women health and the effects of gender discrimination on women health of Barahatal Rural Municipality-2 Surkhet.

The study was conducted in Ward No. 2 of Barahatal Rural Municipality, Surkhet district. In the east of study area lies Bheri River, in the west part lies Taranga, in the north, there is jungle area and, in the south, there is Ranighat. In this study Barahatal Rural Municipality was selected as the universe. The study populations of the study were all the married women of reproductive age (15-49 year) in the study area. Among 153 married women in the study area, 59 married women were selected as a sample by using simple random sampling. The study populations of the study were all the married women of reproductive age (15-49 year) in the study area. Among 153 married women in the study area, 59 married women were selected by using simple random sampling.

Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter deals with analysis and interpretation of data collected from the respondents of the study area. Collected data are presented in the following sub sections:

Personal Information

This sub section of the study concerns with the analysis and interpretation of respondents' personal information like age, marital status and caste as follows:

Age structure of respondents

The age character is a dynamic variable, which is the most important characteristic of population. The age structure of female affects a nation's key socio-economic issues. Countries with young female population need to invest more in education while countries with older female populations need to invest more in the health sector. The age structure of female can also be used to help to predict potential social, economic and political issues. The age composition of female in the study area is given below:

Table 1

Distribution of respondents by age

Age group	No. of respondents	Percent
15-30	22	37.93
31-49	36	62.06
Total	58	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above table shows that majority 62.06 percent respondents were associated with age group 31-49 years. Likewise, 37.93 percent of the total respondents were associated with age group 15-30. It can be generalized that more respondents were belonged to age group 31-49 years and there was mostly prevalence of economically active and matured married population.

Caste / Ethnicity structure of Respondents

Nepal is multilingual, multi religious and multiethnic society. Many religions have made sufficient foundation for vividness of castes too. There is saying "Nepal is a country of four castes and thirty six different tribes" though it is not a clearly observed fact. Among them ethnic composition is another major component, which directly affects in the practice of gender discrimination. Ethnic compositions of female in study area are given below:

Table 2

Distribution of the respondents by caste / ethnicity

Ethnicity	No. of respondents	Percent
Brahmin	3	5.17
Chhetri	25	43.10
Janajati	11	18.96
Thakuri	5	8.62
Dalit	11	18.96
Others	3	5.17
Total	58	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above figure represents that majority 43.10 percent of respondents were Chhetri. Similarly, 5.17 percent of respondents were Brahmin and others respectively. Likewise, 18.16 percent respondents were Janajati and dalit respectively.

Knowledge on gender discrimination

Respondents were asked whether they had knowledge of gender discrimination. The response obtained from them has been shown:

Table 3

Distribution of the respondents by their knowledge on gender discrimination

Response	No. of respondents	Percent
Yes	42	72.41
No	16	27.58
Total	58	100
If yes,		
Preferring son	40	68.96
Preferring daughter	18	31.03
Total	58	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 shows that majority 72.41 percent of the total respondents had knowledge on gender discrimination. Among them, 68.96 percent preferred to have son whereas 31.03 percent of the respondent's preferred daughter.

Knowledge on cause of gender discrimination

Respondents were asked about their knowledge about the cause of gender discrimination. The response obtained from them has been shown:

Table 4

Distribution of the respondents by the knowledge on cause of gender discrimination

Response	No. of respondents	Percent
Culture	22	37.93
Traditional belief	29	50
Other	4	6.89
No	3	5.17
Total	58	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Above shows that the information about respondent knowledge on gender discrimination. Among them, 37.93 percent respondents replied that culture is the cause of gender discrimination whereas 50 percent of them replied that traditional belief as the cause of gender discrimination and rest of them considered other causes for gender discrimination. Hence, traditional belief and culture are the cause of gender discrimination in the study area.

Responsible person for gender discrimination

Respondents were asked about the responsible person for gender discrimination. The responses obtained from them have been shown in Table 7.

Table 5

Distribution of the respondents by responsible person for gender discrimination

Response	No. of respondents	Percent
Father	28	48.27
Mother	27	46.55
Both	3	5.17
Total	58	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 5 shows the information about responsible person for by gender discrimination 48.27 percent respondents replied that their father was the responsible person, 46.55 percent respondents replied that their mothers were responsible and rest of them replied that both father and mothers were equally responsible in the case.

On the basis of the above data, it can be concluded that mother seems more responsible for the son/daughter born according to the majority of the selected women in the study area.

Reason to recognize gender of fetus

Respondents were asked whether they had knowledge of reason to recognize gender of fetus before born. The response obtained from them has been shown in following table.

Table 6

Distribution of respondents by reason to recognize gender of fetus before born

Response	No. of respondents	Percent
Son preference	43	74.13
Other purpose	15	25.86
Total	58	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From the table it is indicated that son preference was the reason to recognize gender of fetus before born according to 74.13 percent respondents whereas rest of them replied other reasons. Hence, son preference is the reason to recognize gender of fetus according most of the women in the study area.

Solution of gender discrimination

Respondents were asked about their idea to solve gender discrimination in society. The response obtained from them has been shown in the table:

Table 7

Distribution of respondents by Solution of gender discrimination

Response	No. of respondents	Percent
Education	20	34.48
Awareness programs	10	17.24
Law and order	10	25.86
Women empowerment	15	5.17
Total	58	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Tables 7 displays that the data related to respondents views on solution of gender discrimination. In Table, 34.48 percent respondents replied that education is the way to solve

gender discrimination, 17.24 percent respondents considered awareness programs, 25.86 percent respondents considered law and order and rest of them i.e., 5.17 percent respondents replied that women empowerment is the way to solve it. On the basis of data collected from the study area, education, awareness programs, law and order and women empowerment are the solution responded by women.

Son preference

Social aspiration and desire for son than for daughter is infant, the inspiration by religions faith and culture. Son is assumed as wealth. Many sons are considered as source of family income and old age security and support (Acharya & Kern, 2013). The researcher intended to identify the son preference of the respondents. The response obtained from them has been shown here.

Table 8

Distribution of the respondents by preference of son

Response	No. of respondents	Percent
Yes	44	75.86
No	14	24.13
Total	58	100
If yes,		
Religious belief	11	25
Cultural belief	11	25
Social belief	22	50
other	44	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 8 reveals that 75.86 percent of the total respondents wanted to have son whereas 24.13 percent of them did not want son. Among the 'yes' responses, 25 percent respondents preferred son due to religious belief, 25 percent respondents preferred son due to cultural belief and rest of them preferred son due to social belief in the study area. It can be concluded that the son preference among the respondents was very high than the national data. The reason behind this might be lack of awareness and education.

Conclusion

The thesis entitled "Gender discrimination and its effect on Women's Health: A case Study of Barahataal Rural Municipality, Surkhet" was conducted to find out the causes and effects of gender discrimination in the health of the women of Barahataal -2, Surkhet. The study followed exploratory type of research design and its' nature was quantitative. The researcher selected 58 married women from the universe in the study area.

In the research area, Women of age group 15-49 were selected by using simple random sampling method. The structure interview schedule was taken as the tool for data collection, which was divided into three parts. The first part of interview schedule was related to Knowledge of gender discrimination, the second part was related to Situation of gender discrimination and the last part of interview schedule was related to impact of gender discrimination on health of women of the study area.

After collecting the data from interview schedule, they were carefully checked to remove the possible errors. The collected information was tabulated in the master tables. Finally, the tabulated data were analyzed and interpreted using mathematical numerical like, number and percentages. In most of the families, males are the head of the households. Females have to work as in periphery of households. Mostly and married women are population has migrated in their economically active age from different parts of the country. Rest of them remains in this community and there is high gender-based disparity. Lack of Education, religious belief, preference of son, unemployment and poverty had played vital role for the gender discrimination. From major finding of this study, it can be concluded that women faced physical (bartering, abortion, domestic violence), mental as well psychological effects like anxiety, depression due to the gender-based discrimination in the study area. Gender discrimination is the deep-rooted social problems, these problems cannot be stopped but there is high probability in rural area then urban. It can be soled by the equality, empowerment, awareness, education and mainstreaming to the women in the development.

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