Papers of 9th International Conference on

Gender & Women's Studies 2022

National University Singapore Society

28 - 29 July 2022

Published by

Unique Conferences Canada

admin@uniqueca.com
www.uniqueca.com

Published in Canada
November 2022

ISBN978-1-988652-46-7

9th International Conference on Gender & Women's Studies 2022

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Proceeding Note for 9th International Conference on Gender and Women Studies 2022 (GWS2020)

After a hiatus of three years, it was a delight to participate at the off-line, 9th GWS International Conference, 2022, held from July 28-29, at National University of Singapore Society, Singapore. The response was overwhelming as over 51 participants (including virtual) from 24 countries participated at the conference.

The conference began with the host, Dr. Prabhath Patabendi welcoming the participants and providing a brief overview of the sessions and logistics regarding the conference. This was followed by two most pertinent keynote addresses by Dr. Madhu Sharan and Dr. Mitchelle Phillip. While Dr. Sharan spoke on *'Achieving Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Post Pandemic Situations,'* and gave a detailed account of how women of one of the largest NGOs, Hand in Hand India, addressed the multiple social and economic issues during the pandemic to achieve gender equality; Dr Philip provided an insight on *'Gendered Responses to the Post-Pandemic Phase Change Among College Studentsin Mumbai.'*

The first session was dedicated to discussing different aspects of *'Women and Society,'* and was chaired by Dr. Michelle Phillip. Interesting insights and thought provoking discussions on topics related to political leadership in local governments in Tanzania (Dr Makalanga); issues relating to pursuance of higher education in Nepal (Sharmila Shyangtan); women's role in household decision making among Indonesian oil palm smallholders (Dr Diana Chalil); women's employment and its effects on domestic abuse in India (Kajal); citizen's agency as a woman (Violet Alinda) and role of government policies in changing status of women in India by Dr Alka and Meeenal Sahoo marked the session.

This was followed by the post lunch session on *'Gender Equality in Different Counties,'* chaired by Dr. Madhu Sharan. Papers on '75 Years of Men's Independence; Gendered and Sexual Inequalities in theIslamic Republic of Pakistan,' by Dr. Afiya Zia; 'Gender and Social Inclusion in Bank of Papua New Guinea,' by Elizabeth Genia; 'Post Displacement Effects on Attitude Towards Gender Roles of Rohingya Women,' by Minakshi Keeni; 'Contribution of Vegetable Farming to Livelihood Outcomes among Female Youth in Dodoma City, Tanzania,' by Dr. Anna E. Maselle, provided great learning and valuable perspective on the session theme. The day ended by deliberating issues related to varied aspects of Women's Rights with papers presented by Dr Rebecca Irons (UK), Ms. Twinkle Malukani (India) and Ms. Marie Nanyanzi (Uganda).

The second day began on a illuminating theme of *'Emerging Studies in Gender and Women Studies,'* chaired by Sharmila Shyangtan (Nepal). Dr. Nuzha Alhuzail (Israel) began the day with a highlighting issue of belongingness of educated young Beouin men to their villages, which was followed by Benjamin Campbell (Australia) discussing the topic of mindful masculinity. Ms. Ishita Sehgal from India talked about 'Reclaiming Sexual Pleasure,' through a study of female agency in a post pandemic world. The session ended with Lyen Krenz Yap (Philippines), taking us through the topic of 'Double Isolation,' of international students in Taiwan during the covid quarantine periods.

Multiple aspects of *'Dynamics of Feminism'* were discussed and chaired by Dr. Nuzha Alhuzail in the second session with papers presented by Dr. Dustie Spencer (USA) who spoke on feminism struggles in South Korea. Prof Aya Kitamura talked about Mothers under crises in Japan, which was

followed by Riho Nagayama (Japan) discussing interpretations of providing beauty practices and its relationship with customers. The session ended with Ruti Sela (Israel) highlighting the issue of Extraterritorial Feminism.

Post lunch session, chaired by Dr. Makalanga, was fruitfully spent deliberating issues of Violence against Women and Other studies. Dr Prasita Mukherjee (India) presented a paper on 'Empowering the Subaltern,' that discussed the re-representation of violated victims from particular Indian short stories. Mia Hyun from UK presented interesting findings on Violence against Women in ASEAN on Governance conditions for policy reforms. This was followed by Abeer Zeibak Haddad (Israel) presenting a very powerful short film on 'Our Silence is a License to Murder.'

The conference ended with a stimulating panel discussion on *'Challenges & Issues in Post Pandemic Recovery Process*: inthe Context of Vulnerable Girls & Women,' that was moderated by Dr. Madhu Sharan and Dr. Michelle Philip. Panelists included Dr. Spencer, Dr. Alhuzail, Dr. Chalil, Dr. Makalanga and Prof. Kitamura, who discussed the several interrelated issues enveloping the theme. Closing remarks were provided by Dr. Sharan and Dr. Philip.

The conference was concluded by Dr. Prabhath Patabendi thanking the participants for their active participation and for a most engaging, thought-provoking and fruitful conference. On behalf of the conference committee I, Dr. Madhu Sharan, would like to thank the organizers and participants for this wonderful offline conference and for excellent presentations and deliberations on pertinent themes engulfing the varied, interlinked aspects of gender and women studies!!

Dr. Madhu Sharan,
(Co-Chairperson & Keynote Speaker – **GWS2022)**
President, Hand in Hand, India.

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But where is home? Filipina Transient Migrants on Identity, Belonging and Women's Agency

Mallari, Mary Jane (pronouns: Sky)

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Abstract

In the past decades, women in the Philippines have migrated to Hongkong, Japan, the United States, and other parts of Europe as overseas Filipino workers (OFW). Migrants who, for most details, are in a perpetual state of transitoriness or are transient migrants. This article aims to discuss the impetus of Filipina women's transient migrations. I aim to discuss the key questions; What prompts them to migrate, and what challenges do they face in this period of transitoriness; When they enter this state of liminality, how does she search for a sense of belonging? Furthermore, how does this period of transience empower Filipina women's agencies?

In several works published by Filipina transient migrants, I employed textual and thematic analysis to conclude the questions posed in this article and arrived at several ideas that I will discuss thematically in the next section. Filipina women find themselves unfulfilled with the quality of their lives in the Philippines; the sense of belonging, the strong family ties, the career stability, and the privilege of working in a country with a high rank in closing the gender gap may seem enough to make them stay. However, the prospect of better life quality superseded all that. Leaving the Philippines for them is a conscious, informed choice. Furthermore, in this period of liminality, they created a microcosm of their own Philippines wherever they were, found some sense of belonging in these communities, and were comforted in sharing their disdain, longing, and ambivalence towards the Philippines and Filipino nationalism. For most Filipina transient migrants, leaving the Philippines is a tour de force in empowering their female agencies.

Keywords: *Filipina, Women migrants, transient migrations, gender studies, Women's agency*

I. Introduction

As a Southeast Asian and queer living in Japan as a transient migrant, I find myself consistently confronted with the truth that the concept of home is elusive, and where is home? While maybe saccharine is a question, if not all, transient migrants face in their state of transitoriness.

In this state of liminality, this state of transience where nothing seems ever permanent, and yet by a matter of necessity, moving forward and navigating life with resolute is the only choice, facing the precariousness of not just the state of temporariness as migrants but also of this post-pandemic time is a critical dialogue to open and discuss in the issues of migrations from the Philippines.

Transient Migrants, more often than not, are forms of economic migrants, people who moved to different countries to find a job or temporary work or study. In recent years, transient migrants have increased in numbers primarily because of new neoliberal working conditions and the increasing shifts in working styles where anyone can work anywhere or be hired remotely.

In the past decades, women in the Philippines have migrated to Hongkong, Japan, the United States, and other parts of Europe as overseas Filipino workers (*OFW*). Migrants who are in a perpetual state of

transitoriness. Leaving their home country was a mere matter of circumstance rather than choice. Predominantly, migrating abroad is their means to provide for their family back home. In recent years, the principles behind migrations, particularly women, aren't limited to economic factors. The presupposition is that Filipina women aren't leaving the Philippines out of circumstance. Comparatively, they left their home country out of personal choice to exercise their female agencies.

This article would like to discuss the impetus of Filipina women's transient migrations. I aim to discuss the key questions: What prompts them to migrate, and what challenges do they face in this period of transitoriness? 2. When they enter this state of liminality, how does she search for a sense of belonging? Furthermore, how does this period of transience empower Filipina women's agencies?

II. Background of the Study

1. *Filipina Transient Migrants*

Filipina/Filipino overseas workers (OFW) have long been studied through the lens of migration and the related challenges of their permanent settlements, adaptation, and bouts of assimilation, particularly in the West. Since the 1980s, the Philippines has seen large migration movements, and such examples were the result of the nursing and caregiving sector crisis in the United States that propelled highly trained nurses in the Philippines to immigrate and work for American hospitals and move there permanently, another example was the labor migration of women entertainers in Japan in early 1980s and continued until early 2000s. Currently, there are nearly two million OFWs all around the globe. While migration studies often look at more traditional forms of migration. I would like to engage in the emerging and often overlooked situation of transient migrant experiences, particularly of Filipina transient migrants.

Transient Migrants, as Niu postulated, are "contracted professional, scientific and technical migrants who may move quite often in nation-states" (87). The essence of transient migrations comes from the concept of "temporariness" or "sojourns," an individual that is passing through and can't be categorized as an immigrant by nature, as their life trajectories can either move towards another destination or back home. Their state of liminality excludes them from the concepts of permanence and settlements in their host or home countries. This form of migration seemingly reverberations a world increasingly and rapidly becoming globalized. "The presence of transient migrants on time-structured work contracts has paradoxically become a permanent feature of globalizing cities in Asia, and a compelling force in driving urban diversity" (Shin and Yeoh).

Filipina transient migrants in this article are those that left the Philippines because of studying abroad, working overseas on a contractual basis, and working temporarily in the West with either a plan to stay or return home. It also includes those in extended periods of travel somewhere else for longer than six months. I intend to focus on the transitory migrant experiences of Filipinas in particular and choose them consciously as the center of this article to highlight their gendered experience in their state of "transitoriness."

III. Research Methodology

I utilized a qualitative and thematic approach in analyzing four articles published in the section of Young Blood in Philippine Daily Inquirer, one of the premier leading newspapers in the Philippines

1. This is Why We Leave You by Pauline Araki
2. Leaving Home by Clarrise Peralta
3. For the Fearless Millenials OFW by Ericka Louise Guck Cayton

4. The Big Move by Maria Sabandal

Braun and Clarke argue that "Reflexive thematic analysis is an approach to analyzing qualitative data to answer broad or narrow research questions about people's experiences, views and perceptions, and representations of a given phenomena" (2017). A gendered approach in analyzing the multidimensional cases of migration from the Philippines considering the political, social and economical aspects of such a phenomenon is applied in thematizing texts used in this study. Analyzing these essays, will hopefully provide a delineation, whilst limited conspectus, of the Filipina transient migrant.

IV. Analysis

Filipina Transient Migrants on Leaving the Philippines as a Matter of Choice

In the Filipino social discourse, leaving the Philippines in exchange for living abroad and searching for greener pastures is the ultimate display of betrayal and abandonment. Betrayal of the promise of giving back your skills and talents for what once was the country that raised you and has given you your education and competencies. Of abandonment of your family, your friends, and colleagues that provide you with your comfort zone and give you your sense of security. Such notions always situate the Filipina amid the question of nationalism and loyalty. Evangelista argues that "we live in a borderless world where leaving one's country is not so much more of abandonment but an extension of identity" The argument "That nationalism isn't bound by time or place… that people move to create new nations yet remain as who they essentially are" (Evangelista). In recent years, the tumultuous political regime and economic conditions in the Philippines seem to leave very few notions of nationalism as reasons for staying in the Philippines.

Filipinas are consciously and proactively finding ways to find work abroad with echoes of anger and resentment towards their current social situation. Ariake, Peralta, and Sabandal resonate with such thoughts "In all my years of living here on earth, I have realized that patriotism does not pay the bills…I took the obvious logical next step: I've decided to work abroad soon" (Ariake). "Some things lead us to believe that going abroad is our best option for a better life. And these are the motivations that see us through the most difficult times in pursuing our loftiest ambitions" (Peralta). "My parents cannot stand the lifestyle in Manila anymore. As the only one living in the Philippines, I not only agree with them but the fact that the Philippines is no longer my home" (Sabandal).

The Philippines' economic conditions were the primary reason Filipina women left the country. However, the past decades have seen shifting migration trends since the early 1970s, from the post-political climate after martial law to being lured to the nursing profession boom in the United States and eventually the height of entertainers profession openings in Japan. Asis argues that "In the Philippines, a deeply rooted and pervasive culture of migration has made moving abroad common, acceptable—even desirable—as an option or strategy for a better life" (1).

In the recent migration trends, as echoed in the perspective of younger generations, while some primary reasons for migrating abroad can be generally concluded with the desire for a better life, other factors include the resentment towards the corruption in the government, the transportation infrastructure and the environmental conditions in the Philippines that propelled them to find ways to leave the country. In the 1980s and 1990s, Filipina labor migrants were concluded as individuals who were forced to work as domestic helpers in Hongkong or caregivers in the West. While this may seem true still more in marginalized communities and individuals, leaving the country was a conscious, informed decision, particularly for the generation of educated individuals and skilled migrants with technical skills.

In this State of Temporariness: Who are We? and Where do we Belong?

While the sense of in-betweenness has always been the internal tension in migrants, the sense of un-belonging becomes more prominent in the state of transience while migrants move in and out of their home and host nations. Adapting and re-adapting to each cultural expectation pose a form of disconnect, a question of identity, and a struggle to belong. However, as Gomes elucidated, transient migrants use different coping mechanisms such as "a range of interrelated everyday activities to make a home for themselves in their respective host nations" (23). Gomes also emphasizes that the transient migrants have "experiences of diversity, with some coming from multicultural and multilingual backgrounds" (23). making them resilient in the constantly changing cultural context they navigate in their everyday lives.

In the Philippines, the context of leaving the Philippines coexists with the notion of betraying the country that fed you, nurtured you, and educated you. This betrayal looms over every migrant and transient migrant in one way or another. In the face of truth, nationalism and patriotism or the lack thereof is a word thrown out in discourses of why there were OFWs almost everywhere in the world. Filipino/na who desire to seek a better life, one that they could not have in their homeland. Yet the struggle to belong seems a distant haze between two cultures where they exist. The host nation continuously alienates them from their own culture as what every migrant is and will always be an outsider, while in their home country, their communities alienate them as they've changed as an individual both in their way of life and their way of thinking, one that could not be fathomed anymore by their families nor their former social peers and communities.

The Filipina transient migrant continues to exist in the cradle of two cultures. One that accepts her for the neoliberal notions of investing in human capital and such would use her skills, talent, and brilliance all in the name of capitalism. The other, her home, or what was once her home which she doesn't know any more or struggles to live in whenever she comes back, continues to mock her with the betrayal of her country in exchange for offering her talents and skills somewhere instead of her homeland. The struggle ceases to end and belonging remains an alien concept and one that she has to come to terms with, that she may or may not find at all.

Empowering Women's Agencies in the state of transience

"Women's agency includes the ability to set goals and work on a series of actions to achieve such goals without the limitations of gender and to participate in decision makings both private and public life" (Chang et al.). While measuring women's agency may be difficult to quantify, direct indicators of women's agencies can be presumably categorized into four frameworks "Power Within, household decision making, freedom of movement, freedom from violence" (Chang et al.). Filipina transient migrant women's agency falls within the two categories "power within" and the "freedom of movement"; the former can be defined as the intrinsic ability and belief of women in their capabilities to decide for themselves. It is also the power to achieve them on their terms (Change et al.). The latter is "a woman's ability to choose where to go and when a key manifestation of agency" (Chang et al.).

Peralta, Araki, and Cayton resonate with the indication of their agency by "power within" (Chang et al.). in terms of their ability to decide for themselves and to work on their goals, their knowledge, and belief in themselves presumably emerge from their discernible self-reliance. Such characteristics enable women to enact their own agencies. However, it could also be argued that to achieve this state and act on it is a challenge as one's goals and ambitions are interlinked to one's social class, financial status, and social networks. Peralta, Araki, and Cayton's perspectives clearly indicate their social and educational background. Coming from well-to-do families with access to good education and financial resources, their agencies are more empowered than most Filipina transient migrants who don't have the same access to opportunities that they have due to limited education and available means. While "power within" (Chang

et al.). is a strong indicator of women's agencies and a reflection of most Filipina transient migrant agencies' enactments, it doesn't encompass those whose decisions are influenced by family background, religion, and financial means. It can be concluded that the "power within" (Chang et al.). is subjective and could mean different things to many women considering the intersectionality of gender, class and power.

Another woman's agency that is empowered by this state of transitoriness is the freedom of movement; these Filipina proactively decide when and where they will migrate. Peralta conveys that once she finishes her studies, she will move to the United States to find a job or continue studying (1). While Cayton's family, who is also residing in Singapore, allows her to move there at any time she finds convenient (1). The ability to earn more and live independently also influences the power to move anywhere else and their diverse backgrounds give them the confidence to migrate and find jobs.

Whilst these views reflect a small number of Filipina's perspectives on the state of transience. I must emphasize that this doesn't generalize the status of all Filipina transient migrants. We can't disregard that the experiences of Filipina transient migrants varies, considering that these two indicators of women's agencies are primarily influenced by factors such as gender, class, and power.

IV. Conclusions

Filipina women find themselves unfulfilled with the quality of their lives in the Philippines, the sense of belonging, the strong family ties, the career stability, and the privilege of working in a country with a high rank in closing the gender gap may seem enough to make them stay. However, the prospect of better life quality superseded all that. Leaving the Philippines for them is a conscious, informed choice. Notwithstanding if it is for a short-term study, temporary employment, or a job hunt per se. They've experienced difficulty finding permanent jobs, extending visa durations, and a fair share of racial discrimination. Furthermore, in this period of liminality, they created a microcosm of their own Philippines wherever they were, found some sense of belonging in these communities, and were comforted in sharing their disdain, longing, and ambivalence towards the Philippines and Filipino nationalism. For most Filipina transient migrants, leaving the Philippines is a tour de force in empowering their agencies.

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Papers of 9th International Conference on Gender & Women's Studies 2022
(978-1-988652-46-7)

Mothers under Crises in Japan: Despairing, Subversive, Empathic and Hilarious

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Abstract

The relationship between the ideology of motherhood and the lived experiences of actual mothers has been contentious in Japan. Historically, Japanese mothers in varying situations have always had to negotiate their social position within the patriarchal structure. Such struggles are all the more prevalent under a crisis, as illuminated in ethnographies of Tohoku mothers after the Fukushima nuclear disaster. In face of the looming danger of radiation and contamination, women's anxiety, fear, and the resulting social actions have created a venue in which women empower themselves and make their voices heard, although oftentimes traditional gender ideology along with neoliberal motherhood hinder their political engagements. Similarly, under the threat of COVID-19, mothers—the guardian of the very home under the stay-home regime—were put under unrealistic expectations of having to juggle their first, second, third (emotional labor), and now fourth (home-schooling) shifts. The women's despairing voices have filled social media; by sending and receiving empathic and supportive comments to each other, isolated mothers at times create a digital common where they together climb off the pedestal of motherhood, laughing and crying at the impossibility of their burdens. Through examining such different types of mothers' reactions against crises in Japan, this paper highlights the agency exercised by women who carve out an alternative space through empowerment, empathy and also tongue-in-cheek humor, however liminal it might be.

Key Words: *Japanese mothers; crisis; agency; social media*

Introduction: What Crises Reveal

The pandemic has hit everyone, but not in an equal manner. In as early as September 2020, *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* issued a special volume, "Vulnerable Populations under COVID-19 in Japan" with ethnographic pieces that vividly depicted the renewed precarities experienced by rough sleepers, migrants, and refugees among many during the pandemic. David H. Slater, the editor, says in the Introduction, "There are different degrees of vulnerability in any society, and even though we know surprisingly little about the patterns of infection on the individual level (who dies, who survives), if we adopt a broader perspective, the effects on different populations and their correlations to different levels of exposure are more predictable" (Slater 2020).

Among such vulnerable populations are women. In 2020, suicide rates increased considerably more among women (83 %) than men (22 %), and the underlying cause is said to be the severe financial precarity that stems from the high proportion of female "irregular" labor (Pesek 2020). There are also those who fell victim to domestic violence—"a shadow pandemic"—(Ando 2020), and those who were deprived of mobility and exposed to isolation and exploitation, as experienced by migrant women (Ogaya 2020).

One other significant group is mothers. The "stay-home" policy during the pandemic has hit most intensely those who are supposed to be the guardian of that home. While there are super moms who create conducive work and study environments for their husbands and children, cook immunity-boosting meals, and even hand-sew masks, many others' lives could not be farther from such ideals. Many Japanese mothers—especially single mothers—find themselves despairing at the continuous juggling of taking

measures to prevent contracting the coronavirus and staying on top of their work, home management, and childrearing (Okubo 2022; Osumi 2022).

However, such mothers' vulnerability, hardship and despair under the crisis is nothing but a *déjà vu* in Japan. Every time Japan is struck by crisis—be it natural disaster, nuclear meltdown, national security threat or pandemic—the job of ensuring that the public calamity does not seep into the private home falls to mothers. They are expected to make sure that their family members are okay even when they themselves may not be. Neoliberal economic policies since the 2000s have heightened this pressure; women are expected to shoulder the double burden of paid work and care work as a self-managing, self-responsible citizen subject without much public support. What actions do women take in the midst of such desperation, and what are the sociopolitical implications of such actions? What do crises reveal about mothering in Japan? Below, through drawing upon existing ethnographic research as well as my own social media analysis, this paper explores the ways in which women tackle the impossible burden of motherhood and crisis management in contemporary Japan.

Mothers and Motherhood—A Contested Relationship

The ideology of "Good Wife, Wise Mother (*ryosai kenbo*)" has long been pivotal when discussing Japanese womanhood. Throughout Japanese modern history, this image of the domestic, docile and self-sacrificing Japanese wife/mother—a historical construct—existed continuously (Koyama 2012). Japan's post-war economic miracle, to take one moment in Japan's modern history, has often been attributed to this gendered division of labor: the prevailing picture is of middle-class, white-collar salaried men, who embody hegemonic masculinity, being cared for by a "good wife, wise mother" at home (Uno 1991), by "office ladies" at work (Ogasawara 1998), and by bar hostesses and sex workers at night scenes (Allison 1994). As the nation prospered, the shadow work that the women performed was rarely acknowledged, and social discrimination along with economic disparity between women and men remain profound in Japan.

However, it would be to oversimplify the matter to assume that Japanese women have indeed been submissive and powerless, a mere "Good Wife, Wise Mother." There has been a long and rich history of feminism—or multiple *feminisms*—in Japan (Bullock, Kano and Welker 2018; Dales 2009), and women's realities are far too complex to be summarized with the confining ideology only. In fact, full-time, professional housewives who devote themselves to ensuring/improving their husband's and children's well-being have occupied only a limited segment of the privileged Japanese population even in the miraculous economic prosperity of the 1970s and 1980s. There have been rural, farming women (Bernstein 1983) and female factory workers (Roberts 1994), to name but a few, who may aspire to live a "Good Wife, Wise Mother" life like their urban, middle-class counterparts, but all in vain. Obviously, for many Japanese women, being a "Good Wife, Wise Mother" is an ideal, an unattainable dream that is far from their realities.

That is, in Japan—as everywhere else—, the category of "wife/mother" clearly has entailed economic, social, regional, and other disparities, and the lived experiences of actual mothers often jars with the popular ideology of motherhood in Japan. Robin LeBlanc (1999), through a long-term ethnography of political movements initiated by suburban housewives, highlights how the women themselves re-signify the "Good Wife, Wise Mother" image. The women in LeBlanc's study emphasize their "regular housewife" identity despite their serious and time-consuming engagement with out-of-home political activities that defy the image. The label has a stigmatizing potential in the male dominated political world too, but the women themselves continue to adhere to it, "to make short-cut reference to their commitments and expertise, to the quality of their contributions to a truly humane life" (LeBlanc 1999, p. 32). LeBlanc calls this slow but steady approach "bicycle citizenship."

Today, this complex relationship between mothers and motherhood cannot be understood fully without considering the effects of neoliberalism. Mari Miura (2015) argues that the so-called Womenomics

policy in the 2000s, also known as *Josei Katsuyaku Suishin* (officially translated as "Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace") blends neoliberalism with statist family policy. Contradictory as it may sound, women are encouraged to contribute to the nation's economy, still assuming familial obligations as a responsible wife/mother. Under the scheme, some women do "participate and advance" in society, engaging in a high-paying and demanding job like elite men, while continuing with their household duties. However, those who cannot live up to the model—single mothers, disabled mothers, mothers with less education and in precarious work situations—are not entitled to the rewards of the system. Their social marginalization is subsequently attributed not to a lack of public support but to their insufficient abilities and efforts; the logic of self-responsibility surfaces. This "neoliberal motherhood," Miura concludes, works to benefit only a small segment of privileged women *without* resolving the fundamental gender inequalities at home, at work and in society at large.

The contentious relationship between ideology and reality, therefore, takes on even more complex implications at the present time. Women may succumb to the neoliberal citizen-subject position, but at the same time, they could act against or beyond it in a seemingly ineffective but strategic manner—as "bicycle citizens." Especially under a crisis, women, already engaging in the impossible balancing act, may stumble and/or rise up to a new position as we see below.

Mothers under Nuclear Crisis

The drastic societal changes that followed the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and the subsequent Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011 included citizens' heightened awareness toward the dangers of radiation. The invisible threat and the ensuing panic created divisions among people. David H. Slater, Rika Morioka and Haruka Danzuka (2014) depict how young mothers with children in the affected areas experienced dire confusion as to what to eat and what not to eat. One mother recounts, "Everything was a decision, something you had to think about and decide. You could not just live. I just wanted to live normally. It was so exhausting." The situation intensified after those mothers who feared and avoided contaminated food were blamed for fanning *fuhyo higai* (harmful rumors) against Fukushima products, a heavily agricultural area. Mothers were put in a "twisted situation that people tell me that in order to be a good wife, and support the family, I have to expose my children to radiation," to quote another mother. The authors elicit those voices of struggling women and illuminate the silencing mechanisms at work in their local communities and beyond.

Aya Hirata Kimura (2016) also focuses on how mothers' concerns with their children's health were pathologized after the nuclear disaster. They were often called "radiation brain moms" whose supposed irrationality, hysteria, and unscientific minds—all traditionally "feminine" traits—were the target of ridicule. The vigilant ways in which the mothers tried to take care of their family might have been praised as the exemplary acts of a "Good Wife, Wise Mother"; however, in reality, those mothers were ostracized. Kimura argues, "A proper citizen-subject is increasingly understood to be a rational, aspirational and appropriately gendered one who would understand contamination primarily as scientific risk issue to be handled without disturbing existing social, economic, and gender orders" (p. 13). The mother as a citizen-subject is, once again, framed as a contradiction.

Despite the negative labeling, Kimura observes, some mothers decided to organize politically. In the "safe school lunch movement," concerned mothers in Fukushima and other regions collectively measured radiation levels of local food, held study-group meetings, and lobbied for revisions of food policies at public schools. Those mothers were strategic; they first fortified themselves with scientific knowledge and data, while second, presenting themselves as "mothers," an authority in child rearing. Third, they utilized their feminine appeal, distancing themselves from the old-fashioned image of angry feminists/activists and instead appearing stylish and fashionable; some even appeared in the high-end

fashion magazine *VERY* in 2013 as "activist *joshi* (girls)" Their efforts bore fruit in the end; some schools and local municipalities agreed to monitor contamination level of school lunches.

However, according to Kimura, the women's activism was not entirely successful. The formal policy revisions were done excluding the very mothers who raised the issues in the first place. Also, such citizen activism was not always sustainable as some women with young children and/or elderly parents in need of care might end up prioritizing pressing needs of their family members over political engagements. Most importantly, the "feminine" strategy was a double-edged sword: "The drawback is that adherence to respectability and hegemonic femininity often muddles political positioning. The confines of hegemonic femininity seem to compel activist *joshi* to make only a subdued criticism of the nuclear village" (Kimura 2016, p. 98). The women's activism is inevitably "muddled" and "subdued" as well as silenced and reluctant.

This mixed, ambivalent nature is also emphasized by Tessa Morris-Suzuki (2020), who also conducted participant observation in citizen's activism in post-disaster Tohoku. Rather than evaluating its immediate effectiveness, she locates the phenomenon within a longitudinal context. That is, she compares the citizen's acts with those in the long history of "informal life politics" in Japan throughout the twentieth century:

> *In the short term, these small-scale autonomous actions were responses to disaster, but in the long term they were made possible because they could build on the deep history of informal life politics which we have explored in these pages. The legacies of earlier cooperatist, humanist and alternative economic ideas, and of experimentation with grassroots community building and social education, continue in quiet ways to reshape Japanese society in the twenty-first century. (Morris-Suzuki 2020, p. 197)*

That is, such fluid, eclectic, experimental, exploratory, and bottom-up politics run through the modern history of Japan; they might appear fleeting and trivial individually, but the historical accumulation is unignorable.

As such, women's "living politics" (Morris-Suzuki 2020) rarely follow a linear, straightforward path as might be expected in the conventional, formal—that is, masculine—politics. Rather, in an informal, unpremeditated, quiet and slow way, women curve out their own spaces, albeit liminal and muddled, to voice out their fear and frustration (Rosenberger 2014). The consequences are inevitably mixed, and it is such ambivalent politics that the analysis below focuses on.

Pandemic and Mothers' Digital Common

For an ethnographer like myself, exploring what living politics emerge among women under the COVID-19 pandemic is an urgent but difficult endeavor in a situation where social distancing prohibits almost everything that is necessary in fieldwork. One cannot immerse herself in the research field, see and hear what takes place in front of her eyes, or most importantly, engage herself in the social interactions in the local settings. Physical isolation is an academic challenge as well as a social issue.

The researcher's dilemma aside, in fact, the mothers' despairing voices have been spilling out of private, domestic settings worldwide. Andrea O'Reilly (2020) has been one of the first to hear out the mothers under the stay-home regime and act on it; in as early as May 2020, she created a Facebook group called "Mothers and COVID-19," a digital platform for mothers in Canada and beyond to share their experiences that they may not be able to express otherwise. Mothers in different areas, occupations and positions write in and back, commiserating their lives filled with multiple shifts—the usual first and second, third (emotional and intellectual mother labor) and now, fourth (home schooling)—all within a confining

space. O'Reilly draws on one mother's words, "trying to function in the unfunctionable," to argue that it is not individual women's lack of ability that is creating the situation; rather, the situation itself is impossible, unsustainable and unfunctionable to begin with. The mothers had already been managing an unattainable workload, considering the never-ending nature of care work and ever-demanding pressure of neoliberal job markets; therefore, when a crisis hits, it is only natural that they collapse. O'Reilly emphasizes that it is time that women's unpaid care work should start to count.

In Japan, although a complete school shutdown was instituted only from March to May 2020, mothers were put under the same impossibility; more housework, including constant sanitizing and health-monitoring; curtailed or canceled daycare services for pre-school age children; not being able to call on grandparents for help because of safety concerns; supporting and managing their children's partial home-schooling; negotiating remote work hours and the use of online working equipment, connectivity and space at home with their husband and children who were also working or studying remotely. Emiko Ochiai (2020; 2020) conducted a large-scale survey in April 2020 and argues, "The reality is that stay-home increases women's burden and deprives them of sleep, and at times, job. Staying home is not free of charge. It is mostly women who pay the cost." While 36 % of women with children answered that they have had difficulties with housework and childcare, only 15 % of their male counterparts responded the same. 31 % of the mothers have experienced deteriorating family relationships whereas only half as many fathers felt so. Junko Nishimura (2022) too argues, based on survey results from November 2020 and from May to June 2021, that it is wives who are more likely to cover reduced kinship support during the pandemic. Also, while women with children have come to use online shopping and delivery and takeaway meals more frequently to reduce their cooking labor, their shopping frequency increased. Meanwhile, their male counterparts did not indicate the same results.

Behind those statistical facts are the mothers' voices, similar to those in O'Reilly's study, that reverberate in virtual spaces. While breastfeeding, queuing at supermarkets, and even in the bathroom, mothers in Japan have engaged in virtual conversation with each other through Facebook, LINE, Instagram, and Twitter. The digital comraderies have expanded beyond local mama-friend circles; sending messages or just giving Likes to each other's posts, they even bond with strangers. Women with differing backgrounds whose paths would not have crossed in the face-to-face world come together in virtual communities, where "motherhood is at the center of the discourse—as lived experience, as complicated identity, as institution, as agency," as Laura Major (2017) observes in a working mothers' Facebook group in Israeli.

Hashtags on Twitter are one way through which mothers have created such a digital common. Since 2018, a series of hashtags with #*Meiga de Manabu* X (X Learned through Great Art) has become popular among Twitter users in Japan. They are a meme of sort, in which users caption a famous artistic masterpiece with a mundane story that is familiar to other people in the community. One of the most tweeted and viewed has been "#*Meiga de Manabu Shufugyo* (Housewife's Work Learned through Great Art)," where housewives—fulltime or not—creatively represent their toilsome work behind the closed door. One viral tweet dubbed Da Vinci's *Last Supper* "When all my husbands' relatives came," and another dubbed Picasso's *Crying Woman*, "Stepped on a Lego block." Delacroix's Liberty represents a mother who embarks onto the Twitter world after her child finally falls asleep, and an image of Psyche looking into a golden box is a mother finding a month-old unwashed lunchbox in her child's room. Later, the tweets were compiled in a book and a sequel, edited by an art-history professor (Tanaka 2018; 2019).

In the memes, the world-famous artworks are stripped of their aesthetic, religious or philosophical significance, and now donned with the never-ending burdens of wives and mothers. Although they may seem like no more than light laughs, those memes twist the normative meanings of wifehood and motherhood. By exposing the messy realities of housework in everyday scenes and laughing at them, the

tweets mock the unsustainable expectations imposed on women. Indeed, the audience—especially non-mothers—get a glimpse of what mothering is really like through the humorous tweets.

During the emergency school-shutdown, amid such despair, some mothers created a new hashtag, "#Childcare during School/Daycare Shutdown Learned through Great Art." Now, the Holy Mother and Child of Michelangelo's *Pieta* represent the universal stay-home-with-children exhaustion under the pandemic. Munch's iconic *Scream* is dubbed, "I have to teach my kids now?!" and Vermeer's *Milkmaid,* "When I'm most thankful for Kellogg's." Angels flying around in classical religious paintings are associated with children destroying the house, refusing to be dressed, or trying to sneak into a Zoom business meeting. Sacred figures despairing are mothers longing for an Uber Eats delivery, a short nap, some silence.

In a different and yet connected context, Liz Sills (2017) discusses the subversive effects of witty hashtags, analyzing #Muslimrage, a movement among Muslims that raised objections to a xenophobic image in one issue of *Newsweek*. Using the exact same wording, protesters tweeted about a funny, mundane scene from their own life—including the viral "Lost your kid Jihad at the airport, can't yell for him #Muslimrage" tweet—to reject the aggressive and violent image that the magazine evoked. Sills, employing McLuhan's concept of the "icon," argues that "a simple joke published as a tweet within a limited microblogging community might seem to have little power to combat such an immense amount of cultural angst, but its simplicity is deceptive, and actually lies at the root of its true power" because, she continues, "the congregation around the icon allows the individual to create their own counterculture. Small-scale autonomy becomes collective discourse of defiance" (Sills 2017, p. 168-9). In a similar manner, the Japanese mothers' unheard voices are now piercing the world of the pandemic, making their burden visible for once, a sign of collective—albeit subtle—defiance.

Furthermore, hashtags create an empathetic field. There are comments such as "This is me," "I couldn't agree more," and "I'm not alone in this," to create a sense of togetherness. Meredith Clark (2020) reflects upon her own experience with the Twitter community of Black women and Women of Color in academia and argues, "Social media gives us the ability to be vulnerable, to drop the mask in public in ways that we dare not attempt among members of our cohort or in front of faculty" (p. 271). Just the sheer number of tweets with the same hashtag is an encouragement because "the hashtag signaled that others were there: listening, sympathetic, and even experiencing similar struggles" (p. 274). Similarly, if a mother should expose her inability to keep up with the crisis in real life, she could immediately be criticized as a bad mother and/or a bad community member, as experienced by Fukushima mothers. However, online, they could find their comrades. This is a nameless community where one can participate with mere thumb movements, and the very easiness, lightheartedness and anonymity can at times be a lifeline for isolated stay-home mothers.

This smartphone approach, just like the bicycle approach in Robin Leblanc's study above, does not aim to overturn the neoliberal gender order at once; the mothers may be too exhausted to even envision such a political dream. Their tongue-in-cheek approach could also be made light of from the viewpoint of traditional, coherent, serious activism (if there is any such). And yet, inadvertently, their words constitute an informal politics of feminism that creates a safe space for mothers to breathe in, while rejecting normative expectations, albeit temporarily and partially.

Conclusion: A Rupture to Normality

There are strong similarities between the Fukushima nuclear crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic; the invisible and unmeasurable threat, the information confusion, and the resulting pressure to manage and care for the self. Mothers in both situations are positioned as primary caregivers without the public support they need. Neoliberalism discreetly renders crisis management a private matter, and structural sexism

ensures that women are essentially the ones who should shoulder it. Even when women perform the role of crisis-manager-cum-caregiver, they may be criticized as an inadequate member of the society. The inherent contradiction between their social positions as a neoliberal citizen-subject and a women/mother is a trap.

And yet, from within their immediate realities of piled dishes, unfolded laundry, and screaming children, mothers do sometimes create their own means of subversion. Some may organize collectively and raise their voices, while others may pave their way through the ridicule and criticism, using their role strategically to their own ends. Yet others humorously and discreetly expose their inability to keep up with normative images and expectations of femininity. Either way, the trap of neoliberal motherhood is still there; however, the women could slip away from it collectively.

The analysis above demonstrates that the actions of mothers in Japan can be creative and muddled, reluctant and subversive all at once. In the midst of this crisis, they constitute an important rupture in the current neoliberal gender regime—a refusal to go back to the unfunctional normality.

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Landays as Anonymous Forms of Sexual Expression for Afghan Women

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Abstract

Afghan proverbs often use kus (female genital/vagina), a derogatory term in their language, to refer to an Afghan woman, elucidating the patriarchal society they live in. The Pakhtun male honour lies in his control over the women of his household, as they are thought to be quick to tamper with their family's honour. The flame sparked within these imprisoned individuals is expressed in the single couplet landays they write or recite. Sung to the beat of a hand drum, this style of poetry dabbles around the subjects of love, grief, war, and homeland. Humour is a survival skill they use to compensate for their suffering, evident in their poetry, which often jokes about men's pusillanimity in bed. In their landays, women talk about their bodies, using the utmost erotic vocabulary to seduce their lovers. The women behind these poems are unknown; landays are either orally documented or are merely anonymous scraps of papers written by illiterate women. Passed on through generations, this art survives because it belongs to no one, a collective plight of Afghan women. This paper explores the anonymity of landays, the reason for their survival, and hence its potency. Additionally, studying the vocabulary employed within them, talking about the female body, power, and sexuality. The expression she uses breaks the layers of the patriarchy she has known all her life and the mockery she makes of her lover, a male figure.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Afghan women, Landays, Sexuality

Introduction

A colossal food spread, and blaring gun fires are what a newborn boy is greeted with. However, within the same strictly patriarchal Afghan society, the birth of a girl is never an occasion for celebration. Elders and other family members wish the parents of this newborn girl better luck for next time or comment on the fact that they already have enough sons and should worry not. Being second-grade citizens of society that they are considered to be, girls are raised with the constant reminder to respect the male figure, even if that is her younger brother. Honour, shame, and *purdah* are the slogans of her life that she must respect at all costs, always at the expense of her freedom.

Such is the Afghan narrative framed according to popular discourse and is maybe rooted in some degree of truth. However, it fails to acknowledge that patriarchy is nevertheless a multifaceted issue, and within it may exist cracks through which feminist and queer imagination emerge; one such example is *landays*, also known as *tapay*. Therefore, this article makes an effort to trace feminist and queer emergences in Afghan culture.

Significance, Purpose and Methodology

Our view of the position of Afghan women is heavily influenced by Eurocentric and postcolonial ideologies, alongside the generalised representation of Afghan societies developed by the previously occupied American forces.

We perceive these women as being suppressed by the Afghan patriarchy that controls them and the tribal conduct that places them under numerous restrictions. While that might be a perception observed from a distance, it disparages the ability of these women to rise against cultural norms.

This paper analyses and studies a form of resistance initiated by Afghan women to lament themselves anonymously by producing, singing and circulating single couplet poems or *landays*. This form of expression establishes that these women are not fearful of breaking societal expectations and are, therefore, not frail beings.

The direct focus of this study is based on determining the status of a particular gender within a society. It, therefore, requires immersion into the way of life and conduct of the specific community. Further, it attempts to study and understand a form of folk literature that continues to exist today and its rebellious nature. Hence, a qualitative phenomenological design was thought best for this study. To be more precise, content analysis was employed to peruse and inspect objectively; books, historical literature, journal articles and transcriptions of interviews conducted by me with natives of the area.

Pashtunwali **and its Origin**

A set of tribal codes binds the Pashtun or Afghan society, *Pashtunwali*, which is often more binding than the ruling government, practised so religiously that it is almost perceived as an identity. This legal structure is based on the concept of 'community' and 'family', which successfully discuss any authorised communal decision, demonstrating an idea of democracy. But as Tapper (2013) points out the irony, this 'community' is merely a community of men who established an exalted hierarchal position through their code of conduct.

Historically, legitimacy was never claimed over the Afghans or Pashtun through Shariah; it has always been the secondary code pursued, *Pashtunwali* leading it. Some, however, remain determined over their claim of *Pashtunwali* being driven by Islamic fundamentals. Apart from being a Eurocentric opinion, this is also prevalent amongst Pashtuns, however *Pashtunwali* is a code that predates Islamic times (Riaz 2021).

Like any other, this code of conduct is exhaustive and may vary depending on the tribe and its geographical location. Hospitality (*melmastia*), refuge (*nanawatai*) and revenge (*badal*) are its core values; respect, pride/honour (*ghayrat*) and *purdah* are among the many others (Moghadam 1989).

A virgin woman is an idealised form within the patriarchal Afghan society, valorised further through marriage. This translates to her not expressing her sexual desires in any way, so much so that if she caters to sexual thoughts, she might as well not be a virgin. She does not want to own any word that might prove as a vocabulary for her sexuality – for it questions the purity of her womanhood.

Marital laws of the *Pashtunwali* state that the act of marrying an Afghan woman is a form of barter. Every girl has a price, which depends on her being a virgin and her looks. Brides are either bought with *walwar*, the bride price, or exchanged with another bride. Also known as *adal badal*, where the *walwar* is either eliminated or reduced depending on whether the exchange is 'equal'. If the two to be exchanged are a widow and young girl, the price paid can be more for the young woman who is, presumably, a virgin; hence the difference has to be made up by extra money. According to an informant, a 20-year-old man named Zareen Khan was once engaged to a 4-year-old girl, after which he earned and saved money to have enough to give in *walwar*. Once he was 30 and the girl 14, they were married off. Later, when they bore children, Zareen exchanged his daughter, in *adal badal*, marrying her to a man as old as him and, in return, getting a 15-year-old second wife (H. Jogezai 2021, personal communication, December).

Another form of marriage barter is *baad*, marrying girls off to reinstate honour, resolve conflicts and disputes, including adultery, murder, and rape. Those given in *baad* are treated with the utmost disgrace, often forced to sleep with animals in the barn, among other acts of revenge. They are isolated, physically abused, and insulted in every way possible (Abawe 2021). Nonetheless, respondents reported several other practices, such as women not being allowed to own property or the right to divorce.

Tajwara Achakzai spoke on behalf of her grandmother, who claimed that men also controlled everyday household necessities such as oil and bread. The number of resources given to women by the head of the family was dictated by the number of sons she had. Tajwara's grandmother also recalled that women were not allowed to go to hospitals, whatever medical crisis they may be in (T. Achakzai 2022, personal communication, February).

After conversations with many natives, a conclusion was surely reached; the Afghans and Pashtuns can be divided into an endless number of tribes and subtribes, each pertaining to a different set of rules or *Pashtunwali*. For example, an interviewee belonging to the Jogezai tribe from Pishin reported that *baad* was not performed in their area. Hence it was deduced that the position of women within this society varied according to the area or tribe they belonged to.

As many call Afghanistan the graveyard of several empires, it was occupied by numerous rulers with different values and visions. Abdur Rahman Khan (r. 1880-1901) bought about the arc of modernisation in the country, so the women's position during his time was higher (Fahim Rahimi 2022, personal communication, April). His code of governance was carried forward by his sons, especially his grandson Amanullah Khan (who ruled from 1926-1929), until Habibullah Kalakani broke the line of ruling ancestry. Habibullah and his successor Mohammad Nadir Shah did everything in their power to overthrow all reforms established during the arc of modernisation. After the monarchy fell, increased assistance was received from USSR, the demand for women in the workforce increased, and so did their rights. Unfortunately, after the rise of the Mujahideen and, subsequently, the Taliban, women were yet again bound by strict conservative boundaries.

Today the increase in literacy rate has allowed Pashtun and Afghan societies to be less susceptible to Pashtunwali and question its endless rules. As an informant belonging to the Nasar tribe (a nomadic Pashtun/Afghan tribe) settled in Zhob narrated; a 5-year-old girl given in marriage expressed her grievances, after growing up, to the local court, who in turn sympathised with her. Such is the change brought by evolution and higher education levels (M. Anwar 2022, personal communication, March).

The *Landay*: Her Freedom to Lament

Centuries of tribal conduct exploited the Afghan woman's body, yet within her existed resilience and resistance through music and lyrics. *Landays*, the single twenty-two-syllable couplet poems, echo the unheard voices of Afghan women ever so loudly. Composed of clean and easily understandable language, documented orally and rarely written as its producers are often illiterate women. According to a celebrated theory, this form of poetry owes its roots to the Bronze Age, the arrival of Indo-Aryan caravans in Afghanistan, to be specific.

A *landay* has few formal guidelines, with only twenty-two syllables: nine in the first line and thirteen in the second. Each couplet to end with the sound 'ma' or 'na' but with no need for them to rhyme. Within these minimal restrictions, the Afghan woman laments herself freely. She negates the male control and proposes herself as a woman more than capable of managing her body and emotions, denying the view of her held by the patriarchal Afghan society as 'passively controlled objects' (Anderson 2006). She sings or writes her *landays* without fear, for she knows these anonymous poems belong not only to her but to all

Afghan women suffering from the same pain. It invigorates conversation, especially when these *landays* are sung amongst women, to create a space of communication where they can voice their sentiments. Zulfia Abawe writes, 'Suffering, patience, and endurance are the best qualities of a real Pashtun woman against daily hardships' and the *landays* succour them not to suffer it all in silence (Abawe 2021, p. 35).

Being a verbal poetic form, *landays* have been sung by women or even rarely by men who do so in a female voice. They can be sung to many different musical notes and tunes on various occasions, of course, in a segregated setting. When travelling, ploughing the field, or on joyful occasions such as weddings, these *landays* accompany the Afghan women as their very own weapons. Malala, yet another woman whose weaponry consisted of not only *landays* but literal arms she raised during the Second Anglo-Afghan war. She egged on her people to fight back on the battlefield of Maiwand in 1880 and
led them to victory.

Landays: A Form of Rebellion

With this form of expression, Afghan women attempt to escape the restrictive, conservative society and social norms they are bound by. This is their act of rebellion, questioning and calling out their dysfunctional marriages and using *landays* to create a territory under their control. These women often indulged in extramarital affairs to refute the extremely patriarchal dominance they had to live by —craving for more liberties and power. Sarfraz Khan and Samina further reinstate *landays* as vessels for Pashtun women to 'protest lack of autonomy over their body and desires; condemn objectification and commodification' (Khan & Samina 2016, p. 16). The portrayal of the Afghan woman as a secondary character and an inferior individual is therefore denied as they use *landays* as a performance of reclamation, fighting for and within their accessible spaces. The tantalising nature of this art form is meant to be provocative and garner a response. Hence, creating discourse within the society.

While this act of rebellion might not lead to instant justice, it is passive and continuously manifests the courage to rise within them. Collins asserts that poetry as a form of expression 'gives voice and power to the marginalized' and explains it further as an act of resistance 'first made into language, then into idea, and then into more tangible action' (Collins 2018, p. 138). Hope is what it is, in a more tangible form.

Landays: Vocabulary for the Sexuality of Afghan Women

Louise O. Vasvári, in her article, rightfully defines sexuality in the context of queer theory; she says that sexuality is not only represented through sexual practices but is also 'a constitutive element of social life'. Vasvári also claims that queer theory studies suppressed or unheard voices as being crucial to forming sexual and political identity. Narratives that feature 'heterosexual queers' or individuals who go against hetero-normative practices, such as marriage norms, act as literature for the broader queer theory. Nevertheless, *landays* must be included within such literature (Vasvári 2006).

Empowered women flaunt *landays* despite the gender inequalities and violence they face, thus express subjects of promiscuity in a way that asserts feminine dominance, creating a space for Afghan women to control what is rightfully theirs, their bodies.

> *Gently slide your hand inside my sleeves,*
> *The pomegranates of Kandahar have blossomed, and they are ripe* (Majrouh 2010, p. 33).

In the above *landay,* she talks about her breasts, referring to them as the most famously important fruit grown in Kandahar. She confidently converses about her body part, which she knows entices her lover

or *janan*. Her breasts are her weapon, desired by many hence she speaks of them with the utmost conviction, as she dictates who can hold them. The woman who produced this *landay* or those who sing it identify themselves as subjects of desire, and Foucault (1985) explained that it is by doing so that modern selves are created, and one may find their identity in desire.

> *Brush the dark bangs on my forehead aside, kiss my beauty mark,*
> *It is a fruit from paradise, lucky charm for life* (Majrouh 2010, p. 32).

In this *landay*, she talks about a part of her body insignificant in size but idealises it as being pronounced. A reward for her lover, which she knows will not be found anywhere; therefore, she holds this power over him. It is her body that she knows and feels most comfortable within her *landays*, her intoxicated gaze, nectarine lips, and velvety thighs.

Knowing the taboo that surrounds her talking about sexuality, she does not shy away from speaking about it with savage frankness. Her language is such that shows she takes pleasure in scandalising men by seducing them and taunting their masculinity (Majrouh 2010). She guards the ability to suspend sexual relations with men and therefore uses it as ammunition against the patriarchy. Toying with his honour and dignity, she jokes about his fright while she is the one taking greater risks. She knows very well that her lover has the freedom to escape if they were to get caught, but she does not enjoy this liberty. Yet the Afghan woman continues to cross traditional boundaries and negates her male counterparts' control over her. She does not fear death; instead, she dreads not having lived her life and felt her youth and beauty alongside the pleasures of love. The Afghan woman rises above the patriarchy, challenging and scorning all odds.

> *Come and kiss me without thinking of the danger.*
> *What does it matter if they kill you!*
> *True men always die for the love of a beautiful woman* (Majrouh 2010, p. 8).

Evident within her *landay* is the language of a fearless woman who knows how to stain the masculinity of her lover. With this, she takes hold of the reigns.

> *Is there not a single madman in this village?*
> *My pants, the hue of fire, are burning on my thighs* (Majrouh 2010, p. 7).

She is not afraid to own her lust. She asserts her sexual desire, calling out to her potential lovers who cannot rise to her courage. Griswold (2014) best describes *landays*, 'they are about sex, they are about the size of a husband's manhood-they don't hold back […] they show these women using their feminine power to shame men'. This ritual of creating a mockery of the Afghan man, sometimes with a verbal whip, is a way for these women to feel dominant, to continue to sexualise their bodies while dictating them on their terms.

> *If I stare at you with such great insistence,*
> *It is because in you I see the hint of my next lover* (Majrouh 2010, p. 59).

Losing her lover is not something the Afghan woman fears, as she jokes in this *landay* that she waits for no man and surrenders for no one, a masquerade of hers that maintains authority over her oblivious lover.

> *My body belongs to me;*
> *to others its mastery* (Griswold 2014, p. 87).

This *landay* rightfully blames the patriarchal society for being unable to understand the complexities of her body. It is one where the singer/writer claims all rights over her physical form, which is her passage to this world and only hers to understand and learn. She often describes her body in these *landays* as a flower that buds to fertility. However, here fertility must not be associated solely with the role of childbearing but rather translates to maturity.

> *To my lover I want to sacrifice it all:*
> *The rose of my face, the hourglass of my waist, and my lips so like the rubies of Badarshan* (Majrouh 2010, p. 61).

Here again, she entices her lover with her body, speaking of it and its 'traditional' beauty. Well aware it is what her lover, the Afghan man, most longs for in the darkness of the night when he comes to visit her. As for her husband, she expresses little interest within many other landays and refers to him as the 'little horror'. He is often a much older or minor, not someone she blesses with the consent of her body or enjoys sexual relations with.

Her bangles are another allegory of her womanhood used in her *landays*. Bangles have remained an optimistic symbol for women, especially within south Asia. An emblem of elegance, beauty, and most importantly, femininity.

> *You'll understand why I wear bangles*
> *When you choose the wrong bed in the dark and mine jangle*
> (Griswold 2014, p. 29).

In this piece, she refers to the bangle as her power to lure her lover into bed. In another context, she may refer to it as her identity, which can help her lover find her in the darkness of the night. In either case, the bangles belong to her, and she uses them on her terms. Silence the Afghan woman, cage her, but she continues to use her voice in a way no man can control.

Notice how the language within these *landays* is transitive; such is the language of desire; it emphasises the object and the subject. Often text dictated by patriarchal discourse, written by men, fails to do so and only situates female desire within an 'object position'. Additionally, within many of their *landays,* Afghan women employ the genderless second person, leaving their gender and that of their beloved unknown. To delineate, she then uses lexical devices such as repeatedly eroticising certain body parts and mentioning 'disruptive taboo features' (Vasvári 2006, p. 7).

It is intriguing to observe how Afghan women contribute to the feminist theory despite having no access to adequate knowledge, which may have built within her the nuances to question and protest autonomy over her body; she is nevertheless part of the movement, as she declares in her own words. As Kulick, Cameron, Harvey and Shalom may put it, sexuality exists or has meaning due to the discourse that produces and circulates it, which is through language (Cameron et al. 2003; Harvey et al. 1997).

Landays: The importance of their anonymity

A *landay* is a poem that Afghan women are not afraid to recite, for it belongs not to one but acts as a collective form of expression (Pulugurtha 2020). *Landays* give not only individual women a voice but a joint platform to many by repeating, imitating, and recirculating. 'Encourages the giving of voice, strength, and energy to other women who may not otherwise engage poetry as a form of expression' (Collins 2018, p. 145). They often act to bring the Afghan women together, as they sing *landays* when they sit together creating an audience that continues to grow, generation after generation.

Historically, women's request for a public voice was confused with 'female sexual transgression'; such was the case with Afghan women. They transgressed not only because of the content of their *landays* but also for establishing a public voice (Guruswamy 1999).

The concept of 'ownership' within the narrative of these women's lives is heavily patriarchal. Hence it is not something they wish to practice or act upon. Queer theorist Margaret Davies reiterates how the idea of a stable self is thought to be dependent on the illusion of ownership and property (Davies 1999). The queer theory aims to question the concept of 'being' on a fundamental level and problematic linkages between 'being' and 'having'; therefore, the idea is required to be revised. While Davies's argument is about self-ownership, it helps one understand the controversial nature of the concept of property. As she goes on further to explain that self-ownership may validate selling 'parts of oneself'. To put this reasoning into the context of this paper, ownership of a text valorises it; instead of a form of expression, it becomes an object sold for its said 'value'(Klapeer et al. 2015). Renaissance artists kept their text in manuscript form on purpose; during that period, the manuscript culture was considered sophisticated compared to the 'vulgar print' (Guruswamy 1999).

The anonymity of *landays* gives Afghan women a sense of safety, erasing any hesitation they might feel of being judged or their character or womanhood being questioned. They produce or recite in freedom which is the best tool an artist needs, allowing the vulgarity and rawness of these women's words to come through.

Conclusion

Behind these narratives of a patriarchal Afghan/Pashtun society resides a fierce and savage woman confined by circumstances who, if given the opportunity, will rise to fight the patriarchy. The *landays* provide the vocabulary for her sexuality that ascertains her robustness and ability to create change from nothingness. Studying them reveals this figure behind the veil, one that gave rise to queer and feminist discourse within Afghan culture.

No matter how strict the rules are in principle, the poetry, unique to Pashtun /Afghan women, can express with total honesty and lyricism. These twenty-two syllable verses of two lines express their deepest despair, longing, anger, and need.

Landays are immortal but know that their anonymity contributes to their longevity, giving their producers the space to create what they have held within themselves with minimum restrictions. It enables these caged birds to sing communally, allowing their united voices to be so loud that they are bound to be heard.

Be an Afghan woman, unafraid of her grave, living fearlessly, creating a platform for herself and others like her to sing ever so openly of their pain and love. Be an Afghan woman who owns and talks about her body with the utmost confidence, not afraid to complement each body part, as she knows her worth. Be an Afghan woman who sings and creates her beautiful art through *landays*, slowly rising against the walls of the patriarchal society she lives within.

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Contribution of Vegetable Farming to Livelihood Outcomes Among Female and Male Youth in Dodoma City, Tanzania

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Abstract

Vegetable farming in Tanzania can develop gainful employment opportunities that would enable exploit economic innovation and enhancement of equal opportunity for male and female youth. Vegetable farming is more beneficial among youth than cereal crops because it has short incubation period, requires minimal land space, chances of crop failure is minimal and has readily available market. However, the difference in livelihood outcomes among male and female youth has hardly attracted scholarly attention. This suggested the need for this study which used the sustainable livelihood framework and convergent parallel mixed methods to examine the contribution of vegetable farming to livelihood outcomes among female and male youth. A two-stage sampling technique was used to select 80 female and 170 male youth respondents and 22 key informants. The first stage involved identification of production areas while respondents were selected in the second stage. Content validity of the youth and key informants' tools was ascertained by extension experts while reliability was determined through a pilot test involving 30 respondents. The reliability coefficient was 0.86α and 0.80α respectively, which were above the 0.70 threshold for acceptable reliability. Using five livelihood indicators a livelihood outcome index was developed. Each indicator was measured by three sub-indicators which were measured in a 3-point Likert scale (low, medium and high livelihood outcomes). Generally, there was no statistically significant relationship between gender and livelihood outcomes in vegetable farming ($(\chi^2 = 2.527$ df = 2; p =0.283). However, the level of participation by the male youth in terms of number of activities they undertook was higher than that of the female youth. Implicitly, female youth terminate ownership of their crops at lower stages of the value chain. Interestingly, a weak impact of vegetable farming was noted in improved human and social capital in such a way that improvement in the livelihoods of youth can only be achieved by cultivating more land. Conclusively, creating ***gender****-responsive agricultural diversification should go beyond numbers in every agricultural intervention to reduce difference to the barest minimum as male youth tend to be domineering.*

Key words: *Livelihood outcomes, Vegetable farming, Female & Male youth*

1.0 Introduction

Gender and agriculture has garnered a lot of attention in recent years among scholars and policymakers. It is argued that, only the agricultural sector has sufficient scale and growth-linkages to significantly provide sustainable livelihoods for the youth given the small and poorly performing industrial sector in Africa. There are exciting opportunities for a new era in agricultural development and rural-urban, production-market linkages (AGRA 2015). However, this demands a more robust understanding of inclusion in value chain development and interventions that distinguish the many dynamic gender, generational and power relations at play in the social context (IFAD 2015). Thus, analyzing "who does what, who has what and who decides what is a valuable approach for understanding inclusion and/or exclusion, social categories, power dynamics and the many identities one person can inhabit. While inclusion is an umbrella term, different categories of youth have different and even conflicting needs and interests. These results into different livelihood outcomes in agriculture among female and male youth (UNICEF 2011). Hence, the

differences need to be understood in order to tailor interventions and to avoid missing whole categories of a population. Without such analysis, one group may be left out of interventions or included under deteriorating conditions, thus contributing to growing inequalities between better-off and poorer groups of youth.

To harness the potential of agricultural sector in providing livelihood opportunities for the youth in Tanzania, several policy strategies have been put in place to create a favourable environment. For instance, the 2016-2021 National Strategy for Youth Involvement in Agriculture emphasizes the provision of agricultural loans and land to entrepreneurial agricultural youth so as to retain them in agriculture. Also establishment of incubation centres such as the 2011 Sokoine University Graduate Enterprise Cooperative (SUGECO). The centre aims at equipping the youth with skills in writing feasible business plans on agribusiness projects and entrepreneurship skills in order to run small viable and profitable agricultural projects as their full time-jobs. These strategies have had appreciable impact as a number of the youth have resorted to various kinds of income generating activities in agriculture particularly vegetable farming (Agboola *et al.* 2015; Oluwasola 2015; Gulamiwa 2015; FAO 2013; Njenga *et al*. 2012; Rutta 2012). However, youth farmers 'are a diverse group with differences related to gender, age, income, size of landholding, amongst others. All these determine a young person's life opportunities and overall livelihood status. It is thus pertinent to compare the livelihood outcomes of female to that of their male counterparts to understand the value of the inequality in order to ensure future equity. Consequently, this paper aims at analysing the extent to which vegetable farming contributes to livelihood outcomes among female and male youth in Dodoma City. Understanding the diversity of young women and men will help to address their needs and priorities. In lieu of the aforementioned, the following research questions will be answered:

1) What is the socio-economic characteristics of males and females' youth in vegetable farming?
2) What is the level of participation in vegetable farming among males and females' youth?
3) What is the level of livelihood outcomes achieved among male and female?

1.1 Theoretical framework

This paper draws on the sustainable livelihoods' framework (DFID 1999). A livelihood status is the summation of an individual's abilities, assets, and activities; given Ellis (2000) definition of livelihood to be made up of the abilities, assets (stores, resources, claims, and access) and activities necessary for a means of living. Ability is vital in livelihood study as it does not only include mere physical labor, but include knowledge, training and special skills. Implicitly, realization of desired livelihood outcomes depends on people's access to different types of assets and their ability to put these to productive use. However, female and male youth farmers possess these assets to varying degrees sometimes driven by personal choice or traits such as age, sex and at other times by forces outside individual control (Mazibuko 2013). Also, the structures and processes of the community and society to which female and male youth belong shapes livelihood both by determining who gains access to which types of assets and defining what range of livelihood strategies are open and attractive to people for their livelihood outcomes (Krantz 2001). Hence, the SLF is considered relevant for this study owing to its strength in explaining how the livelihood outcomes of the youth could be achieved through vegetable farming and how the livelihood assets they possess contribute to varying outcome levels of livelihood among them.

2.0 Methodology

The study was carried out in Ihumwa and Mtumba Wards in Dodoma City. The two wards were prominent for vegetable farming in the city. The City, is one of the fastest growing urban areas in Tanzania and where the growth of the urban informal sector is envisaged to continue. This makes the city strategically positioned for business and hence attracts a number of youths. Moreover, Dodoma is a semi-arid region

characterized by a long dry season starting late April to early December, and a short single rainy season starting December to mid-April. The average rainfall is 500mm annually, and about 85% of these rains in the four months between December and March (URT 2014). Being a semi-arid region, agricultural production is largely unreliable due to the scarcity of rain. Hence, farmers go to an extra mile by engaging in vegetable farming and so do the youth.

A convergent parallel mixed method was employed for the study. The approach involves combining or integration of qualitative and quantitative research and data (Cresswell 2014). Contradictions or incongruent findings are explained or further probed in this approach. A two-stage sampling technique was used to select respondents for the study. The first stage involved identification of production areas and all nine (9) production areas found in Ihumwa and Mtumba wards were covered. Simple random sampling technique was used in the second stage to select 276 farmers aged between 15-35 years (URT 2007). The sample size was determined by employing Yamane which is: $n= {}^{N}/1 + N\,(e)^2$, where: n = Sample size, N = Population size and *e* = Level of precision or sampling error, estimated in percentages (0.05). (Yamane 1967) Therefore, $n=896/1+896(0.05)^2 =276$. The actual number of respondents used was 250, 80 females and 170 males. A checklist was used to gather data from 9 key informants (one City Agriculture Irrigation and Cooperative Officer, two Ward Community Development Officers, two Ward Executive Officers, two agro-input dealers and two Ward Agricultural Extension Officers). Moreover, nine focus group discussions (FGDs), each of which consisted of 9-12 youth farmers (Barbour 2011), were held using an FGD guide. A pilot test involving 15 female and 15 male youth farmers from Msalato Ward was conducted to determine the reliability of the instruments. The Chronbach's alpha was 0.76 which is above the 0.70 minimum acceptable for educational research at a significance level of 0.05.

A considerable number of transcripts from interviews and FGDs were transcribed and coded into emergent themes and analysed using the content analysis method (Mayring 2014). Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, means and percentages were used to describe the socio-economic characteristics of respondents by using IBM SPSS.

Livelihood outcome Index (LOI) was developed to measure the extent to which vegetable farming improved human capital, social capital, assets, household food security and income of female and male. Each livelihood outcome indicator was measured by three sub-indicators which made a total of 15 sub-indicators as indicated in Table 5. These sub-indicators were measured on three-alternative responses (low, medium and high livelihood outcomes), and the responses were coded as 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The overall score for each of the five indicators was established and these scores were used in constructing the livelihood outcome index. The highest possible score for the five indicators were obtained by multiplying 3 by 15 to yield 45, while the mid value was obtained by multiplying 2 by 15 to yield 30 and the minimum possible score was obtained by multiplying 1 by 15 to yield 15. Chi-square was used to determine association between livelihood outcomes and gender among the youth involved in vegetable farming at 5% level of significance.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Socio-economic Characteristics of youth Vegetable Farmers.

Table 1 shows that only 10% of female and 1.1% of male had no formal education. This means that the majority (88%) could understand and comprehend the government's policy and strategies aimed at enhancing farm output, income and farmers' livelihood. The findings are in line with Pyburn and Woodhill who argued that education is a critical tool for new generations of agricultural professionals as it helps shape a young person's ability to enjoy opportunities (Pyburn and Woodhill 2014). A respondents age was also important in determining the average age of youth involved in vegetable farming in Ihumwa and

Mtumba wards. The table reveals that the majority were in the age category 25-35 years. Implicitly, the enterprise had attracted only few young people between the age of 15-25. This is because at tender ages a lot of options are still at the youths' disposal; hence, they cannot make concrete decisions on whether to farm or not. To this end, in a FGD at Mtumba it was said:

> "…*We have different goals and plans; some of us are here to get some cash and go back to school and pursue other career opportunities available*…." (FGD, 29th March 2019).

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of youth farmers

Variable	Female(n=80)		Male(n=170)		Total(n=250)		χ2	df	p
Education level	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	4.472	2	.107
No formal education	8	10.0	2	1.1	10	4			
Primary	70	87.5	153	90.0	223	89.2			
Secondary	2	2.5	15	8.8	17	6.8			
Age (Years)									
15-20	9	11.3	5	2.9	14	5.6	11.198	3	.011
21-25	7	8.8	21	12.4	28	11.2			
26-30	24	30.0	35	20.6	59	23.6			
31-35	40	50.0	109	64.1	149	59.6			
Marital status									
Single	7	8.8	16	9.4	23	9.2	12.695	3	.005
Married	62	77.5	150	88.2	212	84.8			
Divorced	4	5.0	1	0.6	5	2.0			
Widowed	7	8.8	3	1.8	10	4.0			
Experience vegetable farming									
1 - 5	33	41.3	35	20.6	68	27.2	14.142	3	.003
5 – 10	25	31.3	65	38.2	90	36.0			
11 – 15	17	21.3	41	24.1	58	23.2			
More than 15	5	6.3	29	17.1	34	13.6			

The Table further indicates that majority (62% female and 88.2% male) of respondents are married. Marriage entails some kind of responsibility including providing food for the family. This result was affirmed by one KI in Mtumba who said:

> *"Marriage is a very important institution here. It is used as a criterion for a man to be assigned a portion of land for vegetable farming by his family or father"* (KI Mtumba, 12th, July 2019).

Although marital status affects both female and male it is more acute for female in the study area. Male can grow out of this dependency through inheritance of land while females are often more constrained by social norms and gender relations (when to marry). The results in Table 1 also show that only (5%) of female had been in the farming business for more than ten years compared to 17.1% of male. This implies that male youth had been long enough in the business for understanding the technicalities involved in vegetable production and marketing which is important in determining both the quantity of the yields and the levels of livelihood outcomes. On the other hand, female youth are at the disadvantageous position because they enter in the business through their husbands who decides when their partners can join the business. Findings by Oluwasola 2015 support this result by pointing out that the majority of vegetable farmers in Oyo State Nigeria had a farming experience of more than ten years and that was sufficient to know how to produce cost effectively.

3.2 Participation in vegetable value chain activities

Table 2 shows that female youth participate in few numbers of activities, with only 18.8% of them participate in processing compared to 22.9% of their male counterparts. Processing guarantees produce market because they could be easily stored after harvest until when the prices are favourable to the farmers. This implies that, vegetable farming pays more to male youth compared to female. Moreover, 56.3% of female participate in selling compared to 78.2% of male youth engaged in vegetable farming. This implies that female youth terminate ownership of their crops at lower stages of the value chain. This lowers the income generated from the products and ultimately leading to a poor livelihood.

Table 2: Participation in vegetables value chain activities

Value chain Activities	Participation	Female(n=80)		Male(n=170)		Total		$\chi 2$	df	p
		n	%	n	%	n	%			
Production	Yes	50	62.5	140	82.4	190	76.0	11.755	1	.001
	No	30	37.5	30	17.6	60	24.0			
Processing	Yes	15	18.8	39	22.9	54	21.6	.564	1	.453
	No	65	81.3	131	77.1	196	78.4			
Selling	Yes	45	56.3	133	78.2	178	71.2	12.823	1	.000
	No	35	43.8	37	21.8	72	28.8			

NB: Multiple response as some of the respondents participate in more than one value chain

3.3 Vegetable framing and livelihood outcomes among female and male youth

Table 3 shows that more than half (53% female, 75% male) of the respondents scored 31 to 45 on the livelihood outcome index (LOI) scale that was used and thus categorized as belonging to the high livelihood outcomes. However, the analysis of individual indicators of livelihood reveals a clear difference in the pattern of change in livelihood activities between male and female youth in the study area. For example, only 22.5% of female have increased their asset compared to 80% of male youth. This means that the income obtained from the business could only This could be attributed to the fact vegetable farming is a labour-intensive enterprise and female have to balance farming with child care as 62% of them were married and at reproductive age. To this end one of the youth female participants in the FGD argued;

> "*Vegetable farming is very paying for men because they get enough time to take care of their gardens, unlike women most of who are supposed, all the time, to balance childcare with production. In fact, we produce during the rainy season mainly because in dry seasons most of the wells we depend on for watering our crops dry up or remain with very little water which is deep in such a way that only men can manage to get it from there….*" (FGD of Mtumba, 17th March, 2019).

In their study Shoshanah and Emily 2020 concluded that, to fully realize the potential benefits of economic development projects rooted in food and agriculture, we need to better integrate and reconcile how childcare affects the economic opportunities and quality of life for workers.

Improved human capital was another area of concern as the majority of both female and male youth famers scored between 15 and 29 in the LOI. Implicitly, these farmers had not invested much on human capital notably farming skills and improved technology, and this means that the improvement in their livelihood could only be achieved by cultivating more land. This is corroborated by IFAD 2011 report that

due to little improvement in factors of production agricultural growth in African countries is generally achieved by cultivating more land and mobilizing a larger agricultural labour force which produces very little improvement in yields

Table 3: Improvement in livelihood indicator distributed per gender

Indicator		Female (80)		Male (170)		Total (250)		$\chi 2$	df	p
	Levels	n	%	n	%	n	%			
Improved Food security	Low	18	22.5	38	22.4	56	22.4	4.603	2	.100
	Medium	1	1.3	1	0.6	2	0.8			
	High	61	76.3	131	77.1	192	76.8			
Improved Assets	Low	23	28.8	30	21.8	60	24.0	3.881	2	.044
	Medium	35	43.8	60	38.2	100	40.0			
	High	22	27.5	80	40.0	90	36.0			
Improved social capital	Low	25	31.3	57	33.5	82	32.8	3.272	2	.195
	Medium	12	15.0	13	7.6	25	10.0			
	High	43	53.8	100	58.8	143	57.2			
Improved human capital	Low	35	43.8	77	45.3	112	44.8	1.748	2	.417
	Medium	12	15.0	16	9.4	28	11.2			
	High	33	41.3	77	45.3	110	44.0			
Increased income	Low	19	23.8	24	14.1	43	17.2	3.805	2	.039
	Medium	3	3.8	10	5.9	13	5.2			
	High	58	72.5	136	80.0	194	77.6			
			0.0		0.0		0.0			
Overall	Low	17	21.3	29	17.1	46	18.4	2.527	2	.283
	Medium	10	12.5	13	7.6	23	9.2			
	High	53	66.3	128	75.3	181	72.4			

Conclusion and Recommendations

The established patterns of gender asymmetries regarding livelihood outcomes in vegetable farming indicates that there was no statistically significance association between the two (χ^2 =2.527 df = 2; p =0.283). However, the individual analysis of livelihood indicators show that the level of participation by the male youth in terms of number of activities they undertook was higher than that of the female as as female mainly participate in production compared to male to male who highly participate in processing and selling. Implicitly, female youth terminate ownership of their crops at lower stages of the value chain. This lowers the income generated from the products and ultimately leading to the discrepancy in the livelihood outcomes. The study recommends that efforts should be made by governmental and other development partners to ensure that gender mainstreaming goes beyond numbers in every intervention to reduce the difference to the barest minimum as male youth tend to be domineering.

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An Examination of Teenage Pregnancy and Rights to Education in Relation to the Gender Perceptions in Uganda
Ugandan citizens' experiences and opinions on schoolgirl pregnancy and rights

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Abstract

Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, the equity challenges rose to the fore world over. The policy on pregnant girls attending school in Uganda has been under review for years. Upon the re-opening of schools in January 2022 a new set of guidelines was issued on pregnant girls returning to school. This sparked a debate on why and how the pregnant girls should return to school and further exposed Ugandans view on violence against women and children. This paper explores the views of citizens of Uganda and their experiences of violence against women. This is generated from a longitudinal nationally representative study in Uganda. The results show that there was widespread violence against girls and women during the lockdowns measures aimed at stopping the spread of covid-19. The results also show that the pandemic disproportionately affected girls and women in Uganda. With the girls in the poorest region of the country being affected thrice as hard as those from other regions. The results from the study show that even after more than seven out of ten Ugandans witnessed and acknowledged that violence against women got worse during the pandemic, the data shows that the prevalence of attitudes against girls and women has persisted in the last 5years. These include perceptions on gender-based violence and pregnant girls returning to school. This paper examines perceptions of Ugandans before the pandemic in 2018 through to 2022 in the era post the lockdowns in Uganda. The study is nationally representative, and the study participants are randomly selected. This is done under Africa's first nationally representative mobile phone survey, Sauti Za Wananchi platform. This paper highlights the challenges in tackling the rights around girl child education and women. Whereby in as much as this has received a lot of attention and policy adjustments, the real test is in securing the buy in of all stakeholders. There is a need for more investment in understanding the socials norms and participatory knowledge from the communities on how to transform these norms around women, girls and their rights.

Keywords: *Teen-pregnancies, Covid-19, Social norms*

Introduction

Every day in developing countries, 20,000 girls under age 18 give birth. This amounts to 7.3 million births a year. And if all pregnancies are included, not just births, the number of adolescent pregnancies is much higher. Almost one third of women in developing countries had their first baby while they were still in their teens, a recently released report shows, with nearly half of those new mothers aged 17 and younger – still children themselves (UNFPA).

The government of Uganda has enacted a number of policies and measures that address experience of violence. For example, the constitution of Uganda under Article 33 provides for equal dignity of women, and prohibits any form of law or patriarchal system that undermines women's dignity0. Other policies have also been developed like the National Policy on the Elimination of Gender Based Violence 2016 that was developed to encourage stakeholders to increase and expand their programmatic efforts in preventing and responding to gender based violence (GBV)0, The Uganda Gender Policy that was enacted in 2007 to

provide a framework for identification, implementation and design of interventions aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment0 as well as The National Referral Pathway for Prevention and Response to GBV Cases in Uganda (2013) aims to provide assistance to victims or survivors of GBV 0. Despite the measures taken by the government of Uganda to address the issue of violence, experience of violence against women remains high. That is, results from a nationally representative survey by The Uganda Bureau of Statistics indicate that about half of Ugandan women (51%) aged 15 years and older have ever experienced physical violence0. Twaweza's Sauti Sa Wananchi brief, indicates that during the first year of the covid-19 pandemic Ugandans noted that violence, teen pregnancy and other social problems increased in their community. The study conducted in 2020 showed that eight out of ten citizens (79%) say teen pregnancy became a bigger problem during the Coronavirus pandemic, and half say physical (51%), emotional (51%) and sexual (46%) violence got worse. Citizens also reported increases in problems related to alcohol consumption (58%) and drug abuse (49%).

Other data sources indicate that there was a projected growth in teen pregnancy after the first year of the lock down. According to UNFPA, The number of teenage pregnancies increased by 6.4% between 2017 and 2018, then reduced by 2.1% from 2018 to 2019 and then by about 0.9% between 2019 and 2020. Although there is no marked increase in teenage pregnancy between 2019 and 2020, however it is worth noting there is marked increase in teenage pregnancy within districts in 2020 (49.3% that is 67/136). A total of 290,219 teenage pregnancies were recorded from January to September 2021, translating to over 32,000 monthly, likely to surpass numbers in 2020 by end of year18.

Teenage pregnancies affect both the girls and the overall economy. Teenage pregnancies are a form of violence as said by Carmen Barrosso an appointee by the UN Secretary-General in 2015 to monitor implementation of the 2016-2030 Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health, "Forcing women and girls to be mothers, or to resort to unsafe abortion, is a form of gender-based violence. It is violence to force somebody to go through a pregnancy, or to do anything with her body that she doesn't want to do,"16. Teen pregnancies have a negative outcome to the economy. Studies have shown that women who delay the childbearing past the teen years are more likely to stay longer in school and have more access to better paying jobs. Bissell (2000), however urges us to also pay a keen attention to the social economic background of the teenagers when deliberating upon challenges of teen pregnancies. Literature demonstrates that a large percentage of teen mothers come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and this implies that they suffer the negative consequences of teen pregnancies because of their pre-pregnancy condition. The women coming from disadvantaged background according to literature, the delay of pregnancy does not always improve future education or employment opportunities, for this reason there is little perceived incentive to delay childbearing0.

Despite the enabling legal and policy framework on gender equality in education in Uganda, existing data indicates increasing cases of teenage pregnancy among adolescent girls aged 10-19 years in education institutions in Uganda0. In 2020 the Ministry of Education and sports in Uganda released new guidelines on the prevention and management of teenage pregnancy in school settings in Uganda. This was after it was established in a 2015 study that school dropouts due to pregnancy among girls of 14 to 18 years of age are 22.3 %. The Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social development study (2017) on Violence against Children Survey established that sexual violence among girls is still high at 35% and nearly half of these girls experienced sexual violence before the age of 16 years. Unfortunately, only 8% of the girls that drop out of school are given a second chance to re-enroll (MoES, 2015). These guidelines show the role that different actors can play in this prevention and management strategy. The strategy strongly advocates for returning to school after the childbirth but is rather silent on school attendance when a girl is expectant.

The findings from this study can be used to support the design of interventions that aim to sensitize Ugandans on their role in improving the state of girl child rights to foster a better recovery in the post pandemic period in Uganda.

Method and materials

The data used in this study come from Twaweza's Sauti Za Wananchi a nationally representative mobile phone survey. This cross-sectional survey has been running in Uganda since 2017. The survey design was developed in collaboration with the Uganda bureau of statistics. A detailed explanation of the study protocol is available.

The research study was conducted in all the 15 sub-regions of Uganda. A total of 300 enumeration areas were selected across the entire country. The 2014 population census was used as the sampling frame and the enumeration areas were selected proportionate to the population distribution in each sub-region of Uganda. The sample universe was all adults in Uganda.

The Sauti za Wananchi sampling took place in three stages: in the first stage EAs were sampled randomly from specified Enumeration Area strata; in the second stage households were sampled randomly from EA household lists; and in the third stage one adult household member was selected as a respondent randomly from the adult household roster.

Stage one: A sample enabling us to provide precise estimates in two domains: rural and urban was created. The proportion of the sample in each stratum was the same as the stratum proportion in the national population as indicated by census data. EAs were selected using probability proportionate to population size (PPPS) using the Enumeration Area population numbers provided by the Uganda National Bureau of Statistics. For each of the selected Enumeration Areas, the corresponding Enumeration Area maps were obtained from Uganda National Bureau of Statistics.

Stage two: A team of listers pre-visited all sampled population sample units to update the household lists and maps, and obtain GPS coordinates and other cartographic materials. To maintain acceptable workloads in EAs that have experienced considerable growth, the number of sampled households in any EA were capped to 10. The selected households were then visited and no replacements were to be made and no changes of selected households allowed. If a change was to be made the sampling had to be done afresh. The expected number of missing households, either by refusal or absence, was taken into account in the sampling design by increasing the number of households surveyed in each EA.

Stage three: Once selected from the total list of households within an enumeration area, consent was sought to conduct an interview within the household. Once the head of household had consented to a household member participating in the survey, we used a Kish grid (random number table) to randomly select one eligible household member. For practical reasons, we selected our respondent from among persons in the household who will be available for the baseline interview and who are expected to be available for a phone interview. A total of 3000 respondents was selected and participated in the Sauti Za Wananchi baseline survey.

The data was collected using a quantitative survey, this was collected by a team of 27 enumerators using the computer aided telephonic interviews. The computer aided telephonic interviews are carried out in the second phase of the Sauti Za Wananchi survey after the recruitment of the panel where panel members are randomly selected and interviewed in the baseline survey. The data shared in this paper is from two nationally representative survey rounds conducted in 2018 and 2022. The survey enumerators were trained, and the data collection tool was pretested to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire and the lessons learnt were used to finalise the questionnaire. A total of 2900 respondents participated in this call round survey which was carried out in January 2022.

The socio-economic and demographic variables in this study include sex (female or male), age in single years, level of education (no education, primary, secondary, vocational or university), locations

(rural, urban) and region in Uganda. The survey collected information on girls within the household and if any had gotten pregnant at a school going age, and the plans on returning to school, school dropout within family due to pregnancy. Data was collected on perceptions around what should be done to a girl who has dropped out of school, and the rights of a girl within a home. Respondents' perception on the girl versus boy rights to attend school were investigated alongside the perceptions around who holds the duty of taking care of a home.

The data analysis was done using STATA, and descriptive analysis techniques were applied to each variable. We have household level panel data for two years - 2018 & 2022. We conducted simple univariate and bivariate descriptive statistical analyses to unearth household-level experiences for girls of school-going age and to analyze perceptions around the rights of the girl child.

This study underwent the ethical review and was approved by the Research and Ethics committee at Mildmay Uganda Research And Ethics Committee (MUREC). The research also received approval from the Uganda National council of Science and technology. At the baseline a written consent was received from the head of household and also from the survey respondents. The consent for the computer aided telephonic interviews was verbally received prior to the conducting of the interview. Participation in this study was voluntary to all the selected respondents and they are informed that they can voluntarily withdraw from the panel.

Results and discussion

The Sauti Za Wananchi panel comprises one member from the each of the randomly selected 3000 households across the country. The sample is nationally representative. The respondents are both male (49%) and female (51%) with the majority residing in the rural (69%). The larger proportion have no education or have attained some primary education (45%), three out of ten (37%) having completed primary education and one in ten having some secondary or higher education (17%). Marjority of the panel belong to the Christian faith (84%).

The data collected after the first wave of the covid-19 pandemic in Uganda. One out of twelve households (8%) report that a school going age girl in their household became pregnant in the previous six months. This occurrence was higher in some geographic locations and also differentiated by the social economic status of the households. The figures are higher in rural areas (9%) than urban (6%) and are higher among poorer households (12%), those with lower levels of education (10%) and in Eastern (13%) and Northern (12%) regions of the country.

Results indicate that poorer regions of the country as per UBOS data, Eastern and Northern Uganda had more girls getting pregnant compared to other regions like Central (3%), Western (4%) and Greater Kampala (3%). Similarly, the social economic status of the households indicates that the poorer households experienced this more than the middle class (8%) and wealthier (5%) households. This is consistent with the other literature (Bisell 2000) that suggests that poverty negatively affects the likelihood of a school going age girl from a poor background to get pregnant.

The marjority of the girls who got pregnant during the second year of the pandemic were in school before the school closures pandemic response. This is not so surprising given that data from UBOS shows that the PLE completion rate is higher among the girls from 2015 to 2017 compared to the boys however the transition rate to S1 shows a slightly higher percentage for the boys compared to the girls. In these households that experienced a school going girl pregnancy, more than a half (56%) have plans of the girl returning to school while a quarter (25%) have no plans for the girl to returning to school and a smaller number are uncertain (7%) of the future plans of the girl in terms of returning to school.

The key reason as to why some girls will not return to school is that some of them one out of 10 got married, seven out of 10 have no money for schools' fees, then one in five either ran away from home, refused to go back to school or are still pregnant. The survey was conducted in January at a time when the schools were re-opening.

Some families of the girls that got pregnant plan on having the girls return to education like joining a technical institute (3%) or get into a short-term skills training program however the (2%), there is a larger number that have nothing (7%) planned for the girls' future. Overall, the most mentioned plan is marriage (10%) for those that got pregnant and will not return to school.

A comparison of the citizens views on what happens to girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy indicate that before the pandemic (2018) awareness of a family member who has dropped out of school due to pregnancy was higher (35%) compared to the pandemic period (2022). It is also likely that due to the school closures Ugandans were not in position to attribute the lack of return to school to pregnancy since the period of inquiry (March 2020 to January 2022), most of the schools were closed and only open at very limited intervals.

Among those who are no longer in school after experiencing pregnancy, the most common current occupation is housewife (38%, down from 52% in 2018). The number who are reportedly unemployed has doubled from 14% in 2018 to 30% in 2022. This data indicates citizens' views on what happens after a pregnancy with the most likely scenario afterwards being marriage however in 2022 there was less mention of marriage but a doubling of those that were unemployed and not married. This poses areas for further investigation, what does it say about the men who were responsible for the pregnancies. More positively citizens mention an increase of girls who turned to agriculture after dropping out of school from 3% pre-pandemic to 6% during the pandemic.

The difference in the category of households that experienced a teenage pregnancy implies that strategies aimed at helping the teenage girls ought to be targeted at the disadvantaged households. There is also a clear example on the role of education in the development goals and more so for the girls. With evidence that early marriages were more common during the pandemic compared to the pre covid-19 period we suggest that the school closure painted the early marriages as a better option since households were already dealing with livelihood challenges. A clear note for policy makers to ensure the right to education even in the middle of a disaster.

A comparison of perceptions around the girl and boy child rights pre- pandemic and two years into the pandemic. Most citizens believe that a girl who becomes pregnant should be allowed back in school. Most citizens support girls who become pregnant being able to continue with their education, either while pregnant (18%) or after giving birth (66%). A further 6% say the girl should continue but in a different school. These figures are broadly consistent with data from 2018.

Half (54%) say a schoolboy who impregnates another student should remain in school, while two out of ten (22%) say the boy should go to a different school, and a similar number (19%) say the boy should either be expelled (8%) or punished in court (11%).

This data highlights the persistent belief system which suggest a hierarchy between masculinity and femininity which prescribes a dominant position of men and subordination of women (Schippers, 2007). It should also be noted that there is an increase in the number that believe that a girl should continue school while pregnant (13% in 2018 to 18%in 2022) as well as a reduction on those who believe a girl should be expelled (6%in 2018 to 4% in 2022). However, of greater concern is the large percentage (74% 2018 and 66% 2022) that suggest a girl should continue after giving birth, which indicates that the even when a girl is in good health society will view her as unfit to stay in school while pregnant.

There is also a growing perception that the boy child who impregnates a girl should be arrested and imprisoned this perception rose from 6% in 2017 to 11% in 2022. This poses a question on the right to information. Those that hold the above view prompt the question on awareness of the right to health and adolescents' access to sexual and reproductive health information. In Uganda a proposal to introduce sexual education in schools has been met with a lot of pushbacks, to date this is still under review. Getting different stakeholders to understand this fundamental right to health for adolescents is an uphill task since this is against the norms where sexuality related matters are sacred and should not be accessed by young people. Literature review has failed to singularly attribute sexual education to a reduction in teenage pregnancy in developed countries2. However, a targeted approach aimed at caregivers and parents is critical in unearthing the barriers and solutions to reviewing this in a cultural context.

A clear majority of citizens (70%) do not agree that if there is only enough money for one child to attend school, that opportunity should be given to a boy. However, slightly more citizens do currently think this should be the case than felt this way in 2018 (19% in 2022; 14% in 2018). This in a way shows the effect of livelihood challenges on the rights of the girl child and this was made worse by the pandemic.

In January 2022 when the schools in Uganda re-opened after a 2 year closure in Uganda, a debate on allowing the pregnant and new mothers back in school ensued15. Despite a directive by the head of state to allow this group of learners back in school both parents, church leaders, schools heads were not able to implement this citing different challenges like this being impractical and unrealistic. A few schools provided safe spaces for the pregnant and lactating teenagers, but this was not broadly embraced. The inability to provide safe spaces and gain buy in from stakeholders on the new guidelines displayed the case of having law and policies in place but they are not put into practice.

In conclusion, the prevention and management of teenage pregnancies in Uganda is a rights issue. The challenges of implementing this right are routed in the norms that place the women and girls as subordinates of the men and boys. This is made worse with the prevalence of disadvantaged families in a developing country like Uganda since poverty is closely linked to likelihood of teenage pregnancy.

Study limitations and challenges

There are two limitations associated with this study.

Every effort was put in place to ensure that the enumerator and respondent have rapport since they speak to each other in each panel survey carried out under the Sauti Za Wananchi program. The perceptions give a snapshot of what the citizens think about the girl child in different aspects. However some studies have shown that cognitive interviews conducted reveal that interpretation of attitude question may switch between personal and normative beliefs. This also suggests that it is difficult to know whether this happens routinely or it may differ based on the setting01.

While every effort was made to ensure that both the 2018 survey and 2022 were nationally representative and the data was weighted. It should be noted that this was collected from two different panels one with a sample size of 2000 and another with a sample size of 3000. However, both studies have a confidence interval of 95% with the 3000-sample size having a narrower confidence interval compared to the 2000 sample size.

We recommend further studies to explore the social norms and participatory knowledge from the communities on how to transform these norms around women, girls and their rights.

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Women Political Leadership in Provision of Quality Education in Selected Local Government Authorities in Tanzania

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Abstract

The initiatives for provision of quality education has been a concern in Tanzania since independence in 1961. Different scholars in the globe have been dealing with community participation in many countries, but few of them are directly linking women local leaders with the improvement of quality education provision in the society. The tendency in both developed and developing countries has been to increase the number of women representatives in local decision-making organs. However, little is known on whether women in local decision-making organs in Tanzania have strength to influence decisions for improving quality education provision. Hence, this, paper intends to present and discuss findings in an academic interactive manner, the part of women political leaders in improving quality education in selected local government authorities in Dodoma Region as a case study. Data were collected using household survey, Focus group discussion (FGD), semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation and documentary reviews. Quantitative data were analyzed with the help of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) while qualitative data were thematically analyzed. The findings of the study showed that there are aspects of the capacity of women political leaders, explicitly through: leadership style that tends to be self-governing, motherly and shared; decision-making aspects in attaining the community needs of both boy and girls-children and features of family provision as an outside power in carrying out women' role as a political leader. The study concludes that, women political leaders have a significant role in improving quality education provision in the study area especially at the community level. The capacity of women is influenced in fulfilling their gender roles as women leaders, family care takers and community members; thus women influenced decisions in ensuring that gender equality is enhanced in school enrollment among boys and girl-children in the society. The study recommends that, more women should be encouraged to hold political posts to work out their leadership roles as care takers, members of the community and political leaders. This will enable women as vulnerable group in the society to act as catalysts in stimulating provision of quality education as men do in the society.

Key words: *Women participation, Quality education and women political leaders.*

1.0 Introduction

Quality education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality which has been a concern to many countries in the global (Lee, 2013, p.1). However, there are so many evolving discussions from both advanced and developing countries on whether women political leaders in local government structures influence decisions for improving quality education provision in the society (Komariah *et al.*, 2020, p. 675). In Tanzania involvement of men and women in local politics is a critical stress to improve gender equality in politics. This is due to the facts that, both men and women has increased in number in political positions especially in local politics. However, the involvement of women political leaders in provision of quality education in the society is something which is not well known. This paper examines whether women political leaders exercise their leadership power in decision-making organs for improving quality education provision or not. Specifically, this study examines the leadership style employed by women political leaders in the local government structures in ensuring equal access of

education services to boys and girls, mechanisms used by women leaders to identify boys and girls-children' needs for better learning environment and participation of women political leaders in improving infrastructures and facilities for quality education services in the selected local government structures.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

This study used Feminist's Theory because men and women are treated equally especially in political positions Tong, (2012, p. 34). Therefore, equal spaces should be given to both men and women to exercise power in local political position for improved community services including education service provision in the community. Access of quality education services to boys and girl-children in the community is essentially important for community development (Lay & Daley, 2007, p.51). Thus, the use of this theory justify that, decisions regarding the provision of quality education in the society should be made by both men and women political leaders in decision- making organs. This is because men and women have different preferences which affects decisions related to education provision to boys and girls-children in the community. Furthermore, women political leaders in local government structures was considered as agent who were supposed to fulfill the demands of the community members by fulfilling their practical gender needs of women as mothers, care takers, community members and leaders (Paxton *et al.*, 2007, p. 264).

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 The Study Area and its Justification

This paper came from the study conducted in Dodoma Region precisely in Dodoma City. The assortment of Dodoma for the study was prejudiced by the main theme of the paper. Dodoma is the capital city in Tanzania where more government and administrative events are being conducted in Dodoma. The area is further justifiable that the composition of women in local government structures has increased compared to other regions in Tanzania (Mushi, 2010, p.6). The two councils have members including women representatives, who are either chosen or come through special seats arrangement. The lowest local government structures used in this study include villages and *mitaa* which were purposively selected.

3.2 Research Design and Data collection Methods

The present study used a descriptive cross-sectional research design where mixed data collection methods were used. The rationale of choosing the research design was based on its ability to describe a person, event or group of people (Kumar, 2005, p.35). It is convenient when measuring the insights, attitudes and preferences of people about a particular phenomenon. The study envisioned to get the evidence from descriptive - cross sectional design and was considered useful because of its relevance in examining the characteristics of women political leaders and the chances used to represent their constituencies (Kothari. 2004, p.37). Hence, the research design covered a large population at one point (Ingleby, *et al*., 2012, p.213).

3.3 Population and Sample Size

The population of this research paper was formed from men and women in the study villages and *mitaa*.[1] The sample was formed by grouping respondents into two categories. Yamane (1967) formula was used to obtain the first category of household heads both men and women while Ward Councilors, village[2]/*mitaa* committee members, Ward Development Committee (WDC) members and Council chairs

[1] ***Mtaa*** is a lowest structure of urban local government authorities in Tanzania while *Mitaa* represent a plural of the word *Mtaa.* Urban local government authorities in Tanzania include City, Municipal and Town Councils.
[2] In Tanzania a village is the lowest government administrative structure in rural local government authorities

formed the second category of respondents. Key informants such as District Executive Directors (DEDs), Member of Parliament (MP), and District Commissioners (DCs) of the study councils were also involved. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 8 councilors (4 from each district), 32 villages/*Mitaa* committee members, and 16 WDC members. Two DEDs, 2 DCs, 2 council ch[3]airpersons, 2 MPs and 2 council standing committee chairpersons for education committee. Furthermore, 2 district officials in education department were selected to make a total of 464 respondents.

3.4 Sampling Procedures

To select sample, both probability and non-probability sampling methods were engaged. The probability sampling method was selected because it avoids bias and helps to generalize the information collected from sample respondents. In addition, purposive sampling has also been used as a sampling technique so as to include DEDs Member of Parliament (MPs) and District Commissioner (DCs). The rationale for using this method is to ensure in-depth information relating to the capacity and competency of women leaders in decisions concerning education services provision in the study area. Cluster sampling technique was used to obtain the wards in the study local government structures. In each ward, the same procedure was used to select villages /*mitaa* where a sample of male and female members in different committees was drawn. Purposive sampling was used to obtain men and women councillors in the ward and simple random sampling to obtain village/ *mitaa* committee members. In order to avoid bias, male political leaders were used to capture their perspectives on the capacity of women political leaders in facilitating improved education provision.

3.5 Data Collection Methods and Analysis

The study used both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. In the one hand, Focus group discussions (FGDs), non-participant's observation and key informants interviews were used to collect qualitative data. On the other hand, household survey was used to collect quantitative data from men and women household heads in the study villages and *mitaa*. The key informants' interviews were held to District Executive Directors (DEDs), members of parliaments (MPs), district council committee's chairs and council clerks from Dodoma City and Bahi District councils.

3.6 Results and Discussion

3.6.1 Education Access to Boys and Girl-Children under the Leadership of Women

The study showed that, 41.8% of the children in the study area access primary schools within their villages/*mitaa* (Table 1). Others 31.3% use primary schools in the neighboring village/*mtaa*. Significantly ($p=0.00$) variations were observed in secondary schools where some children live too far (69.2%) from the secondary schools in villages while in urban areas, most of them (84.3%) are close to the adjacent secondary schools. This suggests that women political leaders used their power in the study area to influence decisions for the improved education service delivery. However, there are also disparities on distances travelled by children from one *mtaa* to another to reach the nearest schools in Dodoma City. For example, it was observed in the interview that, in Chinyoya, there is no school of any level. All boys and girl-children walk to reach the nearest schools of their interest from Chinyoya to the nearest *mtaa* such as, Majengo, Amani, Kikuyu and Hazina within the City.

In contrast, the state was somehow worse in Bahi District. For instance, it was found that, children in Ibugule village walked between 5 to 10 kilometres to reach the nearest secondary schools. This situation resulted to school dropouts among boys and girls and a larger number was reported to be girl-children in

the area. One of the education stakeholders' in Bahi District reported that, about 60 girl-children and 11 boys dropped from secondary schools between 2014 and 2019. The reasons given include pregnancies to girls, low morale of parents to encourage their children to go to school and poverty as children dropped from schools to seek for jobs in town. This was partly attributed to long distances to reach the nearest secondary schools, unfavorable school environment including poor buildings, unmotivated teachers and poor means of transport. This suggests that, socio-cultural beliefs, socio-economic and school related factors are bordering to girls' educational access in the surveyed areas. This gender inequality show that, many girls than boys drop from school, and therefore they do not achieve the education goals as stipulated by the national education policy (URT, 1995, p.25). Furthermore, this situation has implications that, majority of the absentees in schools are girls. Koech *et al.*, (2017, p.96) concludes, that, early marriages, pregnancies and truancy are the major problems causing girls to drop from schools. This has a significant impact on the quality of education attained by girl-children in rural areas.

Table 1: Accessibility of Education in Dodoma City and Bahi District (n=390).

Education service	**Bahi District**	**Dodoma City**	**Total**	**Chi-Square values**
Primary school in the study *mtaa*/village	113(58.2)	50(25.5)	163(41.8)	$\chi 2$=56.628, P= 0.00 df= 6
Primary school in another *mtaa*/ village	41(21.1)	81(41.3)	122(31.3)	
Secondary school in the study *mtaa*/village	9(4.6)	14(7.1)	23(5.9)	
Secondary school in another village/*mtaa*	4(2.1)	18(9.2)	22(5.6)	
Early child education in the study *mtaa/*village	24(12.4)	27(13.8)	51(13.1)	
Early child education in another *mtaa/*village	0(0.0)	6(3.1)	6(1.5)	
Others*	3(1.5)	0(0.0)	3(0.8)	

Others* include Vocational Colleges and Universities
Source: Field Data (2019) – *Figures in brackets are percentages*

It was further found that, because of the long distances from home to secondary schools, students from the surveyed villages are supposed to wake up early at 5.00 AM every day to start walking so as to reach early at school. For parents who are financially better off, they buy bicycles for their children especially boys, but for those who do not have the capacity to do so they encourage their children to walk. This is partly because the schools have no hostels for both boys and girl-children to live within the schools. This discouraged some of the parents and girl-children to attend schools every day worrying for sexual harassments of their children on their ways to schools. Similarly, Juneja (2001, p.33) opined that, when girl-children live too far, they tend to drop from school due to sexual harassment in their ways. Furthermore, Shahidul and Karim (2015, p.29) reported that school distance is an important determinant of school dropout for female students.

Since girls are the main victims of sexual abuse compared to boys in the community, it was reported in the FGD that women leaders as care takers of the family members are highly concerned to with the security of girl-children and thus, influenced decisions in the local committees for the establishment of hostels close to the schools' surroundings for girl-children. This is similar to what Suleman *et al.,* (2015, p.96) argued that proper security of girl-children in school environment strengthen their educational achievements. Therefore, with more initiatives of women political leaders in the study area, there are more girls who access education as boys do.

3.6.2 Participation of Women Political Leaders in Improving Quality Education Provision in the Study Area

Table 2 revealed that improved quality education provision in the study area involved the intervention of many actors including women political leadership. It was observed that, in Dodoma City, the District Officers (79.6%) *mtaa* committee members (45.9%), ward councilors (12.2%) and NGOs (7.7%) were reported to have facilitated such changes. District Officers (72.7%), village council members (38.7%), community initiatives (25.8%) and ward councilor (10.8%) were reported to have contributed to these changes in Bahi District. In other words, the findings show that over half (58.1%) of the household heads in Dodoma City and closer to half (49.5%) of them in Bahi District attributed the changes in education services and facilities to their local leaders, including *mtaa* committee members, village councilors and ward councilors. Similarly, over one quarter (16.9%) of the respondents reported community initiatives which were likely to have been facilitated by local leaders.

Table 2: Improvement of Education Services in Dodoma Municipality and Bahi District (n=390)

Who made improvement	Bahi District	Dodoma City	Total
District Officer	141(72.7)	156(79.6)	297(76.2)
Village/*mtaa* committee	106(38.7)	90(45.9)	165(42.3)
Ward Councillors	21(10.8)	24(12.2)	45(11.5)
NGOs	21(10.8)	15(7.7)	36(9.2)
Community Initiatives	50(25.8)	16(8.2)	66(16.9)
No Developments	10(5.2)	6(3.1)	16(4.1)
Others*	6(3.1)	3(1.5)	9(2.3)

Others* include Previous Ward Councilors and District Commissioners.
Source: Field Data (2019) -*Figures in brackets are percentages*

Since the focus of this paper was on the capacity of women political leadership, it was further observed that, ward councilors are responsible for ensuring that community members participate in council initiatives. They do this by encouraging community members, both men and women, to participate in the council development activities by contributing their time, money and labour. For example, in Kigwe ward, one village council member (a woman) mentioned that they encouraged other village council members in Kigwe and Kichangani villages to mobilize villagers to construct school classrooms by collecting water for brick making, collecting stones and sand and /or supporting masonry work. This indicates a difference between men and women in how they lead. Lau (2013, p.2), opined that women leaders adopt a more collaborative, cooperative, or democratic leadership styles compared to their men counterparts who adopt a more directive, competitive, or autocratic styles. Furthermore, the findings in the FGD discussion revealed that, TASAF project in the City has women members who collaborated with *mitaa* committee members to mobilize people to contribute money for serving Special Needs Education (SNE) to pupils with disabilities. It was noted that, in the City, there are two primary schools (at Chinangali and Hazina) offering SNE. In the discussion with District Education Officers, it was found that, at Chinangali, the head of the school,

Ward Education Coordinator (WEC) and special seat councilor are women who mobilized parents to contribute money for the construction of a kitchen. This kitchen is used to prepare food for children while they are in school sessions.

Likewise, the study noted that, women leaders mobilized members to support labour and time for project activities implemented by Programme for Results (PforR). Consequently, four classrooms and ten pit latrines were constructed at Mwenge primary school in the ward. The WEC, together with the school committee and WDC at Nkuhungu, mobilized members to contribute money for construction of two more primary schools in the ward. As a result, pupils from Mtube and Mnyakongo *mitaa* in the same ward access primary education closer to their households.

Since women's interests are different from those of men, these findings show that, women leaders are more comfortable when girl-children access schools closer to their residence than their male counterparts. This is similar to what King and Winthrop, (2015, p.13) found that, many women worry about girls travelling long distances on their own. The study further found that, women have a preference to girl-children to be taught by female teachers. This was reflected in an interview with one of the ward councilors (a woman) in Bahi District who commented that, female teachers understand well the problems of girl-children than male teachers. This shows that, there is gender related difference between male and female teachers towards girl-children in school. A study by El-Emadi *et al.*, (2019, p.3) on teachers' sex and students in Qatar found that, both male and female leaders didn't accept male teachers for girls students even when female teachers were not present. Lee *et al.*, (2019, p.2)equally found that girls rate their relationships with female teachers better than they rate their relationships with male teachers.

When household heads were asked to give their views on the level of satisfaction with the capacity of women leaders to the improvement of quality education services over the past 10 years, it was found that 43.1% of the household heads were somewhat satisfied, over one-third (34.9%) were satisfied and just over one fifth (21.1%) were dissatisfied (Table 3). However, there were no variations, (p=0.567) on the level of satisfaction between Dodoma City and Bahi District. This is probably due to the government initiatives and efforts to ensure that all necessary requirements are met in education services in Tanzania, including Dodoma City and Bahi District.

Table 3: Citizens Satisfaction with Education Provision under the Leadership of Women (n=390)

Satisfaction	Bahi District	Dodoma City	Total	Chi-square Value
Dissatisfied	43(22.2)	43(21.9)	86(21.1)	$\chi 2$= 1.106, p=0.567, df=2
Somewhat satisfied	88(45.4)	80(40.8)	168(43.1)	
Very satisfied	63(32.5)	73(37.2)	136(34.9)	

Source: Field Data (2019) -*Figures in brackets are percentages*

However, it was found that the capacity of women political leaders to do this depended on their experience, personal attributes and their ability to mobilize community members to take initiatives and support from the district council. This means that, women leaders are facilitators because the efforts devoted by themselves alone would not bring any impact if other actors would not play their parts. This suggests that education, as a key aspect to the development of any country, needs collaboration of other stakeholders for the improvement to be realized. This is similar to what European Commission, (2020, p.3) commented that, education development needs both human resources as well as economic wellbeing of a particular community. If community members would not have the capacity to contribute their money for the

construction of classrooms and for buying desks, delivery of education in the study villages and *mitaa* would be affected.

3.7 Conclusion and Recommendations

It is therefore concluded that, the improved education services provision in the study area partly enhanced by the influence of women political leaders in decision-making processes and their unique leadership style in the study area. It is therefore recommended that, despite the fact that there is still underrepresentation of women in local politics compared to men, the government should provide more opportunities for women to participate in political position especially local politics. The study further concludes that, mobilization strategies as one of the mechanisms used by women political leaders, enhanced community members to participate in community development activities hence availability of education infrastructures in the area. Hence, community members satisfied with the ruling mechanism by women in the local area. Therefore, it is further recommend that, women political leaders should be given more support by different public and private actors to continue performing better for community development.

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Achieving Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Post Pandemic Situation: A Case Study of an NGO in India.

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Hand in Hand, India

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing crisis exacerbated deep-seated social and economic inequalities within our societies. While no economy is left untouched, the lower- and middle-income countries are worst affected as they have weaker defenses against social and economic shocks. In India, the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected people's lives, particularly the marginalized sections of the populations, with loss of livelihoods, food shortage and disruptions in access to health services and education. Needless to say, poor women have been hit the hardest by the pandemic due to gender-based inequalities and discriminations. It is important to rebuild their lives by providing integrated opportunities of livelihoods, food security, and healthcare including mental health care to enable them to come out of their miseries and start life in a renewed, productive way. And this is precisely what, Hand in Hand, India (HiH India), an international NGO, based in India, has been trying to do with millions of rural women, during and post the pandemic.

Our efforts, since 2020, have largely been directed to providing holistic support to our rural women to help them build sustainable livelihoods to tide over the economic, social and psychological hardships suffered in the pandemic. An integrated approach of providing digital training to enable them to access on-line banking; social welfare and financial inclusion services of the Government, combined with skill training, credit support, market linkages and regular monitoring has helped us to create secure livelihoods for them and help steer their families out of poverty. Ensuring last mile connectivity, we worked closely with the Government to provide access to covid relief measures of cash transfers and food rations to hundreds of thousands of rural families. Exclusive 'Healthcare Helpline' were started to provide information and services on covid care, vaccinations and mental health counselling to help women cope with multiple responsibilities of housework, child care and livelihoods. This paper details on the multipronged approach, strategies and interventions undertaken by the organization to support rural women address the hardships during and post the pandemic, to build back their resilience and lives to create sustainable livelihoods and communities.

I. Introduction:

The covid pandemic has impacted every country, every community, and every person in this world but not equally nor in the same ways. For communities who experience vulnerability and marginalization, because of structural barriers such as economic inequality, racism, harmful gender norms, and numerous other intertwining factors, these challenges have been exacerbated and inequalities even further exposed by the pandemic.

The Wellcome Global Monitor 2020: Covid-19 report, the largest study of its kind, found that the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on low-income countries and people with low incomes across all countries. Almost half (45%) of workers in low and lower middle-income countries lost a job or business due to the pandemic, compared to just 10% of people in high income countries.[4]

[4] Wellcome Global Monitor 2020: Covid 19 Report. https://wellcome.org/news/equality-global-poverty-how-covid-19-affecting-societies-and-economies.

"The inequality and poverty has increased globally due to the pandemic. We estimate that globally people who have been pushed into extreme poverty or those surviving on $1.90 a day have gone up by 100 million. A large part of that, 50 per cent or 50 million are estimated to be in India. Around 22 million are in sub-Saharan Africa," said Alfred Schipke, IMF mission chief for India in a recent roundtable.[5]

Home to over 1.4 billion people, India, the second largest country in the world, has probably suffered one of the most disastrous effects of the covid pandemic in terms of humongous loss of lives, livelihoods and other social and economic shocks. It will take enormous amounts of time and efforts to rebuild the economy and lives of people in post pandemic situations.

*As per the latest WHO estimates (June 20, 2022), India has reported over 43,803,619 cases of covid while 5, 25,825 people have died of the virus***.** While death rates seem lower in India, there is massive underreporting. After accounting for the underreporting within official statistics, India's total confirmed cases and deaths might exceed that of the rest of the world by a large margin (Gamio and Glanz, 2021). In the conservative scenario, the total confirmed cases per million are about 13 times larger than in the rest of the world, and the total confirmed deaths per million are about 85% of that in the rest of the world. In the worst-case scenario, India is far behind the rest of the world.

As far as the economy is concerned, India has suffered one of the largest contractions. Once one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, COVID-19 has crippled India's economy, with the country's GDP contracting 7.3% since the beginning of the pandemic. This is even more devastating because India's GDP averages 7% per year. India's middle class has also rapidly shrunk because of the economic ravages brought on by the pandemic, resulting in 75 million Indians being pushed into poverty. India now represents 60% of the global increase in poverty since the pandemic began, highlighting the devastation brought on by the effects of COVID-19.

The interrelated social and economic repercussions of covid 19 have had an excessive impact on the income inequalities in India. The economic turmoil caused by the pandemic over the past two years has the potential to double the nation's poverty, erasing the decade-long gains from the fight against poverty and inequality. As per estimates by economists, around **150–199 million additional pe**ople will fall under poverty in 2021–2022; a majority of which are from rural areas, owing to the unpredictable nature of the rural economy. [6]It is extremely difficult to predict a time frame to restore the country's economy that has been so brutally shattered by the pandemic.

II. Covid And Gender Inequality in India:

The **Global Gender Gap Report** (2022) presented at the World Economic Forum confirms what we know from experience, Covid may have put gender parity back by a generation, and South Asia is the worst off. *At current rates of progress, it will take nearly 200 years to achieve any meaningful equality between women and men in South Asia while it will take 132 years globally to close the gender gap.* With a female population of **662 million**, India's situation has overwhelming impact on the global picture and gender parity is a distant horizon in the country. **A**cross the world, the COVID-19 pandemic is known to have dramatically increased gender inequality, but India is probably one of the extreme examples of this harsh reality.

In order to control the spread of the covid virus, the Government of India imposed a long and stringent national lockdown in March 2020 and several Indian States imposed lockdowns and restrictions during the deadly second delta wave between April to June 2021. Both, the pandemic and the lockdowns adversely affected the most vulnerable populations especially women and children.

[5] https://www.deccanchronicle.com/business/economy/111021/indias-poverty-rate-to-be-around-10-in-fy22-wb.html
[6]Krishna Kumar, Shivan Yadav (2021). The Impact of COVID-19 on Poverty Estimates in India: A Study Across Caste, Class and Religion. https://journals.sagepub.com

- **Loss of Livelihoods:** Women, especially young women, were the worst casualties of the employment crisis generated by the pandemic and the consequent lockdown**. 71% of women lost their jobs** after the lockdown while the figure was 59% for men. In India, during and post lockdown months, 61% of working men remained employed while 7% lost their job. While in the case of women, only 19% remained employed while 47% suffered a permanent job loss. Post pandemic, unlike for men, women's employment did not recover at all, rather, it continued to decline.
- Women self-employed workers were badly affected by the collapse of markets for their products and services, and also by the insistence of most microfinance institutions on repayment throughout this period.
- **Unpaid work:** Women have done **29% more childcare** per week than men during the pandemic, based on data from 16 countries. In India, the unpaid work done by women (especially related to child care and elderly care), increased manifold, even during the lockdown, when men, due to loss of their jobs, were also largely confined to their homes and could've shared in household work but didn't due to deep seated patriarchal norms.
- **Food, Fuel and Water Woes:** A significant proportion also highlighted greater difficulties in provisioning food and water due to the lockdown, more time spent standing in queues to access food rations, and concerns about meeting physical distancing norms while collecting food, fuel or water. Women and girls continued to be responsible for collection of fuel, firewood and water even men were at home.
- **Child Nutrition:** The school closures associated with lockdown, and the fact that most schools remained closed thereafter until early 2022, had very severe implications for child nutrition because it meant that the Mid-Day Meal programme was effectively suspended. This affected around **80 per cent of primary school students**, or around 144 million children.
- The pandemic and consequent lockdowns had a devastating effect on child nutrition and pregnant and lactating mothers. India has been one of the worst performing countries in the world. It is estimated that around 100 million pregnant and lactating mothers relied on this, mostly those already in conditions of precarious food security. There were heart rending stories of infant children weakened by lack of nutrition and dying because the Anganwadi centres where mothers could previously access food were closed, and no alternative arrangements were made by the Government.
- **Health and hygien**e conditions of poor women and girls were sorely affected by the pandemic as they could not access sanitary pads and other health supplies (like contraceptive pills atc) from the public distribution centres. One study estimated that the closure of family planning services could result in nearly 3 million unintended pregnancies, nearly 2 million abortions (more than half of them unsafe), and several thousand more maternal deaths.
- **Domestic violence** was on the increase during lockdowns and afterwards. *Nearly 1 in 2 women reported that they or someone they know have experienced violence since the start of the pandemic, according to survey results from 13 countries.* In India, the first three weeks of the lockdown alone, calls for help to the National Commission for Women from desperate women facing spousal violence more than doubled from earlier rates. Male family members' loss of livelihood, anger and frustration at being confined to homes, as well as alcohol abuse, all contributed to the violence. In the same period, however, rape and sexual assault complaints outside the home fell, largely because of decreased mobility in public spaces, public transport, and workplaces.

In Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, a man strangled his 19-year-old wife to death as she insisted on visiting her parents during the lockdown. He forcefully made her consume an alcoholic drink by holding her neck

and cheeks. After getting her into an inebriated condition, he strangulated her and hung her body from the ceiling fan in the house to pass it off as suicide.[7]

- **Early marriage:** The lockdown, the destruction of livelihoods and the increase in economic insecurity had particularly adverse implications for older girls and young women, as many were forced into early marriages. There were reports from across the country of a spike in child marriages.

Overall, the period of the COVID-19 pandemic has witnessed a dramatic worsening of the conditions of poor women and girls, made worse by official apathy and patriarchal attitudes of those in power. *It will take systematic efforts to address these inequalities and the gender perspective has to be actively incorporated into policy and for this, all agencies and organizations, across all levels and platforms, have to make persistent efforts.*

In the wake of such countless sufferings and distresses, **Hand in Hand, India** (HiH India), an international NGO based in India, working for poverty alleviation, community development and women empowerment across 22 States of India and 10 countries across the globe, has undertaken significant measures to support and empower women through the pandemic and post pandemic situations. Having created over **5 million jobs** among the rural poor (mostly women), in India (as on August 1, 2022), the organization is steadily moving towards its goal of creating 10 million jobs by 2025. *The organization's mission is to work with poor* women, children and communities in order to provide them with dignity, hope and choice for sustainable development and it continued to relentlessly work towards its mission through the tough periods of covid 19 and its aftermath.

This paper highlights the organization's strategies, implementation efforts and impact on women's lives, livelihoods and state of being in post pandemic situations. It also underlines the efforts made by the organization to build resilience and self-reliance among poor women by undertaking a holistic approach to provide social, psychological and economic support to them to enable them to address the pandemic and post pandemic situations.

III. Methodology:

This paper presents the findings of a longitudinal study of over 2 years (April 2020 – March 2022). Methodology used is a mix of quantitative data and qualitative case studies including desk reviews.

i) Desk reviews were based on research articles on the global impact of covid 19 pandemic with special reference to impact in India. Effects of the pandemic on women comprised a large part of the research.

ii) Quantitative data of 'before and after' the covid pandemic situations of women have been compiled from the organization's monthly MIS reports. The organization maintains a tracker (MIS) of its members that is updated every month. Quantitative data on various parameters of women's lives primarily comprising demographic and economic have been taken from the organizations MIS.

iii) Additionally, the organization also maintained special covid related details pertaining to social, psychological and economic support extended to the women and rural communities at the time of the pandemic including some of the on-going measures during post pandemic situations. These data have been used extensively in the study.

iv) Finally, qualitative data has been collected from personal interviews of women including participant observation methods. Case studies of individual women, entailing their perceptions and assessment of

[7] Times Now News, March 29, 2020 https://www.timesnownews.com/mirror-now/crime/article/kerala-man-kills-wifeafter-she-insists-to-visit-parents-hangs-her-body-to-pass-it-off-as-suicide/571120

changes in their lives in the two years of covid situations have been documented. Interview formats were open ended to enable women to speak of their experiences freely, without any inhibitions or prompting.

IV. Strategies, Implementation and Outputs:

A famous quote of Dubios, that *'there is NO force equal to a women determined to RISE,'* is what sums up our impact with over 2.8 million women across the 22 States of India.

With acute job losses suffered by the menfolk of our project beneficiaries and large-scale reverse migration back to their hometowns and villages, the coronavirus pandemic has pushed millions of our project beneficiaries into extreme poverty. All our efforts during and in post pandemic situations have largely been directed towards providing all-round support to our project beneficiaries to help build sustainable livelihoods to tide over the economic, social and psychological hardships suffered in the pandemic situations.

The organization devised a lot of strategies that were translated into active implementation in the rural communities including in the lives of the project beneficiaries that yielded positive outcomes. A lot of strategies that were implemented during the covid pandemic continued to be executed during the post pandemic situations as it showed promising results in the lives of the beneficiaries, their families and communities in general.

We shall discuss these under three headings, namely economic, social and psychological. Before I discuss these, *I would like to add that through its innovative strategies, dedicated implementation efforts, consistent training, guiding and counseling, and strong monitoring, the organization went beyond promoting gender equality to ensure WOMEN grew to be strong agents of change in their household, community and financial affairs, to help families recover from the difficult phase of covid pandemic in the post pandemic period.*

1. Economic:

Job losses (of both men and women) leading to poverty, inequality and gender-based discriminations in households and communities continued to be a major source of distress among our project beneficiaries. To address this, the organization, through its various initiatives, focussed on providing economic and financial support through and in post pandemic situations that gave a lot of respite to the women in the toughest times.

Some of the important initiatives were

i) **Training on Digital and Financial Literacy** was **provided** to help rural women SAVE money, plan their household expenses and prepare budgets. Additionally, to enable women conduct 'online banking, transact business amongst each other on a digital platform and access Government's schemes, the organization provided training on digital literacy. Over **2, 62,029** rural women were provided training on financial and digital literacy.

ii) **Business Development Training:** To support women establish, expand or improve their businesses, the organization provided **4,82,618** women entrepreneurs *business development training on* integrated skills of business management principles, marketing, technology, accounting and finance.

iii) **Supporting Enterprise Development:** the organization's mission is to *'fight poverty and create jobs,'* and hence utmost focus was accorded to development of enterprises among its project beneficiaries. A very systematic process of conducting social mobilization, providing training and capacity building, skilling, digital and financial literacy, facilitating access to credit for investment in enterprises,

mentoring and monitoring services were provided to support **5,05,689** rural women start a new or strengthen their existing enterprises.

iv) **Skill training:** was provided to 12,434 women to enable them to sustain and develop their enterprises in several trades relating to farm based and allied; non-farm and energy-based sectors and enterprises. A holistic support chain of training and capacity building; access to credit; monitoring and mentoring services was provided to project beneficiaries to help them establish and expand their businesses.

v) **Providing Access to Credit:** this is often the most integral but missing link in business development and the organization made sure that rural women (in pandemic and post pandemic situations) were provided with credit support either through banks, microfinance institutions or from their own group savings. Over **5, 04,622** women entrepreneurs were provided with credit to support their enterprises.

vi) **Creating Market Linkages with markets and Value Chains:** To upscale enterprises of women entrepreneurs, market linkages and value chain support services are provided to strengthen the delivery of business and financial services; enabling the flow of information; facilitating improved market access or increasing access to higher-value markets or value-added products. Over **12,987** women entrepreneurs were linked with value chain services and market for up scaling their enterprises.

2. Social:

A famous quote by financial editor, and CEO of Her Money that, "Resilience isn't a single skill. It's a variety of skills and coping mechanisms. To bounce back from bumps in the road as well as failures, you should focus on emphasizing the positive." Taking cue from this, in the last two years, the organization has worked relentlessly to provide social and psychological support to our large group of rural women and their networks to help them build resilience and address domestic, economic and community related issues.

i) Building Resilience and Strengthening Women's Social bonds: To cope with the stress of the post pandemic situations we provided a lot of training to women self-help groups on building resilience. Building on social capital, our **217 strong cluster level networks of over 22,000** SHG women continued to provide social, economic and psychological support to each other to address their domestic, livelihoods and market related issues.

ii) Access to Government's Social Security and Financial Inclusion Schemes: To help alleviate rural poverty, the organization acted as a bridge between the Government and rural women and provided access to Government's social security and financial inclusion schemes. Schemes related to health, education of children; livelihoods training, access to subsidised loans were provided to over **55,561** rural women in post pandemic situations.

iii) Training and Awareness generation on Covid-19 related Services: The threat of re-occurrence of a new variant of covid was always looming and hence it was important to continuously train and generate awareness among our women and their families on covid related protocols and safe practices. Throughout the pandemic and post pandemic our teams engaged with our project beneficiaries and trained them on covid related measures pertaining to wearing face masks; maintaining social distancing; and frequent sanitizing of hands. Our teams also motivated women and community members to take timely vaccinations and addressed myths around vaccination. Over **2, 78,028** people were supported with covid-19 related awareness and **1014** vaccinations camps were organised.

iv) Supporting Mothers and Children by Setting up 'Child Learning Centers': To compensate for loss of learning due to closure of schools during the long lock down periods in covid pandemic and also to reduce drudgery on mothers, HiH India set up child learning centers (CLCs) where children of neighborhoods were provided with free of cost learning and tuition support. Over **9,486** children were helped with tuitions in 23 CLCs and mainstreamed in Government schools.

v) Organizing Free Medical Camps: The organization stepped up its social and economic efforts by organizing health camps for health check-ups and distribution of medicines, hygiene kits and counselling services during the pandemic and post pandemic periods. Over **1,498** medical camps were organised and **2, 48,829** hygiene kits comprising face masks, soap, sanitizer, etc. were distributed.

3. **Psychological:**
Issues of cramped spaces in homes, job losses, reverse migration, domestic violence, and closure of schools led to damaging impact on physical and mental health of our SHG women. A large part of our work was dedicated to providing mental health counselling to our project beneficiaries to constantly keep them motivated as several of them faced anxiety issues and depression due to increased psychological and economic burden. Many of them became the sole bread winners of their families and were burdened with multiple responsibilities of housework, childcare and livelihoods promotion. During the pandemic and post pandemic periods, the organization provided moral support and counselling services to **20,000** women to make them realise their self-worth and restore their confidence.

V. **Outcomes and Impact:** Promoting Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Post Pandemic Situations

PROMOTING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT of WOMEN: IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS & OUTCOMES

- Training Women in Digital and Financial Literacy: **2,62,029**
- Supporting Women with Enterprise development: **5,05,689**
- Providing credit /loans to Women for Livelihoods Promotion: **5,04,622**
- Providing Skill training and Market Linkages to Women: **13,000**

PROMOTING SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT of WOMEN: IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS & OUTCOMES

- Building Resilience & Strengthening Women's Social bonds: **2.8** million women
- Providing Access to Government's Social Security and Financial Inclusion Schemes: **55,561**
- Training and Awareness generation on Covid-19 related Services**: 2,78,028**
- Setting Up Child Learning Centers - 23 CLCs and **9,486** children mainstreamed into regular schools
- Organizing Free Medical Camps: 1498 medical camps benefitting **1,10,000** community people
- Setting up Helpdesks in Government Hospitals for facilitating access to medical services: **1,186,962**

PSYCHOLOGICAL SPHERE: IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS & OUTCOMES

- Providing moral support and building solidarity and social cohesion **--20,000**

DIGNITY	HOPE	RESILIENCE

VI. **Conclusion:**

Kofi Annan, Former Secretary General, United Nations once remarked that, **"there is *no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women,"*** and this is precisely what Hand in Hand, India, one of the largest NGOs in the country, has relentlessly promoted in pandemic and post pandemic situations. As an organization, we have implemented new strategies and innovative steps to promote gender equality and women's empowerment on a large scale during and post the pandemic situations and seen promising results in the lives of millions of rural women and communities.

Going forward, the pandemic is far from over and its after-effects will continue to torment the lives of rural women in many, difficult ways. It is therefore important to keep working to empower women and build resilience among them by way of promoting enterprises, digital technology for up-scaling livelihoods, financial inclusion services and better recovery systems to mitigate impact of the covid pandemic.

Efforts will be made to **promote self-reliant communities** by working on integrated issues of health, education, environment and livelihoods promotion. Health and education will be priorities areas to combat the aftereffects of the pandemic and building better futures.

Our dedicated efforts will be directed towards strengthening our women-led federations to be effective forums for rural women to voice their demands and advocate for their rights, entitlements, and strengthen their agencies, both in their personal and public (community and market) spheres.

With dedicated focus on HiH India's core mission of job creation, women empowerment and integrated community development, we hope that the coming years bring dignity, hope and choice in the lives of women so they feel truly empowered!

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Road Taken to Higher Education: Experiences of Tamang Women in Nepal

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Abstract

My study aims to understand/explore the experiences of indigenous Tamang women as they navigate higher education in Nepal. Tamang women marginalized from society often face difficulties in access, participation, and experiences where often they are invisible in the space. The narrative approach engages with the participants and generates stories of the Tamang women. I present the stories and experiences of three Tamang women with higher education experience to Master's level. I argue that Tamang women face many challenges in higher education due to the systematic historical injustices toward Tamang people. Their experiences intersect with the multiple identities like gender, caste and ethnicity, class, geography, and langue which shows that higher education institutions in Nepal reproduce an exclusionary system. Thus, Tamang women are on the margin, and experiences in higher education are discriminatory.

***Keywords**: Indigenous Women, Tamang Women, Higher Education, Intersectionality*

Introduction: Who gets in and Who Struggle?

Education is a significant life-changing opportunity for people; higher education plays a vital role in transformational life. In Nepal's context, the introduction of education via Gurukul and Monastery prevail from ancient times. However, modern education started in the 1960s, introducing Western knowledge and pedagogy and universities' establishment, leading to the current education system. After seven decades, the notion of education being accessible to all remains an essential question in the higher education of Nepal.

Higher education before the 1950s was not in access to the general public. In the past, Dalits (Lowest in the Hindu caste system), Janajatis (indigenous ethnic groups), and females could not get access to higher education (Asian Development Bank [ADB] 2015). Nepal is a country of diversity, but the caste structure remains deep-rooted in Nepalese society: it affects socio-political ways, including access to education (Neupane 2017). Those from a marginalized community and belonging to Dalit suffer and struggle with access to education.

Therefore, my paper tries to bring the experience of Tamang women into higher education. Through the narrative approach, I unfold how indigenous women (Tamang) experience their access and participation. In Nepal and worldwide, indigenous people have been unjustly excluded from social, economic, political, and educational resources. There are persisting disparities across sectors, not only between indigenous and non-indigenous people (Aikman & Robinson-Pant 2019)- but mention also 'double repression' (as cited in Winding & Kampbel 2016, p. 4), which means the dominant group and indigenous societies suppress indigenous women making their access to education a difficult endeavor.

Higher Education: Who Gets Access and Who Participates?

Drew Gilpin Faust, President of Harvard University, quotes, "Higher education is the strongest, sturdiest ladder to increase socio-economic mobility" (Soffel 2015). Higher education access has a life-long impact on the individual's personal development and professional and economic reasons. Despite knowing the significance of higher education but who gets access and participation, others are far behind. The importance of higher education mostly aligns with two different components: a) skilled labour and b) human capital; it produces a highly skilled workforce, a prerequisite for innovation, earns higher wages, and benefits not only individuals but people as a whole. According to the World Bank (2017), the economic return for higher education graduates is estimated at 17 percent compared to the primary 10 percent and 7 percent for secondary education in the entire educational system. However, in Nepal, Tamang people do not have equal access to higher education. For example, only 5% of Tamang enroll in tertiary education compared to 30% of Brahmins (the upper caste) (Subba et al. 2014). There is a significant disparity between males' and females' enrollment (ADB 2015). Likewise, "Social justice issues need foregrounding in academic programs and practice, not just in policy" (Bista, Sharma, & Raby 2019). Universities need to address the exclusion of indigenous women, especially Tamang women.

According to Gaulee (2014), higher education challenges are access, equity, quality assurance, funding, infrastructure, human resources, political meddling and instability, policy and social hurdles, diversification and relevance, and many more. Also, universities and academic institutions are located in the capital, eastern, where other parts are neglected. So, Tamang women's access to education is limited due to geographical as well as other factors gender, caste & ethnicity, class, and language. Access to higher education, interpretation emphasized that it significantly uplifts indigenous women's socio-economic status, families, and the community (Ober & Frawley 2017). It is transformative and a way out of the vicious cycle of poverty. In Nepal, where caste-based social hierarchy is prevalent historically, knowledge and power, including educational opportunity, was reserved for high caste people (Subba et al. 2014). They further elaborate on caste, a child's ability to obtain an education determined in this historical, systematic inequality of access to education.

Tamang Women: Access and Participation in Higher Education

The Tamang community has its language, dress, songs and music, culture, tradition, and unique identity. I did not comprehend the heaviness of the essence as I grew up and stories about Tamang girls, primarily being sold or trafficked to India as a synonym to people's surprise to see me in higher education. I grew up in a children's home where most girls were Tamang and digging deep into history and social context made sense why most of us were Tamang. However, no matter how far I have come, I have never separated myself from the Tamang girl's and women's stereotypes.

The historical position of the Tamang people as *Masinya Matwali* [Enslavable Alcohol Drinker] as per Muluki Ain of 1854 had consequences on the Tamang people's life. *Masinya Matwali* communities were alcohol-using communities that the state could enslave. Additionally, Rana's rule for 104 years was the most deteriorating time for Tamang people and women. It is in various forms, from bonded labor-serving with menial laborers for the ruler and courtier class. The Tamang women were serving as the concubine of the Rana palaces. Even today, they are vulnerable to exploitation, working as prostitutes and night dancers in Kathmandu or being sucked into the Bombay sex industry (Zemach-Bersin 2005).

The historical positioning of Tamang people and women especially is painful. The stereotype that we face today is the historical misdeed of people in power and their definitions. Even today, we have not defined ourselves but live in what we do to ourselves. Our dignity is muddled, and we have to live with it-consequences of historical exploitation, oppression, and discrimination reflected in today's context

regarding education, social, economic, and political aspects. Tamang women live with a tag they cannot erase themselves from, and social justice seems a far cry. March (1983) mentions that Tamang carried a little prestige and eaters from dead cows, so Tamang's human condition has no other problematic relation to the cow (Campbell 1998). The elite perceived Tamang as low labor and oppositional power relations, attempting to establish symbolic dominance (Holmberg 2000). Before 2007 B.S [1950 A.D.], the only job a Tamang could get was a '*Pipa,*'[a position in the Nepal Army as the menial workers at the lowest rungs] and access village level but never an administrative responsibility (Rai 2011). Tamang women in such conditions, being from an egalitarian Tamang society, faced challenges and the intersection of inequality and discrimination.

According to Subba et al. (2014), the net enrollment by level of schooling found that Tamang people in Primary have 80.7 percent. Still, as they move up to the lower secondary level, only 46.7percent makes, in secondary level 26.1ercent, Higher secondary School 13.8 percent, and at a tertiary level only 5.4 percent.

Intersectionality: Tamang Women at the Crossroad

Tamang women within the indigenous group fall into the category of a marginalized community. As mentioned earlier, they are double represses of being women and women from ethnic groups. Intersectionality, rather than examining gender, race, class, and nation as distinctive social hierarchies, look at how they mutually construct one another (Collins 1998). In Nepal's context, I implied how gender, caste and ethnicity, class, language, geography, and identity are interdependent and structure one another (Christoffersen 2017). Indigenous women in higher education face barriers not just because of their gender but also due to different elements. According to Collins (2000), intersectional paradigms show us that oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type and how oppression works together to produce injustice. So, it is crucial to examine the intersectional approach to excluding indigenous women in higher education.

Narrative Inquiry: Storytelling and Restorying

This study employs narrative inquiry, a collaboration process involving storytelling and restorying (Connelly & Clandinin 1990). "It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus" (Clandinin & Connelly 2000, p.20). I tried to explore the stories indigenous women live and tell in higher education (Clandinin 2013). I believe stories have power and tell a lot about the lived experiences of the individual; as Connelly and Clandinin (1990) mentioned, individual lived stories as the data source in narrative inquiry. The stories people live and tell are a rich source of knowing and meaning making (Dwyer, Davis, & Emerald 2016, p.1). The stories shared by my participants are the source of my data and meaning making.

The participant in the study is three Tamang indigenous women who are pursuing their higher education: Sonam, Dechen, and Sangmu. For the confidentiality of the interviewees, all the names in the paper are pseudonyms; however, the participant's gender and caste/ethnicity are retained. According to Patton (2003) and Merriam (2009), sample size mostly depends on what we want answers to, our purpose, theoretical framework, information collected, resources, time, and other various factors (as cited in Butina 2015). So, for my study, I have three participants to understand Tamang women's higher education experience and their "personal story as a portal to understanding the larger society" (Kim 2016, p.132). In taking the stories from the participant, I followed ethics as informed consent, harm and risk, honesty and trust, privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity (Webster & Mertova 2007). I made sure my participant was

comfortable and understood that it is relational. Josselson (2017) mentions every aspect touched by the ethics of the research relationship in narrative inquiry. So, I maintain ethics throughout my research study.

Our Story: Getting In, Belonging, and Participating

In 2011, I joined Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED) in a master's program entitled Environment Education and Sustainable Development (EESD) with a scholarship from NOMA/NORAD, by the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Norway; Oslo University, Norway; Kathmandu University, Nepal and the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. I was thrilled and proud of my achievement - a big deal. My higher education ambition was something I could not afford, although I was kick-starting my career working as a program assistant at the dZi Foundation since 2010. I did not realize how my social positioning was related to my ethnic identity, intersecting with class, gender, caste, language, and geography, and who I am: where who gets in and who struggles could be seen.

I am an exception in higher education as I never had other Tamang people in my class. Is it essential to have one? I would always be the only one, but I never questioned it during that time. I was happy about getting my education: I was shy and self-guarded- I just wanted to acquire my degree and get out of the space. The uncomfortableness, uneasiness, and struggle were within me, making my experience even more unbearable than learning to be fun and resourceful. Today, I reflect on why I felt so. Why is it important to have other Tamang women and teachers? Who gets into the higher education space?

Moreover, why do some Struggle? Why do my and my community women's voices and stories matter? Our higher education experiences face the intersectionality of different social categories that create an overlapping and interdependent system of discrimination or disadvantage which are often overlooked.

Getting In: Educational Options with no Options

Sonam, a mother of a five-month-old daughter doing her master's degree, shares her story about continuing education in her village. Although she and her sister wanted to study in Kathmandu, her father restricted her from going to the city, so they continued in the village with only one option also teaching medium of Kathmandu and the village differs. She narrates, "*My sister and I came to Kathmandu after completing our School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination. We arrived but had no one and a place to stay- no idea what to study. We returned home but were mesmerized by the bustling lights, road, transportation, shops, eateries, and educational institutions. However, my father was strict. He used to tell me, being a daughter, you do not roam around in the city. So we also started to teach in the village school and later joined the only options we had in the village, i.e., intermediate in Education. There were options if we went to district headquarters, but Kathmandu was a better option. Since we could not go to Kathmandu, we continue education at village college*".

Sonam's story is a story of many girls whose access to education is affected by gender, geography, and limited opportunities for girls. She faced a gender bias as her father did not allow her to come to an urban area. The higher education options to study different subjects and opportunities are bound to the country's capital. So, a girl like Sonam faces gender bias, the most exclusionary and discriminatory practice in society, home, school, or further education (Cole 2009). She did not use her agency to choose a subject and college that she thought would enhance her personal development. Instead suffer due to geographical and gender intersection in getting her access to education. Students from rural villages lack access to nearby higher education institutions and possible finance options and study programs (Independent Evaluation Group [IEG] 2017). There are unconditional differences in access to education depending on an individual area of living, rural or urban-like Sonam with the intersectionality of gender, class, and language. In the

community, the Tamang language is used but in an educational institution, Nepali and Engish had been a struggle for Sonam.

Belonging: *Bhoteni* 'Why are you studying here?'

Dechen, a master's graduate who had completed her study in a government college, shared how she wanted to join a private institution for higher education. Due to financial constraints, she had to join Nepal college for BBS (Bachelor of Business Studies) in 2012. The college was nearby her rented room and cost only NRs.18,000 per year. Additionally, she started working in an interior design office as an accountant- the salary was just Rs. 5,000 a month, which was enough to buy lunch or stationery. She struggled to make friends after joining the college. One of the frequent questions friends would ask was, "*You guys eat buffalo and cows*? Cow eating Bhote?' It surprised her, and she wondered why she was asked and questioned if it was a girl from the Tamang community. One day she heard someone call her "*Bhoteni, Bhoten*i." She felt he could have called her by the name. The way he called also was in dominating way.

She shared her further mentioned, "*Bhoteni, why are you studying here? You should have been married by now and have children*". Then in anger, she slapped him. She felt humiliated that he said so even as an educated; he said it in a derogatory way to show domination or inferiority. She replied that some people in the Tamang community do not eat beef. That incident made her experience the domination and discrimination Tamang people felt in life. Reflecting on Dechen's story, many times I have also faced stereotypes or prejudice being a Tamang woman. Her story reflects how access is embedded in the class and experience intersects with gender, caste & ethnicity.

Participating: So, what if I graduated with an MPhil degree?

It was the year 2014, Sangmu joined a Mphil [Master of Philosophy] degree. Though she did not have any vision about MPhil, she thought of joining it as she did not want to stay without learning anything. She shared that she also had thought of going abroad. She started feeling a kind of pressure from her relatives. In 2006, she joined her master's degree program at Dillibazar Kanya Niketan. She always felt as '*I am a full-time job holder, part-time student*.' I questioned her; she told me she focused more on the work than studying. She said, one day, luckily, she got a call from her lecturer. He warned about the deadline for her thesis. She had been teaching, and she decided to quit school to complete her thesis and sit for the TOEFL test. She left school after working for two academic sessions and began working on her thesis. After six months, she submitted her thesis and simultaneously applied for a scholarship in foreign universities too. She completed her thesis in 2013 but was unable to get a scholarship. Then she realized that the teaching experience in plus-two levels would help her get a scholarship. So, she was looking for a job and joined the MPhil program.

Sangmu's story in higher education reflects that she got access to the private university through financial assistance from others. By now, she is capable of paying the other necessary cost of her university. Right from joining a Bachelor's degree, Sangmu has been working to support her family economically. So, even when she completed a master's degree, she took a long time. So, the major problem in higher education is graduation rates and academic standards (Harman 1994). Even at the MPhil level, she has taken a long time to graduate. It makes me think that Tamang women must balance study and work together. She understands the importance of education but needs to work to meet their daily needs. She was always conscious about being a good role model for her siblings but now did not need to. In another way, she lacked motivation. So what if I graduated with an MPhil degree was her feeling? Harman (1994) mentioned that one of the major problems is that graduate unemployment, especially in non-science fields. She said that she has been working in teaching for a long time, so she has the job for now. Her story reflects due to

the social positioning of the Tamang people, she had access to higher education but due to economic conditions work and study had to be done simultaneously leading many setbacks in completing the study.

Confirming Space in Higher Education

"University is not for everyone, but a university should be for everyone" (Frawley, Larkin, & Smith 2017, p.3). The idea behind establishing the university enabled individual life and the development of society (Kolbel 2017). However, one of Nepal's indigenous groups, the Tamang people, was restricted from education and even owning land in some areas (Hoftun, Raeper, & Whelpton, as cited in Cole, Bruschi, & Tamang 2002). Bennet, Dahal, and Govindasamy (2008) mentioned that the government had been a failure to provide equal rights (justice and political representation) and public services (education) to the Tamang women in the lower caste/ethnicity hierarchy and women. University, as an organization, plays a vital role in who gets access and who does not. There is bias in the selection and admission based on a particular social, ethnic, and geographic group, and even the students lack appropriate academic preparation for higher education (Harman 1994).

I did not intend to have the first generation of Tamang women in higher education. However, after a few conversations, I realized they were the first generation of Tamang women with access to higher education. A few other family members have reached that space of higher education. Historical injustice experienced by the Tamang people has influenced them to pursue higher education today. So, Tamang people are close country's capital city; however, they are deprived of development, kept backward by Ranas to provide porters, servants, and concubines. This historical positioning has a direct impact on Tamang women's access and participation in higher education.

When listening to the stories despite gender and class barrier parents' support was found. Tamang women's gender, caste/ethnicity, location, and class contribute to their experience like Dechen. Her experience in the classroom was her representation of Tamang women. Her experience of derogatory remarks was a low-rank hierarchy given to the Tamang women. Tamang people have faced inequalities, exclusion, and discrimination from friends, teachers, and other community members systematically and comprehensively (Anthias, 2013). It is perpetuated even today as even the country has progressed to a federal state. Tamang (2009) mentioned Muluki Ain, which made the whole population of Nepal into a caste hierarchy that rigid social life, in the long run, continued to give material, social, and cultural legitimacy.

Higher education is focused more on capital. The central region, mainly the Kathmandu valley, is privileged access to higher education (ADB, 2015). Sonam from different parts of Nepal face difficulties in accommodating the city. Their experience as being an outsider was a chain of struggles found in an academic and social classes. As a female, their coming to the city was questioned. The important aspect I found regarding those Tamang women was that they gave importance to education and continued their education despite hardship. Sangmu told me that her father did struggle to educate her. She said she never felt any of the difficulties but took it positively. Problems make one successful, and she said they might feel the economic challenges, so they choose subjects unaffordable by their financial condition. Had I not got a scholarship and support, I would not have had access to higher education. For all my participants, it was reasonable to be the only Tamang student in the college class or university. There was a surprise as being one of them in the class.

Likewise, Sangmu did get access to higher education however as a working student- she rarely attended the class. For despite knowing the importance of education she participate but was never really there due to work. Her socio-economic condition played a significant role in her experiences in higher education. My reflection on the story of the road taken into higher education depicted that we are walking

into the path where we are supposed to go. My participants and I tried to confirm our space understanding of our value and knowledge system. We were trying so hard to be in that space where we were not acknowledged, and our knowledge was not valued. "Indigenous knowledge system is based on a strong sense of cultural identity, kinship, social and emotional, wellbeing, spirituality, and connection to the country" (Smith, Trinidad, & Larkin 2017). However, the experiences of my participants constructed their identities as space demands. They made Tamang a separate being.

Conclusion

Tamang people, so far in terms of their ethnic identity, proved themselves as vibrant, having their unique language, culture and tradition, way of living, and their indigenous knowledge. The Tamang people faced years of oppression and discrimination from the state, which affected the access and participation from school to higher education.Tamang women's journey to higher education reflects historical discrimination and marginalization of indigenous peoples in general and indigenous women in particular for respect and equality. Further, hurdles to education for Tamang women include patriarchy, stigmatization of indigenous identity and discriminatory and racist attitudes of the friends, teachers, low self-esteem of indigenous learners

Higher education institutions were less sensitive towards equality and justice to the indigenous language, knowledge, and identity. Inequality and historical injustice among Tamang women in higher education is a reality. Despite considering education as a vehicle of a social transformation of the people, community, and nation. Still, Tamang women are deprived of education and very few like my participants struggled to get education, layers of hierarchy which I narrated their stories using intersectionality. Their experiences intersect with the multiple identities like gender, caste and ethnicity, class, geography, and langue which shows that higher education institutions in Nepal reproduce an exclusionary system. Thus, Tamang women are on the margin, and experiences in higher education are discriminatory.

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An Exploration of Female Academics' Opportunities for Career Progression into Leadership Roles in Tanzanian Higher Learning Institutions

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Abstract

This paper mainly intends to give a current state of affairs of women in Tanzanian universities for leadership roles. Drawing on data from 115 survey responses by female academics carried out in 2019, this paper reports on findings from a baseline research project focusing on the opportunities for career progression into leadership roles in a university in Tanzania. Using the core academic progression measures of teaching, research, consultancy and public service, this paper explores female academics' opportunities for career progression to leadership roles within the university. Analysis of the data reveals that average percentage of time spent in teaching and consultancy in females was higher than that of males. Besides the study has revealed that female academics do not aspire for leadership positions as men, so the likelihood that they will seek such higher roles is lower. The current context poses new challenges to the agenda of advancing gender equality in Tanzania thus, in accordance with the proof from the study and individual encounters, the researcher recommends that universities go beyond mere acknowledgment of need for attention to existing inequalities but must address the different needs, aspirations, capacities and contributions of all that is transformative aspect of leadership and policy making.

Keywords: *Career progression, Leadership, Higher Education, Tanzania*

Introduction

Gender inequalities has been a global concern and agenda for development for decades. Globally, female representation in leadership positions is marginal, despite the fact more females are entering the teaching profession whilst top educational leadership positions are being dominated by males (Fuller, 2017; Mukolwe et al., 2018). This situation has made female academics to be underrepresented in senior leadership, and as such the talents of highly skilled females are underutilized. World Bank (2012) emphasizes the importance of gender equality in workplaces by asserting that gender equality enables more females to participate in decision making when they are in leadership positions to allow a diversity of voices in the institutions. In fact, scholars have repeatedly documented the benefits of having diverse perspectives around the leadership table (Catalyst, 2013; Leithwood and Jantzi 2005). Thus, without gender equality decisions are taken with less or without any input from females, as well as not considering the aspects of gender equality and equity.

In Tanzania, female make up 30 per cent of academic staff in higher education in Tanzania (World Bank, 2020). A report on the subject put the number of academic staff currently teaching at various higher learning institutions at 5,933 male and 2,523 female (TCU, 2021). Despite a gender mainstreaming policy architecture at national level for over two decades, and improved access of females to higher education, female academics remain underrepresented in leadership positions in Tanzania (Mbogela and Kanukisya,

2021). While Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) have a role to translate and implement the national gender policies at their institutional level, it is not clear why female academics are poorly represented in leadership roles. Data from the University of Dar es salaam for example indicate that there were only 4 female full professors out of 33 professors and 21 female associate professors out of 55 associate professors and 30 female senior lecturers out of 147 senior lecturers (UDSM, 2020). At the Open University of Tanzania, there were no female professors out of 3 professors and 1 female associate professor out of 8 associate professors and 4 female senior lecturers out of 21 senior lecturers, however, the number of lecturers is impressive as is greater than that of male (OUT, 2021). This fewer number of females with higher rankings implies fewer females even in senior leadership positions because higher academic qualifications imply bigger chances for selection into leadership positions. That is why this study explores female academics opportunities for leadership roles in higher learning institutions in Tanzania by;

a) Examining the current state of affairs of female academics in leadership roles
b) Analyzing female staff views regarding aspirations to leadership roles

Method and Materials

The study employed a descriptive survey method. Data for this paper was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was solicited through staff surveys conducted in the respective university. Secondary data were solicited from a review of policy documentation, university progression rates and online articles. The study sample comprised of 115 academic staff from various faculties. These staff were randomly sampled from a pool of academics. A total of 237 questionnaires were physically distributed across the university. A non-probability convenience sample of academic staff participated in this research. Non-probability sampling is appropriate for surveys of specific groups, such as working professionals (Fink, 1995). Online surveys were sent to all academic staff from the help from the IT department of the respective university, proportion to the population size. Such online surveys are opposed to some critiques. They are criticized for the possibility of respondents' multiple participation (Birnbaum, 2004), technological variations in their layout, potential recognition as spam, and usage difficulties for respondents with a lack of online experience (Evans and Mathur, 2005). To surmount these drawbacks, it was ensured that each respondent could fill out the survey only once by using personalized links. We pretested the survey regarding functionality and readability in different browsers before its launch, and only participants of the online panel, hence people who were willing to answer surveys were contacted. Out of 237 questionnaires, 115 questionnaires were successfully returned, making a response rate of 49 per cent. Analysis was conducted using R-studio and Tableau on a total of three variables. Each variable had 115 observations at (49 females / 66 males).

Results and Discussion

Current state of affairs of female academics in leadership roles by using the core academic progression measures of teaching.

When asked what is the time spent by academic staff in teaching? Hypothesis: There is a significant difference between time spent by male and female staff in teaching that affect their progression. Their responses were as indicated in table 1.

Table 1, Mean % time spent vs mean % of time desired to be spent in teaching

Gender	Mean % of time spent in teaching	Desired % time spent in teaching	t	p-value
Both	0.5740566	0.5000000	2.5577	0.01124**
Female	0.6000000	0.5043478	2.4407	0.01667**
Male	0.5541667	0.4950000	1.4378	0.1532

Time spent in teaching female's vs males t = 1.097, p-value = 0.2752

Table 1 presents the mean percentages of time spent in teaching and the mean percentages of time desired to be spent in teaching for the total sample, the female subgroup, and the male subgroup. The result presented below the table shows the difference in the average percentages of time spent in teaching between males and females.

The results reveal the following: participants spent more average percentage of their working time in teaching than desired (57% compared to 50%). The difference between the desired and spent time is also statistically significant at 95% significance level. For females, the average percentage of time they spent in teaching was significantly higher than the average percentage of time desired to spend in teaching (60% compared to 50%). Results significant at 95% significance level. For males, there was statistically no significant difference in the average percentage of time spent in teaching compared to what was desired. The main identified barrier for time distribution at baseline was high workload. This finding is similar to that of O'Meara, et al (2017) who said women faculty may choose to engage more in teaching and service than men. Career progression of women in academia to higher levels is strongly impacted by excessive workloads, which can disadvantage women much more than men through different interactive factors (Barret, 2011). Earlier findings by Barry et al (2006) confirms that females tend to be more heavily involved in teaching than in research or leadership in comparison with their male counterparts. They further state that the disproportionate division between teaching and research roles in academia can produce gendered segregation of academic roles and thus operate as a barrier to the career progression of female academics.

Time spent in Research

When asked what is the time spent by academic staff in research activities? Hypothesis was there a significant difference between time spent by male and female staff in research that affect their progression.

Table 2, Mean % time spent vs mean % of time desired to be spent in research

Gender	Mean %of time spent in research	Desired % of time spent	t	p-value
Both	0.3431579	0.5355769	-5.9597	1.197e-08***
Female	0.3461538	0.5488372	-4.4746	2.66e-05***
Male	0.3361111	0.5211864	-4.0995	8.008e-05***

Time spent in research females vs males. t = 0.20754, p-value = 0.8361

Table (2) presents the average percentage of time spent in research and the average percentage of

time desired to be spent in research for the total sample, the female subgroup and the male subgroup. The result presented below the table shows the difference in the average percentage of time spent in research between the male and female subgroups.

The results reveal that participants spent a lower average percentage of their time in research than desired (34% compared to 53%). The difference between the desired and spent time in research is also statistically significant at 99% significance level. With regards to females and males, results indicate that they both spent a significantly less average percentage of their time in research than desired (34% compared to 54% for females and 33% compared to 52% for males). Attainments in research performances remain a foremost requirement in the criteria for promotion to higher academic levels and are also perceived by the staff as pivotal for promotion over teaching (Khan, 2021). Thus, academics are expected to perform both in teaching and research, with research given more weight than teaching in the evaluation of academic work (ibid). Similar to the findings, a study indicated that regardless of administrative and teaching workloads, men have been found to focus more on research than women; they have been found to be more protective of their research time while women have been found to allocate more time to teaching, mentoring and service (Misra et al 2011). What women pursue holds less value for promotion purposes, especially when research is considered a priority for career advancement [ibid]

Time spent in Consultancy

When asked what the time is spent by academic staff in consultancy females were more likely to spend more time in consultancy than males.

Table 3, Mean % time spent vs mean % of time desired to be spent in consultancy at baseline

Gender	Mean % time spent in consultancy	Desired % time to be spent	T	p-value
Both	0.2457447	0.4720588	-7.6662	1.142e-12***
Female	0.2884615	0.4779070	-4.353	3.938e-05***
Male	0.2056604	0.4605263	6.5745	5.398e-09***

Time spent in consultancy female vs male: t = 2.4674, p-value = 0.01657**

Table (3) presents the average percentages of time spent in consultancy and the average percentage of time desired to be spent in consultancy for the total sample, the female subgroup, and the male subgroup. The result presented below the table shows the difference in the average percentage of time spent in consultancy between the male and female subgroups.

The results reveal that participants spent a lower average percentage of their time in consultancy than desired (24% compared to 47%). The difference between the desired and spent time in consultancy is also statistically significant at 99% significance level. With regards to females and males, results indicate that they both spent a significantly less average percentage of time in consultancy than desired (28% compared to 47% for females and 20% compared to 46% for males). Results significant at 99% significance level.

The results also indicate that females spent significantly more percentage of their time in consultancy compared to males. Results are also significant at the 99% significance level.

This finding is in line with a study that indicated women to allocate more time in consultancy and mentoring than males something that holds less value for promotion purposes (Misra et al 2011).

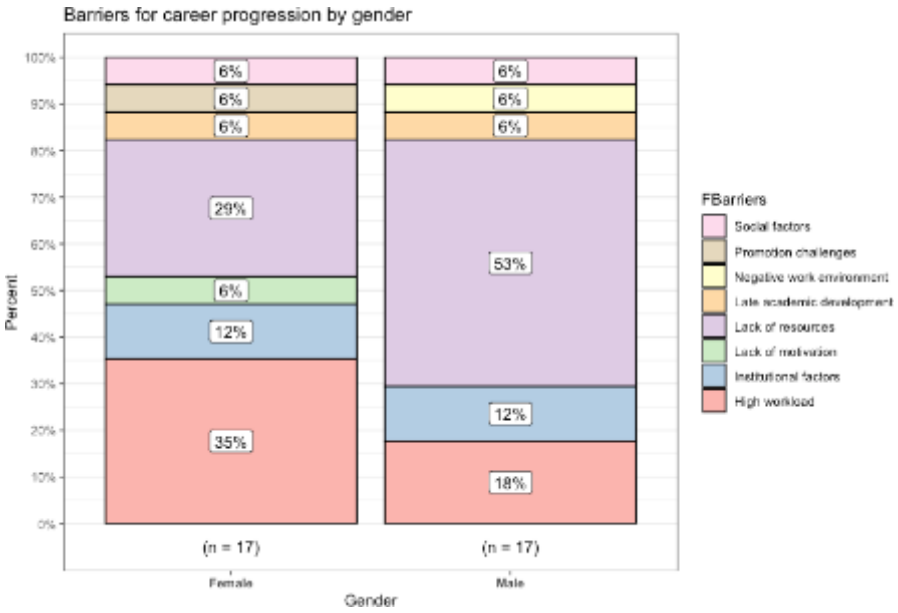
Career progression

When asked about their views on how they feel about their career progression, females were more likely to feel they are not progressing in career than male.

Table 4, Career progression by gender

Gender	N	Yes	No	Fisher's Exact odds ratio females vs males	P-value
F	47	41	6	0.1070585	0.01998**
P. row	100%	87.2%	12.8%		
M	66	65	1		
P. row	100%	98.5%	1.5%		

Table (4) presents differences in career progression by gender, the odds ratio examines career progression for the female subgroup compared to the male subgroup, and the p-value tests the statistical significance of the results. The results reveal that the odds of career progression for females at was 0.11 that of males and results are significant at the 95% significance level. This means that, the perception of career progression was significantly higher among males compared to females. The main identified barriers for career progression among females were high workload (35%) and the lack of resources (29%). Other identified barriers include institutional factors, social factors, promotion challenges, and the late academic development. For the male subgroup, main identified barrier for career progression at baseline was the lack of resources (53%). Other identified barriers include high workload, institutional factors, late academic development, negative work environment, and social factors.

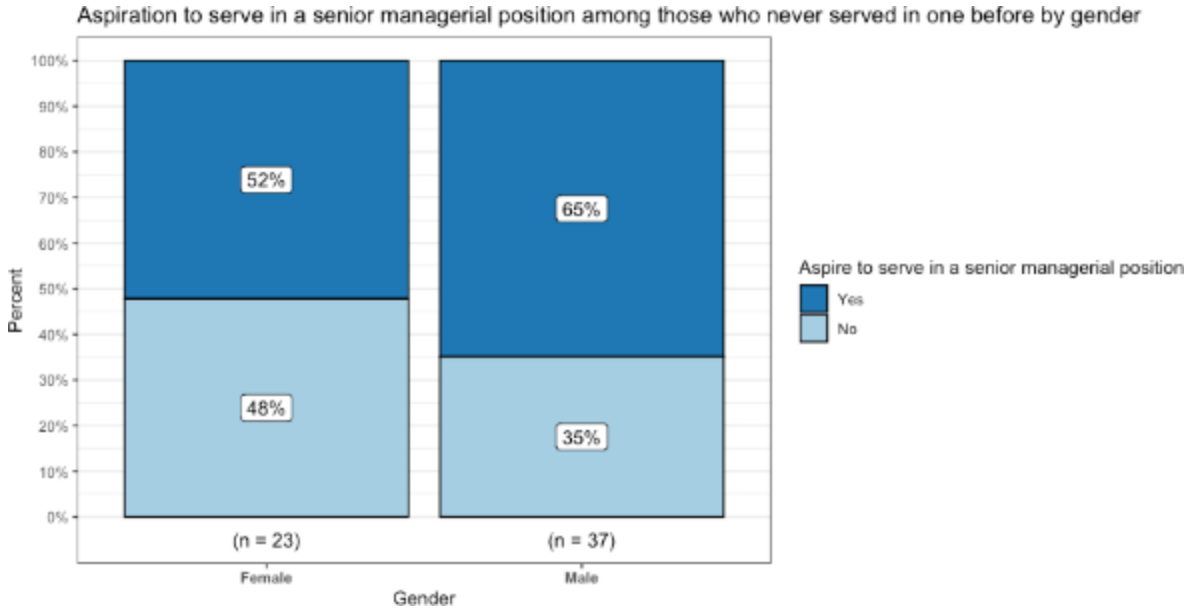


When asked about their views on how they feel about their career progression, females were more likely to feel they are not progressing in career than male. Consistent with this notion, Lyness and Thompson (2000) found that women leaders were less satisfied than men leaders with future career opportunities. This might be because women may perceive unfavorable career prospects because of limited opportunity structures (Powell and Mainiero, 1992), their relative absence in line positions necessary for advancement. In the work domain, women have more limited access to mentors (Ragins and

Cotton, 1991) in key top leadership positions, who are most often men (Powell and Mainiero, 1992), and this acts as a barrier to advancement (Lyness and Thompson, 2000).

Aspiration for leadership positions

The results show that the odds of being aspired to serve at a higher managerial position among females is 0.4 that of males. i.e., Aspiration to serve at a higher managerial position among those who never served in one before is higher in males compared to females. The p-value that occupancies this result is not statistically significant and thus it is fair to argue that, aspiration to serve at a higher managerial position among those who never served in one before is the same for males and females. Figure (2) shows aspiration to serve at a higher managerial position among those who never served in one before by gender. The graph reflects the findings discussed above in that a slightly higher percentage of males aspire to serve in a senior managerial position compared to females.



Regarding female, most participants listed professional development as a core driver for such desire (57%). Other reasons listed were for providing service to the college (29%), and because of a personal motivation (14%) whilst for the male subgroup, most participants were motivated to serve in a senior managerial position because they wanted to provide service to the college (65%). Regarding reasons as why they do not like to serve in leadership positions most female participants listed the desire to devote more time for their academic career as a limiting factor (44%); 33% expressed that they lack the required skills, and 22% highlighted that they lacked the interest to serve in one. This finding concurs that of (Powell and Butterfield, 2003) who argue that individuals with masculine gender identities are more likely to aspire to top positions and for many women, this creates a level of discomfort with their feminine-identified self-concepts. Furhermore (Mbepera, 2015) argued that one of the factors for under representation of female is low aspiration. Most women do not aspire to become leaders and sometimes may reject or be unwilling to take up leadership posts (Mbepera, 2015). However, their aspirations can not only be attributed by individual factors but also structural and, or cultural as shown above. These aspirations are concerned with the socially constructed norms and values that govern social behavior and interaction and, are deeply gendered.

Conclusions

Prior research indicates that female academics already form a disadvantaged group in academia since they are underrepresented in senior leadership roles. And that the academic career path of uninterrupted progression, research activity and networks follow a masculinity norm for career development is merit-based. And this is detrimental to the career progression of female academics. The current context poses new challenges to the agenda of advancing gender equality in Tanzania thus, in accordance with the proof from the study and individual encounters, the researcher recommends that universities go beyond mere acknowledgment of need for attention to existing inequalities but must address the different needs, aspirations, capacities and contributions of all that is transformative aspect of leadership and policy making.

Acknowledgement

The Author acknowledges the support from my supervisors, Dr. Joseph Roche and Dr. Susan Murphy for their continued cooperation to make this a remarkable piece. I also acknowledge support from DUCE GATE project PI Dr. Perpetua Urio, TCD PI Dr. Susan Murphy and other GATE Team members who were involved in the data collection process and in the writing / review process. I also recognize the project and the donor who is the Irish Aid for facilitating fund for my study and for fees for this conference.

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At the Centre of Citizen Agency is a Woman

Violet Alinda

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Abstract

In their very nature women have been organizing to harness their collective resources and power to improve their wellbeing. Several income focused development interventions have leveraged this powerful resource. Whereas the animation pilot project did not set out to harness the women's collective power, this power continued to surface through the pilot phase. This is a story of Fatina Namukuve, a mother of twelve (12) who was selected by her community in Namutumba District, eastern Uganda. An agnostic approach to animation was adopted. Using participatory action research tools communities were supported to collectively reflect on important problems in their villages. Each village prioritized three most pressing problems and systematically worked through each problem until a solution was found. The pilot was implemented in three rural districts of Kamuli, Kole and Namutumba. Thirty-six (36) villages were purposively selected in six rural sub counties in each district. After community sensitization meetings each village nominated a male and female change agent- who were rigorously trained to use the PRA tools that they applied when they convened community meetings. Early results show that, when PRA tools are effectively used deep reflection takes place. Communities commit to agreed actions, they seek information, and they implement, and follow-up agreed actions. The sense of ownership increases, the practice of pooling resources starts to establish, village meetings become regular, there is increased alertness to feedback, and demand for accountability is enhanced leading to a confident community of women and men that are keen on how they are governed.

Keywords: *Change Agents, Citizen Participation, Issue Agnostic, Participatory Action Research Agents*

Introduction

How do you demonstrate how citizens can come together to collectively address their problems and make government work for them? What works and why? Twaweza East Africa set out to address two interconnected problems, i.e. citizens are unable to exert productive influence over the forces that shape their development decision at local and national level and the deteriorating basic conditions for meaningful citizen participation including; the freedoms of expression, association and assembly. This is Twaweza's 5-year commitment in the strategy 2019- 2023.

The animation approach was adopted with the aim of improving citizens' ability, motivation and creating opportunities for citizens to exercise their agency. Participatory action research tools are used to facilitate the process in the target communities. The intervention was piloted in three rural Ugandan districts where there is more opportunity for political competition at the local level, communities can easily speak but also the political scrutiny is not heightened and when compared to the national level where the political space is relatively close. This consideration also meant that it is more feasible for civil society to introduce transparency initiatives at the subnational rather than national level, Michelitch & Grossman (2018) from literature evidence shows that NGOs that are well regarded tend to successfully implement social accountability interventions.

According to Bandura's Social Cognitive Learning Theory (SCLT) "individuals learn both behaviors and cognitive strategies by observing the behavior of others, and these acquisitions can be learned without being directly reinforced, Nabavi (2012)." The pilot animation intervention focused on appealing to individual and community cognitive strategies and behaviours without providing reinforcements (incentives). Communities were facilitated to independently use selected participatory action research (PRA) tools. The sequencing of the tools compels the participants to invest significant amount of time thinking and reflecting on the problem. Communities learn to weight the community problems in order to come with the most the most important priority at the same time they explore and seek to understand the complexity of the community problem as they ask tough questions.

In Uganda both civil society organization and government have implemented a myriad social accountability initiative with varied degrees of success, such as the community score card, community-based monitoring and evaluation systems (CBMES), Public Expenditure and Tracking (PETs), animation targeting the youth as well as the inherent social accountability mechanisms inbuilt within the local government service delivery systems. However, both the formal and the informal mechanisms have significant weaknesses and challenges that undermine their efficacy to galvanize citizen participation in public accountability processes and positively impact on service delivery, ISER (2017). A review of social accountability initiative like Faila & Premand, (2018), study, which looked at whether providing social accountability training and information led to improvements in local development projects and their findings showed that offering communities training improves project quality by a modest amount.

For most of these social accountability approaches, they are very prescriptive focusing on a sector, more with "fill in" template that community resource persons or change agents are trained to use. In the case of this animation pilot, participating communities are supported to use the different tools following a sequence and information is only provided by a technical public servant when the community realize and seek the information otherwise all participants are together on a journey of self -discovery until they collectively agree on the priority problems /issues of focus.

This means each community will priorities based on what they care about most and therefore, at any one moment different villages are exploring ways to address problems such as; sexual/gender based violence, teenage pregnancy, lack of clean and safe water, drug stock-outs, teacher absenteeism, poor state of community roads, safety and security among others. Whatever the issues is, women/ men young and old are engaged and all perspectives consolidated. By the end of the community PAR meetings that climaxes with production of a draft action plan, and this could last anywhere between 12-24 weeks, the communities emerge more informed, knowledgeable and with great confidence. They emerge as owners of the problems and become part of the solutions when they commit to oversee implementation of the actions in the plan for both short and long terms solutions some of which have be solved by communities pooling their own resources/ideas or assigning tasks to community representatives and or collaborating with government leaders at different levels (village, sub county and district) achieve the desired results.

With the support of change agents' spaces for meetings, feedback, dialogues and engagement are created where participating communities interface their leaders to address citizens' concerns. In these spaces communities are in charge limited external influence. Invited public officials are limited to share information within the scope or expectation as defined by the community. The open approach to social accountability focuses treats the process as very important and an end in its own right no matter the outcomes of the process. Communities repeat actions based on outcomes from similar processes for purposes of refining the skill of using the PRA tools so that they master the art and skill of finding solutions to more complex problems.

3.0 Methodology

An issue agnostic approach to participatory action research was adopted and implemented in line with the triple A framework whose key components are Assessment, Analysis and Action. Three pilot districts were purposively selected using a criteria that included; a rural where majority of the people depending on public institutions for social services; openness of public officials to new ideas and willingness to engage and support the pilot project; availability of district based Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) having a working relationship with the district authorities- Michelitch & Grossman (2018), recommend that the civil society organization should be local, non-partisan, credible, and get buy-in from key stakeholders (e.g., politicians, local politician associations, and political parties; and the age of the district. Older districts are stable, they have well established structures, infrastructure and all systems are in place, recently established districts lack most of the key infrastructure and sometimes the structures are still skeletal and the all systems are not yet operationalized. In the case of this pilot, Kamuli was established in 1974, Namutumba in 2006 and Kole district in 2010.

In each district, local NGOs were identified with support of the community development services department, a due diligence conducted for each organization and the staff of the selected organization were oriented and introduced to animation and participatory action research tools. With this knowledge, the NGOs introduced the project the six pilot sub counties purposively selected with the support of the district leaders. In sub counties, 12 villages (communities) were selected, each a male and female change agent was selected against a criteria of; ability to read, write and understand Basic English; a person of good standing (highly regarded) in the community; willingness and readiness to learn; young person and likely to stay in the community for 1 year.

Across the pilot districts, 36 villages and 72 change agents 50% of whom are women were selected. The change agents were trained in the principles of animation and supported to use PRA tools to generate action plans, when they returned to their communities. Change agents convened the first village meetings to share feedback from the training, clarify expectations and agree on a 2 hour PAR meeting schedule that works for the majority of village members.

The main PAR tools used were the; community social (transect/ resource) map, ranking (ordinary and pair wise) tool, historical timeline; root-cause-analysis (using the 5 Whys), venn diagram and action planning matrix/responsibility matrix. Each community produced a an action plan with 3 top priority problems, responsibilities were assigned to members of the village and a 5 member citizen follow up committee put in place to oversee implementation of the action plans. These community action plans are living documents, they are reviewed and when a problem has been resolved the community may decide to priorities another issues of concern.

Integrated in the PAR process communities convene feedback meetings and dialogues during which they seek information from local leaders, they seek answers to their concerns and ask for commitment towards solving issues that matter most to them. The dialogues are organised at community, Sub County and sometimes district and during these engagement spaces, communities, represented citizen follow up committees set the agenda. As result of these interactions the change agents, citizen follow up committees and village leaders are invited into government spaces where they present issues of concern to public authorities which contributes to solving some of the community problems.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Key demographic indicators for Kamuli, Kole and Namutumba

Mixed methods were used to conduct a baseline study before commencement of the pilot participatory action research project.

- A larger proportion of the communities in the pilot study districts derive sustenance from farming; Kole 87%, Kamuli 75% and Namutumba 74%.
- A small minority have secondary education and above; Kole 13%, Kamuli 12% and Namutumba 27%
- Majority of the households are headed by males with female headed households accounting for 21% Kole, 20% in Kamuli and 19% in Namutumba.
- Majority of the households are in the low income bracket, Kole 75% , Kamuli 52% and Namutumba 69%

4.2 Revival of communal activities

Women are more actively involved in the participatory action research meetings more than the men. They have persistently and consistently attended the regular community PAR meetings, invested significant amount of time and this has paid off with desired results. From these meetings, communities their own pooled resources (cash and in-kind materials, labour, ideas) etc to repair broken water wells, maintain (slash, fill potholes and fix small culverts) community roads and enforce village by-laws to realize the desired results in the community action.

4.3 Communities are organizing and engaging

Communities have organised themselves and used their collective bargain to seek audience with their local leaders. In some of the pilot villages, holding community meetings has become the first step to addressing any community challenge. While the meetings started of community PAR meetings, the village leaders are embracing them and are being used to mobilize communities for wider causes. For example, men were attracted to PAR community meeting to find solutions to the security and safety of property and coffee in Nabirama village, where men attended in large numbers. Village leaders are liaising with change agents and citizen follow up committees to mobilize for government programmes even when there are no direct cash incentives.

As a result of these meetings, communities have prepared, submitted and presented "petitions" or request letters to their leaders at Sub County and district leaders asking them to address their plight and positive results have been realized. The results include construction of new boreholes, construction of pit-latrines at schools, opening community access roads, provision of community vaccination outreach programme, provision of information on government livelihood improvement programmes, initiation of the electrification in one of the villages. This has given opportunity to female change agent to speak in public, strengthening their confidence, motivating them to seek more information and find their voice. In her own words, Ms. Fatina Namukuve, a mother of twelve (12) shared her experience;

> *"When I first came for the change agents training, I feared to speak. Whenever I spoke, I would tremble, no one in the community cared about me, be it what I did, where and with who or how. As a Muslim woman, I only trusted Muslims in my community. After had submitted a petition to the district and were asked to attend the district budget conference, I did not think I could speak. But when the name*

> *of our village was called out and our councilors were not present to speak for us; Jackson and I looked at each other and we knew we had to speak for our village. We stood up and I spoke in Lusoga. The Speaker of district council speaker asked the staff from NGO Forum to explain who we were, after they discussed our issue and the council agreed to construct the pit latrine immediately. At first we did not believe it, but a week later the district officials come to our village to survey the site. For the first time the village chairperson looked for me saying that people from the district wanted to see me. From the time the district officials visited to when the material was were delivered and the pit latrine constructed was very short. We waited for 10 years to have proper pit latrine with a girls changing room and using the PAR tactics, solved the problem in 3 months! Fatina Namukuve is a Change Agent of Namuwondo B village in Namutumba District*

4.4. Communities are confident, they seek information and monitor ongoing projects

The PAR process is helping communities realize that they have an ability within themselves to solve some of the problems they face in their villages. From focus group discussion with villagers, communities have explained how they generate ideas, seek more information so that they agree on actions that if implemented will deliver the results they desire, keenly follow and monitor implementation of on-going government projects all with the aim of solving the problems they care most about. The desire to see successful results has compelled them to accurate information by visiting public offices that ordinarily they would not go to, they find themselves asking questions, speak for their community every time an opportunity presents itself and are now more accommodating of people different from them.

> *I now know that people with good ideas come from different religions, so I have learnt to listen to other people's views. I know which offices to visit at the Sub County and district, I can now confidently speak to an audience of 1000 people. I always have to be "ahead" of the community thinking and be ready for the sacrifice because it takes a lot of effort to solve any given problem. Fatina Namukuve, change agent Namuwondo B, Namutumba District*

There is increased communities' interest in monitoring government projects for example, when people of Nawondo B, successfully had a school pit-latrine constructed at Busona Primary School, they key a watchful eye. When the pit latrine developed a crack, the members of the citizen follow up committee reported the matter district water office who validated the community concerns and sanctioned the contractor repair and fix the crack.

4.5 Discussion of the results:

Across the pilot communities, there was a slow reception to the regular community meetings. The culture of village meetings organised by village leaders was absent in most communities. Village leaders and members did not believe that communities to attend meetings where they were not being paid or given some kind of reward. As soon as the few that were actively attending meetings started implementing actions that were 'uncommon in the village' or public officials visited a site or and attended PAR village meetings, by standers both community leaders and villagers were started attending these gatherings either out curiosity or conviction that something different was taking place in these meetings. Stories of once opposed villagers that turned into huge supporters, offering meeting spaces, leading teams visiting public offices, mobilizing for attendance and enforcing by-laws have been reported. This seems to demonstrate that communities do not need huge budgets to convene a village meeting, rather they need tools that allow them efficiently manage a meeting agenda focusing on the purpose of that meeting community meeting to advance the community wellbeing.

When PAR is used to implement animation in communities, the process is very important, it facilitates "fill in the blanks" or complete a puzzle for any given community problem. Good problem identification, prioritizing, analyzing and aligning the problem to the institutions, association/groups and individuals in a subtle way forces communities to deeply think about the most viable solutions. Communities stop focusing on the change agent as an individual with the solution to focusing on how they could use their 'all' so solve a problem in their midst. By the time a community successfully works through a single problem, they are fired up and ready to take up a second issue. From the discussion with these communities, when left on their own to figure out solutions, this independent community collective thinking restores a high sense of "individual and collective self" hence strengthen the "we can do it" muscle critical for the restoration of collective citizen agency together.

4.6 Conclusion:

Insights from the early results, improving the ability and availing opportunities to citizens to independently work through problems of wider community concerns gains traction and get entrenched because of the women members of the community that persistently sacrifice time and attend village participatory action research meetings. It is because of these women that other actions are implemented based on the success achieved in the initial engagements.

Going to the communities with an open mind, widens the possibilities of the issues communities can seek to resolve. It would appear approach distributes the "noise" across departments that would otherwise be concentrated on one department causing a lot of stress. Most importantly because community entry is not tied to any sector, a lot of effort is focused on the process, which once understood, then the communities are able to transfer the same knowledge and skills to another community problem which overtime builds the confidence and citizen agency of participating communities.

End notes:

Twaweza Strategy 2019-2023: We are implementing a three-part mission strategy i.e Mission 01: To demonstrate how citizens can come together to collectively address their problems and make government work for them; Mission 2: To enable citizens' voices, interests and experiences to be heard and taken seriously in decision making, Mission 3: To promote and protect open civic space which enables citizens to freely assemble or organise, speak and act

Under mission 1: we hypothesize that; through information and mobilisation, young people in selected areas interact positively with authorities to address their needs (solve problems). These cases capture the interest and goodwill of progressives (champions) at local and also national authorities to support. As early adopters, they act as ambassadors for participatory, responsive processes within their government institutions; these, in turn, begin to slowly show signs of being adopted and adapted by other locations.

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The Role of Government Policies in Changing Status of Women: A Case of India

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Abstract

Indian Women used to possess high status during the Vedic Period. Unfortunately, from the medieval era to modern times India was under British colonization. Indian women slipped down to lower secondary position in the patriarchal society due to various traditional practices and customs which had evolved over the period of time. Gender equality and women empowerment have become a topic of discussion with regards to economic growth and development. Post Independent India saw many progressive measures taken by the Indian Government to give their due rights by constitutional guaranteed foe equality in Laws and Acts. This study discusses various major policies and schemes launched by the Indian Government for empowerment of the women by examining the changes through women centric empowerment-oriented policies/schemes (National Policy for Women Empowerment, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojna and Ujjawala 2.0, STEP, Women helpline, National Creche Scheme for working women, Mahila Police Volunteers, to name a few). These measures were introduced and adopted by the Indian Government to correct the 'asymmetry' by facilitating women empowerment.

Keywords: *Gender Equality, Government Policies, Women Empowerment, Social Change.*

Introduction

Sex is biological while gender is cultural in nature. Indian Patriarchal Society has been practicing gender-based discrimination and inequality within family, workplace and larger society since the time immortal. This can be seen in the form of female foeticide and is further reflected in the area of health, nutrition, education, early marriage, social customs, employment, political participation, inheritance, positions of authority, etc. Over the period of times, it has become an accepted way of life which resulted in the lower status of women, and they were perceived as the second-class gender in Indian Society.

Objective of the Study

The present research paper aims; -

1) To bring into light the benefit of Gender Equality Policy for the socio-economic development of the Indian society.
2) To bring into light the major relevant policies/schemes launched and adopted by Government of India for the empowerment of Indian Women.
3) To focus on the role played by Government schemes in the changing status of Indian Women.

Concepts Used

Mainly, four concepts have been used in the present research paper viz. 'Status', 'Role', 'Social Change', 'Women Empowerment'.

Status And Role

The concept of 'Status' is generally used in two ways in Sociology- 1) Social Position, and 2) Social Honour and Prestige. By status, Linton (1936) meant, "A position in a system occupied by designated individuals" and by role, he meant, "Behavioral enacting of the patterned expectation attributed to that position". In his classic work, he had classified status into two types -1) Ascribed status and 2) Achieved status. Ascribed status is based on inherited position of individual in the society like sex, caste, age, race, etc while achieved status is acquired by an individual through his/her efforts, abilities, knowledge and skills. 'Role' as Linton defined is "Role represents the dynamic aspect of status". The present paper aims to study the changing status of Indian Women to be empowered due to government policies.

Women Empowerment

Empowerment means people having power or control over their own lives. In this sense, women empowerment refers to "promoting women's self -worth , their ability to determine their own choices and their right to influence social change for themselves and others. The concept of women empowerment has been used in the present paper with special reference to major relevant Government policies.

Social Change

Social Change as a process can be referred to the changes that occur in the structure and functioning of social system. It is the alterations in the material and non-material culture of any society; changes in the statuses and roles of groups and individuals; changes in the values, norms, social institutions; changes in the social relations, patterns of social interactions; social functioning; etc. Here, the concept has been used with reference to the change in the status of women and subsequent changes in the society.

Theoretical Framework

In this context, the broad framework should relate gender with social change (transformation). This type of theoretical framework has to be derived from a concept of social system organized around the structural principle of gender itself. The structure and the relationship of genders which define the status of both the genders within the family, workplace and larger society has foundation in socialization process which encourages stereotyping of sex- roles everywhere.

This institutionalization of inequality between the sexes and their organization into a social system of gender relationships circumscribes the major condition which enables discrimination of one sex by the other. It is on account of this that exploitation of the weaker sex is facilitated such as well perceived less importance of woman's work as housewives, the lesser pay in comparison to men for similar work, domestic violence, rape and sexual harassment. There exist the normatively sanctioned institutions of oppression in the form of traditional customs, traditional practices. to sustain and maintain this institutionalized asymmetry. Therefore, social change should be interpreted in terms of qualitative and quantitative changes taking place within the structure of gender relationships. While formal – legal interventions have been made to 'correct' this asymmetry, the actual transformation of these relationships is an ongoing process (Sahoo :2008).

Limitations of the Study

1. The study is based only on the Government policies/schemes related to women in India
2. The data analysis mainly focuses on major women empowerment-oriented Government Policies
3. The analysis is based on secondary data only

Methodology of the Study

The analysis is primarily based on secondary data collected from various most authentic government sources, reports and websites. Since the analysis is mainly on the Government of India policies for women empowerment; therefore, there is virtually no scope for modification. The schemes covered under the present paper were randomly selected for their popularity and visible impact on the women beneficiaries. Their relation and role in bringing the changes in the status of women have been evaluated.

Major Government Policies for Women Empowerment in Independent India

The Constitution of India recognizes equality in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights and under the Directive Principles of State Policy. Later National Commission for Women was setup in 1992 under the National Commission for women Act, 1990 and National Policy for the Empowerment of Women too was adopted in 2001 along with National Mission for Empowerment of Women (2010). More so, 2001 was declared the "National Women's Empowerment Year". A few major laws in favour of women are as follows: Special Marriage Act,1954; The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956; Indian Divorce Act, 1969; The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, (amendment in 1986); Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971,(amendment 2021); equal Remuneration Act, 1976; PC-PNDT Act, 1994 (amendment 2003); Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005); The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013; The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013; The mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (2005), Right to Education Act, 2009; Maternity Benefit Act,1961, (Amendment, 2017,2019), etc.

With legal- formal interventions made to protect the rights of the women to promote gender equality; various permanent and time bound schemes were launched to achieve the objectives and goals strived by the National Policy for Empowerment of Women, 2001. The objectives of each and every scheme reflect the problems faced by the women to which a particular scheme has been targeted: -

Source: Government of India

Sr.no	Name of the Scheme	Launch Year	Objectives of the Scheme
1.	Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme (BBBP)	2015	• To prevent gender-biased sex selective elimination. • To ensure survival and protection of the girl child. • To ensure education and participation of the girl child.
2.	One-Stop Centre Scheme (OSCs)	2015	• To provide support and assistance to women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces. • To Facilitate/Assist in filing First Information Report (FIR/NCR) • To provide support and counseling to girl child.

3.	Women Helpline Scheme (WHL)	2016	• To provide toll-free 24-hours telecom service to women affected by violence. • To facilitate crisis and non-crisis intervention through referral to agencies, such as police/Hospitals/Ambulance services etc. • To provide information about the appropriate support services, government schemes, and programs available to the woman affected by violence, in her particular situation within the local area in which she resides or is employed.
4.	UJJAWALA Scheme	2016	• To prevent the trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation. • To facilitate the rescue of victims from the place of their exploitation and place them in safe custody. • To provide rehabilitation services with both immediate and long-term to the victims by providing basic amenities/needs such as shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment including counseling, legal aid and guidance, and vocational training.
5.	Working Women Hostel (WWH)	1972-73	• To promote and safeguard working women in terms of location. • To provide accommodation to children of working women, up to the age of 18 years for girls and up to the age of 5 years for boys. Women from disadvantaged sections of the society are also given preference.
6.	SWADHAR Greh	2018	• To cater to the primary need for shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment, and care of women in distress. • To provide women with legal aid and guidance and economical and emotional rehabilitation.
7.	Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)	1986-87	• To provide skills that enable women to become self-employed/ entrepreneurs. Available to all women above 16years of age.
8.	Nari Shakti Puraskar	2016	• To strengthen the place of women in society and to facilitate institutions that work towards the development of women in society.
9.	Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK)	2017	• To create an environment for rural women to have access to healthcare, education, employment, skill development, digital literacy, etc.
10.	NIRBHAYA FUND	2012	• To facilitate safety and security for women at various levels. • To ensure strict privacy and confidentiality of women's identity and information. • Provision for real-time intervention as far as possible
11.	Mahila E-Haat	2016	• To facilitate entrepreneurship opportunities online for women and to educate women on various aspects of online selling and helping them establish their venture.

12.	Mahila Police Volunteers (MPV)	2016	• An MPV will serve as a public-police interface in order to fight crime against women. • The broad mandate of MPVs is to report incidences of violence against women such as domestic violence, child marriage, dowry harassment and violence faced by women in public spaces.
13.	National Creche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers (NCSCWM)	2017	• To provide day care services for children aged 6 months to 6 years of working mothers in the community • To improve children's nutrition and health status • To encourage the holistic development of children • To educate and empower parents/caregivers to provide better childcare
14.	Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojna (PMMVY)	2017	• To give partial compensation to pregnant and lactating mothers in case of birth of first living child who were working and had wage loss due to the pregnancy • To improve their health seeking behavior
15.	Pradhan Matri Ujjawala Yojana (PMUY) and Ujjawala 2.0	2016 And 2021	• To ensure the availability of clean cooking fuel such as LPG in rural and deprived household which were otherwise using traditional cooking fuels • To empower women and protect their health by providing free of cost LPG Cylinders • To prevent the population from a significant number of acute respiratory illnesses • To promote the cleanliness and purity of the environment

Findings And Discussions

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme

BBBP means Save The Girl Child Educate The Girl Child and this is most successful scheme of all. Launched in 2015 in Haryana, the scheme was aimed to bring awareness about the declining National Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB). The Census 2011 revealed the detraction in key gender metrics- Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and SRB. According to World Health Organization (WHO), SRB refers to the male births per female births. CSR means number of girls per 1000 boys aged 0-6 years. This ratio showed a steady decline over the period of time from 945 in 1999 to 927 in 2001 and 918 girls per 1000 boys in 2011 Census of India. This clearly indicates the gender-based sex discrimination and women disempowerment in a Patriarchal setup where gender bias exists due to preference of male child over girl child.

As per The National Family Health Survey – 5 (NFHS), 2019-21 report of 6,36,699 households, the SRB is reached to 1020 girls per 1000 boys. In the absence of Census of India 2021, this report is second most authentic report. This sex ratio trend can be taken as a case for the progress India has made on gender justice and women empowerment by narrowing down the gender division in the society. According to Health Management Information System (HMIS), out of 640 districts covered under the BBBP, 422 districts have posted improvement in SRB from 2014-15 to 2018-19.

The continuous progress and success of the scheme can further be seen through the gross enrollment of girls at secondary level has also Improved from 77.45 (2014-15) to 81.32 (2018-19) and percentage of schools with functional separate toilets for girls in rural areas has also increased from 92.1% in 2014-15 to 95.1% in 2018-19) as UDISE data. The primary education for girls is made free in some states. The scheme covers scholarships and award to girl students too.

One Stop Centre (OSC)

OSCs are intended to provide support the women affected by violence, in private and public spaces, within the family, community and at the workplace. . OSCs are integrated with Women Helplines to provide various services, psychological support and counseling, legal aid and shelter and video conferencing facility. The Ministry of Women and Child Development had approved 733 OSCs of which 682 OSCs were functional in May 2020. By April 2021, 3,41,017 cases had been handled by these centres. Under the scheme, it has been envisaged that OSCs would be set up across the country in phased manner.

Women Helpline (WHL)

WHL provides instant 24 hours emergency and non- emergency referral services (hospitals/ambulance services/police/district legal authority and protection officers (PO) to women affected by violence. 24 hours toll free short code '181' was provided for women seeking support and information about Government Schemes and Programs. This "Women Helpline" is operational in 32 states/union territories and has provided assistance to 51 lakhs (5,177,303 calls were received).

Ujjawala Scheme

To achieve the objective of the scheme to prevent, rescue, rehabilitate, reintegrate women and children's victims of trafficking; the government planned to involve the local community, create awareness through programmes and workshops. As of March 2022, 28,409 victims had been benefitted since its launch in 2016.

Working Women Hostel

The scheme was introduced to provide safe and affordable accommodation and day care facilities to working women. As per the last authentic government data of March 2020, there were 73,387 working women in the hostels and 10,788 children in various day care centres in urban, semi urban and rural areas.

Swadhar Greh

With the aim to rehabilitate (shelter, medical assistance food, clothing, social and economic security) to women in distress including widows, destitute women and elderly women; this scheme has benefited 73,745 women through local administration.

Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)

The purpose of the scheme is skill development, enhance competency and provide increase employability of the girls and women in the age group of 16 and above across the country. The assistance under this scheme is given in sectors like agriculture, horticulture, food processing, handlooms, traditional crafts, handicrafts, etc. Seeing the declining number of beneficiaries from 31,478 during the year 2013-14 to 14,859 in the year 2016-17, the guidelines were revised in august 2016, the number of beneficiaries rose to 60,000 under STEP.

Nari Shakti Puruskar

The 'Nari Shakti Purukar' is an initiative taken by Ministry of Women and Child Development to acknowledge the contribution made by individual women and institutions, to celebrate womanhood- to celebrate woman as agent and catalyst of social change. These achievers' broke stereotypes, stood against gender inequality and discrimination. In all, total 24 puruskars (14 each for the year 2020 and 2021) have been conferred so far.

Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK)

Implemented across 115 most backward/ aspirational districts at the time of launch where student volunteers were instrumental in generating awareness about government policies/schemes and women related issues. The Government further created a framework to take it to all the levels, national, state, district and block level.

Nirbhaya Fund

Under the framework of implementing schemes and projects established by the Government of India to enhance safety and security of women, Nirbhaya Fund was created to provide funds for the schemes like OSCs, WHL and MPV. Rs. 3766.03 crore has been released during the last five years for the implementation of various schemes.

Mahila E-haat

It is an online marketing platform for women entrepreneurs supported by National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC). The registered vendors have been allocated to Ministry of Food Processing Industries; Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Ministry of Commerce and Industry to facilitate their market linkage. There was total 204 registered women entrepreneurs under Mahila E-haat as on February 2021.

Mahila Police Volunteers (MPV)

Approved in 13 states, the MPVs is a public – police interface to fight crime against women and register incidences like domestic violence, dowry harassment, child marriage, violence faced by women in public. As per March 2020 statistics, there were total 9,531 MPVs.

National Creche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers (NCSCWM)

The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017, requires every establishment having fifty or more employees to have the facility of crèche within a prescribed distance. As per the available data, during the year 2017-18 there were total 18040 creches which was declined – 8018 creches in 2018-19 and 6458 in 2019-2020.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojna (PMMVY)

To meet the aim, the scheme provides a benefit of Rs.5000 payable in three installments to pregnant women and lactating mothers in rural areas for the first live child in the family. Since the time of its inception till 25.1.2022 the number of registered beneficiaries is 2,58,07,111.

Pradhan Matri Ujjawala Yojana (PMUY) and Ujjawala 2.0

Introduced by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, the ambitious social welfare scheme aims to empower and protect their health by providing free of cost LPG Cylinders to rural women. The first phase of the Yojna (policy) began in May 2016 with the aim to provide 5 crores LPG connections to below poverty line (BPL) families with a support of Rs. 1600/- per connection in the next three years. 8 crores households were benefitted by this scheme in august 2019, seven months ahead of the target date.

After the grand success pf phase I, the second phase named Ujjawala 2.0 was declared in FY 2021-22 union budget which aimed to provide additional 1 crore deposit free LPG connection to low-income families who could not be covered under the first phase of PMUY. Under phase 2.0, migrant workers could avail a free cooking gas on the basis of self declaration without any documentary proof of address. As on 1 june 2022, total 12,810,952 connection were issued taking total tally to 92,714,082. (PMUY website).

This study has discussed various women empowerment-oriented policies, schemes, laws and other initiatives undertaken by the Government of India to achieve gender equality in India. These schemes seek to uplift, protect and empower women to enable them -1) to enjoy equal status in the family, workplace and wider society; 2) to facilitate them to perform their roles effectively; 3) to eliminate all forms of discrimination, prejudice and unfair treatment meted out to them; 4) to respect their human rights; and 5) to celebrate womanhood. Many schemes (like BBBP, WHL, Nirbhaya Fund, WWH, STEP, PMMVY, Ujjawa 2.0,) are running permanently after their high or partial success rate to help women in their socio-economic empowerment. Some schemes are into their second (Ujjawala 2.0) phase or are functional in many individual states. Only a few schemes (like NCSCWM, Swadhar Greh) have low response. The success of the schemes has resulted in attitudinal change in women themselves as well others towards them. During and post Pandemic situation, most of the schemes had been functioning effectively. Additionally, Free ration was given to all the ration card holding households, 3 free LPG cylinders, and Rs. 2000 were transferred in the bank account of all the Shramik Card Holders and Zero balance accounts, legally known as Basic Savings Bank Deposits (BSBD). This prestigious scheme was launched in 2015 with the aim of financial inclusion of every Indian Citizen.

In fact, there are a plethora of existing schemes and laws for women and are further being formulated besides above mentioned to address the gender issues, some of the schemes need continuous monitoring and tracking their implementation aspect. In addition, the timely revival and updating of these schemes to make them more responsive to the needs of women will go a long way in their march towards empowerment and equality.

Conclusion

Women play a key role in the economic growth and overall development of any society. The necessity of women empowerment has arisen due to gender discrimination and male dominance because of Patriarchal structure of the Indian society since the time immortal. They have been held back and exploited and oppressed for reasons like old customs and traditional practices. Through women empowerment it can be possible to bring qualitative and quantitative changes in the overall social system of gender relations.
'Gender Equality' is a fundamental right and is the 5th goal among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United States. Despite many legal- formal interventions, policies, schemes adopted and implemented by the Government of India to correct the 'asymmetry' by facilitating women empowerment, the march of Indian women towards empowerment is not as expected. The society is going through a transitional phase, so there is a need of a strong will to change the patriarchal mindset to accept and embrace the changing status of women.

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Women's Employment and its effect on Domestic Abuse in India

Kajal

Abstract

The welfare of women is commonly linked to their employment. However, there is vast literature that indicates various societal and cultural norms that inhibit the participation of women in the labour market in India. This paper examines the impact of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee programme (MGNREGA) on domestic abuse faced by women. MGNREGA is a "demand- driven" programme that provides employment opportunities to one member from each household, within 15 days of request. It aims to alleviate poverty and promote participation of women in the labour force through its gender sensitive implementation. This study narrowly focuses on household level data collected through two waves of the Indian Human Development Survey conducted (IHDS) in 2005 (prior to the implementation of MGNREGA) and 2011 (post the implementation of MGNREGA nationwide) with the same respondents. It estimates the effect of participation of women in MGNREGA on the domestic abuse they face under various circumstances using a Logit fixed effect model. The study concludes that domestic abuse faced by women has an economic underpinning. As women start earning, the net income of the household increases along with their bargaining power, leading to a decrease in domestic abuse.

***Keywords**: Women Employment, Labour force, Domestic abuse*

1. Introduction

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme is one of the largest social initiatives in India that attempts to reduce poverty through employment opportunities for the unskilled labour force in rural India. Following the enactment of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in India in 2005, the programme was first launched in February 2006. As a right based intervention, it guarantees at least 100 days of paid employment to any rural household at a rate fixed independently by the states.

Its design element aims to reduce social prejudices by promoting the participation of women in the labour market through three special provisions in the Act:

1. One third of the employed people must be women (Schedule 6)
2. Both men and women should be paid equal wages based on number of hours completed (Section 34)
3. On-site childcare for women with kids under the age of 6 years old. (Section 28) This section also mandates that the worksite should be within a radius of 5 km from the household, if not, a compensation amount is provided for the travelling expenses incurred

There are conflicting studies that explore the economic and social effect of women's participation in the labour market. The household bargaining model contends that as women start contributing to the net income of the family, her bargaining power in household decisions over the allocation of resources increases, in turn, reducing incidents of abuse (Aizer, 2010). On similar lines, the income effect suggests an inverse relationship between income and domestic abuse associated with financial distress (Amaral et.al., 2015). In addition, exposure to the spouse model suggests that employment leads to a decrease in the total time a woman spends with her spouse leading to fewer instances of domestic abuse (Sarma, 2020).

Contrasting these arguments, the backlash effect suggests that increase in autonomy of the women due to financial independence attained through employment threatens the dominance of men in the household.

The male-dominant power structure within the family, prescribed by social norms, is distorted, which leads to an increase in domestic abuse as an instrument to maintain dominance (Eswaran and Malhotra, 2011). The backlash effect is criticised by Aizer (2010) on the grounds that it ignores the rationality constraint of women who are employed, that is, the possibility of ending the relationship. He argues that, as the income increases, women are less likely to remain in an abusive relationship. However, a primary study conducted by the International Centre for Research on Women (2020) in India, estimated that less than 10% of victims of domestic violence left their husbands and a vast majority of these women returned because of societal pressure on the natal family. Similarly, the extraction effect points that the risk of domestic abuse is higher for women with more financial resources.

From these theoretical standpoints, it can be concluded that the participation of women in the labour market has a bilateral impact on domestic abuse faced by them. In this study, the researcher contributes to the literature by estimating the effect of participation of women in the labour market on their welfare by taking MGNREGA as a case study.

2. Data and Methodology

To estimate the effect of participation of women in the labour force market on domestic abuse, the researcher uses nationally representative panel data from the Indian Human Development Survey. The survey was first conducted in 2005 (before the implementation of MGNREGA) and then the same respondents were re-interviewed in 2011 (post the implementation of MGNREGA nationwide), covering over 40,000 households across 33 states and union territories.

Data from IHDS was used because it gave the opportunity to capture changes overtime for the same respondents. Additionally, the gender relations module of the survey asked women whether it is 'usual in their community for husbands to beat his wife' under certain circumstances namely: if she leaves home without permission, if her family provides inadequate dowry, if she neglects the children or the household duties such as if she cooks badly and if she disrespects elders in the family.

Questioning women on personal experience of domestic violence is not only a sensitive issue but also endangers the respondent in a household survey. The outcome variable of interest in the study is, therefore, a proxy indicator of domestic violence which takes a value of 1 if it is usual in the community to beat his wife in the circumstances stated above and 0 otherwise. A sample of 17,614 women who are married and living with their spouses in both rounds of the survey (that is, women who were divorced, became widowed or don't live with their spouse were excluded by the author).

The researcher used a fixed effect logit model to estimate the effect of participation of a woman in MGNREGA on likelihood of her facing domestic abuse under the circumstances stated above. The model estimated controls for various individual and household level characteristics that might have an impact on the decision of a woman to participate in MGNREGA or reasons for domestic abuse faced. Additionally, the model controls for district and time invariant factors to reduce omitted variable bias. The regression equation for the model is as follows:

$$\mathbf{Y_{it} = \delta_1 M_i * Year_t + \delta_2 Age + \delta_3 Education + \delta_4 SpouseEducation + \delta_5 Caste + \delta_6 Kids + \delta_7 Log\ Income + \lambda_t + \alpha_d + \varepsilon_{itd}}$$

- Y_{it} is the binary outcome variable that takes value of 1 or 0 as explained above.
- M_i is the dummy variable that takes value of 1 if a woman participated in MGNREGA in both time periods, 2004-05 and 2011-12, 0 otherwise. This is done to enable a comparison between the two groups before and after MGNREGA was implemented.

- $Year_t$ is a dummy variable that takes a value of 1 for time in which MGNREGA existed, that is- 2011 and 0 for 2004-05. An interaction between the two is introduced in the model to capture the effect of participation in MGNREGA in 2011-2012 on outcome variables.
- Based on existing literature, the time variant factors included in the model are age of the respondent, years of education of both the woman and the spouse, caste, number of kids and log of total income of the household
- λ_t and α_d are time and district fixed effect variables that control for unobservable time invariant factors
- ε is the error term

3. Analysis

Women's Participation in the Labour Market

The below given graph shows employment status of women, as in 2005 and 2012:

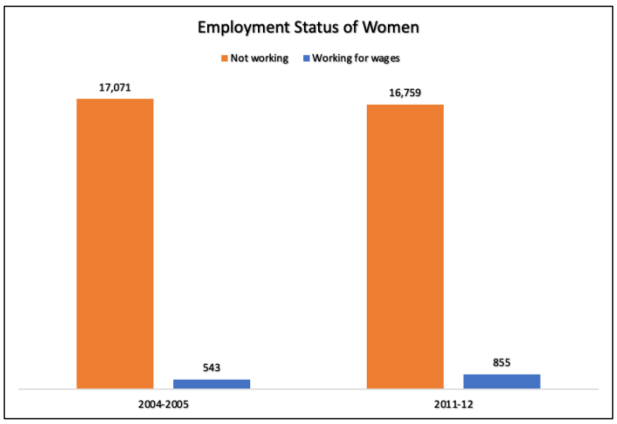

Figure-1: Employment Status of Women in 2004-05 and 2011-12

Data shows overall low participation of women in the labour market in rural India as only 3.08% of the total women were working for wages in 2004-05 which went up to only 4.85% in 2011-12. The graph below shows employment status of women in 2004-05 separately for women who participated in MGNREGA in 2011-12 post its implementation.

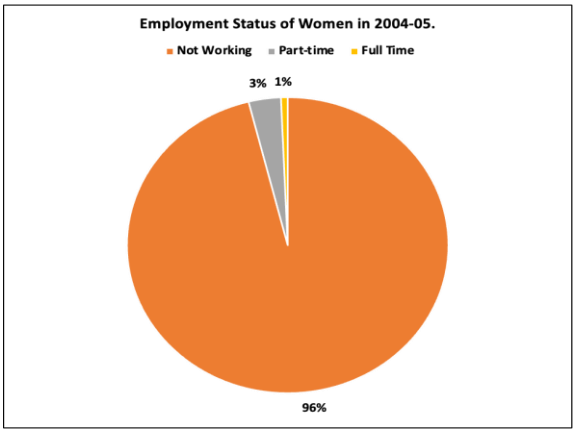

Figure-2: Employment Status of Women in 2004-05 based on MGNREGA participation in 2011-12

Out of 4005 women who participated in MGNREGA, 96% of them were unemployed in 2004-05. Most women engaged in either domestic work or in unpaid labour such as agriculture, managing livestock, etc. Since the work under MGNREGA did not require prior work experience, it provided a good opportunity for unemployed women to participate in the labour market and earn additional income through casual work. However, despite the priority given to women, data suggests low participation rate of women in the programme. The literature highlights three reasons for this:

1. India, being a patriarchal society, has historically limited the role of a woman to household chores and unpaid agricultural activities. These results are highlighted in the survey data which shows that 62% of the women who did not participate in MGNREGA responded negatively when asked if they were allowed to work by their spouse or in-laws.
2. Many illegal contractors in the background areas turn women away when they demand work as they prefer men over women for manual labour. Women have also often complained about harassment by the contractor and exploitative work conditions (National Institute of Rural Development, 2016).
3. There is a lack of awareness about the programme and its provisions in rural areas which limits participation (Tripathi, 2013).

In the next section, the researcher estimates the welfare effect of participation of women in the programme by looking at domestic abuse data.

Participation in MGNREGA and Domestic abuse

The below-given table presents the results of the fixed effect logit regression model estimated to capture the effect of participation of women on log odds of them facing domestic abuse. The outcome variable is binary which takes value of 0 if they don't face domestic abuse and 1 if they do under the circumstances stated.

	Neglect of kids and household duties	Bad cook	Inadequate Dowry	Leaving house without Permission
Intercept	-1.24*	-0.89*	-1.24***	-0.27**
MGNREGA*Year	-0.28**	-0.20*	-0.20***	-0.41*
Individual and household specific characteristics				
Education	-0.04***	-0.03***	-0.03***	-0.05***
Kids	0.05**	0.03***	0.07***	0.04***
Spouse Education	-0.02***	-0.01***	-0.02***	-0.01***

Log of household Income	-0.25**	-0.20*	-0.28***	-0.27***

Table-1: Results of the Regression model

In the model, the interaction coefficient shows the comparative estimate from 2004-05 to 2011-12 across women who did and did not participate in MGNREGA. That is, the coefficient estimates of -0.28 in shows that, the log odds of a woman facing domestic abuse due to neglect of kids and household duties is lower by 0.28 for women who participated in MGNREGA over those who did not, keeping all the individual and household factors constant. Similarly, in all the models, a negative interaction coefficient highlights a positive effect of women participation in MGNREGA.

To further expand the results, it is important to understand the reason behind abuse in each of the situations. There is a vast literature that indicates various societal and cultural norms that inhibit the participation of women in the labour market. Klasen and Pieters (2012) in their research highlighted that there is a negative relationship between a woman's values and labour force participation. Das (2006) points out that women in a traditional household are expected to be the caregivers in the family and should only be involved in the household. Therefore, when women fail to deliver on such societal expectations, that is neglect of kids and household duties and bad cooking, they are likely to face abuse.

Models 1 and 2 show that, as women participated in the programme, the log odds of them facing abuse were lower by 0.28 and 0.20, respectively, over those who did not. This positive effect can be attributed to women being financially empowered. The wage system in MGNREGA is based on fixed wages. This rate is higher than the average wages earned by women in the labour market. This, therefore, increases the opportunity cost of women staying at home, hence persuading them to join the workforce. 96% of the women who participated in the programmer were earlier engaged in household activities or unpaid labour. As women now contribute to the total income in the household, they gain more bargaining power and control over decisions in a household. On similar lines, model-4 shows a decrease in log odds of women facing abuse by 0.41 for leaving the house without permission.

Domestic abuse due to inadequate dowry is vastly linked to extraction effects whereby, the family tries to extort money and assets from the natal family of the woman through domestic abuse (Farmer & Tiefenthaler,1997). Results from model 3 shows a statistically significant decrease in log odds of a woman facing domestic abuse due to inadequate dowry. As participation women in MGNREGA leads to an increase in the net income of the household, the economic objective of extracting money or resources through dowry goes down leading to decrease in abuse.

Based on the models estimated and discussion, domestic abuse faced by women has an economic underpinning. This result is supported by the coefficient of income variable in the regression model which shows an inverse relationship between income and log odds of domestic abuse in all the four scenarios of abuse, keeping all individual and household characteristics constant. Therefore, When the net income of the household increases through MGNREGA, the log odds of domestic abuse faced by women goes down.

Policy Recommendation

Despite the provisions, the low rate of women's participation in MGNREGA is an obstacle that has gained significant attention from policy makers and researchers. In this section, I discuss key policy initiatives to enhance the participation level of women.

Higher wage for women participants: Substitution and income effects are the two major determining factors of labour supply. The substitution effect suggests that higher wages will lead to increase in working hours of individuals due to increase in opportunity cost of leisure. On the other hand, the income effect suggests that an increase in income leads to a decrease in working hours as the same amount of income can be earned by working less (Bhalla & Kaur, 2011). In rural India, women mostly engage in unpaid labour and domestic activities in line with social norms. An increase in wages for only women participants, increases the opportunity cost of non-participation for both individuals and the household. Therefore, a significant increase in the household income could act as an incentive for women in the household to participate in the programme.

Increasing scope of work type: MGNREGA currently provides employment through manual labour in various private and public projects in rural areas. The nature of work thus involves hard manual labour because of which MGNREGA is also referred as "Employment of Last Resort" for women who are in dire need of work (De Mattos & Dasgupta, 2017). Because of the physical strength required for the work, a feature that leads to bias towards hiring men over women by contractors, it fails to be inclusive for women at various stages of their life such as pregnant and lactating women (Chopra, 2019). Thus, to enhance participation of women, the scope of employment should be expanded to other types of casual work such as manufacturing, textile, etc.

Higher level of Governance: The operational guideline of the programme mandates that one-third of participants should be women and on-site childcare facilities for women participants who have kids under the age of 6 years old. It is the responsibility of the local government (Panchayat) to ensure these guidelines are met. However, the panchayats have failed to deliver on these promises because of a higher preference for male participants and seeking cost reductions for childcare facilities, respectively (Desai et al., 2015; Siddhartha, 2008). Therefore, there is a need for a higher level of governance (District administration and state government) to actively evaluate the performance of the programme at a ground level through regular field investigations.

4. Conclusion

MGNREGA as a poverty alleviation programme has played a vital role in enhancing women welfare by giving them an opportunity to participate in the workforce. As women start earning, the net income of the household increases along with their bargaining power, leading to a decrease in domestic abuse. However, the benefits of the program remain limited to a small population because of lack of women participation an effective implementation of the programme at a ground level will not only attract women participation but will also help fight the gender roles that have historically limited the role of women in the society.

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Papers of 9th International Conference on Gender & Women's Studies 2022
(978-1-988652-46-7)

Expanding Scope of Intimate Partner Violence in India: A Socio-Legal Analysis

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Abstract

Right to equality is a fundamental right under the Constitution of India and this applies to all genders. While there is demand for gender neutrality in laws, it is seen that, even today, women face several hurdles in terms of the power dynamics that exist within the family and the honour related considerations that surround them in the Indian society. After India gained independence, laws were made in compliance of international law for the protection and promotion of the rights of the women. However, these laws remain ineffective when it comes to actual implementation. One such issue that has been in place and even emerged as a shadow pandemic during COVID-19 is the domestic violence or intimate partner violence. While domestic violence has always been prevalent, with the changing nature and scope of relationships in India, the protections available to women in relationships in the nature of marriage as well as other unions need to be emphasised. In this paper, the author attempts to analyse the laws and their efficiency in India which protect women from intimate partner violence particularly for relationships that are in the nature of marriage. Since the courts have given recognition to different forms of relations and the laws relating to domestic violence also accept such relationships, this paper attempts to analyse the protection accorded to women from abuse within the walls of such relationships in their actual implementation.

Keywords: *Intimate Partner Violence; Domestic Violence; Women's Rights; Supreme Court of India; Live-in Relationships*

Introduction

The highest prominent kind of abuse towards women within India, regardless of caste, class, religion, or geographic location, is domestic abuse. Violence towards women is not only perpetrated by outside parties but perhaps by husbands. Numerous reports of dowry killings have resulted from harassment by spouses and various older relatives. Multiple research studies have revealed that abuse towards women has increased dramatically due to women's status as sex objects and their experience of oppression and subjugation in patriarchal societies.

With one in three women encountering it, intimate partner violence has become a significant public safety concern worldwide. According to research, 30% of all women who have ever been in a relationship may experience bodily or sexual intimate partner abuse at some point in their lives. Spousal abuse is the assault of a woman by a partner or a close relative, including physical, verbal, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse. According to a recent WHO analysis, women in South-East Asia (India, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bangladesh, and Timor-Leste) are more likely than women across Europe to experience partner violence at a particular occasion in their lives. When the Indian scenario is viewed in this light, it becomes clear that there are proponents and opponents of the situation of women, making the position of women within India a contentious issue. Women play a vital responsibility in societal structure since they make essential contributions in both the social and domestic spheres today, as well as to the economy of the nation.

Here in this paper, the past studies and material is looked into to provide an insight into how this menace to society is looked at. Then the results of such studies are discussed, and an understanding of the author is provided. At last, it is concluded that we should not ignore IPV and must take stern measures to curb it.

Method and Materials

The analytical approach and objective

The current research will look into the prevalence and provokes of violence against women, i.e., intimate partner violence or domestic violence. The research will be focused on previous knowledge of intimate partner violence, for which this paper will evaluate various books, journals, and reports. Furthermore, the study will take a sociolegal perspective on the issue and will take an analytical approach to sceptically consider the existing situation and the causes of such violence.

The study's results are helpful in educating community members about the causes and consequences of gender-based violence. Furthermore, the study aims to raise awareness about domestic violence and provide support services as needed. This paper also discusses methods for dealing with and addressing the problem of domestic violence.

Various understanding of this social menace

Domestic violence, widely recognized as intimate partner violence (**IPV**), is among the most horrific acts in today's society. These cases are highly susceptible since the perpetrators of such crimes are relatives and friends close to the guilty parties, such as husbands and in-laws. They are also known as passive abusers because they occur behind locked doors and frequently have no witnesses. Such violence against women has become a widespread problem in India, with disastrous physical, sexual, sentimental, intellectual, and economic consequences for women.[i] The possible explanation why it is significant to debate such issues is that it is vital to understand the widely divergent underlying cause that further start a fight in a household within locked doors should be analysed and determined, and analysis of various main factors that cause such misdeeds can effectively combat a household from experiencing the pain of the detrimental effects of domestic violence.

The criminalization of DV in India goes back to the early 1980s due to a coordinated campaign by feminist groups and women activists across the country. The widely panned *Tukaram v. State of Maharashtra*[ii] decision provided a significant driving force to this movement.

The writer of the book *'Battered Women: Implications for Social Change*'[iii] mentions the word 'battered' to describe the state of women who have been victims of domestic abuse. His work reflects his concern about the issue, asserting that "*cases of domestic violence, the battering of women occurs in intimate relationships, especially within the household.*" He says that acts such as marital rape, the possible danger of murder, inhumane treatment and harassment, slapping, biting, hitting, and trying to poke are examples of women battering.

In his publication '*Psychological Aspects of Domestic Violence*,'[iv] Suresh Goel defines DV as an aggressive outlook toward the other person through various means such as threats of violence, endangering, and abuse of the victim. He also claims that DV includes physical, intimate, and mental violence and torture. Other terms mentioned by the author include violent attack, sexual abuse, and eking. The author places a high value on the victim's inert violence. When it comes to detached abuse, the study defined it as "*covert, subtle, and veiled*." Victimization, ambivalence, and overlook entirely are examples of intellectual and

spiritual abuse. Much further mentioning the repercussions that a kid can even have after exposure to the trauma of IPV leads to an extensive range of weathered predicated detrimental consequences. They may also generate adverse mental health problems and engage in violence against their wife when they reach adulthood.

'*Behind Closed Doors: Domestic Violence in India*,' another critical book addressing the issue. According to the author, "*being assaulted, used, and raped by someone as intimate as a husband is the most degrading experience for a woman.*"[v] Women who confront such misdemeanours are unaware that DV is an actual crime and so forth; cases of abuse are encountered on a consistent schedule by innumerable women across India. The author points out that women's voices go unacknowledged behind the locked doors of their civilization, family, morals, and culture. They are accepted as the norm but were never questioned or protested; their crackling voices of terror and trauma stayed within the four walls, failing to attract the attention of legislators or security agents.

The author explains numerous methods of coping with DV or dysfunctional relationships in some other books, i.e., '*Overcoming a Life of Domestic Violence and Abusive Relationships.*'[vi] Countless variables are identified throughout the book to assist a victim of such violence in overcoming and rehabilitating herself after facing such inappropriate behaviour. In addition, the author has addressed in-depth information discussions along with how to underestimate the past and move forward, what are the potential advantages of commencing a unique and refreshing life, what are the causes of domestic violence, and where a victim can seek help in case of such an observation, and the difficult times when a woman alienates herself as a result of such abuse.

The DV Act has specifically addressed sexual abuse. Sexual violence is seen as the use of intimate relations as a tool or weapon to demonstrate or use maintain power and control, ordinarily to perpetrate or humiliate the other person. This article provides a detailed characterization of sex as a weapon a husband uses against his wife in cases of domestic violence. Although still not acknowledged as a concept in India, marital rape is widely accepted in many other countries. The predominant explanation why women ignore this violence or abuse is to preserve the family's dignity; marriage is considered strictly confidential and should not be openly discussed; discussing sexual violence by a husband will harm the name and reputation.[vii] As a result, IPV is often hidden behind notions of intimacy and the social realm. Moreover, the presumption that family dignity must be shielded at all costs prevents many women from seeking external assistance.

Doctoral research was conducted on deploying the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, in the context of the Kesarwani Community, a small-scale business community in Kolkata. The research focuses on the legal fabrication of IPV acts in marital relationships and how the legal framework exacerbates violence experienced by women in their matrimonial homes and their relatives. The study also explored how legal proficiency (comprehension) and its application are primarily limited to legal practitioners and government officials. The general public's knowledge of the law is minimal, and this lack of knowledge is more prevalent in the country's rural and interior areas. According to INCLEN Trust International 2000, it is a problem that transcends age, education, social class, and education. According to this study, at least 40% of married women have experienced some form of physical violence in their lives.[viii] According to Murthy, the authors of the current research interpret that IPV is dependent on the husband's learning, the size of the family, the kind of marriage, and menstrual cramps, which further are a few factors that have a considerable influence on the harassment against a woman in the family, and that factors such as heavy drinking and drug use also contribute to IPV. In addition, masculinity theory can be related to IPV because men genuinely think that using physical restraint against the relatively weak gender proves their manhood. Numerous possible explanations by the authors include spouse relationships, child sex (for example, when a woman gives birth to a girl child, it usually results in IPV by the husband or in-laws or even both), dowry, occupation, and income, and so on.

The survey, titled '*Study of Domestic Violence among Currently Married Females of Haryana, India*,' represents the state of married women in Haryana. According to the paper, IPV among married women in Haryana was listed at 28 percent, compared to 39.7 percent nationally. IPV was more prevalent in Haryana's rural and urban areas at 29.1 percent and 25.3 percent, respectively, compared to overall statistics of 38.3 percent and 29.4 percent. The research reveals that rural women were more likely to encounter IPV than those in the city. The authors explained that women in rural areas have less schooling, too little wages, and less knowledge of their rights than women in urban areas. In addition, as per the study, husbands were more likely to IPV against their wives in multiple kinds than females (0.1 percent physical and 4.5 percent sexual) against their husbands in Haryana.[ix]

As per Dr. C.P Prakasham in his published paper titled '*Men's attitude towards sexual and domestic violence against women in selected states in India*,'[x] it is stated in the Ugandan survey data that 16 percent of men and 28 percent of women genuinely think it is legitimate to overpower the women once she continues to refuse to have sexual contact with her husband. Sexual violence between spouses was prevalent in rural Uttar Pradesh, with 21 percent of women suffering violent assault and 68 percent suffering coerced sex.

Although Vidushi and Sethi[xi] offer numerous euphemisms for this violence, such as partner violence, family dysfunction, and IPV, many other related ways of describing domestic violence, including wife battering and cruel treatment by husband, and so on. The article also describes various methods of causing such abuse, including stomping the wife, biting, smacking, trying to shove, throwing stuff at another person, and striking objects. Ability to control, overpower, threaten, stalk, disregard, and monetarily constrain the wife are examples of psychological and emotional harassment.

The say of reports

As per the 2017 NCRB report, the total count of reported cases under crime against women was 56,011, with only 30,103 being charged.

Together with instances from the preceding year, the total number of cases reported in the state of Uttar Pradesh under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, was 616, and the total number of patients under research was 745.

The incarceration rate of the accused under the PWDV Act was 138 (47.3 percent), while the number of acquitted cases was 153, which was greater than the number of convictions.

According to the NCRB 2018 Report on IPV Against Women, there were 580 cases in India, a 0.1 percent raise over the past year. According to the most recent NCRB data, the overall number of crimes against women in 2020 is 371503, with 496 reported cases under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA) throughout the year.

Results and Discussion

Among the most prevalent types of violence against women is IPV, which typically includes sexual, and mental violence and controlling behaviours by an intimate partner. IPV can occur in any configuration and among any socioeconomic, religious, or ethnic background. However, women bear the lion's share of the IPV burden. Therefore, the IPV's hidden aspects must be seen.

What effects does violence towards intimate partners have?

IPV has a negative impact on women's overall health through both primary (injury) and secondary (chronic health issues brought on by continuous stress, for example) channels. Furthermore, a background of abuse is a dangerous variable for numerous illnesses and ailments.

According to recent studies, violence can continue to have an impact even after the physical harm has subsided. Furthermore, the influence of violence on a woman's bodily as well as psychological health increases with severity, and it indicates that various forms and repeated experiences of abuse have an accumulating effect through the years.

Damage and physical well-being

IPV may cause bruising, blisters, gashes, abrasions, abdomen or pulmonary wounds, breakage, fractured bones, or missing teeth, as well as cerebral harm, suspected strangling, spinal harm, and throat damage. Regrettably, illnesses that frequently have no apparent medical causation or are challenging to identify are in addition to injuries and may even be very much more widespread. Irritable bowel syndrome/gastrointestinal symptoms, fibromyalgia, different chronic pain syndromes, and asthma exacerbation are among these, which are commonly made reference to as "*functional illnesses*" or "*emotional stress situations*." Regardless of the act of violence committed years earlier, mistreated women were double as prone as non-women to report poor healthcare and general health issues.

Depression and suicide

There is evidence to support the claims that harassed women have greater degrees of anxiousness, phobias, and unhappiness than non-abused women. According to the WHO multi-country survey, women who might have previously suffered bodily or intimate violence reported more remarkable mental anguish, suicidal feelings, and suicide attempts than women who never had. The following situations have also been associated with IPV: smoking, self-harm, alcoholism and drug addiction, food and sleeping abnormalities, laziness, low self-esteem, post-traumatic stress disorders, and hazardous sexual activities.

Reproductive as well as sexual healthcare

For women, IPV may have various harmful effects on their sexual and reproductive health, wildly unexpected and undesired pregnancies, risky miscarriages, HIV and other STDs, pregnancy problems, pelvic inflammatory illness, urinary tract infections, or sexual problems. IPV can directly affect a woman's access to sexual and reproductive by causing sexually transmissible illnesses during forcible sexual contact during the marriage, or it could be done so indirectly by rendering it problematic for a woman to manage the utilization of contraceptives or condoms with her spouse.

Violent behaviour while pregnancies

Research has discovered significant instances of bodily IPV during childbearing in situations everywhere across the globe. Primarily increased pervasiveness has been discovered in a couple of facility-based research studies across a couple of locations, notably one from Egyptians showing an approximated incidence of 32%, as well as an analysis of research across Africa that discovered an occurrence as higher as 40% in specific situations.[xii] Abuse while pregnancy has been shown linked to fatal harm, low delivery mass or small-for-gestational-age new-borns, bereavement, early childbirth and delivery, and miscarriages. Although policymakers frequently overlook this relationship with maternal death rates, IPV might contribute to a fraction of that as well.

Homicides as well as various types of death

According to research findings from several nations, between 40 and 70 percent of women who were murdered have been killed by their husbands or boyfriends, frequently in the course of an oppressive relationship.[xiii] Information also points to an increased probability of suicide in women who use IPV, as well as a possible increased chance of HIV infection and AIDS-related mortality.

Effects on kids

Numerous studies have linked IPV targeting women to adverse societal and wellness effects for kids, such as stress, unhappiness, subpar academic attainment, and bad health. According to a vast set of information, exposure to IPV versus the mother is among the most often occurring factors linked to male victimisation and female encounter of IPV afterward in life. In addition, several studies have discovered a link connecting IPV and child cruelty in a similar environment.

Furthermore, research involving some low-income nations, such as Nicaragua and Bangladesh, has shown that youngsters whose mothers had tortured are least sure to receive vaccinations, suffer elevated incidence of diarrheal disease, and/or are more inclined to pass away around the period of five.

Why don't women escape abusive relationships?

According to research findings, the majority of victimized women do not behave like detached victims; instead, they frequently take steps to ensure their protection and the security of their kids. According to Heise and colleagues (1999),[xiv] what can be perceived as a woman's passivity might actually be the consequence of a deliberate decision concerning how to safeguard herself and her kids. They continue by citing evidence for a number of causes why women might keep in abusive relationships, such as panic of retaliatory action, a dearth of other options for financial assistance, worry for their own children, an absence of aid from relatives as well as friends, the connotation attributed with separation or even the afraid of forfeiting legal guardianship of children, and adore as well as the joy that the companion will shift.

The degree of the violence increasing, realising her spouse won't improve, and learning the abuse is impacting her kids all seem to be aspects that lead women to eventually leave a violent partner.

What are the most effective methods for stopping and combating IPV?

A range of field assessments has compiled information on appropriate or, at minimum, promising strategies for stopping and managing abuse towards women, together with IPV, in previous years. These assessments indicate that at all scales of the ecological approach, governments and a civilized society must engage together comprehensively, cross-sectoral, and over an extended period of time. Admittedly, assessment of extensive, multi-level, multi-component initiatives and institution-wide structural changes is more complex than personally supervised ones. As a result, even though these frameworks are more or less evidently the most effective for long-term preventative measures, they have been further the ones that have received the least amount of research.

Furthermore, these evaluations have highlighted a number of particular tactics which have shown potential or efficacy, such as:

- Change the criminal as well as civil juridical systems.
- Plan mainstream press and awareness-raising initiatives to spread the word concerning current laws.

- Boost the legal protections for women in the areas of separation, property, child benefit, and custody.
- Create alliances between institutions from the government as well as the civil social system.
- Create a solid evidentiary ground for raising knowledge and understanding as well as education.
- Communicate to transform behaviours to effect social reform.
- Use a gender frame of reference to reshape entire institutions across all industries.
- In general, and especially, make sexual as well as reproductive well-being services more sensitive to violence against women.
- Encourage women and girls' social and economic advancement and develop all-encompassing community services for IPV survivors.
- Create life skill sets and school-based mentoring programmes, involve teenagers and men, and support equality between the sexes and nonviolence by offering at-risk families way earlier interference programs.

Conclusion

The abuse of women at home has always been a problem. Women were usually seen as being helpless, defenceless, and easily exploitable. Therefore, it is helpful to assess the condition of interpersonal abuse towards women using a socio-legal interpretive perspective. In various nations, the prevalence of domestic abuse against women is rising as a result of numerous economic as well as societal causes.

Based on the social and cultural environment and ethical structure, domestic abuse takes on different forms and intensities. Personal research projects and survey data typically yield more significant estimations of violent behaviour than official statistics. Moreover, it is also believed that they overestimate the amount to which IPV against women occurs. Women often choose never to disclose domestic violence for a number of factors. Most domestic abuse reports adopt the appearance of emotional abuse, although the kind and occurrence of domestic abuse differ based on socio-cultural factors. Although economic issues are among the primary causes of domestic abuse, other societal aspects also impact its character and prevalence.

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