

**VEGETABLE MARKET: A PLATEFORM OF WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT**

(A Study of Women Traders in Balkhu Vegetable Market)

A Thesis

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **Vegetable Market: A Platform of Women's Empowerment (A Study of Women Traders in Balkhu Vegetable Market)** written and submitted by **Buddhi Ram Khanal** has been prepared under my guidance and supervision. I recommend this dissertation for final approval and acceptance.

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LETTER OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **Vegetable Market: A Platform of Women's Empowerment (A Study of Women Traders in Balkhu Vegetable Market)** prepared and submitted by **Buddhi Ram Khanal** has been accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology.

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Date: April, 2016

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Abstract

This research tries to reveal the role of micro-business like fruits and vegetables trading in order to bring economical prosperity and women's empowerment among the women traders involved in the business. For this purpose it has selected 30 women traders from Balkhu Fruits and Vegetable Market. According to the research, women fruits and vegetables traders have not only made this small business a means for survival but also led themselves towards the women's empowerment by enriching their economical prosperity and by changing traditional confined domestic space with their access in public domain. Throughout the study it is revealed that these women vendors had started their business with minimum investment as the proper means of survival in Kathmandu. Basically these women were from outside of the valley. However, this small fruits and vegetable business has become a proper platform for their economical and social enrichment.

At the beginning these women traders have run the business in Kathmandu in order to secure good livelihood with many obstacles to initiate this profession. The vegetable market has given the opportunity to exercise their business potentiality even in the central of the Nepal. Their small trade has made their access of the urban life of Kathmandu. It is clear that the vegetable trade is one of the proper small business that helps to survive in Kathmandu for the women from minority communities. The women's involvement in Balkhu vegetable market marks that it is the platform of business for the women from each castes, ethnicities and communities. The vegetable market is the public domain for business for all kinds of Nepalese women from each communities, castes and ethnicities. Even for the uneducated or for the women of low qualification of education the vegetable business could be proper medium for self independent life. In this sense, the Balkhu Vegetable Market has become a proper destination for uneducated, illiterate, literate all kinds of women who tries to pursue their secure future in micro-business.

Most notable aspect of vegetable market is that these women though from low profile have been exercising themselves in public domain by independent business. Likewise, these women are equally responsible for their household responsibility. These woman traders are fully satisfied with the business that they can earn form it for maintaining their livelihood. On the other hand, they have to equally be responsible for their household works.

Likewise, the study shows that women involvements in vegetable marketing have led them to

make self decision in their household. Before they involved in vegetable marketing women were in controlled and completely dominated by male i.e. husband, father or brother. When they started earnings from vegetable marketing decision making role in their household has changed subsequently. The increasing status of women's decision making is due to their independency of business and income generating activities.

In nutshell, vegetable market is one of the proper business platform to pursue the future, earning and independence. It has contributed a lot for the proper enrichment of economical and social status of women. Likewise, it is also the place of hope to exercise the business potential even with minimum investment. Most of them agree that economic empowerment made them independent and bold to make decisions themselves. These women even have their proper control upon their income. Likewise, most of the women are helped by their husbands in terms of household activities. The control of economy in women's hand as well as involvement of husbands in domestic works refer that the women involved in vegetable market have been able to change the nature of gender relation and roles as the most vital women's empowerment in Nepalese society. The women traders of Balkhu Fruits and Vegetable Market have brought the new image of modern women blurring the traditional submissive female identity though they have low family backgrounds, low educational qualifications and low cost of investment in their business. Thus, the vegetable market could be a proper place to exercise business potentiality for the women from marginal community.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	- Agricultural Development Bank
ADB	- Asian Development Bank
AGDP	- Agriculture Gross Domestic Production
APP	- Agriculture Perspective Plan
APROSC	- Agriculture Project Service Centre
CBS	- Central Bureau of Statistics
CNAS	- Centre for Nepal and Asia Studies
CWCD	- Center for Women/Children and Community Development
DOA	- Department of Agriculture
FAO	- Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	- Focus Group Discussion
GDP	- Gross Domestic Product
HMG	- His Majesty Government
HVC	- High Value Crops
ICIMOD	- International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
ILO	- International Labor Organization
JICA	- Japan International Co-operation Agency
KMC	- Kathmandu Municipality
LMP	- Livestock Master Plan
MMC	- Market Management Committee
MOA	- Ministry of Agriculture
MOAC	- Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
NDDB	- National Dairy Development Board
TUCL	- Tribhuvan University Central Library
UN	- United Nation
UNDP	- United Nation Development Programme
VDC	- Village Development Committee
VDC	- Village Development Committee
WAD	- Women And Development
WB	- World Bank
WID	- Women IN Development