

An Assessment of Empowerment of Dalits
A Case Study of Devdaha VDC of Rupandehi District
Nepal

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Letter of Recommendation

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Approval Letter

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**An Assessment of Empowerment of Dalits**” submitted to the Central Department of Rural Development, Tribhuvan University, is entirely my original work prepared under the guidance and supervision of my supervisor. I have made due acknowledgements to all ideas and information borrowed from different sources in the course of preparing this thesis. The results of this thesis have not been presented or submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree or for any other purposes. I assure that no part of the content of this thesis has been published in any form before.

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Abstract

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. The general objective of this study was to examine the empowerment of dalits in terms of opportunity and participation, where this study has opted to analyze the socio-economic status, dalits participation in the social, economic and political institutions and hindering factor for empowerment of the dalits in Devdaha VDC of Rupandehi district.

This study incorporated descriptive as well as exploratory research design. It is based on the primary and secondary sources of information. Information was collected through both quantitative and qualitative tools. As quantitative tool, the questionnaire, institutional survey guidelines were used and check list (Focus Group Discussion), key informant interview guidelines were used as a qualitative tool. Forty four sampled households were taken randomly as sample size of two wards of the VDC.

Majority of the population were found in age group 0-15 years (32.4%) and lowest population was found in age group 45-60 years (8.6%) where the sex ratio in the study households is low (91.1%) than sex ratio of whole country. The average number of family members in households is 5.04. More than third quarter of the population (75.5%) were literate where rest of the population was illiterate though only 0.7% has completed higher level education. 79.6% of total females were married before 18 years whereas 41.9% of total males were married before 18 years. Majority of the households were living with Nuclear family where as 43.2% of total family types were living with Joint family and 4.5% were living in Extended family. Among the total households, more than two third (70.5%) of the households had male headed family and remaining (29.5%) were female headed family.

Remittance is the major source of income of the households in which 34.1% households depends. Daily wage and agriculture / livestock are the second and third income source of the households in which 27.3% and 18.2% respectively depends respectively. 11.4% of total respondents fall in the category of more than Rs. 30000 per month and least of the total households (4.5%) in the category of less than Rs. 3000 per month. All the dalit households had no land ownership called sukumbasi, no food security by their own land though they had traditional skill that was not modernized so most of the households were not using it as the main source of income.

Dalits participation in the social institutions is satisfactory with Dalits population of Devdaha VDC whereas participation of Dalits is seen increasing in the SMC of schools, Mothers group and Tole Reform committee. Even though a form of caste discrimination is found participating in the cultural programs and Dalits participation is found weaker as EC members of cooperatives and only 3.5% Dalits participation was found in the cooperative as general members except Mulyawan and Sangini Saving and Credit Cooperative Limited based on Dalits population. Similarly, Dalits participation in political institutions is unsatisfactory because the percentage of Dalits participation as EC members at ward level is seen only 8.6% which is less than the total number of Dalits population of VDC. Similarly, only 25% of total respondents have membership of any political parties where rest of huge mass is politically inactive or no politically aware.

It is found that status of Dalits is vulnerable in the socio-economic and political indicator while comparison with non- dalits because they have illiteracy, are born with debt and die with debt, no food security with lack of ownership on land, low participation in socio-economic and political process and low awareness about rights, are the dominant causes of disempowerment of Dalits. It is a system here dalits are taken at the bottom of the social stratification of caste, until now, they have been facing caste discrimination especially untouchability problem inter and intra Dalits. It is also a pertinent factor for not receiving opportunities so that they are demoralized and demoted which emphasized for no power. So, they are not taking part in the social interaction which accentuated no self autonomy in the decision making process though they have traditional skill and knowledge.

Hence, Dalits are not empowering due to lack of no opportunity to participate in the program that is hampering to create power and social interaction as well as self autonomy. This means opportunity directly effects to the empowerment so, it is necessary to provide opportunities and conduct programs relating to uplift socio- economic status and in creating awareness against caste discrimination to empower the status of Dalits.

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Acronyms / Abbreviations

AD	<i>Annoy Domini</i>
BS	<i>Bikram Sambhat</i>
CA	Constitutional Assembly
CBS	Central Beauru Statistic
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CDRD	Central Department of Rural Development
CPN UML	Comunist Party of Nepal Unified Marxism Leenism Nepal
DDC	District Development Committee
EC	Executive Committee
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPTP	First Past the Post
GOs	Government Organizations
HDI	Human Development Index
HSS	Higher Secondary School
INGOs	International Non Government Organizations
KII	Key Informant Interview
NC	Nepali Congress
NDC	National Dalit Commission
NGOs	Non Government Organizations
NHDR	Nepal Human Development Report
NLSS	National Life Standard Survey
NNDSWO	Nepal National Dalits Society Welfare Organization

NPC	National Planning Commission
NRs	Nepali Rupees
PCI	Per Capita Income
PS	Primary School
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SMC	School Management Committee
SS	Secondary School
TRC	Tole Reform Committee
TU	Tribhuvan University
UCPN (Maoist)	Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
UNDP	United Nations Development and Program
VDC	Village Development Committee