

Role of women in agriculture related to work performance and decision making in Madi, Chitwan, Nepal



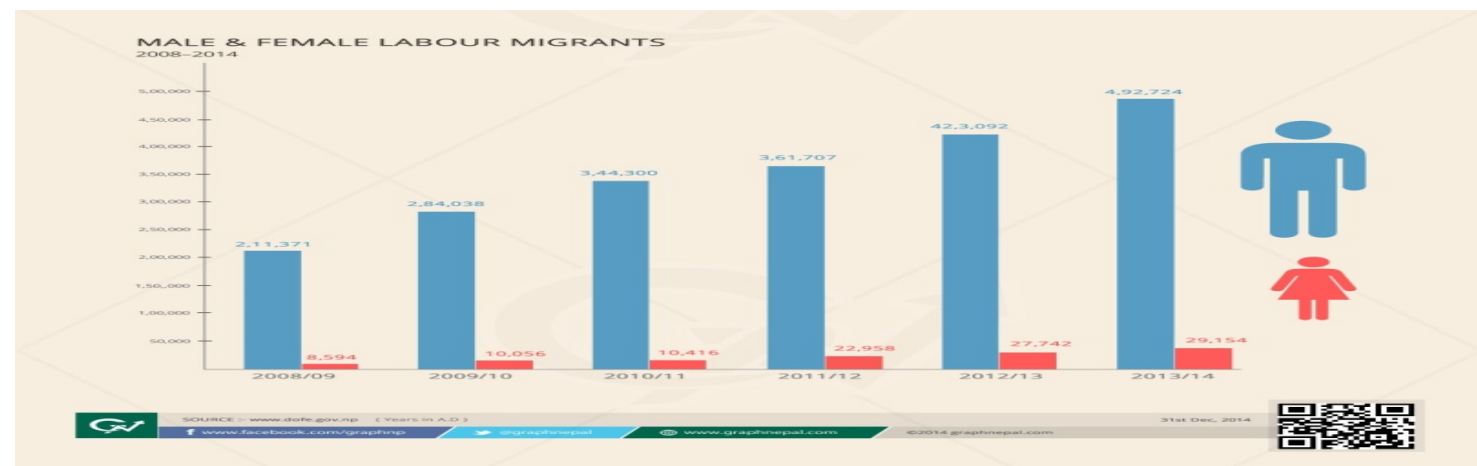
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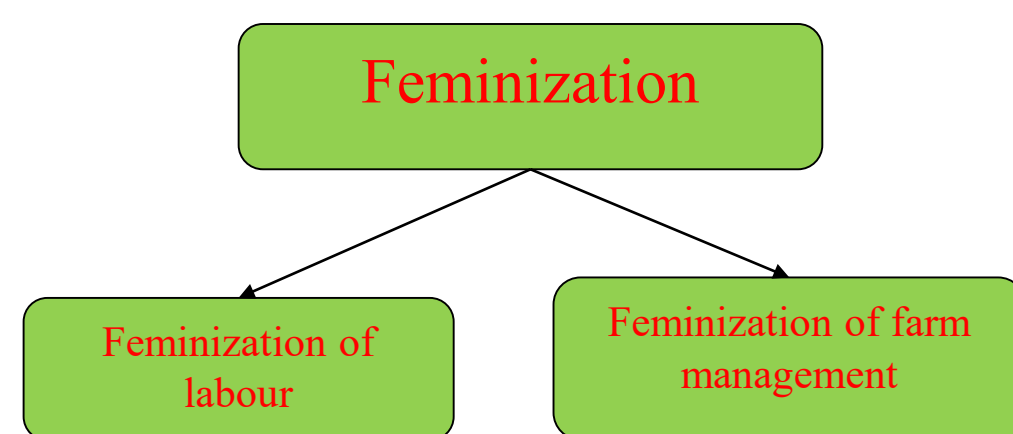
Introduction

Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood in our country. More than 60% of the economically active population in Nepal is involved in agriculture, and approximately one third of the country's GDP derives from this sector (CBS2014). The development of our country entirely depends on the change and improvement in the agricultural sector. In some parts of the country a transition from traditional and subsistence farming to a more intensive, market-oriented production has been noticed which may be due to an increasing degree of market integration, institutional development, migration and labour shortage, and the increasing value of cash crops (Adhikari, 2013). Nepal is a patriarchal society where men have dominated over the female in most of the activities. Due to the shortage of employment opportunities in rural areas of Nepal, people are forced to move to urban centres, or abroad so, they are more likely to abandon agricultural work at home and seek waged jobs in other sectors (Bhadra and Shah, 2007, De Shutter, 2013).

A national survey from 2008-2014 showed that the proportion of male migrants (89%) were significantly higher than the proportion of female migrants (1%) in Nepal (Bhadra and Shah, 2007) causing the distinct increase in the number of economically active women involved in agriculture in Nepal.



In 2001, 73% of the economically active women of Nepal were involved in agriculture, while in comparison only 60% of the economically active men were involved in this sector (CBS, 2004). These numbers indicate that as the males move away, either physically, or by shifting their interest to other types of work, agriculture is increasingly becoming a female occupation. There is increase of feminization or female participation in agriculture. Brauw et al (2005) divides the feminization of agriculture into two types, namely a feminization of labour and a feminization of management. The feminization of agricultural labour occurs when women perform an increasing share of on-farm work within the household. Similarly, the feminization of farm management occurs in two possible ways; either when women increasingly become the primary decision-makers on the farm, or when they gain greater access to agricultural income (de Brauw et al., 2008). Feminization is not only related to the participation in the labourious work only but also in the mental and managerial work of the agriculture.



This research discusses the significance of this "feminization of agriculture" in my study area, which is Madi village and its surroundings located in Chitwan district in the central region of Nepal. The basis of this study is to examine various indicators and potential effects of a feminization of agriculture in the study area.

Methodology

Study area: The survey was conducted in the western part of Chitwan in the Madi village. The Chitwan District is located in the southwestern part of Province No. 3, covering an area of 2,238.39 km². Madi is the municipality in the district which has a population of 50,000.



Sampling frame: We purposively selected 60 farmers, based on a list of farmers from the Madi cooperative. Even though the sample size is relatively small, the number and composition of the respondents were sufficient to address my research question. The aim of this survey was to provide an understanding of the general characteristics of the local farming system and the nature of gender roles and relations in Madi.

Data collection and Analysis:

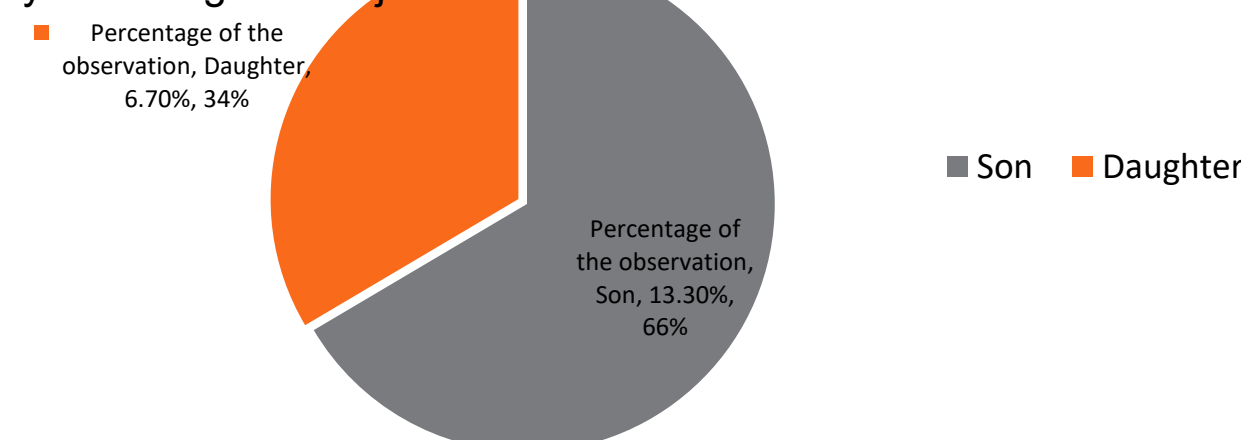
The primary data of this research is the result of a fieldwork or household survey conducted from the beginning of April to the end of May 2018. Data was recorded in the field using the Kobo Tool Box app. The survey included 15 structured and unstructured questions. Data analysis was conducted in SPSS and MS Excel, and consisted of frequencies, cross-tables and correlation analyses.

Result and Discussion

From the field survey and interview, we analyzed the data into different categories;

Socio-demographic information: The majority of households surveyed had nuclear family structures (66%) with the remaining reporting joint family structure. The majority of household members were between 15 and 59 years of age (59%), while 26% and 15% were between the ages of 0 and 15 and 60 or more respectively. Migration was reported in 20% of the households. The majority of households surveyed were Brahmin (53%), while 10% were Chhetri, 3% were Gurung, 7% were Dalit and 13% were other/Janjati. Buffalo was the most commonly reared livestock (28%), followed by goat (26%), chicken (18%), cow (15%) and ox (13%).

Willingness to take over farm: The perception of parents on willingness of their siblings to take over farm is seen two times more in son. It may be due to the trend of the society of Nepalese context, although female works harder in the farm, they are not given major role to control the farm.



Gender division of agriculture task: In the agriculture activities like ploughing, irrigating, threshing and applying chemical fertilizer and in few livestock production activities like housing, medication, selling eggs and milk products, men are mostly participated and considered as "men's work", whereas in the most of the agriculture activities like weeding, hoeing, manuring, collecting firewood, and livestock activities like collecting fodder, feeding and watering, cleaning of sheds and sanitation, milking, animal raising, care and maintenance, female are mostly involved actively participated but in the decision making process of agriculture activities, the scenario is different. Most of the managerial activity is under the control of male because of our patriarchal society.

Average of about NRs. 208 is paid higher to men than female in some agriculture works. The wage difference is due to the discrimination in perception about the different capacity of work between the gender. About 73.3 percent of respondents think that women can perform all task. Similarly, about 80 percent of the respondents think that men can do any task of agriculture.

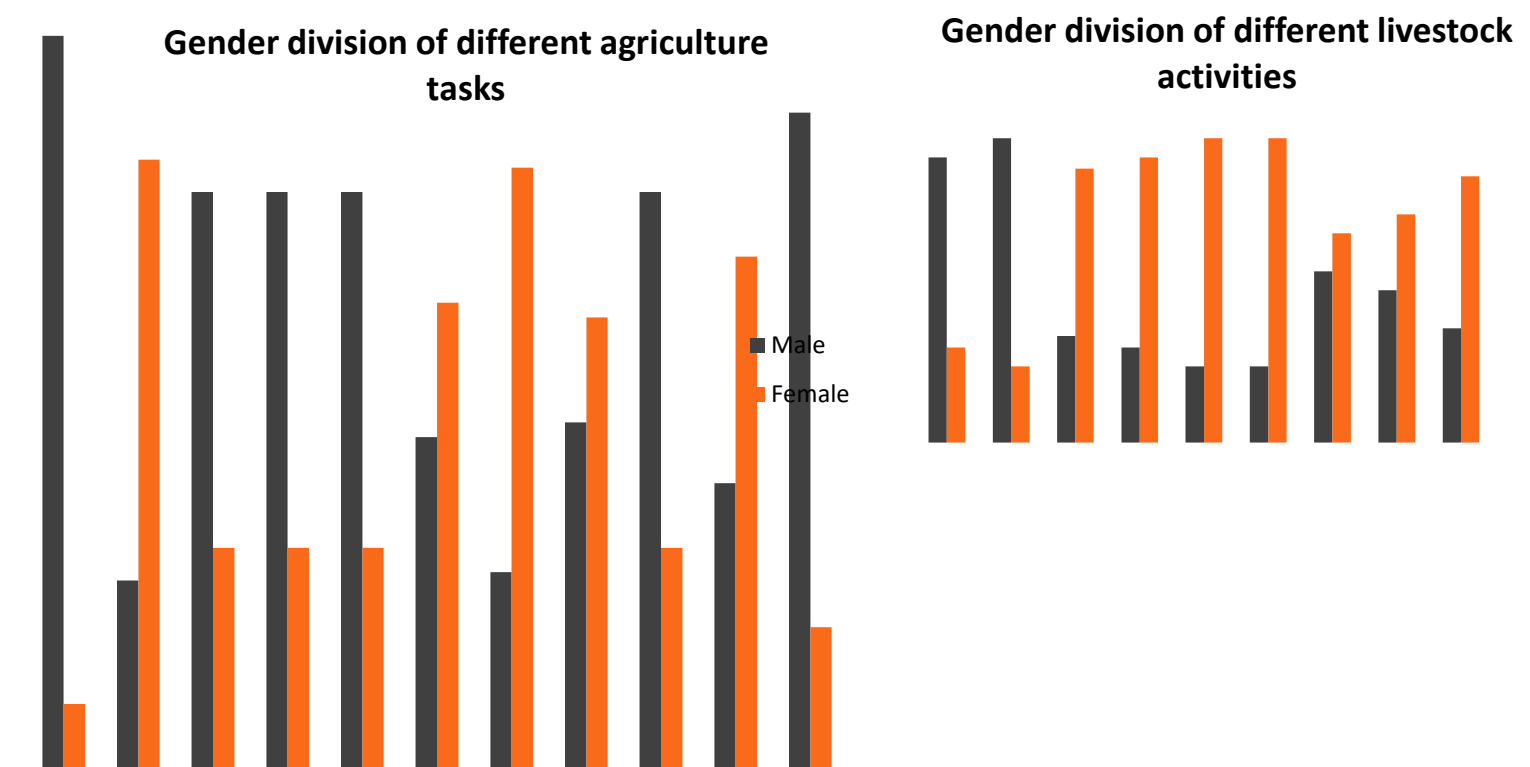
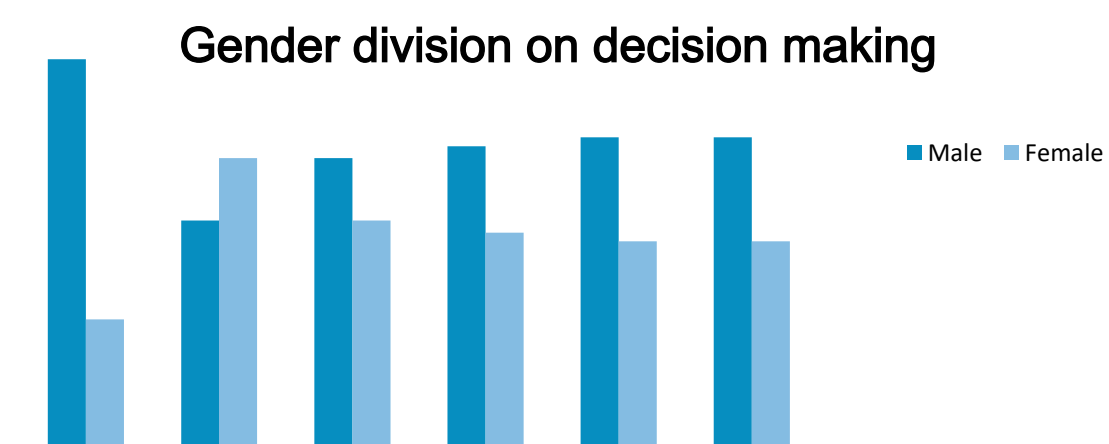
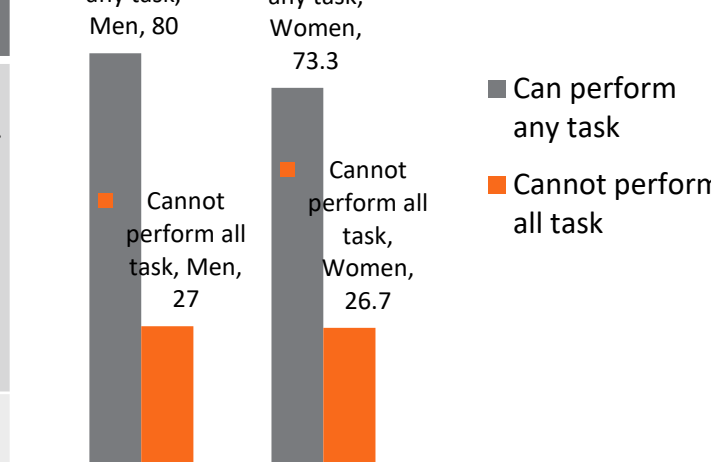


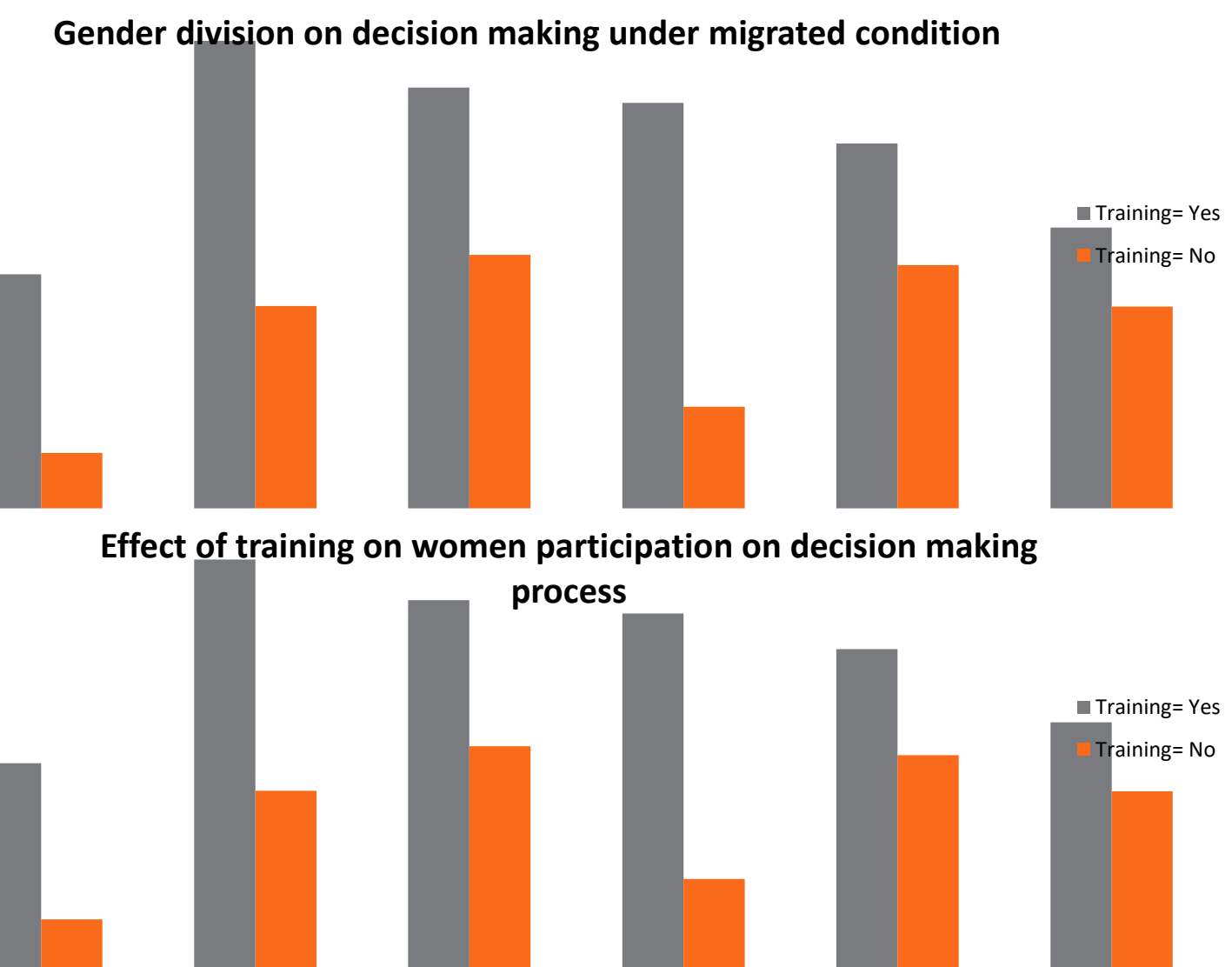
Table: Wage difference between gender

Wage difference	No. of observation	Percentage of observation	Average of wages of difference
Yes	17	73.3	208.67

Perception on the different gender's capability to perform different task



Effect of migration and training: Due to migration, women had to take over the so-called "men's work". Due to training, there is significant increase in women's participation in different decision-making processes.



We can easily see the increment of the female role in the agriculture aspects due to migration of male and awareness due to training respectively. It stresses the need and how the feminization is being on its way in the area. Majority of female in the household where male have migrated abroad, have taken all responsibility of agriculture in their own hand. So decision making as well involvement is autonomous to female in that case.

Similarly with the awareness of different agriculture techniques to handle and manage different agricultural problems through knowledge gathered through the trainings, female role in the decision making has been enhanced.

Conclusion

In the surveyed area, there is the feminization of labour but still lacks the feminization of management. Women involvement in the different farming systems is still high but the decision-making power is fully controlled by men in most of the cases. Only in few activities, the women have their control over the decision. There is the need of assuring the proper gender roles in the agriculture to possibly imagine to increase the production to ensure food security. There is the need of giving proper space of management to that gender who have gathered a lot of experience and expertise of farming in the different farming system through their high involvement and work performance which can be achieved through training and education.

References and Acknowledgement

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