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WORK OF AYMARA WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT, A VIEW FROM ANDEAN RURALITY

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ABSTRACT

The present research makes visible the historical process of the participation of Aymara women as agents involved in rural development, both in the family environment and in the communal context. The method used was qualitative, using as a technique the participant observation, in-depth interview and the *focus group*. Twenty-seven family mothers from the Aymara communities of the Puno region participated in the study. From the testimonies we identify the various roles they play in the family environment, as well as their participation in multiple activities and responsibilities in the development of the community. Recognizing the fundamental role, it plays in the preservation of living culture, the importance of economic and family security and the vision of the future that they build and share alongside the family.

INTRODUCTION

The Congress of the Republic in merit of the Convention 169 of the OIT, approves the Law of Peasant Communities No. 24656, normative body that gives rise to peasant communities, containing principles, functions, condition of being a community member, of having the right to a territory and your own self-determination. Therefore, the Aymara peasant communities of the Puno region, “maintain a strong cultural component of wisdom, reciprocity, and complementarity, a functional identity in a relational sense, and not an absolute monodic identity” (Estermann, 2008, p. 82).

For this reason, in Andean thinking and in its existence of complementarity as a whole, both in the biological, natural, cosmic and social, which transcends beyond animal, plant and human life, as part of the dialogical understanding and conciliation, Estermann (2008) highlights the imposition of a feminine rationality in the founding structure of Andean thought.

In their daily life, women have dynamically promoted a series of tasks in the family environment, taking care of housework, procreation and raising their children (Carreño et al., 2018, p. 51), which begins their empowerment, increasing the degree of personal independence, their economic autonomy and their possibilities for personal and professional fulfillment and development (Noguer et al., 2020, p. 292). Then, their participation is transcendental in the preservation of the family unit, as well as in the strengthening of the communal organization based on their values and ancestral customs, aspects recognized by the United Nations Organization (UN) that in its fifth objective seeks to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In the historical process, women in their daily lives have undertaken a series of individual and collective tasks, despite this, the lack of recognition, inequality and mistreatment towards them are found in different public and private spaces. This article shows the Aymara female work in the historical, political, economic and social process, both in the colonial and republican periods, and with the passing of the decades it is in the process of recognition and vindication of their fundamental rights.

We will begin with an ethnographic look, to explain and analyze the participation of Aymara women in the family environment and their contribution to community organization, becoming an agent of change and development in social, cultural, political and economic spaces. The objective of this research is to understand and explain the participation of women in equal conditions from the Aymara peasant communities, from the family and communal space as agents of change.

METHOD

The research was carried out in the years 2018 and 2019, the qualitative method was used, as a technique, the interview, the observation and the documentary review (minutes and communal files), allowing us an approach to the reality and the registration of the activities carried out by Aymara women in their daily lives. For the selection of the interviewees, inclusion criteria were considered: a) mothers of families, b) with permanent residence in the community, c) who have assumed positions of responsibility in the community organization, in the case of men, being the husbands who participated voluntarily. The interviews made it possible to collect the information from the actors themselves, as well as the testimonies of the lived experience.

The data processing was carried out organizing into categories and subcategories, association of concepts and the proposal for theoretical analysis. The participants, once the purpose of the research had been explained, voluntarily decided to participate in the research.

THEORETICAL APPROACH AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Aymara woman, their historical journey and legal recognition.

In the cultures of ancient Peru, there are vestiges that represent the feminine as a sign of status, in Inca society, women had a significant role in the economy and support of the family. They worked the plots, crushed and cooked the grains, wove and made the clothes. In addition, they fulfilled important functions in the family environment, it was an important part of the social structure, based on the principles of equality, respect and reciprocity.

In the colonial period, the norms and patterns of behavior which were imposed, form ideals of feminine behavior, consequently, the family organization models from the “Europeans” were directly based on racial classification, men's sexual freedom and the absolute fidelity of women, (Qijano, 2014). Peru suffered a process of transformation and imposition surrounded by abuses and excesses committed by the Spanish colonizers, subjecting women to the service of houses and estates. In a similar situation, the men worked in the mines and in the construction of roads. A different form of violence occurred against women, rape and mistreatment were legitimized by the established power. As Guardia refers (2013) that many women sacrificed to preserve their customs and fought for the indigenous insurrection as in the case of Micaela Bastidas, María Parado de Bellido, among other women who actively participated to achieve independence.

At the beginning of the republican period, Don José de San Martín in 1822, established the educational system extended to women. In 1825, Simón Bolívar created the school for female students in Cusco and Lima, whose operation was not fruitful due to the economic and financial problems that arose. Subsequently, female training centers were built to strengthen the role of wives and mothers.

In republican Peru, women did not have the right to vote, they were considered dependent and illiterate, it was evident that constitutional norms and those of lower hierarchy discriminated against women and much more against indigenous women, despite this, women's associations emerged that fought for the recognition of the right to vote and to the women's union.

The first Peruvian Civil Code of 1852, in its title II on people, recognizes the man and the woman in their marital responsibilities, also indicates that the woman should obey the husband, obliged to live with him, to continue where he has for convenient to reside, the husband should authorize to appear in a trial, as for divorce, only included adultery on the part of the woman, undoubtedly the Peruvian norms assumed a sexist and discriminatory content.

As early as 1919, women began the first feminist mobilization in Peruvian history to reduce the prices of basic necessities. Feminist, anarchist, indigenous and working women were organized in a Women's Committee for Subsistence Reduction (Ministerio de la Mujer y Desarrollo Social MIMDES, 2005, p. 31). Then the Political Constitution of Peru of 1933, grants the right to vote

conditionally to literate women of legal age, married or mothers of families. Finally, on June 17, 1956, Peruvian women exercised their right to vote in general elections, whereas women from peasant communities were not considered in this vote.

The Political Constitution of Peru of 1980 in its Art. 2 Inc. 2 establishes that men and women have equal opportunities and responsibilities. The law recognizes women's rights not less than men, the same that is ratified in the Constitution of 1993. The Peruvian Civil Code of 1984 in its Art. 4 indicates that “men and women have equal capacity to enjoy and exercise of civil rights”, which supports the empowerment and progressive independence of women.

Women in the Andean context.

In the Andean context, the woman is linked to tenderness, weakness, in addition to being considered as the family protector, recipient, and welcoming. She is conceived as attached to nature, reinforcing community ties and dedicated to individual sacrifice for the collective good (Cruz, 2020, p. 138). Andean women frequently practice housework and agricultural work. She has the economic government of the house, from this point of view “she should be discreet, industrious, shrewd, prudent, kind, submissive to her husband and modest. This model remained in force until the middle of the 20th century” (López Dietz et al., 2018), the highlight is that women, due to their cultural differences within their roles, develop activities and have particular behaviors, attitudes, feelings, assume roles, They have their own thinking and posture, specific relationships in the field of their development, they are people who assume tasks that silently promote changes in those imposed discriminatory models.

Currently, Aymara women are no longer stereotyped in their condition of inferiority in the sexual division of labor, identified in servitude, now they are in the supply markets as entrepreneurs to achieve economic autonomy, which allows greater economic income and improve living conditions of their family (Orlandini, 2018).

Women ideologically identified with reproduction and men with production, on the contrary, women are in both spaces, both in the productive and in the domestic sphere, activities made invisible which normally are carried out in the home: be it biological reproduction, education and care of children, the sick and the elderly, the reproduction of the workforce consumed daily (Bellucci & Theumer, 2018, p. 58).

Thus, in their daily lives “they can add innumerable efforts that are carried out by themselves in multiple activities, efforts and work that are made invisible by naturalizing their execution as part of the culturally assigned roles” (López Rocha & Ryzhkov, 2020, pp. 400–401).

On the other hand, the role of women is inseparably reconfigured in all spaces: cultural, social, economic, political and family, which invisibly assume roles in the family and community organization, thus, the work of women remained hidden behind the facade of the monogamous family, remaining invisible. It

seemed to be magically diluted in the air, since it did not produce an economically visible product (Larguía & Domoulin, 1975, pp. 15–16).

However, considering feminist theory, which develops the characterization of gender identity Based on sociocultural attributions, it leads men and women to acquire different masculine and feminine cognitive styles, which produce dichotomous practices of traditional thought and actions that, in turn, reinforce sexism through the perpetuation of the categorical thought that represents the masculinity and femininity (Blazquez et al., 2010, p. 31).

The dichotomy between male and female, one linked to emotion and the other to control values, unfortunately lead to the construct of gender ideologization.

Aymara Woman and Her Role in The Family.

The Andean Aymara woman socializes at an early age the roles, their level of participation and their skills, through interactions, games, dynamics, in their sociocultural environment, called Aymara socialization by Carrasco & Gavilán, which begins in childhood to build a pattern of gender difference, being designated with specific terms and progressively focusing on those behaviors and skills appropriate to the roles of each sex, beginning the identification with the world of work specified by gender (2014, pp. 172–173). In Aymara communities, the father and mother give a series of tasks to the daughters, for example, support in the kitchen, washing clothes, support in agricultural work and accompanying parents in the insurance and herding of animals, the care and protection of her younger siblings, in this regard Mary, family mother, tells us.

“I have 4 children, 2 boys and two girls, my eldest daughter has to help me with her brothers, with the farm, in collecting firewood, tying and untying the animals, she has to take care of the house when we travel to the city, my son helps his father, they also have to study at the Tacasaya school here in Pucani there is no secondary school” (E1).

Or, as when Josefina, another family mother, states:

“When I was wawa (little girl in Quechua) I liked to go to school, and for that I used to breed my chita (yearling sheep in Quechua), I made it grow and with the money from the sale, I paid for the school. My mother told me that because I was lazy, I wanted to go to school. Would I be a judge or a doctor? I better not waste time and that I help her with the chores, picking up the farm and grazing the sheep and cows, she used to tell me that way” (E3).

As is known, the young women are in charge of assuming tasks according to their age, constituting the workforce in favor of the family, assisting in domestic tasks according to the changes in the agricultural and livestock period, starting from the sowing to the harvest of the products, according to their physical conditions and seasonal cycle “dry or rainy” that allows the change of activities and functions either to the environment and interior of the family.

In this way, the woman is constituted as the backbone within the Aymara family organization, since a large number of within family activities fall on them, being the ones who watch over the union, caring for, feeding and educating their children. Thus, deploying a large number of procedures and ensuring family integration. So, “the social division of labor by sex, encompasses aspects such as domestic activities, care of children and /or the elderly, women are the ones who are mostly in charge of these tasks” (Champi Carrasco & Guzmán Chuco, 2017, p. 144). Also, it stands out for being the interlocutor, it would not be passively anchored to the decisions of the man, if not: it would manifest a certain independence in family matters” (Branca, 2016), as in the case of childcare, as Hilda states:

“I bathe my children in the tub on Sundays so they can go to school. Every weekday, in the morning I change their clothes, I wash my children in a bowl with warm water, I have to comb them, since they are small, I have to put their clothes on, prepare their notebooks so that the teacher does not scold them. I do not want to be admonished at the parents' meeting” (E5)

According to Hilda, as an Aymara woman, she performs a series of domestic chores in her daily family life, usually preparing her food, and if she does it on her stove, she uses dry herbs as firewood or bosta (dried manure from cattle and sheep) as fuels collected by them in the dry months (May-October) and then used in rainy seasons (December-April).

The products they use in the preparation of food are obtained from their own harvest and elaboration, such as potatoes, broad beans, papalisa (*Ullucus tuberosus*), oca (*Oxalis tuberosum*), peas, barley, quinoa, chuño, tunta and moraya (freeze-dried potato - the latter are processed products, reserved for the periods of rain) that are consumed rationally. An example of this is the daily life in the community that Rosa tells us:

“Our breakfast contains a mate infusion that can be made from eucalyptus, rue, chamomile, misico, q'entu, muña or other herbs that exist in the community for the cold season so that we can also avoid stomachaches. Then we prepare the cold cuts for noon. In Aymara we call it (qoqo) with products grown and processed from the community, then I wrap it in huncuña, an embroidery woven with sheep's wool so that the cold cuts are hot for noon” (E2).

Rosa, an adult woman who is highly respected in the community, tells us about her domestic activities, either indoors or in the family environment, as Aymara women work more than men. In short, women dedicate much more time than men to domestic work (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI), 2018, p. 87).

Women And Their Participation in Agricultural Production

The participation of Andean women in agricultural production has increased in recent decades. Their income is an important part of the family sustenance (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI), 2018), they, in addition

to taking care of domestic tasks and caring for relatives, are usually in charge of production for self-consumption (Gallo & Peluso, 2013). Within the community, agricultural work is divided by periods of dry and rainy, so much so, the family agricultural activity begins from the month of August extending until the month of April of the following year. The rotation of agricultural lands is planned that consists of the “change of use or management of the territories, much more, if the high ecological vulnerability of the high Andean ecosystems is considered (Loza-Del-Carpio & Taype-Huamán, 2021), thus the agricultural period begins with the preparation or fallow of the land, in the family space. The man is dedicated to the removal of the earth and the woman is in charge of the pulverization.

Since the appearance of the first rains in the highlands, women have been in dialogue with agriculture, predicting the dates indicated for the sowing of products, they are the ones that select the seeds for each crop considering the natural signalmen, through their different elements such as the stars, plants, animals and physical phenomena (Enriquez Salas, 2000, p. 251). Women are linked to the pacha mama or mother earth, they work hard during the harvest season, supplying themselves for consumption during a large part of the year (Campaña, 1981, p. 34), so they actively participate in all stages of the harvest. agriculture, from planting to harvest (Ballara et al., 2012).

Likewise, they not only take care of what happens around the domestic space, they also consolidate the processes of socialization and the construction of identities through a series of food, curation and production practices (Escobar, 2010, p. 73), as Julio explains, his wife's participation in the agricultural process:

“My wife is in charge of selecting the seeds and deciding on what land to sow. In September we sow in mille (on the banks of the lake), broad beans, wheat, quinoa, oca (oxalis tuberosum) and from October potato is also sown. Not just any day he hunts, my wife tells me when to work the farm, when to hill and harvest, there are bad days when you shouldn't enter the farm. It gets kind of scabies. My wife and daughters also select to eat the products and to invite the family that lives in the city, they select to sell at the fair, save the seed and separate for the chuño (freeze-dried potatoes) in June” (E4).

Considering the July version, the beginning of the agricultural period from sowing to harvest. The wife is in charge of planning agricultural production, despite the climatic changes in the region that usually trigger intense rains or prolonged frosts and other factors associated with its demographic structure and the conditions of its environment (Escobal et al., 2015, p. 210), despite this, the agricultural period requires Andean knowledge, a form of productive strategy allows diversifying risks and thus ensuring production (Ledezma Rivera, 2006, p. 20), to this Andean knowledge, labor is added complementary services such as preparing food and snacks for the participants in the agricultural task.

In other spaces, the men of the community usually travel seasonally to the cities of Arequipa, Puno, Juliaca, Moquegua, Tacna, Ica, Ilo and Lima, in order to

improve economic income, doing multiple jobs, whether commercial, in works or seasonal agricultural activities on the coast, in this regard we highlight the testimony of Agustina:

“My husband, Victor, travels every year in mid-September to Moquegua to work. He works as a caretaker in the grape farm, he stays until the following year, only the month of April or May arrives for the community festival, but he brings money, here I stay with my children and we take care of the farm and the animals” (E7).

According to the interviews, the absence of the husband makes the community woman effectively assume the agricultural production process of family self-consumption, as the main promoter, for this reason she constitutes the center of the affirmation of family agriculture (Porto Vázquez & Mazariegos, 1991), in the absence of the husband the woman doubles her effort and with her work guarantees family sustenance, in addition to this, she is participatory in all daily activities, (Aranda, 2012, p. 71), Andean woman is an agent of change, her knowledge “is not a subordinate discourse but an assertive parallel domain, whose teaching touches a universe of ecological, moral and sensitive exchange”.

On the other hand, the livestock activity is fundamental for the family, it represents an alternative for their economy, the control of the livestock production of cattle, pigs and sheep from the breeding, reproduction, shearing, care and the right time for the sale in the market, the active participation of women is opportune. In the farm productive activities, it is a dynamizing factor of the farm (Molina & Alvarez, 2009). On the other hand, the children also contribute to the care of the small animals, which constitutes a form of support to the family economy.

For Wiener (2009), the role that women play within the Aymara family structure is important, which is quite independent, it is the one who is dedicated to the care of smaller and older animals when the husband moves to the cities for prolonged periods to work, they are the ones who take care of the family and its economic resources as Julián tells us:

“In the months of August to April, I travel to work in civil construction in Puno city, my wife and children stay to take care of the animals and do the farm, I have to work for the expenses and save, it is where I earn my money to the family, I come to the community on Sundays or when there is no work in the city or to do important work such as planting and harvesting, or for the carnival festival and Trinity, or when we have to take the animals to the fair to sell in green time there costs a little more. I am going to take my wife and children to Puno city, I am saving to buy a piece of land” (E6).

Participation Of Women in The Family Economy

Even though it is often considered that women work much more, their work in the family and community environment has often been underestimated “The participation of women in economic activity has occurred in a sustained and

gradual manner” (Vásquez Parra et al., 2016, p. 339), in addition these responsibilities in the rural sector are generating in them a transformation and empowerment without losing their customs and traditions (Castillo et al., 2020). The active participation in the undertaking of the family economy, despite the fact that the community does not have large extensions of arable land, does not prevent it from participating in trade fairs selling its products grown and harvested in the community such as potatoes, barley, quinoa, broad beans, oca (*oxalis tuberosum*), olluco (*Ullucus tuberosus*), izaño (*Tropaeolum tuberosum*), or fishing, thus being part of the commercial exchange (barter), Similarly, in the longer migration processes to other cities in the country, women are the ones who take the initiative to start small businesses (Incacutipa et al., 2022).

Many times they are improvised at fairs, in several cases women undertake ventures on their own initiative, creating opportunities, taking advantage of their capacities or abilities; In other cases, due to the need to assume their own economy and that of their family (Alicia & Echevarría, 2020), For Lipovetsky, peasant society often women hold the cords of the bag, decide on purchases that concern the family economy (p. 215).



Figure 1. Aymara women in meeting

Participation Of Women in Community Organization

Female participation in the communal organization becomes a great dichotomy, on the one hand, it must develop its own activities and on the other the commitment to the communal organization, this is how women participate substituting their husbands in communal assemblies, on the other. In order to be informed of the agreements, in the same way to be participants with proposals. They are very responsible, they organize their experiences, meanings and relationships with the social world, according to their peasant culture and with a strong root for their territory, community and productive organization. Their

knowledge is the result of experience, customs, values and beliefs (Chávez Plazas et al., 2021). Raimunda tells us about her participation in community meetings.

“I participate in the meetings when my husband is not in the community, I go to the meetings and assemblies called monthly in the community, and the meetings are held on the fifteenth day of each month, the meetings are directed by the president and the lieutenant governor, all the community members, we must be on time, for tardiness and absences they charge us fines and the money collected is used for community management” (E8).

Considering the community minutes book, the registry of attendees shows the participation of women, however, in decision-making and agreements, the presence of women is minimal, either as a speaker or participant. The power of women, speeches and domestic life (Lipovetsky, 1997), in terms of community leadership, men are elected, while women for a long time were elected only as treasurers or minutes secretary, which is changing over time, currently women are already seen in positions of lieutenants or communal presidents, María manifests:

“We elect the communal board of directors for a period of two years, all the skilled community members between men and women participate, before only men participated and very few women, now all women participate, they are also elected as part of the board of directors” (E9).

In Aymara communities, until now, men have not lost control of the communal leadership, women have had to build themselves by fighting against this situation imposed by a patriarchal society (Aboal López, 2020, p. 503). In fact, rural women in recent years are more active in their opinions and decisions for the benefit of the community, they assume positions within the communities, their participation is more active, law 30982 strengthens the role of women in peasant communities, including a gender quota of a number of no less than 30% in their conformation, this implies that communal directives must include the participation of women, on the other hand their inclusion is not complementary and less expectant or improvised positions in the community, as Candelaria tells us.

“For positions of lieutenant governor every year-end in a communal assembly it is proposed and elected with votes, in 2018 Mr. Rubén proposed Teofilo and I proposed Aurora, by majority they were appointed as authorities, I say why men are always authorities, women can also assume positions, we quickly manage the requests of the community, on the other hand, men delay” (E10).

Despite this, women assume this work with great responsibility without neglecting their daily tasks as mothers and wives, the increase in the number of women who work has not been able to stop affecting the division of domestic tasks and, with it, to traditional male and female models (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 66).

FINAL REFLECTIONS

In addition, in peasant communities, women additionally participate in the *vaso de leche* ("glass of milk" is a social program of food assistance) meetings and with more autonomy in the participatory budget, they assume communal positions of lieutenant governor, director of their community, also as a member of the drinking water committee, in construction of electrification works, construction of modules for livestock, grazing of livestock in the community, construction of irrigation canals, construction of premises for schools, medical post, also to have water and light, roads, a sample of innumerable tasks and activities that they undertake in the community.

Then, the political and social participation of women from the popular sectors develops from concerns linked to their own space (Defossez et al., 1992), for rural women who are integrated into community organization and management, this fact marks them and represents a factor in their favor, for the empowerment of their rights as a woman (Mendoza Mejia, 2017, p. 468), a path to equity oriented even fair and equitable treatment of men and women to avoid discrimination, the gap gender an excellent way to illustrate the discrimination of women in society and their inequality compared to men (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el desarrollo PNUD, 2012).

The woman contributes to the family development and the Aymara communal organization, without this, the man would not be able to have a full development in the family and community environment. Women have managed to create gender solidarity to face the differences that remain as a result of capitalist and patriarchal influence, despite this, women in Peru and in the world represent sustainability and the body that feeds the soul of their consorts in development (Huanca Arohuanca, 2021), in the Andean perception the man without the participation of the woman is not a complete man, therefore in the Andean world all those who want to assume communal positions must be accompanied by a woman who comes to be his wife (Hermenau, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

One of the virtues reflected in the research is to make visible the roots of women with culture and, therefore, in the preservation of Aymara identity, we would not speak today of a living culture if it were not for its immeasurable contribution that means Andean vitality.

The woman, unlike the man, constitutes the fundamental axis in the development of the Aymara communities, equipped with a system of values that allows them to assume a leading role in the social organizational structure of the community, it is also up to them to ensure that the fulfillment of the norms of familiar coexistence.

However, in the Aymara world women are still restricted by a series of discriminatory, normative and social mechanisms, such as illiteracy, racism, physical and psychological abuse. But they have shown that they have the ability to overcome them and function responsibly in all areas.

The participation in the family economy, as a result of the research, reflects an interdependent couple relationship, framed, on the one hand, in a life project in the Andean rural community, fulfilling absolutely all the organizational responsibilities, and in a second project, not less important than the first, it is a projection to urban life, in which the role of men is more visible, so that family aspiration is expressed in a relationship of complementarity.

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