

**Job Condition of Women Laborers in Industrial Area:  
A Case Study of Balaju industrial Area, Kathmandu**

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**Abstract**

The paper explores the current situation of women laborers in industry. It examines the women worker's present job conditions in terms of job satisfaction, working hours and wages and their rights. This study was carried out on the Nebico Private Limited at Balaju Industrial Area. There were 65 laborers working and I selected only 23 women by using the convenience sampling method as respondents of this study. The nature of the research approach was mix method. Moreover, the research employed both forms of data primary as well as secondary. In order to elicit the primary data, a face-to-face interview was conducted. The study reveals that women's work is treated as unskilled labor and they face several other difficulties in comparison to males in their working space. It was found that more women laborers were working in the factory for a longer period. In this study, out of 23 female respondents' 39.13 percent are ethnically followed by Chhetri, 21.74 percent by dalits and 17.39 from Brahmin among total respondents. It was found that 43 percent of the women were working between one to three years of duration time period followed by one-third of them working less than years. Likewise, 22 percent of the women shared that they worked for three to five years of time duration. Women during her interview said that it was very difficult for them to find job and when they find a job it was more difficult to satisfy the person in their industry. However, they had no alternative than to continue their jobs.

*Keywords:* Women labor, industry, job condition, feminism

*Paper Type:* Research paper

**Introduction**

One of the key components of women's empowerment is economic independence. It is one of the key components to increasing the involvement of women in social and political activities. However, women make up a significant portion of the informal economy in Nepal. Only 26.2% of women in the workforce are formally employed, and their average pay is only

59.3% that of men. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), women now hold 19.71% of fixed assets like houses and land, up from 9.11% in 2001. (CBS,2011). According to the CBS data, women dominate the workforce in agriculture and the unorganized sector of the economy. However, they have limited authority to make decisions about the use of input, the trading of products, and participation in technical training to develop capacities (CBS, 2011).

The first person to lead the conversation on women in economics was Ester Boserup. She maintained that in economically developing cultures, women have been excluded and have suffered as a result of growth (Boserup, 1970). This Boserup thought eventually led to the design of a plan for include women in development. Since then, there has been a significant influx of funds and staff through development organizations in order to accomplish the goal of include women in development in poor nations. The genuine nature of women in economics is one in which, among other things, their contributions have empowered them to have equal access to resources, technology, opportunities, decision-making, and control over money, and whether this has ultimately enhanced their quality of life.

One of the problems in this relationship is the bidirectional relationship between economic progress and women's empowerment. By eliminating poverty, economic growth and prosperity are essential for addressing gender disparity. Another theory holds that women might be crucial to growth. Therefore, equality has value. Women's capacity is essential for making positive changes in their lives. Based on the authors' two prior studies, Effectiveness of Gender Responsive Budgeting in Nepal, 2019, and Women's Contribution in Family Economy in Nepal, 2010, this paper examines the scopes and opportunities provided by government policies for Nepalese women and analyzes the obstacles to implementing the policies Although programs that directly help women have budget allocations of more than NRs 500 billion, results have not been as anticipated. Sustainable (Rajkarnikar 2019).

The Nepal Labor Force Survey 2013/2014 shows that 80.1% of the country's workforce is made up of women. In rural areas, where 86 percent of women are employed, this percentage is higher. Women's standing in Nepal, and rural women in particular, is far lower than that of men. Daughters are discriminated against from birth and do not have equal opportunities to flourish because of the country's strong preference for sons. Low levels of access to economic, social, and political opportunities, as well as to education, healthcare, and other services, describe the situation for women. Even though the government, non-governmental organizations, and foreign development organizations are working harder to empower women in Nepal, the socioeconomic situation of women at the local level has not significantly improved (Mahat, 2014).

Compared to men, who have an unemployment rate of 10.3 percent, women have a rate of 13.1 percent. In addition, women make up 44% of those who are forced to work (those who are at least five years old) (CBS, 2019). In 2018, the ratio of women to men participating in the

labor force was 96.86, up from 89.29 in 1991. (WB, 2020). In 2018, the employment to population ratio for women is about 80%, which is slightly lower than the ratio for men. In the long run, the agricultural industry has seen a concentration of female employment. In the agricultural sector, there are more female employees than male employees, but fewer in the industrial and service sectors. However, there is a growing tendency in the proportion of women employed in the manufacturing and service sectors.

### **Statement of the Problems**

Nepalese women are among the most socially and culturally vulnerable groups, subject to discrimination at home because of the patriarchal system, exclusion at work because of a lack of literacy and skills, and marginalization in the political process because of a lack of executive and polity experience, non-affirmative government actions, and constitutional flaws (Adhikari, 2000). Changing gender attitude with moral values and social norms, the society may move forward to achieve equality and social justice in practice as part of human lives (Pandey, 2019).

In 1960 A.D., the concept of creating industrial districts in Nepal was born when the Government of Nepal and the United States Agency for International Development signed an agreement. Due to this, the establishment of two industrial districts at Balaju and Hetauda was suggested. Balaju Industrial District was the first Industrial area developed with the foundation laying of Balaju Yantra Shala Pvt. Ltd. The industrial area was built with the intention of fostering the country's industrial development through the development of scientific production and management methods as well as the creation and promotion of an authentic industrial environment (Amatya, 1968).

Males and females coexist in the workforce in Nepal's industries, as they do in the majority of developing nations. The nation's industries require a lot of labor as well. In response to the expanding number of industries, it is possible to share the primary element influencing industrial production. In the majority of nations, as the number of industries rises, so does the number of jobs created at the same time. In order to achieve quick economic growth and to address the high unemployment rate, industrialization is therefore crucial. Balaju Industrial Area is the largest industrial area in Nepal in terms of both industries and labor force. The labor force is almost entirely made up of women. In terms of employment, working conditions, job satisfaction, and rights, the study focused on determining the current situation of women laborers in the industrial sector. Additionally, women who work outside the home must perform household duties and fulfill the tasks of a decent wife and mother. In Nepalese society, women have dual responsibilities. Both inside and outside of their homes, they both work. Their responsibilities are more and have more burdens. They might become uninterested and unconfident in working outside as a result of this. Therefore, the study was focused on to answer the research questions:

- a. What are the socio-economic backgrounds of the women workers in the Balaju industrial Area?
- b. What is the women workers' present job condition and their rights in the Balaju industrial area?

### **Objectives of the Study**

- a. To explore the socio-economic background of the women workers in the Balaju Industrial area.
- b. To examine the women workers' present job condition and their rights in the Balaju industrial area.

### **Limitation of the Study**

This study mainly focuses on the condition of women workers in industry. The study explores the present job condition and their rights in the study area. This study does not cover the overall aspect of the women workers in industry. The conclusions were drawn only from a study conducted by Nebico Private Limited in the Balaju industrial region. The study's findings and conclusions might not apply to different contexts and locations exactly in the same way.

### **Literature Review**

The ability of women to make decisions has an impact on women's empowerment. It is the method through which women take charge of their own life, acquire authority, and develop the capacity for strategic decision-making (EIGE, 2020). According to Blau et al. (2010), prejudice is harmful since it directly and indirectly, through feedback effects, undermines the economic outcomes of equally productive people. The typical method for identifying job discrimination, according to Darity and Mason (1998), is to isolate group productivity differences (education, work experience). Discriminatory treatment is to blame for differences in outcomes (like pay or job placement) that cannot be attributable to worker qualifications.

The proportion of people aged 15 and over who were currently employed, or the labor force participation rate, fell slightly from 85.8 percent in 1998/99 to 83.4 percent in 2008. Urban areas experienced a more significant fall in the current LFPR (from 73.3 percent to 67.3 percent) than rural areas. The declining rate of children participating in economic activities may be to blame for this. According to the statistics, more male adults (87.5%) than female adults (80.1%) are currently active, however the proportion of girls who are currently active (37.8%) outnumber the boys (30.2%). In addition, according to industrial classification, 73.9% of individuals work in the agriculture sector, while 26.1% work in the non-agriculture sector (CBS, 2009).

In today's workforce, women make up a sizable portion of the population. Women were able to find jobs thanks to the Great Industrial Revolution and the subsequent

industrialization. In practically all modern nations, including India, women began taking advantage of employment opportunities. Even in the urban communities, adult women are no longer exclusively viewed as "homemakers" (Rao, 2022).

Feminism is an anti-patriarchal and anti-sexist movement that advocates for social equality for men and women (Macionis, 2012). The subordinate position of women in many civilizations has come to light as a result of the rise of feminism. While radical feminists place more value on having children, Marxist and socialist feminists link women's subjugation to the creation of riches. Marxist feminists also emphasize the exploitation of women in paid jobs much more strongly (Harlambos & Holborn, 2018).

From the theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, socialist feminism emerged. From this vantage point, capitalism reinforces patriarchy by consolidating power and wealth in the hands of a select few men. The liberal feminism-backed measures do not, in the opinion of socialist feminists, go far enough. If we want to replace "domestic slavery" with some sort of community method of doing housework and child care, the family structure that capitalism established must change. Only a socialist revolution that establishes a state-centered economy to suit everyone's needs can replace the traditional family (Macionis, 2012). In the business world, discrimination against women is frequently fairly subtle. Women are generally discouraged from working in professions that are deemed more acceptable for men by society. For instance, it isn't truly true that female bank presidents make less money than male counterparts; rather, there aren't many female bank presidents. The adage "equal compensation for equal effort" is rarely applicable because men and women frequently don't perform the same amount of work. Men and women sometimes carry out comparable tasks, but there might be two different job titles and pay scales for them (Tischler, 2011).

Males and females coexist in the workforce in Nepal's industries, as they do in the majority of developing nations. The nation's industries require a lot of labor as well. In response to the expanding number of industries, it is possible to share the primary element influencing industrial production. In the majority of nations, as the number of industries rises, so does the number of jobs create at the same time. In order to achieve quick economic growth and to address the high unemployment rate, industrialization is therefore crucial. Balaju Industrial Area is the largest industrial area in Nepal in terms of both industries and labor force. The labor force is almost entirely made up of women. The study focused on identifying the current

Even social and political elites, according to Acharya (2008), have not yet overcome their male-dominant mindsets. Although the Local Self-Government Act (LSGA) calls for 20% and 30% female representation in all categories of user groups and in local self-government, district and local politicians and community leaders have little interest in tackling gender issues. She goes on to argue that while equal representation for women is guaranteed in terms

of political representation in DDCs and VCDs, it is not guaranteed in terms of committee provisions or representation in committees under VDC/DDC. Less than 2% of women serve on district councils, and less than 10% of LSG executive bodies as a whole, which is ineffective because they don't have enough power

According to Hunzai (2010), although women in Nepal contribute significantly and productively to the national economy, they still have relatively limited access to knowledge, skills, resources, opportunities, and power. Even though they make up slightly more than half of Nepal's population, women trail males in practically every socioeconomic indicator there. Women are the most impoverished group among the poor, and they are the poorest group within the tides of poverty. Additionally, there is a severe issue with workplace discrimination on the basis of gender. While institutional exclusion and discrimination against women are both prohibited by law, it still occurs often. One of the most significant forms of discrimination is employment discrimination.

### **Research Methods and Materials**

This study was based on Nebico Private Limited at Balaju industrial area. It is located in Kathmandu which is the capital city of Nepal. I collected data from Nabico Private Limited which is the pioneer biscuit industry of Nepal established in 1964 with the objective of manufacturing quality biscuits and confectionery in Nepal. The research design of the study was descriptive as well as explorative since descriptive research design it describes socio-demographics background of the respondents whereas exploratory design explored the present situation of the women labors in the industrial area.

There were 65 labors working and I selected only 23 women by using convenience sampling method as respondents of this study. The nature of research approach was mix method. Moreover, the research employed both forms of data primary as well as secondary. In order to elicit the primary data, face to face interview was conducted. The secondary data was used from several published and unpublished books, journals; article and research report. Face to face interview with the respondents was done to collect primary information. The interview was applied to collect data from 23 women workers. This tool covered information about the socio-economic backgrounds of the women workers and current situation of the women workers in the industrial areas. To get qualitative information on women workers and their current situation in working sectors, 4 women workers were asked for an in-depth study at opting case study method. The collected primary raw data was checked and coded at first stage. Then after the data was tabulated, analyzed and interpreted to meet the objectives of the research. The qualitative interview data was also analyzed and interpreted to meet the objectives of the research.

## Results and Discussion

### Socio-Economic Background of the Respondents

#### *Caste/Ethnic Background of Respondents*

Caste is viewed as a structural feature that fits within a broad notion of social stratification and is similar to other hierarchical structures in many ways. In the census of 2011, 125 caste/ethnic groups were recorded. An ethnic group is a social group or category of people who share racial, linguistic, national, or cultural characteristics and are distinguished from one another in a wider community. Different castes and ethnic groups have their own cultural traditions and conventions, which either directly or indirectly influence way of life. In this study, out of 23 female respondents 39.13 percent are ethnic followed by Chhetri and dalits 21.74 percent and Brahmin consists only 17.39 percent of total respondent.

**Table 1**

#### *Caste/Ethnic Background of the Respondents*

Caste/Ethnic group	Frequency	Percent (%)
Brahmin	4	17.39
Chhetri	5	21.74
Vishy	9	39.13
Shudhra	5	21.74
Total	23	100.00

*Note.* Data are based on field study, 2022.

#### *Respondent by Age Group*

One of the most fundamental social and cultural categories is age. Usually, sex and age are interrelated, and both of these universal categories are true (Parson, 1942). It demonstrates that, of the total respondents to the study, the majority of women who work are employed in the 20–25 age range (30.43 percent), followed by the 25–30 and 30-35 age ranges, which together account for 26.1 percent of the total respondents. In contrast, only 7.1 percent of women who work are employed in the 15–19 age range.

**Table 2**

#### *Respondents by Age Group*

Age group	Frequency	Percent (%)
15-20	4	17.39
20-25	7	30.43
25-30	6	26.1
30-35	6	26.1
Total	23	100.00

*Note.* Data are based on field study, 2022.

### *Educational Status of the Respondents*

The social institution of education is how society imparts critical knowledge to its people, including fundamental knowledge for employment, skills, and cultural norms and values. It is important in many facets of people's lives. Without education, people find it difficult to achieve success, and their outlook on life and level of knowledge can have a significant impact. The majority of education in high-income countries like the United States consists of formal instruction delivered by teachers with specialized training in a classroom setting. In all human communities, it is one of the fundamental human activities. Nepal's overall literacy rate (for those aged five and over) improved from 54.1% in 2001 to 65.9% in 2011. In comparison to women, who have a literacy rate of 57.4%, men have a rate of 75.1 percent. The Kathmandu district has the highest recorded literacy rate (86.3%) while Humla has the lowest (47.8%). (CBS, 2011). Education and literacy levels are important social status indicators for women. According to the chart above, out of all the women who work in the study region, 39.13 percent have a degree or above, and 30.43 percent of all respondents have completed their secondary education, which is followed by S.L.C. level education (13.43%). Women only make up 8.69% of those with an elementary education.

**Table 3**

#### *Educational Status of the Respondents*

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent (%)
Primary	2	8.69
Lower Secondary	2	8.69
Secondary	3	13.43
S.L.C.	7	30.43
+2	9	39.13
Total	23	100.00

*Note.* Data are based on field study, 2022.

#### *Marital Status of the Respondents*

One of the basic social institutions is marriage. It is a marriage that is recognized by the law and typically entails sexual activity, childbirth, and economic partnership. The legally recognized marital state is marital status. Single, married, widowed, divorced, separated, and in some circumstances, registered partnership are among the several marital statuses. The marital status of women is a significant element in determining their socioeconomic level. The majority (56.53%) of all respondents in the study area were found to be single, while 43.47 percent were found to be married.

**Table 4***Marital Status of the Respondents*

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent (%)
Unmarried	13	56.53
Married	10	43.47
Total	23	100.00

*Note.* Data are based on field study, 2022.

**Case 1**

A woman named an Anonymous is 37 years old. She began working in this field in 2063 B.S. 2. Falgun She hasn't had any training in this field. She has gained all of her knowledge from my own professional experiences. She also had the full backing of her family. She doesn't have to put up with any issues in this field or discrimination against women. Men and women both participate equally in every field. It also got simpler to meet daily necessities. They are not subjected to any physical, psychological, or sexual abuse by the male employees.

**Women Labourer's Present Job Condition**

The female employees were questioned regarding their length of employment at the factory where they are currently employed. It was shown that 43 percent of the women had jobs that lasted one to three years, with a third of them having shorter jobs. Similar to the men, 22% of the women reported having worked for three to five years. One woman said in an interview that she had been employed there for more than 8 years. More people were found to be working at the factory for longer stretches of time.

**Table 5***Percentage Distribution of Women Workers According to their Duration of Work*

Time period	No of respondents	Percentage of respondents (%)
Less than a year	5	22
1 to 3 years	10	43
3 to 5 years	5	22
6 to 8 years	2	9
More than 8 years	1	4
Total	23	100.00

*Note.* Data are based on field study, 2022.

***Descriptions of Women Workers by their Job Satisfaction***

The female employees were questioned regarding their level of job satisfaction. The table below includes a description of their responses. Four in five of them, or a substantial majority, indicated that they were content with their current employment; however, one in five indicated that they were not. Women in the focus groups reported that it is currently very difficult to find a job. Therefore, they have entered the sector in order to survive and support themselves. They are not quite content with their employment, but they are stuck in them. In focus group conversations, some of the ladies stated that they were unsatisfied with their positions because of the challenging labor and the lack of facilities.

The women workers were asked about their working hours a day. Their responses are described in the table given below. A large majority i.e. sixty four percent of them said that they were working for eight hours; however, sixteen percent of them said that they were working for more than eight hours a day. It is also seen that permanent workers had a fixed working hours where as contract and daily wages workers do not have fixed working hours and they work for more than eight hours.

**Table 6*****Percentage Distribution of Participants According to the Working Hours in a Day***

Working hours	No of respondents	Percentage distribution of respondents (%)
Less than 8 hours	8	35
8 hours	12	52
More than 8 hours	3	13
Total	23	100.00

*Note.* Data are based on field study, 2022.

***Case 2***

An anonymous is a 34-year-old woman who was born in an ordinary family. There are 7 members in her family. She has started to work in this industry from 2068Magh. She has got fully support from her family. There is not any wage gap between male and female workers. There is an equal training opportunity. She had worked in a garage before this industry. She has work 6 days in a week. In this industry there is one workers union which support in the time of problem. She is also one member of this union.

***Description of Respondents According to their Nature of Job***

The women workers were asked about their nature of job whether they are permanent or not. Their responses are described in the table given below. A large majority i.e. sixty five percent of them said that they are working as not permanent (Contract/ daily wages) staff shows

ever; thirty five percent of them said that they were working as permanent. In focus group discussion, the participants said that working as daily wages basis they were enjoying less facilities and their wages is also low.

**Table 7**

*Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to their Nature of Job*

Types of job	No of respondents	Percentage distribution of respondents (%)
Permanent	8	35
Not permanent (contract/daily wages)	15	65
Total	23	100.00

*Note.* Data are based on field study, 2022.

***Distribution of Respondents by Enjoying Paid Leave***

The women workers were asked about the provision of paid leave they enjoy. Their responses are described in the table given below. A large majority i.e. 78 percent of them said that they were enjoying the provision of paid leave during their urgent work however; 22 percent of them said that they do not have right for the provision of paid leave. Among the respondents, permanent workers and contract workers said that they were enjoying the provision of paid leave where as daily wages workers said that they were deprived from the similar provision.

**Case study 3**

An anonymous is 36 year old woman. She has starts to work in this industry since 2075 B.S. Chitra 14. Her family does not create any problem they support me to work in this industry and in this industry too. She fined an ambient environment it became easy to fulfill her family daily needs. There is also a security of work of workers are nicely evaluates by the company. They are rewarded too for their well needs. Women employees can raise their voice for their empowerment. Soshe is totally satisfied by my work. She has to work six days a week. She is also the members of women labors Union.

***Distribution of Respondents by their Knowledge on Labour Union in their Industries***

The women workers were asked about their knowledge on labour union in their industries. Their responses are described in the table given below. Cent percent of the respondents said that they are aware of the labour union in their industries. They further said that different labour unions affiliated to different political parties are present in each industry in the Balaju Industrial District.

**Table 8***Percentage Distribution of Respondents by their Knowledge on Labour Union*

Knowledge on labour union	No of respondents	Percentage distribution of respondent (%)
Yes	23	100
No	-	-
Total	23	100.00

*Note.* Data are based on field study, 2022.

***Respondents by their Participation in any Labour Union***

The women workers were asked about their participation in any labour union in their industries. Their responses are described in the table given below. A large percentage ( 87%) of the respondents said that they have n become member of any labour union in their industries. It could be said that a majority of women workers are not interested in participating or becoming member of any trade union. The women in the focus group discussions said that there is compulsion to join the trade union; it depends on individual's interest.

**Table 9***Percentage Distribution of Respondents by their Participation in Labour Union*

Member in trade union	No of respondents	Percentage distribution of respondent ( % )
Yes	20	87
No	3	13
Total	23	100.00

*Note.* Data are based on field study, 2022.

**Case 4**

An anonymous is 36 year old woman whose family economic condition is good. There are 6 members in her family. She has fully supported from her family. There is not any discrimination in the name of gender. This industry provides equal opportunities to both men and women. She is totally satisfied in this industry. There is a work security also this industry play a vital role in women empowerment too. She has to work 6 days in a week. She had not

worked anywhere before this industry. There is one workers Union and she is also one of the members of this Union

### Conclusion

This study explores the current situation of women laborers in industrial area and their job condition. It examines the women worker's present job condition (job satisfaction, working hours, and wages) and their rights in the Balaju industrial area. People of different caste and ethnic group have their own cultural practices and norms which effects way of life directly or indirectly. In this study, out of 23 female respondents 39.13 percent are ethnic followed by Chhetri and dalits 21.74 percent and Brahmin consists only 17.39 percent of total respondent. It was found that 43 percent of the women were working between one to three years of duration time period followed by one third of them working less than years. Likewise, 22 percent of the women said that they have worked for three to five years of time duration. In an interview one woman said that she has been working there in the same place for more than 8 years. The women workers were asked about their participation in any labour union in their industries. A large percentage (87%) of the respondents said that they have not become member of any labour union in their industries. It was found that more working are working in the factory for longer period. They said that to find a job is very difficult at the moment. So, in order to survive and for their subsistence they have joined the industry. However, they are not fully satisfied by their jobs but they have no option. It is also seen that permanent workers had a fixed working hours where as contract and daily wages workers do not have fixed working hours and they work for more than eight hours.

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