

Exploring Hurdles Encountered by a Part-Time Female Teacher: A Gender-based Auto-ethnographic Perspective

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Abstract

The researcher, a female part-time teacher with eight years of experience serves as the main agency for data collection and analysis in this auto-ethnographic study. Auto-ethnography is based on its exceptional capacity to combine academic research and personal experiences, enabling a thorough examination of the researcher's path as a female part-time teacher at Tribhuvan University (TU). The study focuses on the gender-related obstacles that part-time female teachers on TU must overcome. Self-reflections, observations, insights, and the realities encountered throughout the researcher's eight-year stay are all included in the qualitative data gathering. The application of content analysis to self-reflection write-ups facilitates the interpretation and synthesis of recurrent patterns and insights, thereby advancing a nuanced comprehension of the gender-related obstacles faced by female part-time teachers. The findings show that female part-time teachers face many structural issues, such as a lack of institutional recognition of being female, unfair requests for academic and financial contributions, exploitation, and rejection from appointments despite having academic and research competency. The aforementioned issues highlight the necessity of extensive reforms within the university system to mitigate gender-based inequalities, guarantee equitable treatment, and cultivate a climate that is consistent with the values of professionalism and equality. This study adds insightful information to the continuing conversation on gender parity in higher education in Nepal.

Keywords: Gender equity, Systemic challenges, Auto-ethnography, Part-time female teacher, Tribhuvan University

Context of the Study

The prevalent prejudices and misconceptions about female teachers materialized as different kinds of disrespect and gender parity. My battle to be respected and acknowledged emerged as a recurring theme when I encountered barriers stemming from gendered norms. My resilience was consistently put to the test by the overt and covert tendencies of academic exploitation. This difficult journey

became a story of personal perseverance as well as the larger social barriers that Nepalese women in academia must overcome. The difficulties that a part-time female teacher encounters due to her gender are a major factor in the undervaluation and marginalization of her job in higher education. This study explores the experiences of female part-time teachers at Tribhuvan University, illuminating the distinct set of difficulties women face. The researcher has eight years of experience working as a part-time female teacher, thus, she has direct knowledge of the nuances of this particular professional environment. Nonetheless, the narrative of the experiences of female part-time teachers in this academic institution is nuanced. The difference in workload among part-time teachers in the same job category is one noteworthy feature.

Having taught eighteen periods a week at the Master's and Bachelor's levels, writing research articles in national and international peer-reviewed journals, the researcher reveals that this is a more taxing workload than that of many permanent teachers. This unequal and unfair workload distribution calls into question the fairness and equity of the educational system. In addition, compensation for female part-time teachers is revealed to be a major issue. Part-time teachers make a substantial contribution to TU's academic activities, although their pay is disproportionately low. This economic gap not only shows that their efforts are not valued, but it also exacerbates financial difficulties that could have an impact on their general well-being. The purpose of the study is to examine the complexities of this remuneration system and how it affects the lives and motivation of female part-time teachers.

The study examines the structural problems in further detail that results in the exploitation of female educators. The purpose of the research is to identify the fundamental causes of part-time female teachers' exploitation in academic setting, whether they are due to subtle biases in evaluation, a lack of opportunity for career growth, or unequal access to resources. By elevating voices, the study aims to draw attention to problems that are frequently ignored. The goal of the research is to provide important insights that can guide policy changes and institutional reforms, promoting a more inclusive and equitable academic environment, by analyzing the gender-related obstacles faced by part-time female teachers on different campuses of Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

This study aims to deconstruct the complicated issues that female part-time teachers confront. The study intends to advocate for positive changes in the academic

landscape and contribute to a larger discourse on gender parity in higher education through an in-depth examination of workload, remuneration, and systemic issues.

Background of the Study

I was raised in a small rural Nepalese village, and despite many obstacles, I persevered my educational path. Enrolling the campuses of Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, was a moment that opened doors to new and exciting opportunities. I wanted to learn more and support higher education. I left my village. I had hopes of overcoming my limitations. I went overseas to pursue my higher studies. With my newly acquired knowledge and abilities, I hoped to have a significant influence on higher education after my return to Nepal.

A significant portion of the higher education environment is made up of female part-time lecturers, particularly at the researcher's working place. Even though these teachers make a big impact on the classroom, they frequently face difficulties that are typically disregarded. Research has paid little attention to gender-related challenges. These challenges are faced by part-time faculty members in higher education. This is especially true at Tribhuvan University. In order to fully comprehend the special difficulties that part-time female teachers have, a complete investigation of this crucial area of academic life is lacking. By filling in this research vacuum, I hope to highlight the complex dynamics at work and offer insightful information that can guide practices and policy decisions to establish more supportive and fair learning environments for females in TU.

Within the complex fabric of higher education, female teachers' experiences, especially those from part-time jobs, tell a story full of difficulties that frequently transcend the classroom. A major obstacle that female educators in part-time positions encounter is the complex relationship that exists between their home and academic duties. Balancing the responsibilities of family responsibilities with the demands of lesson planning, grading, and academic endeavors may be quite difficult. Female part-time teachers frequently find themselves at the crossroads of professional aspirations and cultural expectations due to the need to balance work and home obligations, which adds layers of complexities in their academic journey.

In pursuit of higher education, the author completed a double master's degree, i.e., M.A. Population Studies, M.Ed. Population Education and an M.Phil. Degree (not yet completed), exacerbates the difficulties. A female part-time teacher must negotiate the challenging fields of research, academic writing, and dissertation

completion while working to enhance their academic credentials. Striking a balance between academic pursuits and teaching duties is difficult. . An additional level of complexity is introduced by the way the university authorities assign instructional periods. Continuously for eight years The researcher have been offering a substantial contribution to Sanothimi Campus's academic endeavors and overall academic environment in the form of teaching-learning, research, and publications of research-based articles.

The researcher observes that period allocation is still a crucial component. The discrepancy in workload between the educators points to a possible gender-related issue within the educational structure. In addition to having an impact on female teachers' ability to combine work and life, this injustice calls into question how their contributions are valued and acknowledged more widely throughout the academic hierarchy. Surprisingly, the researcher's eight years of experience at Sanothimi Campus as a part-time female teacher also provides insight into the complex problem of gender recognition in academia. The researcher observes a lack of official recognition as a female part-time teacher despite her long tenure. This feature not only highlights the structural issues embedded in the educational system but also the thinking and mindset up of seniors and those who are in the post at the university.

A female part-time teacher at TU embodies resilience and dedication. Her experiences highlight the balance between professional aspirations and personal responsibilities. As the study's backdrop, the researcher working place does not provide a microcosm of the broader challenges faced by female academics in higher education. The researcher's eight-year journey serves as a testament to the perseverance required to navigate these challenges and highlights the imperative for institutions to foster an environment that recognizes, values, and supports the contributions of female educators within the academic tapestry.

One of the most important aspects of the issues that female teachers at Tribhuvan University experience in their work is harassment and exploitation, especially in part-time roles that I experienced during my last eight years as a part time teacher. An investigation of the pay scale for female part-time teachers exposes a discouraging reality marked by inequality and insufficiency. In spite of their noteworthy contributions to the field of education, these teachers frequently struggle with pay that does not keep up with the rigorous demands of their labor. The contrast between the amount of money received and the significant amount of teaching

obligations assumed is a telling sign of exploitation. This mismatch jeopardizes not just the financial security of female educators but also raises concerns about the more general problem of gender parity in higher education. Such low compensation has far-reaching effects on these educators' motivation, job satisfaction, and general quality of life, in addition to their financial security. Exploitation must be addressed as part of a thorough analysis of the difficulties experienced by female part-time teachers in order to promote a more just and encouraging academic environment.

The analysis of structural problems in the educational framework clarifies the complex difficulties that part-time female teachers encounter. Identifying prejudices, having few prospects for career progression, and having unequal access to resources stand out as important issues among these problems. Systemic prejudices frequently penetrate decision-making procedures, compromising the equitable treatment of female part-time teachers and hindering their advancement as profession in higher education. This impedes not just the advancement of careers but also creates a climate in which the mistreatment of these teachers becomes more obvious. Moreover, I experienced the mistreatment of a part-time female teacher in the study site. Unfair financial demands for internal appointments on campus, instances of different forms of harassment, and unwanted messaging with disgusting language are all concerning examples of exploitation. These actions put part-time female teachers at risk of harassment and coercion, in addition to being against the fundamental values of a safe and respected work environment.

The prevalence of these various types of exploitation emphasizes the necessity of doing a thorough analysis of systemic problems inside the educational system. Within the larger context of Tribhuvan University, Sanothimi Campus functions as a microcosm for the ubiquitous gender-related issues that frequently define academic settings. Sanothimi Campus, the study's main focus, offers a distinctive prism through which to look at the particular intricacies of gender-related barriers in this setting. The experiences of the female part-time teacher serve as a metaphor for broader problems that women in academia confront, such as subtle discrimination, a lack of opportunity for professional growth, and unequal access to resources. Through examining the difficulties on this particular campus, the research aims to clarify the complexities of gender-related barriers, offering insightful information that goes beyond Sanothimi Campus and can guide more general efforts to promote gender parity in higher education. It is essential to comprehend the dynamics at work in this specific context

in order to create focused solutions that address and lessen gender-related issues that face female educators in larger academic setting.

Research Gap

There is a substantial vacuum in the literature regarding the gender-related difficulties faced by female part-time teachers in academic institutions. The dearth of thorough research addressing the unique difficulties encountered by this group emphasizes the necessity of a thorough investigation of their experiences. Although a number of studies have examined gender-related issues at TU, the complex difficulties faced by female part-time teachers have received very little attention (Laursen & Austin, 2020; Thun, 2020). This study gap draws attention to the need for a more in-depth investigation to fully understand the complexities of their work and personal challenges, illuminating elements like uneven workloads, insufficient pay, and little acknowledgment.

A more fair and encouraging atmosphere within academic institutions can be promoted by addressing the special challenges experienced by part-time female teachers through policy changes and institutional reforms that are informed by this comprehensive understanding. To create focused treatments and promote inclusive practices that acknowledge and handle the unique difficulties experienced by part-time female educators, it is imperative to close this research gap. The researcher experience as a part-time teacher has given a unique insights into the complex issues faced by women in similar professions. The researcher is a female researcher deeply involved in the academic arena.

My ability to manage the intricate interplay between my personal and professional obligations has given me a sophisticated grasp of the nuances involved. My personal experiences with unequal workloads, insufficient pay, and the larger problem of gender recognition at Tribhuvan University have inspired me to bring attention to these issues. By talking about my experiences, I hope to raise awareness of the difficulties that part-time female teachers have been facing, which are frequently ignored. In addition to adding to the body of knowledge on gender-related issues, my goal with this research is to push for significant institutional and legislative reforms that will make the work environment more welcoming, equal, and encouraging for all female educators. Essentially, as a female researcher in this study, my viewpoint aims to address the particular difficulties experienced by part-time

female teachers and further the conversation on gender equity in academic institutions particularly at Tribhuvan University.

Rationale for the Study

The study's justification stems from the necessity to confront and shed light on the often disregarded difficulties that part-time female educators have in the educational setting. Through an academic exploration of the complex dynamics of their experiences, the research aims to raise awareness of these obstacles and provide a thorough understanding of the barriers that are sometimes overlooked in scholarly debate. The main objective is to make a significant contribution to the continuing discussion about gender equity in higher education. In order to give useful insights that can guide legislative changes and institutional reforms, the study examines workload inequities, inadequate remuneration, and systemic prejudices. In order to create an inclusive climate that acknowledges and tackles the particular difficulties experienced by part-time female teachers, the research advocates for positive changes inside academic institutions. In the end, the study acts as a spark for concrete, revolutionary changes in the educational environment, guaranteeing a more fair and encouraging atmosphere for all teachers, regardless of their gender or position in the workforce.

Literature Review

The analysis of the obstacles connected to gender that part-time female teachers in higher education must overcome is placed in a larger, multidisciplinary framework. Despite the wealth of research on gender equity in higher education, little is known about the complex issues unique to female educators who work part-time. Nonetheless, the corpus of literature that has already been written offers insightful perspectives on the larger context of gender inequality, workplace dynamics, and the experiences of women in academia.

Higher education research frequently reveals the persistence of gender stereotypes and biases in academic contexts. Studies like those by O'Connor et al., (2015) Burkinshaw (2018) highlight the systemic nature of gendered expectations in higher education and how they affect women's career paths and development prospects. For female teachers, these biases provide a difficult environment, thus it's important to comprehend how these dynamics relate to part-time work. Moreover, the research conducted by Mullen (2015) and Bardasi and Gornick (2008) explores the complex connection between part-time employment and gender disparities in higher

education. They stress the devaluation of part-time work and how it results in a lack of job stability and professional recognition. These results illuminate potential connections between gender bias and work status and provide a theoretical framework for investigating the particular difficulties experienced by female part-time teachers.

Examining the experiences of women in academia especially those in temporary roles is a crucial component of the literature study. Research explored the difficulties contingent faculty members encounter, emphasizing problems like unstable employment, little chances for professional growth, and exclusion from institutional decision-making processes (Archer & Leathwood, 2005; Callender, 2008; Jacobs & Winslow, 2004). Although their research does not explicitly address gender, it does set the stage for understanding some of the difficulties associated with contingent or part-time labor, which may disproportionately affect academic women. Study by Thun (2020) and Laursen and Austin (2020) highlights the need for a more inclusive understanding of gendered experiences inside academia, focusing on the larger global environment. The intricate relationship between gender, power, and representation is shown by both authors investigation of the feminization of teaching in higher education and the work of Laursen and Austin on the geography of gender in academia.

The literature on gender-related difficulties in higher education also includes studies on the impact of gender on teaching evaluations (Laube et al., 2007), the feminization of academic labor (Rana et al., 2018; Regmi, 2021), and work-life balance (Gandhari, 2021). These studies provide insights on the general difficulties experienced by women in academia, which may have bearings on the experiences of part-time faculty members even though they are not specifically directed towards part-time teachers. Despite the abundance and diversity of academic literature on gender, little is known about the unique experiences of part-time female teachers. The examined material lays the groundwork for a more in-depth investigation of the particular difficulties experienced by part-time female educators by providing a framework for comprehending the larger context of gender-related obstacles in higher education. By investigating the relationship between gender, part-time work, and academic experiences, this study aims to close the current research gap and advance our understanding of the challenges this particular group faces in the context of higher education.

Methodology

The researcher, a female part time teacher with eight years of experience at Sanothimi Campus, TU is the main instrument of data collection and analysis in this study because it uses an auto-ethnographic research methodology. Because auto-ethnography combines academic research and personal experiences, it is a preferred method for enabling researchers to examine and evaluate the subtleties of their own experiences in a scholarly setting. This approach gives the researcher a platform to critically reflect on her experiences as a female part-time teacher in addition to facilitating an in-depth examination of my academic and professional path. Purposive sampling is used in this study.

Data Generation

Observation, realities, insights, and self-reflections faced for eight years in as a female part time teacher. A range of qualitative sources, such as the researcher's own views, observations, insights, and experiences as a part-time female teacher over a eight-years period, are included in the data gathering process. Self-reflections are methodically recorded, offering a wealth of intimate knowledge and feelings. The researcher's everyday contacts, difficulties, and impressions in the academic setting are the main topics of observation. The goal of the study is to provide a thorough understanding of gender-related obstacles by capturing the complex realities that the researcher faces via the use of personal experiences.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process primarily involves interpreting and synthesizing the self-reflection write-ups generated during the study. The researcher engages in a reflexive process, critically examining researcher's experiences and perspectives. Through this analysis, the study seeks to uncover the gender-related challenges faced by part-time female teacher, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics within the academic environment. The iterative nature of data collection and analysis in this auto-ethnographic study allows for continuous refinement of themes and insights, ensuring a robust exploration of the researcher's experiences as a female teacher in higher education.

Findings

The findings of this study shed light on a number of structural difficulties that female teachers at the researcher's working place, Tribhuvan University encounter. A significant concern is the mistreatment that female part-time teachers endure at the

hands of university administrators and seniors. The study exposes situations in which female teachers are subjected to various forms of exploitation in spite of their commitment and diligence. This kind of exploitation permeates not just professional hierarchies but also the larger university community. In spite of heavy workloads and strong research and academic qualifications, there is a systemic failing to give female teachers the credit they deserve. This under appreciation is a widespread problem that impacts the professional community more than just an oversight.

Another critical finding highlights the denial of campus appointments despite full workloads and academic and research qualifications. This denial not only stunts career advancement but also perpetuates a sense of marginalization among female teachers. The study suggests that the failure to provide campus appointments creates a barrier to professional growth, reinforcing the gender-related challenges faced by female educators within TU. In addition, the study reveals the alarming fact that female teachers in the TU system are asked to make contributions. This type of exploitation increases a teacher's vulnerability because female educators are targeted by unfair requests in exchange for professional considerations or appointments on campus. In addition to undermining meritocracy, these actions also foster an abusive and poisonous workplace culture.

Furthermore, giving preference to applicants who hold positions at the institution while filling campus seats creates ethical issues and encourages an atmosphere of inequality and unfairness in higher education. Selecting candidates who are currently employed runs the risk of excluding worthy candidate with academic excellence who could provide a variety of skills and viewpoints to the campus community. The potential for academic achievement and creativity is hampered by this practice, which also compromises the values of justice and lowers the general standard and inclusivity of higher education. In order to maintain the values of equality and meritocracy in the quest of knowledge and personal growth, educational institutions must reexamine these practices.

The findings show that female teachers at TU confront a complicated network of issues, including being taken advantage of by administrators and seniors on campus, not being acknowledged by the institution, being turned down for campus jobs while having the necessary qualifications, and unfair demands. All of these issues together show how urgently the university system needs to undergo extensive reforms in order to address gender-based inequalities, guarantee equitable treatment, and create a

culture that supports the values of professionalism and equality for all teachers. The researcher uses auto-ethnographic research to investigate why campus officials routinely reject a competent female teacher for internal placements. This investigation explores gender dynamics in the context of universities.

Discussion

The study's conclusions, which shed light on the structural obstacles that female teachers at Tribhuvan University must overcome, are consistent with the body of research on gender-related barriers in higher education. The widespread problem of being taken advantage of by seniors and administrators fits in with larger conversations about power relationships and gender differences in higher education. According to Acker (2012) research on gendered organizations, women are frequently exploited in a variety of professional settings, highlighting the ways in which current power structures can uphold inequality. The systemic nature of the issues faced by female part-time teachers at TU is demonstrated by the fact that their exploitation transcends professional hierarchies and affects the whole campus atmosphere.

Female teachers at TU experience a lack of recognition that is consistent with research that highlight the under-appreciation of women's contributions to academia, even in spite of their heavy workloads and academic credentials (Boud & Falchikov , 1989; Bush et al., 2023; Ceci, 2014). The lack of recognition, as this study demonstrates, is consistent with the larger conversation about how women's work is undervalued in academic environments, impeding their ability to advance in their careers and negatively impacting their general sense of well-being. The literature on gender inequality in higher education frequently discusses the under-appreciation of the contributions made by female educators, indicating that this is not an isolated occurrence.

In addition, the rejection of university's and campus internal appointments in spite of heavy workloads and academic credentials is consistent with more general conversations about job instability and the scarcity of possibilities for part-time teachers to develop in their careers (Burgan, 2006; Goldenberg & Cross, 2011). This research demonstrates how the unstable nature of part-time work exacerbates the gender-related issues that female educators confront. According to the study, the denial of campus appointments not only stunts teachers' professional advancement but also feeds their sense of marginalization, exacerbating the gender-related barriers that

have been previously studied. The disturbing discovery that TU's female teachers are subject to demands for contributions emphasizes how crucial it is to look at the intersections of power, gender, and economic vulnerability. Though there isn't much research on academic exploitation, larger conversations on power disparities and harassment based on gender (Holland, 2019) provide insights into the intricacies of these dynamics. A poisonous and exploitative work environment is created by unfair demands in exchange for professional considerations; these demands are consistent with research highlighting the gendered aspects of economic coercion and workplace harassment.

Ultimately, the results of this investigation align with previous research on gender-based obstacles in tertiary education, offering a comprehensive comprehension of the intricate network of problems encountered by female teachers at TU. The university system urgently needs extensive reforms due to the exploitation, lack of recognition, denial of campus appointments, and demands that are all interconnected. It is imperative to tackle these gender-based differences in order to guarantee equitable treatment, cultivate an atmosphere that supports equality, and advance professionalism for all educators, regardless of their gender or place of employment.

Recommendation

Given the gender-related obstacles that part-time female teachers at TU, have to overcome, it is critical that tailored policies be developed and put into action in order to advance justice and equality. The development of rules that specifically address concerns of exploitation, lack of recognition, rejection of campus appointments, and demands encountered by female educators should be given top priority by TU authorities. In order to guarantee a secure and encouraging work environment, it is imperative to set up clear procedures for reporting and handling complaints. In order to raise awareness of gender biases and prejudice among teachers, department heads, and campus leaders, TU should also actively participate in awareness campaigns and training initiatives. Encouraging diversity and inclusion initiatives, along with fostering mentorship programs for female teachers, can contribute to dismantling existing barriers.

Tribhuvan University should also reevaluate and update the current promotion and recognition standards to make sure that part-time female teachers' contributions are fairly recognized and rewarded. To create an atmosphere that is equitable for

professional progression, it is imperative to tackle biases, ensure fair resource access, and TU should put in place strong policies, raise awareness, and cultivate a culture that categorically rejects all forms of teachers. In the end, TU can make significant progress toward tearing down barriers and cultivating a university culture that supports justice and equity for all of its educators by implementing and upholding gender-sensitive policies. exploitation in order to make the environment safer and more fair for female

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