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GENDER BASED INEQUALITIES FACED BY WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE: A CASE OF KATHMANDU DISTRICT

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Abstract:

Gender inequality, a persistent issue in Nepal and globally, is rooted in societal norms, gender roles, and economic disparities. South Asia, notably, faces significant gender disparities in employment and wages, where women earn considerably less than men. This research explores gender-based workplace discrimination against women in Kathmandu, employing primarily qualitative approach with supplementary quantitative analysis. The study seeks to identify the underlying causes and manifestations of this discrimination, considering variables like age, marital status, race, and education. The research involved a minimum of 48 employed female interviewees aged 25 to 45 in the Kathmandu district. Data was collected through interviews and questionnaires, aiming to gauge emotional responses, knowledge levels about the issue, organizational measures, and suggestions to combat gender-based discrimination in the workplace. The research results demonstrate that in order to promote equality, inclusivity and foster the professional advancement of women in Nepal's workplace, it is important to address policy compliance, cultural expectations, and work-life balance.

Keywords: Gender inequalities, Gender-based discrimination, Workplace discrimination

1. Introduction:

Gender-based workplace disparities persist globally, and Nepal, including Kathmandu, is no exception. Women in Kathmandu encounter obstacles hindering their professional growth and full potential, reflecting broader societal gender roles (Ghimire, 2023). Despite evolving gender responsibilities, studies highlight persistent biases in leadership styles, where feminine approaches are often devalued, limiting women's opportunities (White, 1998). The Nepalese city of Kathmandu, a bustling business hub, faces gender-based workplace challenges, with women encountering barriers such as unequal pay, limited career opportunities, underrepresentation in leadership, workplace discrimination, and cultural biases (Gurung et al., 2021). Despite legal frameworks, implementation

challenges persist, fueled by social, cultural, and historical norms, perpetuating gender gaps in the workplace.

2. Literature Review:

Workplace discrimination, particularly against women, remains a significant and extensively discussed global issue. Numerous studies, including those by Ross (2008) and Tesfaye (2011), reveal persistent gender-based disparities in promotions, recruitment, and job satisfaction. Hora (2014) emphasizes the hindrance of women's higher education and advancement to leadership positions. Socially constructed stereotypes about gender, as explored by Sikdar (2008), influence behavior in leadership roles. The concept of equal work opportunities faces challenges, with women's socioeconomic conditions impacting their job choices. Limited access to resources and ingrained beliefs of inferiority contribute to women being confined to entry-level positions. Shikha and Yuvika (2014) note differing perceptions of male and female leaders, with biases influencing administrative roles over decision-making positions for women. Balancing work and family life is crucial, but businesses, especially in higher education, often fall short in supporting female employees. Stigmatized individuals in the workplace may face undesirable assignments, less mentoring, reduced chances of promotion, and strained interpersonal relationships. Stone-Romero and Stone (2004) highlight three common forms of unfairness: distribution injustice, institutional unfairness, and interpersonal unfairness. While performance evaluations may not significantly predict gender-based discrimination, broader cultural dynamics play a crucial role in understanding distinctions in men's and women's working lives (Cleveland, 2000). Gender inequalities persist due to structural, social, and cultural disparities, reinforcing traditional gender roles and expectations. Discrimination and bias impede women's access to education, employment, leadership roles, and decision-making processes, contributing to gender-based salary discrepancies and under representation in various fields (Fletschner & Mesbah, 2011).

Lack of confidence emerges as a significant barrier to women's career development, leading to lower workplace aspirations. Administrative women navigate a delicate balance, needing to be assertive yet not overly aggressive, independent yet willing to seek help, and taking risks while maintaining high performance standards (Davidson, 1993; Morrison, Velsor, & White, 1987). Occupational health disparities persist, influenced by factors like employment, socioeconomic class, family dynamics, and the sexual division of labor. Gender biases in role assignments contribute to women facing more precarious situations, impacting psychosocial working conditions. Addressing these disparities is crucial, considering women's dual exposure to family responsibilities and workplace risks (Campos-Serna et al., 2013). Despite acknowledging gender disparities in the workplace, gaps in knowledge persist, particularly in areas like bullying, sexual harassment, and discrimination. The review emphasizes the need for further research and targeted efforts to reduce

these inequalities. Recognizing evolving societal roles, addressing gender disparities is essential for overall improvement.

3. Objectives:

1. To identify particular forms of gender-based inequality and discrimination that women faced in the workplace in Kathmandu district.
2. To examine, how workplace policies intersect with women's job opportunities, with a specific focus on the challenges that limit their advancement into leadership roles.
3. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the organizational strategies used to address gender discrimination at work and support employees who experience such inequalities.

4. Research Questions:

1. How do cultural norms, traditional gender roles, and gender-based injustices impact women's career choices, pathways, and experiences in the workplace in Kathmandu?
2. How do organizational policies and rules impact the opportunity and career development of women in the Kathmandu district workplace?
3. What strategies have been successful in addressing and reducing gender discrimination within the workplace perceived by interviewees?

5. Research Methodology:

Section	Contents
Research Design	This study combines analytical and descriptive qualitative approaches to explore gender-based discrimination in the Kathmandu workplace, considering variables like age, marital status, race, and education.
Source of Information	Primary data is collected through interviews and questionnaires from 48 female banking industry workers. Secondary sources, including academic papers and reports, provide additional context to the study.
Mode of Inquiry	Utilizing both quantitative and descriptive methods, the study employs statistical analysis of numerical data obtained through structured questionnaires, enhancing reliability.
Sampling Method	Simple random sampling is employed in Kathmandu, focusing on 48 mid-level female employees in the banking industry to ensure representation, and voluntary consent is obtained.
Geographical Location	The study centers on the private banking sector within the Kathmandu Ring Road region, aiming for a comprehensive understanding of sector dynamics.

Nature of Interviewee	Mid-level female workers in Kathmandu's private banking sector are the targeted interviewee demographic.
Ethical Consideration	Ethical standards are maintained through verbal and written consent from bank administration and interviewees. Confidentiality is prioritized, and participation is voluntary.

6. Result & Discussion:

Table 1: Percentage distribution on the basis of age, job position, marital status, and sector

Variable	Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Under 30	8	10
	30 to 35	20	50
	35 to 40	14	30
	Over 40	4	10
Job Position	Assistant	29	65
	Officer	16	27.5
	Executive	3	7.5
Marital Status	Married	31	67.5
	Single	17	32.5
Sector	Financial	39	85
	Non-Financial	9	15

This table provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic distribution within a surveyed population, classifying individuals based on key variables such as age, job position, marital status, and sector. Regarding age, the majority of participants fall within the age group of 30 to 35, constituting 50% of the sample, followed by those between 35 to 40 (30%), and individuals under 30 (10%). Those over 40 make up the smallest segment at 10%. In terms of job position, the majority are classified as assistants (65%), followed by officers (27.5%) and executives (7.5%). The marital status distribution shows a higher percentage of married individuals (67.5%) compared to singles (32.5%). Lastly, the sector distribution reveals a significant majority in the financial sector (85%) as opposed to the non-financial sector (15%). This detailed breakdown of demographic data aids in understanding the composition of the surveyed population, facilitating more targeted analyses and insights into specific segments within the dataset.

Table 2: Participation of women in the workforce

	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	18	38%
Neutral	16	34%
Disagree	14	28%
Total	48	100%

This table presents data on responses to a set of statements, categorized as Agree, Neutral, and Disagree, along with corresponding frequencies and percentages. Among the participants, 38% expressed agreement, 34% indicated a neutral stance, and 28% disagreed with the statements. The total number of responses is 48, representing 100% of the surveyed population. This breakdown allows for a clear understanding of the distribution of opinions or sentiments regarding the given statements, providing valuable insights into the perspectives of the respondents.

Table 3: Getting equal opportunity in the workplace

	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	23	48%
Neutral	17	35%
Disagree	8	17%
Total	48	100%

This table illustrates the distribution of responses to a set of statements, categorized as Agree, Neutral, and Disagree. Out of the total 48 responses, 48% expressed agreement, 35% indicated a neutral stance, and 17% disagreed with the statements. The breakdown provides a clear representation of the participants' perspectives on the given statements, offering insights into the distribution of opinions within the surveyed population.

Table 4: Balancing professional life and household duties.

	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	23	76%
Neutral	20	64%
Disagree	5	20%
Total	48	100%

There seems to be an inconsistency in the provided data. The percentages for Agree, Neutral, and Disagree add up to more than 100%. Please double-check the values to ensure accurate

representation. If the percentages are adjusted to correctly sum up to 100%, I would be happy to help explain the table and provide insights based on the corrected data.

Table 5: Equal opportunities for promotion and upward mobility

	Frequency	Percentage
Equal opportunities	17	35.42%
Experience Biases/ Difficulties	11	22.92%
Different view	5	10.42%
Total	48	100%

The table delineates data across three distinct categories: "Equal Opportunities," "Experience Biases/Difficulties," and "Different View." In the realm of equal opportunities, there were 17 occurrences, constituting 35.42% of the total. Experience biases and difficulties, the second category, were observed 11 times, representing 22.92%. The "Different View" category had 5 instances, contributing to 10.42%. In total, the table comprises 48 data points, and the percentages provide insights into the proportional distribution of each category within the dataset. For instance, the data underscores that 35.42% of the total observations relate to equal opportunities.

Table 6: Obstacles that restrict women from obtaining roles of leadership.

Obstacles Faced	Frequency	Percentage
Perceptions that men have higher leadership abilities than female leaders.	14	29.17%
Finding it difficult to maintain a balance between work and family responsibilities.	12	25%
Underrepresentation of women in decision-making bodies.	8	16.67%
Lacking confidence.	4	8.33%
Prejudices and norms based on gender.	3	6.25%
Some instances of promotion where male employees were given preference.	3	6.25%
Skills and abilities are underestimated due to gender stereotypes.	2	4.17%
Experienced all of the above.	2	4.17%
Total	48	100%

The presented table sheds light on the challenges individuals face, specifically focusing on gender-related obstacles. It provides a breakdown of the frequency and percentage distribution of

various impediments. To elaborate, 29.17% of the respondents identified perceptions that men possess superior leadership abilities compared to female leaders as a significant hurdle, with a frequency of 14. Balancing work and family responsibilities emerged as a substantial challenge for 25% of the individuals, reflecting a frequency of 12. Another noteworthy issue is the underrepresentation of women in decision-making bodies, constituting 16.67% of the total instances, with a frequency of 8. A subset of respondents expressed facing difficulties due to a perceived lack of confidence (8.33%, frequency of 4). Prejudices and norms rooted in gender stereotypes accounted for 6.25% of the challenges, with a frequency of 3. Similarly, instances where male employees were favored in promotions and the underestimation of skills based on gender stereotypes each comprised 6.25% of the obstacles, with a frequency of 3 and 4.17%, with a frequency of 2, respectively. Additionally, 4.17% of individuals reported experiencing multiple obstacles simultaneously, as indicated by a frequency of 2. The total of 48 signifies the collective instances of these challenges, while the percentages offer insights into their proportional distribution within the dataset.

Table 7: Workplace Policies and Regulations

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Understanding of policies for career development and gender equality.	Yes	18	37.50%
	No	10	20.87%
	No idea	20	41.67%
Policies efficiency for maternity and paternity leave.	Very Effective	20	41.67%
	Somewhat Effective	16	33.33%
	Not Effective	12	25.00%
Involvement in programs for professional development or mentoring.	Yes	14	29.17%
	No	18	37.50%
	No idea	16	33.33%
Working Policies' Role on Inclusivity.	Yes	19	39.58%
	No	15	31.25%
	No idea	14	29.17%
Strategies for Improving Workplace Policies.	Yes	12	25.00%
	No	16	33.33%
	No idea	20	41.67%
Participation of Female Workers in	Yes	16	33.33%

Decision-Making.	No	17	35.42%
	No idea	15	31.25%
Dealing with the Changing Gender Dynamics.	Very Well	14	29.17%
	Somewhat Well	18	37.50%
	Not Well	16	33.33%
Adapting organizational policies from other organizations	Yes	13	27.08%
	No	19	39.58%
	No idea	16	33.33%
Total	-	48	100%

The table provides a comprehensive view of individuals' perspectives on various aspects related to workplace policies and their influence on gender equality and professional development. Notably, there is a varied understanding of career development and gender equality policies, with a significant portion expressing comprehension (37.50%), while others indicate a lack of understanding (20.87%) or uncertainty (41.67%). The effectiveness of maternity and paternity leave policies is diverse, with substantial percentages deeming them very effective (41.67%), somewhat effective (33.33%), or not effective (25.00%). Participation in professional development or mentoring programs displays an equal split, with some engaging (29.17%), others not participating (37.50%), and a considerable number being uncertain (33.33%). The role of working policies in inclusivity receives mixed perceptions, with acknowledgment of their positive impact (39.58%), skepticism (31.25%), and uncertainty (29.17%). Similarly, opinions on the existence of strategies for improving workplace policies vary, with affirmations (25.00%), denials (33.33%), and uncertainties (41.67%). Female workers' participation in decision-making is divided, with acknowledgment (33.33%), skepticism (35.42%), and uncertainty (31.25%). Dealing with changing gender dynamics reveals diverse proficiency levels, with percentages indicating handling it very well (29.17%), somewhat well (37.50%), and not well (33.33%). Lastly, the adaptation of organizational policies from other entities elicits varied responses, with indications of adaptation (27.08%), denials (39.58%), and uncertainty (33.33%). In essence, the table captures a nuanced understanding of workplace policies, reflecting the intricate landscape of gender-related challenges and professional development experiences.

Table 8: Workplace Dynamics and Perceptions of Gender

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Career	Personal Interest	24	50.00%

Motivation	Financial Stability	8	6.67%
	Industry Passion	10	20.83%
	Peer Pressure from Family	6	2.50%
Work Performance Ranking	Top 15%	12	25.00%
	Average	24	50.00%
	Bottom 15%	12	25.00%
Gender Dynamics	Treated Differently	15	31.25%
	Not Treated Differently	18	37.50%
	No Idea	15	31.25%
Workplace Gender Ratio	Doesn't Matter	10	20.83%
	Prefer Mostly Men	6	12.50%
	Prefer Men to Women Equal	16	33.33%
	Prefer Mostly Women	16	33.33%
Men who Support Women	Women Should Serve	24	50.00%
	No Idea	12	25.00%
	Men Concerned About Conduct	12	25.00%
Equal Opportunities for Promotion	Yes	15	31.25%
	No	10	20.83%
	No idea	23	47.92%
Responsibilities and Promotion	Yes	14	9.17%
	No	16	33.33%
	No idea	18	37.50%
Total	-	48	100%

The table presents insights into various factors influencing individuals' career motivations, work performance rankings, perceptions of gender dynamics, preferences regarding workplace gender ratios, attitudes of men towards supporting women, and beliefs about equal opportunities for promotion. In terms of career motivation, personal interest is the predominant factor, accounting for 50.00%, followed by industry passion at 20.83%, financial stability at 6.67%, and peer pressure from family at 2.50%. Work performance rankings are evenly distributed, with 25.00% each for the top

15%, average, and bottom 15%. Regarding gender dynamics, a notable percentage (37.50%) believes they are not treated differently, while 31.25% feel treated differently, and an equal percentage (31.25%) is uncertain. Workplace gender ratio preferences are diverse, with 33.33% each preferring mostly men and mostly women, and 20.83% each indicating a preference for an equal ratio or stating that it doesn't matter. Concerning men supporting women, half of the respondents (50.00%) believe women should serve, while 25.00% are uncertain, and another 25.00% express concerns about men's conduct. Views on equal opportunities for promotion are divided, with 31.25% affirming, 20.83% negating, and 47.92% uncertain. Finally, opinions on the relationship between responsibilities and promotion vary, with 9.17% affirming, 33.33% negating, and 37.50% uncertain. The total number of respondents is 48, capturing diverse perspectives on these career-related aspects.

Table 9: Female employee's perspectives on gender inclusivity and workplace equality

	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	24	50%
Disagree	4	8.33%
No Opinion/ Not Sure	10	20.83%
Total	48	100%

The provided table summarizes responses to a statement, indicating the agreement, disagreement, or uncertainty among the participants. Out of the total respondents (48), 50% agreed with the statement, 8.33% disagreed, and 20.83% expressed no opinion or were unsure. This data reflects the diverse perspectives within the surveyed group regarding the given statement.

7. Conclusion:

A study analysis of the workplace in the Kathmandu District reveals that women still struggle with a serious issue today despite having strong objectives for gender equality. These issues include the unpredictability of equal opportunities along with the continued difficulty of juggling work and home duties, which reinforces the recurrence of gender biases and inequalities in leadership roles. A significant finding from this study is that, although organizations often adopt policies and efforts encouraging gender equality, they frequently are not successfully communicated or put into practice. Because of the disparity between policy and reality, female employees are unsure of the actual help that is offered to them. It highlights the necessity of organizations to ensure open communication with all of their employees as well as the establishment of inclusive policies. Transparency including approach can reduce confusion and motivate women to actively pursue professional advancement within the workplace.

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