



## STATUS OF GENDER PARITY IN LABOR MARKET OF NEPAL

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### **Abstract:**

The gender parity score is a tool to analyze the real status of women over men in a particular aspect of private and public life. To assess the status of gender parity in the labor market and to explore causes and measures of gender inequality in the labor market situation, this study conducted with the title “Status of gender parity in the labor market of Nepal”. This study is mainly based on the secondary data source of Nepal Labor Force Survey (NLFS-III, 2017/18). Essential Information collected through various search engines by simple literature review. This study revealed that the gender parity is favorable to male in most aspects of the labor market in Nepal. Gender disparity in the labor market is reflection of gender discrimination in Nepalese society. By realizing triple roles of women, i.e. reproductive, productive and community managing activities; it is mandatory to free them from subordination for achieving equality, equity and empowerment. Necessary mechanism should make to fulfill their practical needs and strategic needs. The labor market is the proper area for enhancing status of women. It empowers women more effectively than other mechanism. Gender parity in the labor market ensures overall development of the nation. By giving priority to gender matter, it is essential to conduct intensive, broad-based research investigation to find out the potential impact of ongoing labor policy on gender parity and to introduce evidence-based policies to create opportunities for both male and female without prejudice.

**Keywords:** empowerment, gender parity, gender disparity, labor market, prejudice

### **1. Introduction**

Gender discrimination is rampant all over the world. The nature and magnitudes of gender disparity are varied due to different social, cultural, political, religious,

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geographical, environmental, ethnic, and sexual orientation. Gender disparity manifests multiple forms of gender related problems. Copenhagen declaration about convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, 1980; Nairobi forward-looking strategies for advancement of women, 1985; Beijing declaration about action for equality, development and peace; United Nations' millennium development goals, 2000; and sustainable development goals, 2015, all global initiations dedicate for achieving gender equality throughout the entire world. All efforts contributed to extend the way for women's rights and empowerment. The result produced in improving way but not cover all section of women and all aspects of gender issues. The result is somehow good in certain aspects and effective in some limited locations.

According to McKinsey global institution, there are ten major gender impact zones. It classified into five global impact zones and five regional impacts zone. Global impacts zones are: a) lack of women in leadership and gender wage gap in blocked economic potential. b) busy women in wage less domestic work. c) disparity in legal privilege. d) low involvement in politics. e) women related violence. Regional impact zones are: a) lack of women participation in formal jobs in South Asia. b) persistence problem of maternal and reproductive health in sub-Saharan Africa. c) low educational access for women in South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. d) exclusion of women in financial and digital sector in south Asia. e) low value for girl children in South Asia (Manyika, et al., 2017).

By considering gender impact zones, south Asia has extreme form of gender disparity in all dimension of private and public sphere of society. Being a member country of south Asia, Nepal is also facing the anti-humanitarian problem of gender discrimination. Nepali women are still depriving meaningful and fruitful participation in strategic aspects of social life such as educational, social, economic and political. In 2018, an article titled "Advancing gender parity could contribute \$770 billion to India's GDP by 2025" stated that, economic progress is impossible without women's contribution. Joint effort of male and female create rapid economic prosperity. Bangladesh, India, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan and South Korea have wide gender parity favorable to male in labor market.

In developing country women performs various role. They play the role for farmers and food providers; business people and traders; heads of households; mothers, careers and support workers; community leaders, activists and role models. Though women fulfill various roles, they have miserable status in society. Development creates negative impact on women. It undermines women's contribution and promotes men's status. As a result, there is gender inequality (Regan, 2012).

Gender parity ratio is simple but fancy-sounding sociological metric. It is a statistical measure that compares a particular indicator among women to the same indicator among men. It helps to understand relative equality between men and women. It gives policy makers and researchers a sense of whether we are progressing or regressing in any given area. This is an important tool for anyone working toward gender progress. At their best, gender parity ratios can capture the inequalities defining thousands, even millions, of life stories with one simple number (Swenson, 2017). Gender

inequality is contextual by nature. There are various causes and consequences of gender inequality. Social, economic and political aspects are responsible for gender concern. Gender inequality is a complex term. To understand complexities of gender inequality, a construct is made as gender parity for exploring the status of gender in a specific society. Gender parity score indicates both positions and distance of current situation of gender inequality in social life. This study may aware concerned authority to inspect problems related to social policy and formulate gender sensitive plan and policy for creating favorable condition of gender parity in Nepal.

In view of Indian economist Amartya Sen, development is a creator of freedoms for all people without any discrimination. To create gender equality is the main concern of development. Development should guarantee easy access to justice. It should minimize the gap between male and female (WB, 2012). Sustainable development enforces for maintaining gender equality and achieving human right. Basic human right has provision of gender equality in all aspects of social life. Women's descent life has economic, political, social, cultural and environmental significance (Regan, 2012). The nature and magnitudes of gender inequality is different. It is a universal social phenomenon and creates results directly or indirectly on the life of all people throughout the globe. It is essential to understand the nature and measure the magnitudes of gender inequality for internalizing its complication. Although gender parity ratio cannot cure the complex gender induced problem of society, it may show the real picture of discrimination in civilized and modern society. This study helps to make benchmark to analyze the gender disparities especially in economic activities of Nepal.

Despite progress on multiple factors of society, gender parity remains as unmet goal. To accelerate progress toward parity and gain the economic benefits, bias social structure and belief system should be replaced by new one. At first, it is essential to maintaining gender equality in society for creating gender parity in work (Manyika, et al., 2017). With the motto "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali", the latest periodic plan i.e. 15th five yearly development plan targets to transform Nepal as a state of happy, healthy, educated, dignified and high quality living citizens with equal opportunity, including prosperous, independent and socialist-oriented economies. Goal-5 of sustainable development goals pays global attention to eliminating gender inequality. To achieving the target of goal 5 of sustainable development goals by 2030, Nepal government has formulated and implemented various plans, policies and programs. Although the share of population is high, there is a minimal share of female in social, political, economic and administrative fields of public life in Nepal. There is urgency to make effective institutional mechanism for addressing situation of gender disparity to lead progress in gender matter.

## 2. Objectives

This study has twin goals: a) to analyze situation of gender parity in labor force in Nepal and b) to explore cause and measures to maintaining gender parity in various aspects of labor force.

### **3. Materials and Methods**

Central bureau of statistics (CBS) is the central governmental agency for the collecting, processing, analyzing, publishing and disseminating various data and information. It is under the national planning commission secretariat of Nepal and serves as a national statistical organization of the government. By conducting censuses and surveys, it generates timely, reliable and valid statistics of multiple dimensions. The Nepal labor force survey (NLFS III) was conducted by the central bureau of statistics in 2017/18. This study is mainly based on the secondary data. Report of Nepal labor force survey is the data source of this study. By using the formula of gender parity ratio, the number of female and male employee in the same variable is calculating into gender parity score. Necessary information collected through various search engines by simple literature review. Analysis of data is performing through using tables in descriptive way.

### **4. Result and Discussion**

#### **4.1 Policies related to improve economic status of women in Nepal**

The labor Act 1992 made progressive provisions in favor of women employee. Various welfare mechanisms such as health care, insurance and pension facilities have been formulated. It also made provisions about different form of leave facilities as well as canteen and child care facilities in office. The civil service act and rules 1993, made legal mechanism to guarantee the special reservation for women in formal job. Industrial policy 2010, made provision to promote women participation in industrial sectors by favoring them in representation, investment, venture capital, training, easy access to bank loan and market, To create secure environment for women, Industrial policy 2010 has Mandatory provisions of introducing directives for prevention and control of all types of gender based violence in the workplace (NDRI, 2017).

Nepal government made various policies to improve the social economic status of women. Policy itself can't produce positive result; it requires effective implementation. Various mechanism made by Nepal government is applying only in formal sectors of labor market Nepal is pioneer to sign on national or international commitment towards eliminating all form of discrimination. Nepal is enthusiastic to make commitment and lethargic to fulfill it on time. Ineffective implementation of effective policy and unaccountable nature of government authority is responsible for creating miserable condition of Nepal including gender related problems.

#### **4.2 Status of gender parity on employment in economic activities**

All activities related with production, distribution, marketing, and sales of goods or services are referring as economic activities. That is, the activities which are carrying out for profit or own consumption is considering as the economic activities. Such activities will be contributing to the value added of the national production (CBS, 2019). In narrow terms, economic activities are industries. All industries of Nepal are grouping into 21 types. Table 1 revealed that there are 3 categories of industries in which gender parity is

favorable to female. Other types of industries have gender parity favorable to male. The status of female is better than male only in agriculture, forestry and fishing; human health & social work activities; and private household. The status of female is a bit lower than male in education, Wholesale & retail trade, repair of motor vehicles & motorcycles, Accommodation & food service activities, Financial & insurance activities. Apart from above mentioned industries, there are very low presences of female as an employee.

**Table 1:** Status of gender parity on employment in economic activities

SN	Industries	Gender parity score
1	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1.33
2	Mining and quarrying	0.37
3	Manufacturing	0.49
4	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0.25
5	Water supply	0.26
6	Construction	0.12
7	Wholesale & retail trade, repair of motor vehicles & motorcycles	0.78
8	Transportation and storage	0.02
9	Accommodation and food service activities	0.81
10	Information and communication	0.27
11	Financial and insurance activities	0.87
12	Real estate activities	0.21
13	Professional, scientific and technical activities	0.25
14	Administrative and support service activities	0.12
15	Public administration and defense; compulsory social security	0.27
16	Education	0.83
17	Human health and social work activities	1.17
18	Arts, entertainment and recreation	0.13
19	Other service activities	0.31
20	Private households	1.92
21	Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	0.41

**Data source:** NLFS- 2017/18, CBS.

### 4.3 Status of gender parity on employment by occupations

By analyzing gender parity on employment in terms of occupations, Table 2 revealed that the gender parity favorable for female is found only in Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers. All other categories of occupations have gender parity favorable to male. In service and sales workers, professionals and elementary occupations female have comparable status with male. Apart from above mentioned occupations, there is a very low presence of female as employee than male.

**Table 2:** Status of gender parity on employment by occupations

SN	Occupations	GPS
1	Managers	0.15
2	Professionals	0.69
3	Technicians and associate professionals	0.45
4	Clerical support workers	0.65
5	Service and sales workers	0.76

6	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	1.35
7	Craft and related trades workers	0.27
8	Plant and machine operators and assemblers	0.05
9	Elementary occupations	0.70
10	Other occupations	0.08

**Data source:** NLFS- 2017/18, CBS.

#### 4.4 Status of gender parity on average monthly earnings of employees in the main job

By realizing inequality in gender wage as a concern of gender activist, this study tries to explore situation of gender parity on average monthly earnings of employees in the main job. Table 3 revealed that in all categories of main job except other; gender parity is favorable to male. The average income of male is higher than female. Female average income is near about male in skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers. The average income gap is wider in plant and machine operators and assemblers as well as professionals' job.

**Table 3:** Status of gender parity on average monthly earnings of employees in the main job

SN	Occupations	GPS
1	Managers	0.85
2	Professionals	0.57
3	Technicians and associate professionals	0.82
4	Clerical support workers	0.87
5	Service and sales workers	0.69
6	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	0.93
7	Craft and related trades workers	0.71
8	Plant and machine operators and assemblers	0.53
9	Elementary occupations	0.75
10	Other	1.16

**Data source:** NLFS- 2017/18, CBS.

#### 4.5 Status of gender parity of employees in the main job by location

There is a different lifestyle in rural and urban area in Nepal. Although the rural sector covered more areas than urban sector, it is neglected and underdeveloped. Urban setting is more prosperous than rural setting. People have a high tendency to migrate and live in urban areas. This study focuses to find out the status of gender parity in the main job in rural and urban area. Table 4 revealed that in both locations, gender parity is favorable to male. Gender parity is wider in rural area than urban areas. It means a male dominance female in main job by locations.

**Table 4:** Status of gender parity of employees in the main job by location

SN	Location	GPS
1	Urban area	0.71
2	Rural area	0.66

**Data source:** NLFS- 2017/18, CBS.

#### 4.6 Status of gender parity on employment by sectors

Economy is classified as formal and informal sectors. Formal sector is secure and regulated. Table 5 revealed that Gender parity is favorable for male in both formal and informal sectors. Both agriculture and non-agriculture of formal sector have a wider gap between male and female employee. There is one female employee in every two male counterparts. Agriculture and private household, of the informal sector have gender parity favorable to female, but non agriculture of informal sectors has gender parity favorable to male. Formal sector and non agriculture of informal sector is prestigious and high earning field of economy. Informal sector includes insecure and unregulated jobs. Women involved in the informal sector have low bargaining power. They have low incomes and low awareness about their right.

**Table 5:** Status of gender parity on employment by sectors

SN	Sectors	GPS
1	<b>Formal</b>	0.49
	Agriculture	0.55
	Non-agriculture	0.49
2	<b>Informal</b>	0.66
	Agriculture	1.41
	Non agriculture	0.42
	Private household	1.92

**Data source:** NLFS- 2017/18, CBS.

#### 4.7 Status of gender parity on employment by place of work

Place of work determines the status of the job. The work performed through a modern equipped official system is more prestigious than work performed through the unofficial system. The place to operating work is different according to the nature of the job. Place of work done, determine facilities for employees. This study analyzes the place of work as factors of gender parity. Table 6 revealed that the place of work at home, at structure attached to the home and at land, forest & river; gender parity is favorable to female. Gender parity is favorable to male in another place of work except above mentioned place.

**Table 6:** Status of gender parity on employment by place of work

SN	Place of work	GPS
1	At home	1.67
2	Structure attached to the home	1.20
3	At the client/employers home	0.14
4	At an office, shop, factory or other fixed place of work	0.45
5	Fixed stall in the market	0.42
6	Land forest, river	1.13
7	Without fixed location	0.12
8	Construction site	0.14
9	Others	0.19

**Data source:** NLFS- 2017/18, CBS

## 5. Conclusion

Labor market empowers women to play economic role as workers, consumers, and decision makers. By shaping rules, resources, people, activities and power of social relations, the social institution like household, market, community, and state have immediate, underlying and structural factors to produce gender inequality. Nepali family system, school curriculum, market structure, community life style, and state's mechanism are the main actors for producing gender inequality. Low awareness level and high tolerance power of women are responsible to flourish gender inequality in Nepal. Lack of family support, provision of low paid job, society accepted gender wage gap, deprivation of public benefits, low academic qualification, lack of skillful training, domestic burden, lack of decisions making power, violence in work place etc. creates barrier for Nepalese women to enter and sustain in labor market.

Nepal can minimize the persistence gender inequality by focusing action on following strategic areas. Give priority for meaningful participation of female in labor market. Promote female in business-leadership positions. Increase access of female to digital technology. Change the traditional mindset of women's role. Make a joint effort to create gender equality (Wetzel et al., 2015). The real situation of women over men in the labor market situation of Nepal revealed by this study, must aware all concerned authority to identifying inequalities and avoiding the traditional mindset and practices about gender based economic activities and jobs. A Family support system, equal pay for equal job, free insurance policy for female worker; control of women violence on work place; scholarship scheme for female in higher education; provision of safe and decent working environment, etc. will be beneficial to increase women's involvement in the labor market. Due to the present status of gender parity favorable to male, the gender blind policy of labor force management should be replaced by a gender specific policy in Nepal. A small step should forwarding immediately complete the long way journey of gender parity.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

### **About the Author**

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