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Gender Disparities among Employees in Private Schools: A Study of Four Private Schools in Kathmandu

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Abstract

This study provides information about the employees' experiences and feelings about gender disparities at their schools. The study looked at four private schools in Bansbari, Kathmandu. The data was gathered in 2019 for my master's thesis. The four organizations that were chosen had 139 full-time teachers then. Out of 139 teachers, 48 were selected using the snowball sampling technique; participants were 28 women and 20 men. Information was gathered via a questionnaire and field visit. The outcome shows inequality in many areas, including remuneration, working hours, the hiring procedure, promotion time, permission to leave, wearing uniforms, and more.

The findings indicate that female employees began working earlier than their male colleagues. Female teachers were junior teachers at the time and rarely received promotions compared to male teachers. There were significant discrepancies in income; 28.57% of female employees received the lowest remuneration, or less than Rs. 11,000, while no male teachers fell into this category.

Keywords: *employees, facilities, gender discrimination, private schools*

Introduction

Every known human society has some degree of inequality, with the most affluent people or families enjoying excessive authority, prestige, and other valuable resources. The issue of economic and social inequality has received a lot of attention in advanced industrial cultures through social policy and rhetoric (Grusky, 2019). One of the prime inequalities seen in society is Gender inequality. Stratification is the basis of all the inequity in society (Logan, 1978). Every industry and social norm exhibits gender imbalance, significantly affecting global development (Moulabuksh et al., 2021).

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Gender roles established by society are the primary driving force behind gender discrimination rather than biology (Shrestha & Gartoulla, 2015). Males are viewed as courageous, able breadwinners, intelligent, and powerful, and the attributes typically associated with women include being courteous, reserved, sensitive, and caring. In many societies, women are expected to follow men's orders and handle household chores and family responsibilities, such as cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing (Childs, 2012). Gender discrimination is a result of the prevalent anticipated gender roles and stereotypes, which make women less powerful and inferior in society.

Women often make up a larger portion of parliaments in wealthy nations than in developing ones (Inglehart et al., 2003). When women are in positions of power, they create policies that raise the standards for all women. In emerging nations, the situation is the exact opposite. Women are consistently underrepresented because so few are in positions of authority. If we consider the problem in Nepal, The Nepal Labor Force Survey 2017–18 (Shrestha, 2022) states that there are 125 women for every 100 men in the working-age population, but only 59 of them are employed in Nepal. Only 22.5% of Nepal's working-age women are employed, despite the country having 11.53 million such individuals. This circumstance demonstrates that discrimination against women exists even before they start working. Research on experiences and viewpoints of gender discrimination in the workplace in Nepali society is scarce, if not nonexistent. Therefore, gender discrimination in private schools in Kathmandu, Nepal, is discussed in this study, along with the actual reality, experiences, and perspectives surrounding it. To speak up and create policies for a better future, it is crucial to understand the reality of the situation. The results might not apply to all societies in the nation. Still, it's a fantastic example setting to delve into the details and learn more about how to mitigate unfavorable circumstances.

Gender Discrimination in the Workplace: A Global Scenario

Over the past few years, there has been a minor decrease in the wage gap between men and women. Globally, women made 82 cents for every dollar men earned in 2021 (Statista, 2022). Denmark was the nation with the lowest level of gender inequality in 2021, according to the Gender Inequality Index (GII) and Yemen had the highest level of gender inequality (Statista, 2022). Bias is prevalent in every activity that is conducted in the workplace. For instance, when men and women work at the same place and even when women are hired ahead of male competitors, women do not have equal opportunities for advancement into managerial roles. Regardless of performance, commitment, work habits, knowledge, or expertise, men are promoted to Supervisor, Director, and President positions swiftly, whereas women are not given the same opportunities. Even highly ambitious and capable women are barred from advancement. They are hardly ever picked, even though they are considered for higher jobs (Childs, 2012).

Various research has been conducted on gender discrimination in the workplace globally. For example, in the study (Wright et al., 1995), several topics relating to the gender gap in workplace authority were examined in seven nations (the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, Norway, and Japan). The finding showed a considerable cross-national variation in the gender difference in authority, with Japan having the most significant gap and the four English-speaking nations having the smallest.

The study (Musetsho et al., 2021) shows that most women in South Africa continue to experience unfair discrimination despite implementing numerous legislative programs, policies, and statutory measures to reduce gender inequality and unfair employment discrimination. Only a

tiny percentage of women hold senior positions in management and leadership. Women remain underrepresented, while men dominate all four top occupational levels (top management, senior management, professionally qualified, and professional level).

Low labor force participation rates for women are observed throughout South Asia. Women make up a tiny percentage of the official labor force and are disproportionately employed in unorganized, low-status, low-paying sectors. Women are more likely than men to be underemployed, which devalues their efforts, abilities, and educational backgrounds. Bangladesh is placed 68th out of 142 nations in the 2014 Gender Gap Index, followed by Sri Lanka at 79, India at 114, Bhutan at 120, and Pakistan at 142. Female labor market participation rates are low in all nations (Strachan et al., 2015).

Gender disparity in the workplace still exists around the globe despite decades of research and intervention. Women are disproportionately underrepresented in leadership positions, perform most unpaid work, and frequently earn less than men for doing the same job (O'Brien et al., 2017).

Gender Discrimination in the Workplace: A scenario in Nepal

Gender discrimination is acknowledged as a kind of unfairness and as a problem for women (Poudel, 2019). Nepal is a predominantly masculine, religious country where women are seen as subordinate to men. The preference for son births is more widespread practically everywhere. Discrimination based on gender takes many forms and persists throughout life (Pokharel, 2008). Male and female roles are entirely different in cultural rites and rituals and even in celebrations like festivals.

Table 1: *Involvement in occupation by gender*

Industry	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	14.7	33.0	21.5
Manufacturing	16.2	13.4	15.1
Construction	19.5	4.2	13.8
Information and communication	1.1	0.5	0.9
Real State	0.3	0.1	0.2
Scientific and Technical activities	0.8	0.3	0.6
Administrative	1.3	0.2	0.9
Transportation	7.1	0.3	4.5
Education	6.8	9.6	7.9

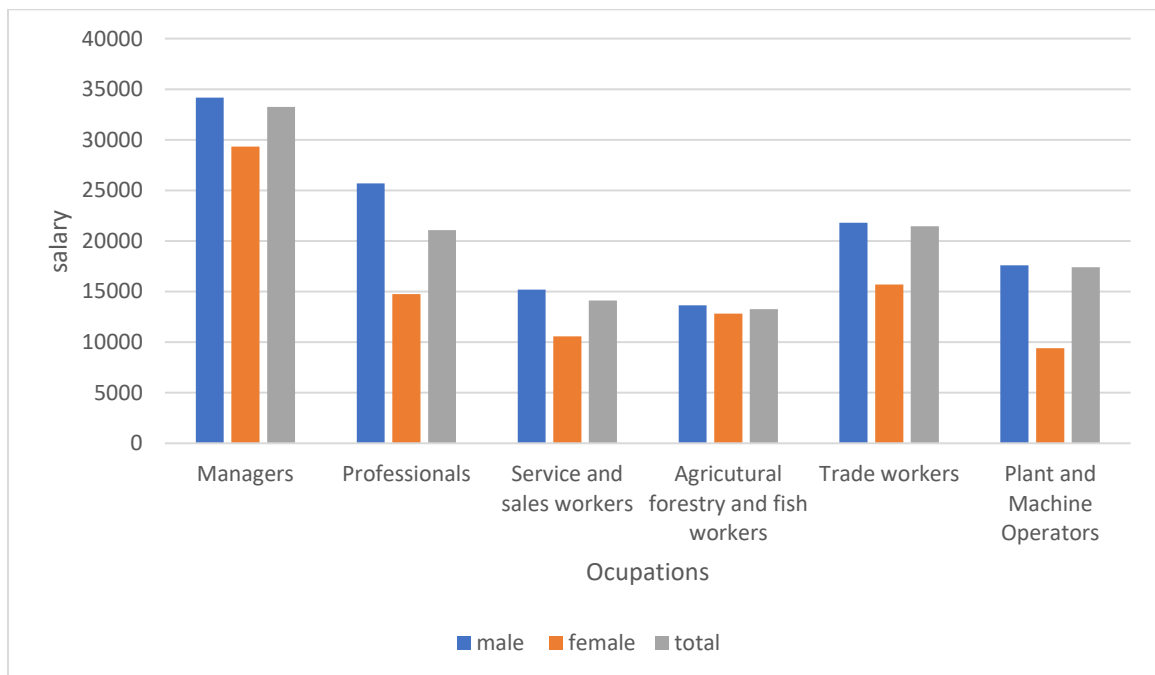
Data source: Nepal Labour Force Survey - 2017/18,
https://nepalindata.com/media/resources/items/20/bNLFS-III_Final-Report.pdf

The Nepali government implemented several programs to raise women's socioeconomic standing. However, policy alone cannot achieve positive outcomes; they require successful implementation. Different mechanisms created by the Nepali government are exclusively utilized in the formal sectors of the labor market. Nepal formally commits to the abolition of all forms of discrimination. While Nepal is eager to make commitments, it is sluggish at keeping them (Khadka, 2020). There is gender pay equality in the government workforce; however, it is not implemented in the private sector.

Different workplaces have different human resources. Therefore, it's crucial to understand the industries and professions of employed persons. Furthermore, some professions have a reputation for being exclusively held by men, whereas women predominately hold others. For instance, according to recent data from Graph Nepal (Shankar, 2017), there were 16432 doctors in Nepal overall, and more than 67% of them were men. Due to this, some industries now employ women primarily while others employ men primarily. The following table shows the occupations by gender in Nepal.

Research on employment discrimination by gender was widely undertaken. However, only a small percentage of all research is qualitative. This qualitative study was undertaken because I wanted to learn more about the treatment of other employees at private schools after experiencing multiple forms of discrimination at the organizations (private schools) where I worked. Qualitative researchers do their work in the natural setting to explain or interpret events in terms of the meanings that individuals ascribe to them (Halcomb, 2016). However, quantitative research only reports the number of respondents, not the actual condition. Thus, qualitative research is crucial to comprehending the actual situation.

Figure 1: Pay Gap in Occupation



Data source: Nepal Labour Force Survey - 2017/18,
https://nepalindata.com/media/resources/items/20/bNLFS-III_Final-Report.pdf

According to data from the Nepal Labor Force Survey, many women work in agriculture, forestry, and fishing. These tasks are casual and can be completed while caring for the family and home. However, when women perform these tasks for the family, they are not paid. As was said above, society distinguishes between male and female vocations. According to data, many women work in the education sector since they are regarded as better at caring for children. On the other hand, very few women work in formal and technical fields, such as information and communication, where the proportion of men to women in these fields is more than two to one.

As I worked in private schools for around a decade, I experienced and saw various forms of discrimination against women in the workplace. The pay gap is one of the prevalent biases. I worked in several educational institutions and was always paid less than my male peers. There is significant gender discrimination in the workplace in Nepal, including a pay disparity; according to Nepal Labour Force Survey (Office, 2019), Employees in Nepal make a mean monthly salary of Rs. 17,809 on average. The difference in mean monthly incomes between men and women of Rs. 5,834 in favor of men. Despite having the same occupation, men and women earn very different monthly amounts. The wage gap by occupation is displayed in Figure 1.

In none of the formal jobs represented by the bar graph, earnings are equal or more for females than males. For instance, although male employees in managerial positions typically earn over 33,000, female employees only earn about 28,000 for the same role. It is unfair that female plant and machine operators receive only half as much pay as men.

Education System in Nepal

Nepal is a landlocked country surrounded by two huge countries, China and India. Development is a lifelong process (Carlsson et al., 2015). Everything is dynamic; even nonliving things do not remain constant for a long time, the buildings, infrastructures, and all. However, the development of science and technology has made many things easy and accessible. If we look back at history, mass education began in the 1950s, when a political rebellion toppled the authoritarian Rana administration that had dominated the nation for more than a century (Carney & Rappleye, 2011). People gradually started to get an education. In the current situation, a lot of development has occurred. Most young people in Nepal now have access to significantly greater educational possibilities than their parents. For instance, elementary school net enrollment rates rose from 66.3 percent in 1999 to 97 percent in 2016. Similarly, secondary level school enrolment rates increased from 44.9 percent in 2007 to 60.4 percent in 2015 before falling to 54.4 percent in 2016, most likely due to the 2015 earthquake. However, tremendous advancements have been made in expanding female participation in education. The gender parity score for elementary and secondary school enrollments increased from 0.17 to 1.08 between 1973 and 2016, indicating that female admission rates in education improved from being at best marginal to presently enrolling at slightly greater rates than boys. However, high dropout rates continue to plague the educational system, with girls being more likely than boys to leave school sooner. Even though retention rates have significantly grown over the past few decades, in 2015, only 76.8% of students in cohorts enrolled in primary school made it to the final grade. Lower-secondary completion rates are currently at 69.7 percent (2016), whereas upper-secondary completion rates are far lower at 24.5 percent (2014) (Dragana Borenovic Dilas, 2018).

If we look at Nepal's student-to-educational institution ratio, Early Childhood Educational Development or Pre-Primary level student-to-school ratio, according to the data, is 27.05. The

ratio for primary to secondary education is 205.80. There are 302.37 students at the bachelor's level in each college, whereas there are roughly half as many at the master's level. The current ratio is 144.90. Similar to this, there are 14 PhD-facilitating institutions and 6 MPhil-facilitating institutions. For the two, the campus-to-student ratio is 179.17 and 144.21, respectively. Last but not least, there are 224 students registered in the degree program and seven institutions that facilitate PGD studies, which means that there are 32 students in each institution (Edusanjal, 2022).

About 35,674 schools are now operating in Nepal. These include 27,812 community schools (Government, 2022). Over 1,500 private and 600 community schools are in the Kathmandu Valley (Republica, 2022). People from around the country congregate in Kathmandu. One of the reasons people travel to Kathmandu is to receive a top-notch education. According to the sources, public schools only graduate 20% of their students with good grades in SEE, whereas private schools, which make up only 20% of Nepal's total school population, account for 80% of the SEE's favorable outcomes (Republica, 2022).

The Kathmandu valley has a large population since residents from all 77 districts live there for various reasons. It is obvious that an increased population necessitates more infrastructure. Private schools are not an exception; Kathmandu has a large number of them due to the city's high child population. I want to investigate how inequality persists in these private schools in this study. In public schools, the government offers equal pay and amenities. Still, in private schools, there is no such policy, there are no predetermined salaries, and the administration sets the salary as they see fit. Therefore, it is essential to discuss how private school personnel feel about their jobs and the resources and behaviors they receive from other institutions.

Methods and Materials

The research was built upon first-hand data gathered in four private schools in Kathmandu, Nepal, for my master's thesis using field research and questionnaires. During my school visit, I also conducted conversational interviews with the respondents.

I used the snowball sampling method for data collection. I took help from my teacher colleagues and other school staff to connect with the respondents. Forty-eight teachers were selected as the respondents. I took permission from the school administration and managed time to visit the school to make teachers fill out the questionnaire and have conversational interviews—the questionnaire comprised 40 open-ended and close-ended questions.

To create detailed narrative descriptions and build case studies, qualitative researchers engage in a naturalistic inquiry by inductively observing real-world settings (Patton, 2005). It is significant to understand the entire situation, experiences, and opinions of the people to explore the actual situation, so I chose the qualitative research method.

Results and Discussion

Respondents by Age and Sex

A workforce's age composition is essential since the diverse ages of employees bring various talents, experiences, and perspectives. The generation impacts people's behaviors, attitudes, and even work ethics. As a result, age diversity in the workplace fosters new perspectives, some of which may be helpful while others may be harmful, like prejudice.

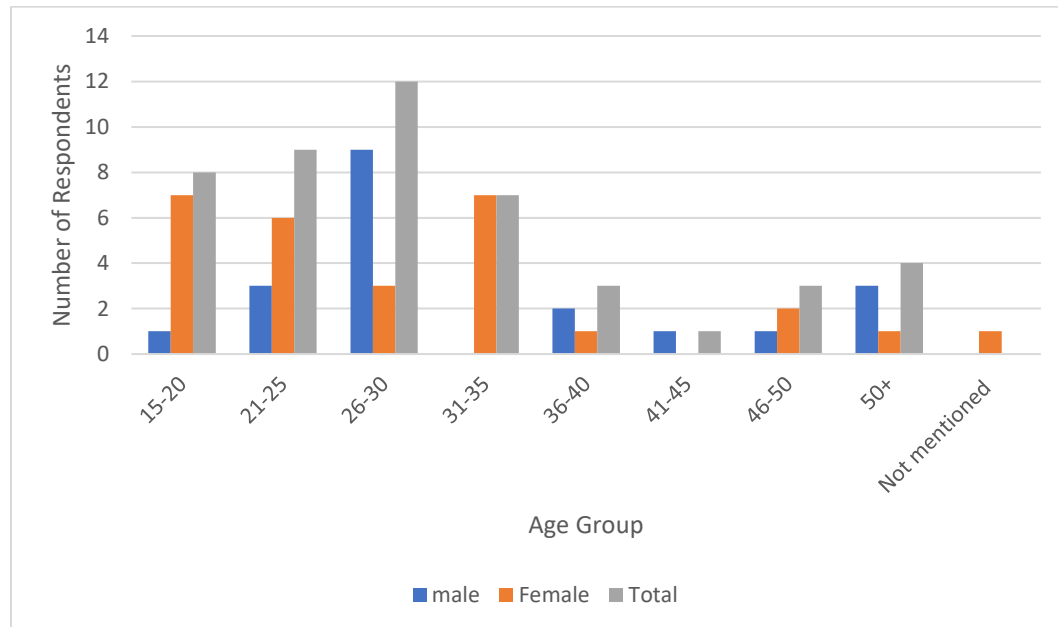
The number of respondents by sex and age is shown in Figure 2.

The report demonstrates that there were seven female employees in the age range of 15-20 but just one male employee in this age range. The male respondent explained that he was working in a school for a short time during his college break and that he would return to the institution once classes resumed. The situation for female employees was different; most stated they were full-time teachers, and some even abandoned their education. For personal, familial, and professional reasons, they said they could not complete their education.

There were no male employees in the 31–35 age range. Male employees did not view private school employment as a stable and long-term career choice. Most male respondents mentioned that teaching in a private school is not a good career option because they do not offer their instructors a good wage and other benefits. In addition, they mentioned that when they have a family, the salary would not be enough to feed their children and provide quality education.

Most male employees mentioned that they spoke up for their rights several times when the administrations did not listen to their agenda. In contrast, female employees remained at the same job and were paid for decades. Some female instructors stated how easy it was to commute to work, how near it was to their homes, and how they had worked so long that they didn't want to leave the school. The female employee, who was 60 years plus older, claimed that she began working in a school when she was 18 and that two of her senior female coworkers passed away while they were employed there. She promised to continue working at the same school until she could come and teach. Male instructors never brought up such issues. If the school management did not agree to their demands, they would leave the institution rather than make a compromise.

Figure 2: *Number of Respondents by Age and Se*



Source: Field visit, 2019

Ranking of the Teachers

Employees are ranked against one another according to a certain plan or design in a ranking-based evaluation system. The respondents were asked to fill out their positions. The following table lists the teachers' rankings at the schools I've been to.

The respondents were asked to answer the question, 'Who evaluates the performance for recruitment and promotion?'. Most of the respondents answered, Coordinator. Coordinators often determine the ranking. Male instructors were typically appointed senior-level teachers, whereas female teachers were most frequently found working as junior-level grade teachers.

The table above demonstrates unequivocally that female employees did not enjoy the same opportunities as male employees. Only one female worker claimed to be a high school teacher. Some female employees said they had earned a master's degree and asked management for higher classes to teach, but they were turned down because they were female. On the other hand, men who had merely earned a bachelor's degree were lecturing senior classes. The same female employee who worked for decades in the same school said that she repeatedly asked the school administration to give her a chance to teach senior classes. Despite having a master's degree in science, the administration gave her the reason that she was a woman, had a soft voice, and teachers with such characteristics could not control senior classes. This is a concrete illustration of how female workers are denied the opportunity.

Table 2: Respondents by Ranking

Position of Teachers	Male	Female	Total
Pre-Primary Teachers	0	7	7
Primary Teachers	2	7	9
Lower Secondary Teachers	4	6	10
Secondary Teachers	10	1	11
Coordinators	4	1	5
Not Mentioned	0	6	6
Total	20	28	48

Source: Field visit, 2019

Salary Structure

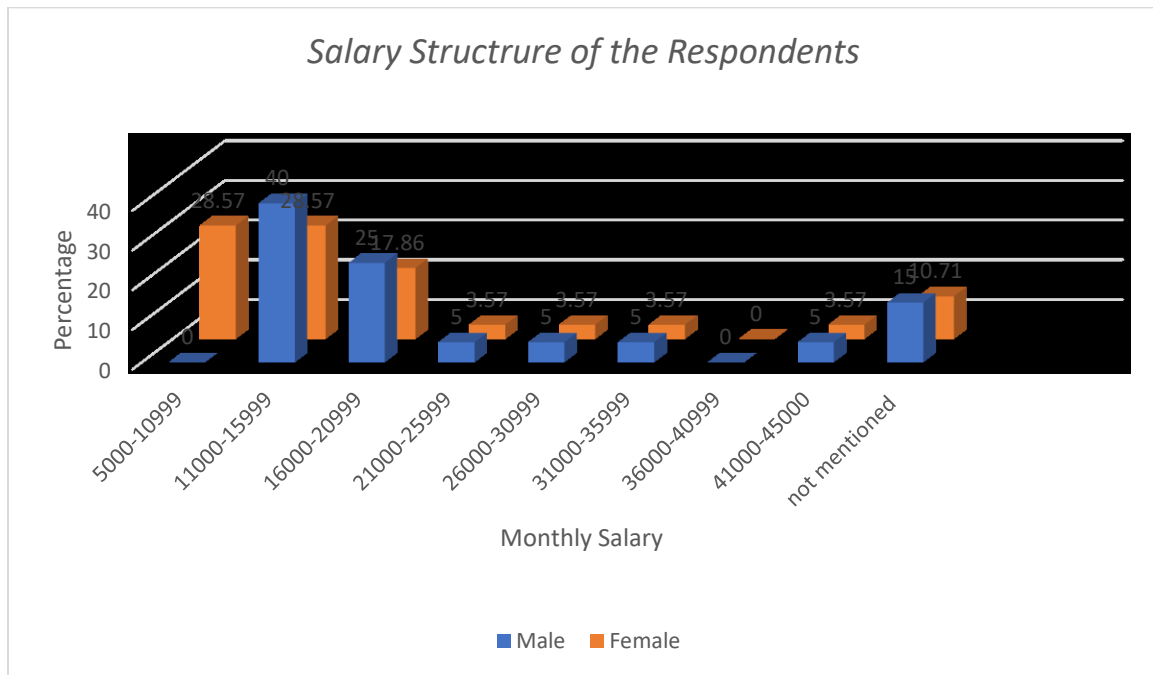
Salary is the most important consideration when entering the workforce. Every employee is paid for their efforts. However, in the workplace, there is frequently a gender wage disparity (Yamamoto et al., 2019). The majority of the female respondents voiced discontent with their pay. The respondents' pay distribution is shown in the figure 3.

The respondents' lowest pay levels were Rs.5,000 to Rs.110,000. Compared to none of the male teachers, seven (28.57%) of the 28 female teachers reported receiving a monthly wage

between 5 and 11 thousand. The data demonstrate that as salary increased, the proportion of male responders increased, and the proportion of female employees decreased. There were a number of female employees who expressed dissatisfaction with their pay. One over-50-year-old female teacher claimed that despite spending decades at the same school, her pay was at the very least one. She never demanded a salary increment because she taught at the same school for a long time, and it was close to her house.

On the contrary, one male computer teacher said he was a new teacher in the school, and it was his first time teaching, but he threatened to quit if he did not receive a pay raise in the next two months. Only a tiny percentage of female employees said they requested a pay raise from the school administration and received it, but the majority said they never requested a pay hike. Women workers were paid far less than males, and most never had the confidence to stand out for their right to equal remuneration. As a result, the monthly payout was unequal.

Figure 3: *Salary Structure of the Respondents*



Source: Field Survey, 2019

Perceptions of the gender balance in the workforce

Respondents were asked if they felt unfavorable treatment because of their gender in the recruitment and selection process, remuneration, performance management, and training.

The recruitment procedure was reported to have left the respondents quite satisfied. Out of 48 respondents, just four claimed that women were mistreated during the hiring process. When I asked the respondents about the policy on contracts when they first started working in schools, around 50% said they had made one, and 50% had not. Additionally, it had no impact on their teaching careers. Most employees stated that the institution hired them via job announcements.

High levels of pay dissatisfaction were noted; more than 65% of workers reported they thought women employees were paid less. I also asked them if they believed that the school paid everyone similarly for equal effort, and 75% disagreed, saying that the organization did not pay everyone equally. The results indicated that employees had encountered and believed there had been discrimination against female employees in various settings.

Table 3 : Respondents' perception of gender balance

Areas	Respondents		
	Both treated equally	Females treated favorably	are less Total
Recruitment and Selection	44	4	48
Remuneration	17	31	48
Performance Management	39	9	48
Training and Development	27	21	48

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Discussion

I considered doing this study since I experienced many limitations and barriers simply because I am a female. I was a private school coordinator and high school teacher during the data collection period. Other female employees were highly experienced and had excellent educational backgrounds, but despite their desire to teach at higher levels, they were not given the opportunity. Although I was given a lot of responsibility, I received a salary significantly lower than my male counterpart. In addition, to pay, I lagged behind my male colleague in many other perks, like dress code, vacation time, arrival and departure times, and so on. I am one of the many women employees who make up the workforce. I consequently contemplated determining what other employees feel, think, or believe about their employment.

Women today have greater equality than in the past, but even the most industrialized nations worldwide cannot guarantee equality for everyone. For example, although the constitution guarantees equal pay for equal work, in practice, women are treated considerably less favorably than male employees in all areas of employment, including compensation, job status, advancement, and other factors. This sample research is a perfect example of how this occurs.

Although Nepal has been progressing toward women's empowerment, gender prejudice is still present. In Nepal, culture and gender discrimination are inextricably linked. In light of this, changing people's perspectives takes time. Women should be educated to speak up against unfair situations early to create a welcoming environment for everyone. To create an atmosphere that is favorable for everyone, gender equity should start at home and in childhood.

When girls experience harassment, they are instructed to maintain their composure, obey, and keep quiet. They are instructed to make concessions in order to maintain peace. How can females who have been reared with these characteristics speak up and fight for equal rights? The female respondents to my survey are excellent examples; the majority of them stated that they did not report verbal harassment, did not ask for a raise in pay, held junior positions while having higher qualifications, and so on. They made numerous concessions but did not speak out to improve the situation.

Conclusion

This research is being done to examine how private school employees are treated differently based on their gender. The study used four private schools in Bansbari, Kathmandu, as its sample set to assess the extent of gender inequality in these institutions.

The results show that gender inequality is prevalent in private schools in a number of different ways. Female employees were found to enroll in school at an earlier age than male employees, and it was also shown that they were more likely to remain at the same institution for an extended period of time. No male teachers claimed to have worked at the same school for more than ten years. On the other hand, many female employees claimed to have worked for the same school for many years; a few even claimed to have done so for more than two decades, and one lady employee reported having worked there for more than three decades. It demonstrates that, in contrast to male employees, female employees do not look for better opportunities and tend to stay in the same position at the same institution for a long time.

One of the most unsatisfactory aspects of gender discrimination in private schools was unequal remuneration. Even male employees complained that women did not receive salaries on par with men's. As a result, the possibility for female personnel to advance their careers was extremely rare or nonexistent in all schools. Many female teachers said that despite their qualifications, they were not given better positions. Simply because they were female, they were in the back. Since they were never given any opportunities, it was hard to demonstrate that they were capable of producing something marvelous.

Female employees at private schools can work in a pleasant environment if they are given better opportunities and paid equally for equal work. Likewise, if male and female teachers contribute equally and are paid equally in private institutions, minor issues with accessing facilities will progressively disappear.

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