

# Socio-Economic Condition of Female Workers and Workplace Environment in Pokhara Industrial Estate in Nepal

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**Abstract**— Using the primary data collected from 154 female workers working in Pokhara Industrial Estate, Kaski, Nepal, this study has examined the socio-economic conditions of female workers and work environment in the industrial estate. This study has revealed that women from the different age groups between 16 to 45 years representing major caste/ethnic and religious groups work in Pokhara Industrial Estate. Most of the female workers have attained formal education, are married, unskilled, have a permanent job and live in a nuclear family headed by a male. The average salary of most of the female workers is between NRs 8,000 to 14,000. The age of female workers seems to determine the salary rather than the educational attainment and skills of the workers. The monthly average salary of the majority of female workers is less than the salary of male coworkers. A large majority of the female workers work eight hours a day and don't have any membership in the trade union. Industries in Pokhara Industrial Estate also provide minimal medical facilities if any employee is injured during the official working hour. Despite having a good rapport with coworkers, some cases of gender-based abuses are noticed in the workplace. However, most of the female workers are satisfied with the works they are involved in. In the end, this study has suggested the concerned authorities to apply some of the specific measures to improve the socio-economic condition of female workers and ensure a friendlier workplace environment for female workers in Pokhara Industrial Estate.

**Keywords:** Socio-economic condition, female workers, workplace environment, job satisfaction, Industrial Estate, Nepal

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Women play a key role in the development of a nation. In Nepal, women comprise more than half of the total population (51.5%), but only 57.4 percent of them are literate [1]. Women, along with involvement in socio-economic activities, are heavily engaged in domestic chores. They have a major role in household management. Despite the fact of being heavily involved in household work, women have a very limited role in important decision-making in the household. They are discriminated against since their childhood. In childhood, they have to live under their parents, while in adulthood, they should follow their husbands and in old age, they are under children. Keeping this reality in mind, the overall development of the country is not possible without uplifting the women's condition.

The issues on women have been given considerable importance around the globe since the 1970s. The significance of women's participation in development was first articulated in the United Nation's International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City in 1975. Similarly, the Nairobi conference (1985) and Beijing conference (1995) also have been great milestones for women's participation in development around the world. These phenomena have also significantly influenced the participation of women in development in Nepal [2]. However, very few Nepalese women are involved in the mainstream of development.

Over the past decade, women have become a larger percentage of the workforce. Various research and studies around the world have reported that women's participation in both the public and private employment sectors has significantly risen over the period. According to the World Development Report 2012, the global rate of female labor force participation increased from 50.2 percent to 51.8 percent, while the rate of males fell slightly from 82 percent to 77.7 percent, which is noticeably higher than female counterparts [3].

Industrial development is essential to achieve economic growth in the nation. But industrialization does not happen accidentally. Industrial development needs adequate infrastructure established by the state. In the context of Nepal, industrial development was initiated in the mid- 1930 [4]. Most of the Nepalese industries, due to the lack of appropriate technologies, sufficient raw materials, and skilled labour, have a low level of productivity. Labors, despite having a significant role in the production process and being considered as the backbone of the industry, are the most neglected factor of production consequently resulting in a high rate of labor turnover in Nepalese industries. The satisfaction of workers is necessary for the better performance of industries [5].

Women constitute a significant percentage of the labour force in various industries such as textiles, weaving, packaging, dairy, noodles, biscuits, and chocolate, etc. Nevertheless, they are given less opportunity and less valued in the society

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and factories but are forced to work hard, discriminated in the workplace, work under difficult physical condition, face health-related problems, are mostly in low-level positions and seem to receive less salary or wage as well as have more work burden compared to male counterparts ([6], [7], [8], [9], [10]). Furthermore, women are also at disadvantage position compared to men counterparts due to the natural phenomenon of motherhood [11]. Moreover, women tend to face many other physical and psychological problems in the workplace such as sexual abuse or harassment. Many women do not report cases of harassment at the workplace due to the fear of losing their jobs. Some women even quit their jobs and suffer many personal-psychological as well as family problems as a result of the harassment.

To regulate the workplace environment and ensure a friendly environment to all the workers in the workplace, the Government of Nepal (GoN) and International Labour Organization (ILO) have initiated some legal provisions. They have emphasized the need for workers to enjoy "conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity" in the workplace. The labor act, 20A (2074) ("New Labor Act") was passed by the parliament on August 11, 2017 AD in Nepal. The New Labor Act has provisions for rights, interests, facilities, and safety of workers and employees working in enterprises of various sectors. The major provisions of the new labor act [12] includes:

**Working Hours:** Working hours are 8 hours a day and 48 hours a week. The maximum overtime labour can work is 24 hours a week.

**Leave and Holidays:** Based on the labor act, there is the provision of one holiday every week for rest, 14 public holidays, in Nepal 8 march is observed as a national holiday.

**Safety and Health Arrangement:** Where 20 or more employees are engaged, the employer shall constitute a safety and health committee.

**Sexual Harassment:** It is strictly prohibited to use abusive language, teasing or any other kind of sexually abusive activities at the workplace. Sexual harassment in the workplace is subject to disciplinary action up to dismissal from service.

**Retirement:** Regular employment of the worker ends at 58 years of age. The employer can also hire an employee of up to 61 years as if he/she can work.

**Social Security:** The labor act requires retirement funds such as (a) gratuity or (b) provident fund. There have been separate laws on social security act 2017 (2074), which has also obtained and accord of assent of the president on August 16, 2017. Social security for part-time workers includes regular payment, provident funds, and other social security facilities. And full-time workers get salary, remuneration, medical facilities, and health insurance facilities.

**Remuneration:** Remuneration will increase once a year at the rate of half-day basic remuneration. Workers engaged in work for less than a month within three days from the date of completion of the work must get remuneration. There is also a festival expense given for workers once a year, which is equivalent to the basic remuneration of one month.

Several national and international organizations are ac-

tively working for women empowerment. Similarly, many female politicians have reached in powerful positions where they formulate and execute plans and policies. However, women are generally paid less and are forced to work low-status jobs. In this context, this study aims to analyze the socio-economic conditions of female workers and the workplace environment in Pokhara Industrial Estate.

## 2. DATA AND METHODS

For this study, data were collected from 154 women out of total female workers (630) in Pokhara Industrial Estate (PIE). Pokhara Industrial Estate was established in the 1974 AD under the Government of Nepal. Currently, there are 76 industries established inside the district out of which 61 industries are in operation. Food industries, dairy industries, biscuit industries, cotton industries, foam industries, and beverage industries are the major types of industries operated at Pokhara Industrial Estate. The necessary data and information for this study were collected using a semi-structured interview schedule as well as through observation and informal interviews.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The socio-demographic characteristics of the female workers working in the industry such as age, caste/ethnicity, religion, educational attainment, family size, marital status, and gender of the head of the household are briefly described below.

**Age:** Age composition of the female workers has been divided into different age groups ranging from 16 to 45. The age group below 16 was not allowed to work, which proves that child labor was not permitted to work inside the Pokhara Industrial Estate. Among the total female workers surveyed for this study, a majority of female workers were of 21-30 years (58.5%) followed by 31-35 years (17.5%), 16-20 years (12.3%), 36-40 years (11%) and 41-45 years (0.6%) respectively (table 1).

**Caste/ethnicity:** Nepal consists of various caste and ethnic groups. Among many caste/ethnic groups, *Bharmin*, *Chhetri*, *Janajati*, and *Dalit* are the major caste/ethnic groups in Nepal. Traditionally, castes/ethnic groups also represent different occupations or professions. For example, *Brahmins* were considered as knowledge workers, *Chhetris* were considered as state rulers, *Baishyas (Janajatis)* were considered as businesspersons and *Sudras (Dalits)* were considered as producers and service providers. Of the total female workers surveyed for this study, the highest percentage of them belong to *Brahmin/Chhetri* (41%) followed *Janajati* (37.7%), *Dalit* (14.9%) and other castes/ethnic groups (5.8%) respectively (table 1).

**Religion:** Nepal is a multi-religious country. Among many religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity are the major religions in Nepal. Among the total female workers surveyed for this study, a great majority of them were Hindu (88.3%) followed by Buddhist (5.8%), Christian (4.5%) and other religions (1.3%) respectively (table 1).

**Educational attainment:** Education is a key to women’s economic empowerment in particular to increase their access to the labor market. Educational attainment is assumed to have a positive relationship with the level of work. Education is the means to utilize technical knowledge, generate ideas and build networks. In this study, educational attainment has been categorized as no formal education, up to the primary level, up to secondary level and undergraduate level completed by the female workers. Among the total sample female workers surveyed for this study, more than two-fifths of them (44.2%) have completed up to secondary level education. More than one-third of them (35.7%) have completed the primary level only. Only a few of them (3.2%) have completed the undergraduate level. However, about one-fifth of them (16.9%) have not attained any formal education (table 1).

**Family type:** Types of the family play a very crucial role in women’s empowerment. Family type can have both positive and negative effects on the economic empowerment of women. For instance, in some cases in nuclear family, women might be taking care of the children therefore not being able to work outside; or in other cases, in the similar family, women might be more responsible to earn money for the livelihood of the family, therefore, being forced to work outside and earn the livelihood of the family. The same may happen in the case of the joint family as well. Of the total female workers surveyed for this study, over two-thirds of them were from the nuclear family (68.2%) and remaining less than one third (31.8%) were from joint family (table 1).

**Marital Status:** Marital status refers to the condition of being married, divorced, widow or unmarried. The marital status reflects the roles and responsibilities of an individual in the family. Over two-thirds of the total female workers (66.9%) surveyed were married followed by unmarried (31.2%) and divorced (1.9%) respectively (table 1). A higher number of married women’s involvement in industries indicates that they either do not have other jobs or this job is easy to find for low educated people. In the informal interview, married women reported that they have the low economic condition and they are working in hope that their children may get a better education and life in the future. Some of them are saving money by reducing their expenses to start another business to live a better life in future. They also support their family. Not only married, but unmarried females were also contributing to running their family.

**Gender of the head of the household:** Head of the family means the principal person in the family who holds control over every important household decision. Males are the head of the most of the households in Nepal, and almost all the households where female are headed are either because there is no male in the family or women is separated from the husband. In the context of this study, of the total female workers surveyed, males were the head of a large majority of the households (76%) and remaining less than one-fourth of their

households (24%) were headed by females (table 1).

**Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of female workers**

Variables	Frequency	Percent
<b>Age (in year)</b>		
16-20	19	12.3
21-25	44	28.6
26-30	46	29.9
31-35	27	17.5
36-40	17	11.0
41-45	1	0.6
Total	154	100.0
<b>Caste/Ethnicity</b>		
Brahmin	39	25.3
Chhetri	25	16.2
Janajati	58	37.7
Dalit	23	14.9
Others	9	5.8
Total	154	100.0
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	136	88.3
Buddhist	9	5.8
Christian	7	4.5
Other	2	1.3
Total	154	100.0
<b>Level of education</b>		
Up to primary level	55	35.7
Up to secondary level (10+2)	68	44.2
Undergraduate level	5	3.2
No formal education	26	16.9
Total	154	100.0
<b>Family size</b>		
Nuclear	105	68.2
Joint	49	31.8
Total	154	100.0
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	103	66.9
Unmarried	48	31.2
Divorced	3	1.9
Total	154	100.0
<b>Gender of the head of the household</b>		
Male	117	76.0
Female	37	24.0
Total	154	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2018

**3.2 Economic Characteristics of the Respondents**

Economic characteristics in this study include main sources of income of the family of the female workers, main earner of livelihood in their family, and type of job of the female workers themselves, which are described below:

**The main source of income in the family:** Sources of income in this study were categorized into agriculture/animal husbandry, job, labor work, foreign earning, pension, wage, and others.

Among the total female workers enumerated for this study, the main source of family income of over two-fifth of them (40.9%) is job followed by labour (18.2%), agriculture (17.5%) and foreign employment (12.3%) respectively (table 2). It indicates that the income of the female workers working in Pokhara Industrial Estate is not the main income in their family. Their income might be considered as extra income in the family but not the main income; therefore, females despite being engaged in work may not have a significant influence in economic decisions in the family.

**Type of job of female worker:** The nature and type of job in the industry vary according to the time, policy and condition of recruitment in the company. In the context of Pokhara Industrial Estate, if the workers work for one year and less than one year, they are considered as temporary workers. If the workers work for more than one year and above, they are considered as permanent workers. Furthermore, some of the workers work for a certain period they are considered as contract workers and some of the workers work for a daily wage they are considered as daily wage labor. This study observed that a majority of female workers (54.5%) were doing a permanent job, followed by temporary jobs (37.0%). However, a few of the female workers are also engaged in contract jobs (5.2%) and daily wages (3.2%) (table 2).

**Average monthly salary of female workers in Industrial Estate:** The average monthly salary is the payment given for the work done by the workers in normal working hours. This study revealed that the minimum monthly salary of female workers working in Pokhara Industrial Estate starts from NRs 5000 and the maximum monthly salary is up to NRs 20,000. The average monthly salary of female workers working in Industrial Estate is NRs 10591.91. The average salary is less than the salary scale of the lowest level staff of the government of Nepal. The monthly pay scale of staff working in the government sector starts from NRs. 13,450 [13]. The monthly salary of a great majority of female workers (95.6%) in Pokhara Industrial Estate appears to be less than the minimum salary provided to the employee by the Government of Nepal. A majority of female workers have an average salary between NRs 8,001 to 11,000 (55.2%). Only a few of the female workers working in the industrial estate have a salary below NRs 8,000 (2.6%) and above NRs 14,001 (2.5%) (table 2).

**Table 2: Economic characteristics of the respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percent
<b>Major source of income in the family</b>		
Agriculture/ animal husbandry	27	17.5
Job	63	40.9
Labor work	28	18.2
Foreign earning	19	12.3
Pension	5	3.2
Wage	11	7.1
Other	1	0.6
Total	154	100.0

<b>Main earner of the family</b>		
The lady herself	30	19.5
Father	52	33.8
Husband	61	39.6
Others	11	7.1
Total	154	100.0

<b>Type of job</b>		
Temporary	57	37.0
Contract period	8	5.2
Permanent	84	54.5
Daily wages	5	3.2
Total	154	100.0

**Average monthly salary of female workers in Industrial Estate (in Nepalese Rupees)**

20001-above	1	0.6
17001-20000	2	1.3
14001-17000	1	0.6
11001-14000	61	39.6
8001-11000	85	55.2
5000-8000	4	2.6
Total	154	100.0

*Minimum: NRs 5000, Maximum: NRs 20,000, Mean: NRs 10590.91, SD: 2052.843; Monthly Salary < 13850 = 95.6%*

Source: Field Survey 2018

### 3.3 Association Between the Education and Skill of Female Worker and their Salary:

Educational attainment and skill of female workers are the variables included in this study assuming that these variables could have some association with the monthly salary of female workers. The variance on the monthly salary of female workers by educational attainment was examined in two steps. On the first step, the average monthly salary was compared between the female workers who attained formal education up to primary level and those who attained secondary level and above. On the second step, it was compared between the female workers who attained formal education and those who did not attain any formal education. In, both the cases, the study did not observe any significant difference in the average monthly salary of female workers (up to primary level versus secondary level and above:  $F=.361, p>.05$ ; formal educational attainment versus no formal educational attainment:  $F=.077, p>.05$ , table 3). It indicates that educational attainment does not make a significant difference in the income of the female workers working in the industrial estate. Similarly, the study also did not observe a significant difference in the monthly income between the female workers who were involved in skilled jobs and those who were involved in unskilled type labour works ( $F=1.659, p>.05$ ) (table 3).

**Table 3: Variance on monthly salary of female workers by their educational attainment and skills**



Source: Field Survey 2018

However, descriptive statistics seem to reveal very surprising results. Very interestingly, the average monthly salary of female workers who have studied up to secondary level and above appear to have a relatively lower salary compared to those who attained only up to the primary level of education. For instance, the average monthly salary of the female workers having a secondary level or higher educational attainment is NRs 10516.44 meanwhile the average monthly salary of female workers having only up to primary level educational attainment is NRs 10738.18. Similarly, the average monthly salary of the female workers having formal education has a relatively lower monthly salary compared to those having no such formal education. For example, the average monthly salary of the female workers having formal educational attainment is NRs 10488.46 while the average monthly salary of the female workers having no such formal educational attainment is NRs 10611.72 (table 3). This could be due to the age of the workers as the age of an individual can be assumed to have a positive association with the duration of experiences thus having more grades despite having the same basic pay scale. A grade in salary refers to an additional amount increased generally every year, which becomes more for the senior workers who have worked in the organization for a longer period than new and young workers, therefore, having more salary. The senior workers might not be much educated and skilled. Though they are less educated and do not have formal education, their grades can be more than the young workers who are educated, perhaps somewhat skilled or joined industries recently for jobs, thereby resulting in such surprising results nullifying the general assumptions of higher payment for educated and skilled workers than uneducated and unskilled counterparts. Therefore, to confirm whether the age of female workers has a significant association with an average monthly salary, the Pearson correlation between the age of the female workers and their monthly salary was further examined. The Pearson correlation test revealed that the age of the female workers has a significant positive association with the average monthly salary of female workers ( $r=.356$ ,  $p<.001$ , table 4), which means that the senior female workers have a significantly higher salary than that younger works in the industrial estate. Hence, it can be concluded that the salary of female workers working in Pokhara Industrial Estate is determined by the age of the female workers but not by their education and skills.

**Table 4: Association between the age and monthly salary of female workers**

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	SD	r
Average monthly salary	5000	20000	10590.91	2052.84	.356**
Age of workers	16	42	27.45	6.14	

Note: N=154; \*\*p<.01

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
<b>Educational attainment (Up to primary level versus secondary level and above)</b>							
Up to primary level	55	8000	13800	10738.18	1521.51	.361	.549
Secondary level and above	73	5000	20000	10516.44	2394.90		
<b>Educational attainment (Formal educational attainment versus no formal educational attainment)</b>							
Formal education attained	26	8000	13800	10488.46	2048.67	.077	.781
No formal education attained	128	5000	20000	10611.72	2061.10		
<b>Skills of Workers</b>							
Skilled workers	42	7000	20000	10938.10	2782.607	1.659	.200
Unskilled workers	112	5000	13800	10460.71	1698.826		

**3.4 Workplace Environment in Pokhara Industrial Estate**

The workplace environment of an organization refers to the physical, socio-psychological and behavioural environment at the workplace. Workplace environment tends to affect the feeling of a worker about their job, which can influence their work habits consequently resulting in the productivity of the workers [14]. Workplace environment in this study has been examined with reference to official working hours, nature of work, promotion opportunities, gender difference in salary, gender of the boss, cooperation by the boss at workplace, relationship with coworkers, abuse at workplace, medical facility or health insurance, and membership of worker’s union/trade union.

**Official working hours:** Industries in Pokhara Industrial Estate in normal days open six days a week from 10 am to 5 pm (Sunday through Friday), which is the official working hour per day. A large majority of female workers (77.0%) officially work 8 hours a day. However, over one-fifth of the female workers (20.8%) work more than 8 hours a day; meanwhile, a few of them (1.3%) also work less than 8 hours a day (table 5).

**Nature of work:** It is obvious that the nature of work is determined by the level and skill of the worker, age, education, experience, etc. In that sense, the ranks of workers are categorized into highly skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled. Workers, who have advanced academic, technical, and professional skills, are called high-skilled workers. On the other side, workers who involve in labour type work are called unskilled workers. This study found that over two-thirds of female workers are unskilled workers (72.7%) followed by semi-skilled workers (24%). However, a few of them (3.2%) are high-skilled workers (table 5).

**Gender difference in salary:** Generally, the amount of salary varies according to the skills and position of the workers in the organization. However, in some contexts, despite the fact of similar nature of work for both, female workers seem to be paid a lower salary scale than male counterparts. In the context of this study, almost two-thirds of the total workers in the industrial area (64.3%) reported that they receive less salary than male co-workers. About one-third of them get equal salaries as male co-workers, and merely 2.6 percent of female workers get more salary than male workers (table 5). It indicates that there is a gender difference in salary (female workers are paid less salary than male workers) even though the level of work is the same. Furthermore, in the personal interview, the female workers also reported that the workers, who work more than one year, receive the *Dashain* festival bonus equal to their normal salary scale; and permanent workers can also get dress, yearly bonus, festival bonus, and dividend profit.

**Gender of the bosses and their cooperation to the female worker:** Gender is the social identity given to the male and female. The gender of the boss refers to the gender of the head of the industries, who handle the overall management of the company. His/her friendliness to workers in the company determines the quality of the workplace environment. The study observed that most of the industries have a male boss (94.8%) while only a few industries (5.3%) have a female boss. Although a great majority of the bosses are male, a large majority of them (62.4%) are found cooperative towards female workers. However, a few of the bosses (7.7%) were also reported uncooperative towards female workers. About one-third of the bosses (29.9%) reported that they are neutral to female workers (table 5). In a personal interview, some of the female workers also reported the need for childcare or a lactation facility on its premises to help women having children.

**Rapport with the coworkers:** Rapport refers to the friendly and harmonious relationship between people. If workers have a good working relationship with coworkers, they are on good terms and can work effectively together. A majority of female workers (53.2%) have an excellent relationship with coworkers followed by two-fifth of them (40.9%) having an above-average relationship with coworkers and a few of them (5.8%) having an average relationship with co-workers (table 5).

**Abuse at the workplace:** Abuse is ill-treatment that harms or injures another person. Abuses are classified as physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, etc. The workers working in the industry may face abuse from the seniors, managers, and co-workers working with them. Only a few of the female workers (1.9%) reported that they had faced some sort of abuse at the workplace (table 5). In the personal interview, they mentioned that they were abused with abusive languages, vulgar comments and inappropriate remarks about their appearances by male co-workers and bosses of the company.

**Membership of workers' union/trade union:** Trade union is an organization that consists of workers and union leaders, united to protect and promote their common interests. The workers join a trade union basically to safeguard the rights of workers. Trade union fights for equal opportunities at the workplace, equal pay and fight against discrimination at the workplace. The study observed that only about one-fifth of the female workers in Pokhara Industrial Estate (22.1%) are associated with trade unions; whereas, the remaining large majority (77.9%) don't have any membership of trade union (table 5).

**Medical facility at the workplace:** There is a high risk of disease and accidents in the working area in the industrial sector. Workers need protection from such physical and biological hazards in the workplace. A large majority of female workers (66.9%) received medical facility, while; around one-third of them (33.1%) did not receive any kind of medical facility at the workplace (table 5). In a personal interview, the boss of one of the companies in Pokhara Industrial Estate mentioned that workers get minimal medical facilities during the official working time. It means that medical facilities are not secured outside the workplace.

**Table 5: Workplace environment for female workers at Pokhara Industrial Estate**

Variables	Frequency	Percent
<b>Official working hours</b>		
Less than 8 hours	2	1.3
8 hours	120	77.9
More than 8 hours	32	20.8
Total	154	100.0
<b>Nature of work</b>		
High-skilled	5	3.2
Semi-Skilled	37	24.0
Unskilled	112	72.7
Total	154	100.0
<b>Gender difference in salary</b>		
Less than male workers	99	64.3
Equal to male workers	51	33.1
More than male workers	4	2.6
Total	154	100.0
<b>Gender of the boss</b>		
Male	146	94.8
Female	8	5.2
Total	154	100.0
<b>Level of cooperation by boss</b>		
Cooperative	96	62.4
Neutral	46	29.9
Uncooperative	12	7.7
Total	154	100.0
<b>Rapport with coworkers</b>		
Excellent	82	53.2
Above average	63	40.9
Average	9	5.8
Total	154	100.0
<b>Abuse at workplace</b>		

Experienced sometimes	3	1.9
Did not experience	151	98.1
Total	154	100.0
<b>Membership of workers' union/trade union</b>		
Yes	34	22.1
No	120	77.9
Total	154	100.0
<b>Provision of medical facility</b>		
Yes	103	66.9
No	51	33.1
Total	154	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2018

### 3.5 Job Satisfaction Level of the Female Workers

Job satisfaction is a complex psychological concept. It depends upon the perception - how one feels about the job he/she is involved in. In the industrial sector, some workers are satisfied with their job and income whereas some are not satisfied. For some female workers working in the industry, satisfaction is not even a matter of concern as they work for survival. In this study, most of the female works (64.9%) reported that they were moderately satisfied, while, about one-fourth of them (23.4%) reported neutral in this regard. Similarly, some of the female workers (9.7%) were found highly satisfied. However, a few of them (1.9%) also reported that they were moderately dissatisfied with the job (see table 6). In the personal interview, those who were dissatisfied with the job reported that they have been working in such industries because their parents or guardians wanted them to work. In fact, the pay scale, job guarantee and goodwill were not satisfactory for them. Those dissatisfied workers were among those who have temporary and contract jobs and work for more than 8 hours but still earn below 10 thousand.

**Table 6: Job satisfaction level of the female worker**

Satisfaction level	Frequency	Percent
Highly satisfied	15	9.7
Moderately satisfied	100	64.9
Neutral	36	23.4
Moderately dissatisfied	3	1.9
Total	154	100.0

### 4 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that women from the different age groups between 16 to 45 years representing major caste/ethnic groups (Brahmin/Chhetri, Janajati, and Dalit) and religious groups (Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian) work in Pokhara Industrial Estate. Most of the female workers have attained formal education, are married, skilled, have a permanent job and live in a nuclear family headed by males. The average salary of most of the female workers is between NRs 8,000 to 14,000; a great majority of the female workers are paid less than the minimum salary prescribed by the government of Nepal. A majority of female workers tend to receive less salary than the salary of male coworkers. The age of female workers seems to determine the

salary rather than the educational attainment and skills of the workers. A large majority of the female workers in industrial estate work eight hours a day and don't have any membership in trade unions. Despite having a good rapport with coworkers, some cases of abuse at the workplace by male coworkers and bosses of the company are noticed. Industries in Pokhara Industrial Estate also provide minimal medical facilities if any employee is injured during the official working hour. Most of the female workers are satisfied with the works they are involved in. Finally, in order to improve the situation of female workers and workplace environment for female workers, this study suggests the concerned authorities to focus on the measures: (i) the government or non-government organizations should conduct training and workshops to develop skills of the female workers, therefore they can involve in better jobs and earn higher income; (ii) the government should monitor the industrial sector if the female workers are paid salary or wage less than the provision of minimum wage/salary prescribed in the labour act, as well as if female workers have been paid less salary than male counterparts. And the government should make sure that no organization has violated the provision of minimum wage/salary prescribed in the labour act and also should ensure there is no gender discrimination on payment for equal work; (iii) government or non-government organizations, or industries should conduct awareness programmes on gender-based violence or abuses at workplace; (iv) industrial estate or every industry should have regulatory policy against gender-based violence or abuses at workplace and be strict to abuses at the workplace; (v) industrial estate should have a grievance remedial cell to listen and address the problems of workers, and (vi) industrial estate should provide childcare or lactation facility in its premise to help women having children.

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