

# Assessment of Labor Condition of Construction Workplace in Banke District, Nepal

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## Keywords:

Labor condition,  
Awareness, Banke,  
Construction site, Relative  
Importance Index (RII),  
Safety

## Abstract

The article "Assessment of Labor Condition in Construction Workplace in Banke District, Nepal" addresses two main objectives in order to assess the present status of labor conditions in the construction sector. The primary objective is to determine workers awareness regarding Nepalese Labor Act's provisions, using a yes/no-dichotomous method. The second objective is to determine general working conditions of construction workers on construction sites. The study depends on primary data gathered from questionnaire survey, obtained from construction workers participating in different projects. The study evaluates financial, social, environmental, health and safety, and site management aspects in order to better understand labor conditions in construction workplaces. Surveys targeting construction workers were used to collect data, and Tukey's HSD test, ANOVA, and the Relative Importance Index (RII) were used for analysis for the second objective. The results show serious issues such as inadequate training programs, a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE), limited health insurance coverage, unpaid wages and delays in payments. The results show that employees are largely unaware of their rights under the Labor Act and draw focus on poor working conditions, such as insufficient safety precautions, a lack of social security, and a lack of effective labor law enforcement. These results highlight the necessity of improved workplace standards, better enforcement of labor laws, and broader labor changes in order to guarantee construction workers' safety, equality, and financial stability. Improving working conditions by taking these steps is essential to developing a more sustainable and economically viable construction sector.

Received: 8 November 2024

Revised: 29 November 2024

Accepted: 2 December 2024

ISSN: 3102-0763 (Print)  
3102-0771 (Online)

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## 1. Introduction

The construction industry plays a major role in the development of the nation's infrastructure. With 16.8 million laborers, Nepal ranks 37th in the world in terms of labor size in 2017. In Nepal, the construction industry accounts for an important percentage of employment, and accounted for 10–12% of Nepal's GDP (Gross Domestic Product)[1].

The Labor Act of Nepal, 2074, enacted in 2017, governs labor relations and employment practices with in the country. It applies to all enterprises and organizations, ensuring fair treatment of workers

regardless of sector or size. The Act mandates written employment contracts, sets minimum wages, regulates working hours, and promotes occupational health and safety measures [2]. The Act excludes child labor, forced labor, and discrimination in the workplace, protects workers' rights to unionize and engage in collective bargaining, and incorporates social security provisions like as maternity leave and provident funds. The National Building Code also specifies safety precautions for construction[3]. The 1994 Occupational Safety and Health Act establishes strict safety regulations in an effort to lower workplace accidents and enhance worker well-being. It places a strong emphasis on creating a workplace that is both physically and mentally healthy for employees. However, there are insufficient safety rules in Nepal's construction industry, which is primarily labor-intensive and semi-mechanized[4].

Previous research and policy of Nepal have highlighted a number of strategies to enhance working conditions in the construction industry but insufficient to fill the gaps. Construction activities are always unique, and there are many different sources of risk [5]. Inexperience or inadequate site management, highlighting the necessity of strong laws and regulations, frequently causes construction accidents. The government of Nepal does nothing to encourage establishing site safety, in contrast to wealthy nations that impose strong safety laws[6]. Due to a lack of awareness and risk mitigation, workers frequently work in hazardous situations, and contractors put money before safety. Poor equipment maintenance, a lack of safety officers, insufficient personal protective equipment (PPE), inadequate training, emergency plans, accident records, and compensation are some of the key problems. Site safety is made worse by a lack of contractor commitment and weak government enforcement [7].

The studied highlight that, the workplaces are generally poor in terms of job security, social benefits, pay, long hours, and living circumstances and there is no government protection. Even, women construction workers about their experiences of working in construction face many issues such as wage inequality, the absence of worksite facilities, and sexual harassment[8]. According to the study, workers are mainly uneducated and unaware of the laws that safeguard their rights, which results in difficulties including health issues, disparities in wages, poor salaries, child and bonded labor, lack of social security, and lack of rest. Although 11 ILO agreements have been implemented by Nepal, the majority are simple to use and do not guarantee social justice or improved working conditions[9].

The ILO and other organizations are working to enhance worker rights, opportunity, and welfare in Nepal's construction sector. Nevertheless, despite current regulations, there are still many issues, including uneven enforcement, inadequate safety precautions, inadequate training, and low social security. Real progress is still hampered by the gap between policy and practice[10]. Furthermore, research shows that women face numerous obstacles in Nepal's construction industry, such as informal employment and a lack of legal protection. According to the World Bank, minimum percentage of women work in the construction industry, the majority of them do so informally and without legal protection [11].

The ILO's Decent Work Agenda, OSHA, the World Bank, and Nepal's Labor Act 2074 have all made some progress toward improving the working conditions of construction workers in Nepal, but these efforts are still insufficient and unevenly implemented. The construction industry in Banke district is essential to economic development, but labor conditions including awareness of one's rights, pay,

safety, and working conditions are poorly understood and challenging. In order to find gaps and suggest policy changes to improve labor management, this study evaluates construction workers' knowledge of the Labor Act 2074 and examines at the financial, social, health, safety, and environmental conditions.

## 2. Methodology

The study was carried out in Nepal's Banke district, which was chosen for its varied topography and socioeconomic background. Due to the district's fast urbanization and expanding infrastructure, a combination of local and migrant workers are employed on construction projects. The workforce in Banke, which consists of both skilled and unskilled people, is representative of the normal labor market structure in Nepal. The study focused on Banke's labor awareness level regarding Nepalese labor act and conditions in order to address issues like unsafe workplaces, worker exploitation, and inadequate social security.

A questionnaire survey was used to collect primary data, which included responses from workers regarding labor act provisions and, site-specific, financial, health, safety, social, and environmental factors. The purpose of this study was to draw attention to labor issues and offer suggestions for bettering working conditions in Nepal's construction sector. Primary data was obtained by a questionnaire survey that used dichotomous (Yes/No) questions for first objective in order to assess the laborers awareness regarding with Nepal's Labor Act Provision [4]. In order to assess working conditions in terms of finances, health and safety, social, environmental, and other aspects, a five-point Likert scale was used for second objective (1 being "very low" and 5 being "very high"). Qualitative approaches were used to examine the data, and excel was used to score the variables using the Relative Importance Index (RII). ANOVA analysis showed significant group mean differences if  $p < 0.05$ , and for particular group comparisons, Tukey's HSD test was used. Cronbach's alpha in SPSS was used to evaluate reliability; results of 0.736 and 0.772 ensured the data accuracy and consistency for assessing working conditions in the construction sector. The study population for the 17-construction project consists of nearly 300 construction workers. Slovin's formulae was used to find the sample size from the population size,

$$n (\text{Sample size}) = N / (1 + Ne^2),$$

Where,  $n$  = sample size,  $N$  = population size and  $e$  = margin of error (taken as 10%). Approximately, 75 number of samples were calculated from the equation. The calculation suggested 75, but the study has considered 105. The sampling method used in this research study was convenience and snowball-sampling method same as used in [12]. These both method are non-probability sampling method. Sample are identified through convenience (friends, relatives) and through referral networks. This method is used when it is very difficult to get response from sample elements. This method helps to collect the data quickly and economically.

## 3. Results And Discussions

The demographic information from the survey reveals significant aspects of the construction industry. The industry's male-dominated nature is reflected in the gender distribution, which shows a notable disparity with 88.6% of respondents being men and only 11.4% being women. 54.3% of workers are

unskilled, compared to 45.7% who are skilled, indicating a greater dependence on unskilled labor, which could have an impact on quality and productivity. The age distribution reveals that the most active group of workers, 37.1%, are between the ages of 25 and 40, followed by younger arrivals (30.5%) and experienced workers (32.4%). There is a mix of experience and new talent in the workforce, as seen by the fact that 32% of workers have over ten years of experience, 28% have two to five years, and 14% are newly hired with less than two years.

### 3.1 Awareness Level of labor regarding Nepal's Labor Act, 2017 provision

The first objective of the study was to find the awareness level of labor regarding the provision of Labor Act, 2017. There are 31 provision of Labor Act, which was also included in [4], the more percentage of "Yes" indicate the high awareness level of labor regarding provision of Labor Act, 2017 and vice-versa.

Table: 1 Provision of Labor Act, 2017

S.N.	Provision of Labor act	Yes %	No %	Remark
1	Employer is responsible to provide safety tools, equipment and material in as sufficient quantity as required for construction	81.9	18.1	
2	Employer is responsible to arrange for temporary quarters to the Labors who do not have settlement near the construction workplace, clean drinking water and supply of necessary food items.	69.5	30.5	Section 85, Special provisions relating to construction labors
3	Employer is responsible to make appropriate safety arrangement in the construction workplace	78.1	21.9	
4	Your employer is responsible to fix the rate of remuneration and other benefits for the construction Labors, representation of the trade union of the concerned level and of the construction entrepreneurs' association is compulsory	47.6	52.4	
5	There shall be no discrimination between the Labors in remuneration for equal value of work on the ground of sex	58.1	41.9	Section 7 (1) Prohibition on discrimination in remuneration for equal work
6	No employer shall employ Labors to work more than eight hours a day and forty-eight hours a week	76.2	23.8	
7	The Labors shall be provided with half an hour rest after five hours of continuous work	69.5	30.5	Provision Relating to working hours
8	The rest time to be provided shall be counted in the working hours	63.8	36.2	
9	OT work is only subject to four hours a day and twenty-four hours a week	46.7	53.3	Provision Relating to Overtime

10	the employer shall pay to the Labor remuneration at a rate of 1.5 times of the basic remuneration for OT.	41.9	58.1	Additional Remuneration to be paid
11	Is there any condition of working hours in your agreement with the employer?	31.4	68.6	Fixation of working hours
12	Provision on arrangement for transportation to and from the workplace for a female Labor where the working hours begin after the sunset or before the sunrise	16.2	83.8	Arrangement for transportation to be made
13	Getting monthly remuneration within 3 days after completion of work month	70.5	29.5	Payment of remuneration
14	Getting payment right after completion of work (casual work)	39	61	
15	Getting an increment in remuneration (grade) each year in an amount equal to at least half a day remuneration based on the monthly basic remuneration? (For a Labor who has completed one year of service period only)	11.4	88.6	Entitlement to annual increment in remuneration
16	Getting an amount equal to the basic remuneration of one month as the festival expense each year for the festival to be celebrated according to his or her religion, culture, and tradition? (In pro rata basis)	27.6	72.4	Entitlement to festival expense
17	Getting weekly one day leave	22.9	77.1	Weekly leave
18	Insured (medical insurance) by the employer of at least one hundred thousand rupees	7.6	92.4	Medical insurance to be made
19	Insured (accidental insurance) by the employer of at least seven hundred thousand rupees covering all kinds of accidents	3.8	96.2	Accidental insurance to be made
20	Employer shall not collect any fee or charge from a Labor in consideration for the provision of any safety related facility or equipment to the Labor	29.5	70.5	Duties of employer towards labor
21	The personal safety equipment is provided by the employer	90.5	9.5	
22	Employer is obliged to provide necessary information, notice and training relating to the safety and health to the labor, as required	38.1	61.9	
23	Employer is obliged to provide necessary training and information in an appropriate language to the labor in relation to the use and operation of the equipment or chemical, physical, or biological	48.6	51.4	

	materials related to the work			
24	Employer is obliged to make proper arrangement for the safe entry and exit from the workplace	52.4	47.6	
25	Employer is obliged to provide personal safety means to the labor, as required	68.6	31.4	
26	Employer shall not collect any fee or charge from a labor in consideration for the provision of any safety related facility or equipment to the labor	58.1	41.9	
27	Aware of not performing any such act in the workplace intentionally or recklessly that may cause adverse effect or risk on the safety and health of him or her or of others	85.7	14.3	
28	Aware of providing necessary assistance to the employer and concerned person in the fulfilment of any duties mentioned	98.1	1.9	
29	Aware to obtain information about the manuals, instructions and other matters prepared for the operation and use of the equipment, product, or material to be operated and used in the workplace safely and cautiously	96.2	3.8	Duties of labor
30	Aware to operate and use the workplace, equipment, product, or material safely and cautiously in accordance with the manuals, information and instructions prepared for the operation and use of such a workplace, equipment, product, or material	100	0	
31	Aware to use compulsorily the personal safety equipment provided by the employer	98.1	1.9	

The study assesses labor awareness regarding the Labor Act provision, and reveals the contrasting findings about the duties of employers and employees.

The study shows that employers and construction workers have different levels of knowledge about the provisions of labor laws. There is a general compliance to fundamental safety regulations, as shown by the large percentage (81.9%) who are aware that employers are required to provide safety equipment and arrangements (78.1%). However, there remain gaps in fair labor standards, as seen by the declining awareness of employers' duty for basic amenities and temporary residences (69.5%) and the notable lack of information of trade union participation in wage-setting processes (47.6%). Regarding gender-based compensation, 41.9% of respondents noticed ongoing discrimination, highlighting ongoing gender inequality, while 58.1% of respondents support equal pay for equal effort. Moderate awareness of working hours is shown by the fact that 76.2% of people are aware of the usual 8-hour workday, but less understand the provisions for rest breaks (69.5%) or that rest time is included in working hours (63.8%).

In terms of overtime (OT), just 41.9% are aware of the 1.5 times OT remuneration norm and 46.7% are aware of the legal OT limit (4 hours per day, 24 hours per week), indicating significant non-compliance and possible labor exploitation. Unfortunately, only 31.4% of respondents are aware of official working hour agreements, and only 16.2% are aware of specific transportation arrangements for female workers who work during unsafe hours. These statistics highlight serious gaps in gender-sensitive policies and formalization. Only 39% of people are aware that casual workers receive immediate payment, but 70.5% are aware that monthly payments are paid on period. Awareness of entitlements like annual increments (11.4%) and weekly leave (22.9%) is relatively low, possibly due to short project durations and pressure to complete work rapidly. There is apparently little awareness of health-related provisions. A crucial area of neglect is highlighted by the fact that just 7.6% and 3.8% of people, respectively, are aware of required medical and accidental insurance. While 90.5% of people are aware of personal safety equipment, fewer are aware of employers' responsibilities to offer free safety facilities (29.5%) or training (48.6%).

On the other hand, workers demonstrate a high level of knowledge of their own duties, such as using safety gear (98.1%) and operating equipment safely (100%), which improves workplace safety. Overall, the results indicate that in order to protect workers' welfare and promote equitable labor standards, there is a need for stronger enforcement of policies, more awareness of labor rights, and formalization of employment practices.

### 3.2 Labor condition in construction workplace

The second objective of the study was to find the labor condition in construction workplace through different aspects. Questionnaire was designed to understand the situation of the working condition that may be in safety and health measures, insurance provision, accident rate, compliance with labor laws and rules, worker satisfaction, etc. All the respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaires. The Relative importance index (RII) was ranked as per their value of importance.

Table: 2 Health and Safety aspects

S.N.	Descriptions	RII	Rank
1	Adequate trainings and skill development programs related safety and others.	0.38	4
2	Use of PPE and safety wear	0.46	3
3	Regular Toolbox talk	0.59	1
4	Accident rate	0.31	5
5	Adequate warning signals and sign boards	0.47	2

The descriptive analysis of occupational health and safety aspects reveals significant insights into labor conditions in construction projects. The highest-ranked factor is the Regular Toolbox talk with an RII value of 0.59, indicating its critical role in maintaining safety. Adequate warning signals, signboards (0.47), Use of PPE, and safety wear (0.46) also play vital roles in mitigating risks. However, lower-ranked factors like Accident rate (0.31), which is very good and adequate training programs (0.38), suggest the need for improvements in safety training and accident prevention mechanisms. It might improve general safety to highlight these factors.

Table: 3 Financial aspects

S.N.	Descriptions	RII	Rank
1	Fair wages	0.67	1
2	Compensation and health insurance	0.38	4
3	Delay in Payment to labor	0.66	2
4	Wage discrimination between gender	0.46	3

The analysis of financial aspects affecting labor conditions reveals that Fair wages are the most critical factor, with the highest RII value of 0.67, indicating its importance in ensuring labor satisfaction. Delay in Payment to labor (0.66) closely follows, highlighting the negative impact of delayed payments. Wage discrimination between genders (0.46) ranks third, reflecting ongoing issues of inequality. Lastly, Compensation and health insurance (0.38) ranks lowest, suggesting a need for better coverage and benefits to enhance financial security for workers.

Table: 4 Social aspects

S.N.	Descriptions	RII	Rank
1	Worker satisfaction	0.68	3
2	Proper communication and collaboration among workers and with supervisor	0.79	1
3	Work-life balance of worker	0.68	2
4	Respect and dignity	0.67	4
5	Compliance with Labor laws and rules	0.67	5
6	Physical and Verbal harassment	0.40	6

The social aspects affecting labor conditions highlight the significance of Proper communication and collaboration (RII 0.79) as the most important factor for effective workplace dynamics with highest value of RII. Work-life balance and Worker satisfaction, both with an RII of 0.68, emphasize the need for a supportive work environment. Respect and dignity (0.67) and Compliance with labor laws (0.67) further underline the importance of fair treatment and adherence to regulations. Physical and verbal harassment (0.40) ranks lowest, showing progress but also the need for ongoing prevention efforts.

Table: 5 Environmental aspects

S.N.	Descriptions	RII	Rank
1	Proper air quality and Ventilation	0.69	3
2	Noisy working environment	0.53	5
3	Working in high temperature	0.63	4
4	Prone to natural hazard	0.39	6
5	Proper waste management	0.72	2
6	Good water quality management	0.75	1

Environmental factors play a crucial role in labor conditions. Good water quality management (RII 0.75) ranked highest, emphasizing/highlighting the importance of clean water in promoting worker health. Proper waste management (0.72) and Proper air quality and ventilation (0.69) also highlight the significance of maintaining a safe and healthy workplace environment. Working in high temperatures (0.63) and Noisy environments (0.53) are moderate concerns, while Natural hazards (0.39) are considered the least pressing, although still a factor in risk management.

Table 6: Other aspects

S.N.	Descriptions	RII	Rank
1	Proper site organizations	0.71	3
2	Working hour prescribed by norms.	0.76	2
3	Timely inspection of construction site	0.85	1
4	Congested construction area	0.49	6
5	Facilities at site such as medical, drinking and toilet etc.	0.69	4
6	Provision of quarter for labor	0.62	5

The analysis of other aspects reveals that Timely inspection of construction sites (RII 0.85) ranks highest, underscoring the critical importance of regular inspections to ensure safety. Working hours prescribed by norms (0.76) and Proper site organization (0.71) also rank highly, highlighting their role in maintaining labor efficiency and safety. Facilities like medical aid, drinking water, and toilets (0.69) are essential but slightly lower in priority, while Congested construction areas (0.49) and Provision of labor quarters (0.62) are identified as lesser concerns but still important for labor well-being.

*ANOVA Analysis of the RII value and Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) test*

Table 7: ANOVA table

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom (df)	F-Value	p-Value
C(Category)	0.1988	4	3.03	0.0393
Residual	0.3609	22		

Table 8: Tukey's HSD test table

S.N	Category 1	Category 2	Mean Diff	p-adj	Lower	Upper	Reject
1	Environmental Aspects	Financial Aspects	-0.0758	0.8872	-0.3211	0.1694	FALSE
2	Environmental Aspects	Occupational Health and Safety	-0.1763	0.191	-0.4064	0.0538	FALSE
3	Environmental Aspects	Other Aspects	0.0683	0.8845	-0.1511	0.2877	FALSE
4	Environmental Aspects	Social Aspects	0.03	0.9939	-0.1894	0.2494	FALSE
5	Financial Aspects	Occupational Health and Safety	-0.1005	0.7679	-0.3554	0.1544	FALSE
6	Financial Aspects	Other Aspects	0.1442	0.4294	-0.1011	0.3894	FALSE
7	Financial Aspects	Social Aspects	0.1058	0.7056	-0.1394	0.3511	FALSE
8	Occupational Health and Safety	Other Aspects	0.2447	0.0335	0.0146	0.4748	TRUE
9	Occupational Health and Safety	Social Aspects	0.2063	0.0932	-0.0238	0.4364	FALSE
10	Other Aspects	Social Aspects	-0.0383	0.9846	-0.2577	0.1811	FALSE

Relative Importance Index (RII) ratings varied significantly amongst categories, according to the ANOVA analysis (p-value = 0.0393), suggesting that not all categories were regarded as equally

important. The "Occupational Health and Safety" and "Other Aspects" categories were shown to have the largest significant difference, according to Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) test. The average RII for "Other Aspects," which includes things like facilities, working hours, inspections, and site organization, was much greater than that of "Occupational Health and Safety." These results demonstrate that respondents gave "Other Aspects" a higher priority than safe health and safety issues, indicating a change in the aspects that are believed to be essential in construction sites. It is advised to conduct additional qualitative research to investigate the reason for this prioritization.

#### 4. Conclusions

According to the study, construction workers are not fully aware of their benefits and rights under Nepal's 2017 Labor Act. Although most employees are aware of their duties for workplace safety and regulation, they still have no idea what their employers must provide, such as providing insurance, overtime compensation, and wage benefits. This ignorance limits workers' access to necessary safeguards and increases the possibility of exploitation.

Occupational health and safety, financial stability, social circumstances, environmental concerns, and general site management are important factors that impact working conditions. Although training and provision of safety measures need to be improved, regular safety conversations and communication were found to be crucial. Financial issues including equitable remuneration on-time payments and insurance coverage remain to be major concerns, while social factors highlight how crucial worker satisfaction, equitable treatment, and adherence to labor regulations are. Although problems like high temperatures are still present as Banke is the hottest place of Nepal, and environmental conditions, such as access to clean water and waste management, are critical for worker well-being. Furthermore, it is believed that maintaining productivity and security requires regular inspections, adherence to standard working hours, and structured site management.

The results reveal that, despite the importance of health and safety, workers typically place a higher value on practical workplace aspects like organization, inspections, and financial stability. To guarantee that construction workers obtain the benefits and protections they are legally entitled to, it is essential to enhance labor law enforcement, expand awareness campaigns, and encourage systematic compliance procedures. A more equitable and sustainable construction industry in Nepal can be achieved by an effective approach that strengthens safety protocols, increases financial stability, and promotes improved working conditions.

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