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Problems and Prospects of Employed Women in Ilam Municipality, Ilam

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ABSTRACT

Women in Nepal play a crucial role in the work place, yet they encounter numerous challenges that hinder their professional growth and well-being. Gender role has been changing in Nepali society. Traditional rigid patriarchal system has been changing gradually. Particularly urban society has realized such change. This research article has been found the problems of employed women in the study area. This research article is based on primary data which the researcher has been collected in the field survey. However, the secondary data were used in the literature review. to analyzed the current problems of the employed women. The purpose of the research is to explore major problems of employed women in the society. Exploratory and descriptive both methods were used to analysis the collected data. The result of this study shows that there is the situation of double role burden of household's chores and income generating work of outer periphery. They are facing different physical, mental, social difficulties in both government and private sectors job. The findings of the study are Job insecurity, household's chores, and lack of family support, difficulty in work place, future insecurity, and low wage pay in private sectors employees were the major problems of the employed women in the study area. To address these problems, the local government have to make good policies targeting the employed women which could make east to daily life a good expectation of the future.

Problems and Prospects of Employed Women in Ilam Municipality, Ilam

Women employment has been an opportunity for career development in Nepal. The person who has a job and devotes a lot of time and energy towards is a concretization of work for pay. Through her work, she is producing wealth which she can later use to pursue her goal. Based on the age, circumstances, needs and desires of individuals, works takes different shapes. It is important for the individuals to see work as a means towards achieving one's goals. Work provides individuals with the medium to realize most of their aspirations. Therefore, it is an important tool for forming the individual and community as a whole (CBS, 2021).

Status of women is an important factor, which affects the socio-economic development of country. It is known that status is not a fixed rigid concept, it changes with time. So the status of women also changes with time. Status has been defined in different ways. The United Nations has given the definitions of women's status "The conjunction of position a woman occupies as a worker, student and wife mother and prestige attached to these positions and of the right duties she is expected to exercise (Khanal, 1998). Society is a web of human relationship. Educational environment, social nature, health status and many other determines the status of society. In Nepal, women are treated as second as second-class citizen, this itself explain how pathetic social position they have. They are born, as daughter became sister, wife and mother. They don't have their self-identity. They are deprived of property right, political right and power. Women have not control over own body. No matter how hard they work for their family and country they are put into lowest rank. They are restricted to be a public life. A patriarchy is a society in which men dominate women, children and major social institutions. Men control business and banking, government, religious organizations, the mass media, school and universities, legal and creational systems prestigious professions such as law, medicine and science, the military and most of the

nation's wealth, women's power is more likely to be focused on traditionally female concerns such as children care than on male-dominated areas such as economic policy. Women also derive power from their unique position as a majority, for while virtually all other minorities are segregated from those who dominate them, intimate relationship between men and women lie at the heart of the most universal of all social institutions, marriage and the family (Shrestha, 2002).

In Nepalese society, caste, clans and family alliances are predominant factors in social interactions. This factor influences women's status in different ways (Acharya, 1979).

Women generally have a middle level or higher education so they enter the government service at higher clerical and lower gazette (or officer level). There are number of factors related to women expected social role such as household and children care responsibilities to improve their qualification and hence diminish their prospects for promotion usually freezing them at the lower levels (Acharya, 1979). Nepal is rigidly patriarchal society. This has directly impact in political which created a number of barriers in citizen's right especially women right. They had limited access to markets productive services education health and local government. When employed there wage normally were 25% less than those paid to men (Acharya, 1995). In most rural areas their employment outside the house generally was limited to planting weeding and harvesting. In urban areas they are employed in domestic and traditional jobs as well as in government sector mostly in low level position.

In Nepal, women's role in economic activities is unidentified. Men are considered as bread earner and women as care taker of households. Women are primary supporters of the domestic and subsistence sectors (Acharya, 1998). At present there is changing of women activities. However, women's contribution in term of household's economy is overlooked. On the other hand, their contribution towards household's economy is overlooked. On the other hand, their contribution in terms of household's work is not recognized. Mostly women who

wake up early and sleep late compare to men members but their work is not valued. Thus they are over burdened with triple role.

Statement of the problems

Gender roles in Nepali society have been changing gradually. Women are moved into the income generating job. It is the result of the effort made by the government, private sector NGOs-INGOs, and civil society. However, they are still performing their traditional gender role. This study has been presented the economic status of women who are employed at the government or non-government sectors. A number of research studied have been conducted in the field of gender and socioeconomic status of working women of the society. In the context of Nepal, there are few studies which are developed to status of women and their burden of dual works. This study has been presented information about the dual role by working women and their economic status in the study area. Nowadays, Nepali women are marched towards the income generating activities in governmental activities in governmental sector. It is upgrading the socio-economic status of Nepalese working women. However, an important issue need to be considered is that their role in households is not decreasing significantly in comparison with the increasing rate of involvement in payable work. It shows that they are becoming the victim of double burden of household chores and income generating job (Gynawali, 2017). Thus, this research article tries to find out the real problems and situation of Nepalese employed women in the study area.

This study is dedicated to add information about various problems which has been affected to handle their career and trying to answer the following research question.

- What is the experience of working women about their dual role in the society.
- What are the social and economic problems faced by the employed women.

Significance of the study

This study on the problems and prospects of employed women is significant as it sheds light on the multifaceted challenges and opportunities faced by women in the work place. In an era of increasing female participation in various sectors, understanding the socio-economic, cultural, and organizational barriers that hinder their growth is essential for creating more inclusive supportive work environments.

The findings of this study will benefit several stakeholders:

- Policy makers and government agencies: It will provide insights into the area where interventions are needed, such as maternity benefits, workplace safety, equal pay, and career development programs for women.
- Academics and Researchers: This study contributes to the existing literature on gender studies, labor economics, and sociology by offering updated, real world perspectives on women's employment-related experiences.
- Women and Advocacy Group: Employed women and gender equality advocates can use the findings to raise awareness, lobby for better condition, and support efforts that promotes women's empowerment and workplace equity.

Ultimately, this study highlights both the persistent problems and emerging prospects for employed women, aiming to foster a more equitable and supportive environment for women in all sectors of employment.

Methods

This research article has followed a descriptive and exploratory research design. Both primary and secondary data were used in this study, primary data were collected by field survey. To collect secondary data, books, journals, reports, published and unpublished documents were studied minutely. A descriptive method gives description about the women status and satisfaction level of employees of different sectors in Ilam Municipality with respect

to their age, education, access to property, wage structure etc. On the basis of the given procedure, different statistical tools like table percent frequencies and simple statistical tools have been used in the study depending on the nature of variables. Explorative research design explores the cause and effect of women employees on socio-economic status in household's affairs which are unseen to till data. In the study area, altogether 1193 households, the researcher has taken 20 percent of the sample households that is 238.6 households. In this sample households, 150 women are employed in both private and government sectors. The researcher has taken as sample 150 employed women in the study area.

Result and Discussion

Selection of the study area

Ilam Municipality is divided into 12 wards. Ward no. 7 is the study area of this study. This ward lies in Ilam Bazzar area. There are 1193 households, total population of this ward are 5744 out of them 2952 are female and 2792 are male which shows 48.6 percent is male and 51.6 are female. (Ward profile, 2079). Out of 1193 households the researcher has taken 20 percent of the sample households that is 238.6 households. In this sample households, there are altogether 150 women are employed in both private and government sectors. Problems of employed is the major concern of the study. Although many researchers have carried out their research work about socio-economic condition of the employed women of other district, Yet the researcher claims that the selected regarding the various problems have not been studied deeply. Ward no. 7 is center and Bazar area of this municipality so many employed women are sitting as a rental for their study and jobs. The researcher includes only permanent residential women who are employed in different sectors.

Women in Economic Activities

In respect of studying "Women of Nepal" Women Development SAARC Division under Ministry of labor social welfare Published 1987 indicates that as in other developing

countries women in Nepal are mostly engaged in household work and employed in lower level have to bear double burden of house and office due to various reasons. The contribution of women to economic activities in various fields is no less than that of men. To understand the actual economic condition of women obstacle that continues to make recognition of women's full potential stem from obstinately held narrow concepts regarding women.

Women's situation on labor market has deteriorated as they have shown to be less successful than men to compete for jobs in market environment. Women are easier fired and have more difficulties in finding jobs. The proportion of employed women are increasing. Educated women are found typist, receptionists, school teacher, nurses and doctors, social workers and academics and as officials in the government and in the nationalized banks and life insurance corporations. But the number of women officials is still small compared with men. The majority of Nepalese women work in the informal sector or as unpaid family helper, 75.3 percent self-employed and 27.9 percent are unpaid family workers (Shrestha, 2002). Women in Nepal are responsible for three types of works reproduction, management of households and employment. However, reproduction is not treated as work and management of the household is not considered as a productive work. Moreover, women in Nepal work for longer hours than men and have much lower opportunity for gainful employment and possess extremely limited property rights.

Problems of Nepalese employed women in career Development

Women have important roles to play in the household and family. They are primarily responsible for the functioning of the household, child development and taking care of the needs and requirements of other family. So household and family responsibility is one of the major factors which is negative affect for their career development. In Nepal, among communities that women are less capable, efficient and skilled as compared men. They are discouraged from getting engaged in any kinds of job and functions that require manual labor.

The prevalence of this kind of attitude makes them less interested in their work. Nepalese women still experience discriminatory treatment at the work places. They are often deprived of promotion and growth opportunities. In the present world, almost all working women are prone to sexual harassment irrespective of their background and categories, personal characteristics and types of employment. Sexual harassment is not only at the workplace, but it is also prevalent in educational institution, hospital and public places.

Lack of family support is another issue that working women experiences the family members encourage women to get engaged in household work and not in employment opportunities. There are so many other reasons for their development like:-personal demographics such as age education qualifications, marital status, and number of children, place of residence, other sources of income etc. So, Nepalese women employees in different jobs are found facing similar problems at present time.

Problems of employed women in the study area can be found by analyzing on the basis of different variables like: - Age, Employed situation, Education level, Marital status, Family types, Satisfaction level of salary, Job satisfaction level, Sexual discrimination. Family support, Job security, Dual role etc.

Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents on the basis of the variables directly related with the women employed in different private or governmental sectors in Ilam Municipality of ward no. 7 from the 238 sample households. Out of 238 households only 150 women are employed in different sectors. The researcher has been analyzed the problems facing 150 women who are employed on the basis of the following variables.

Age of the Respondents

Age structure of the employed women in different sectors in Ilam Municipality ward no. 7 is major factors which is used to analyzed their problems. Age group of the respondents has been divided into five major group.

Table 1

Age of the respondents

Age group	No of respondents	Percent
20-25	50	33.33
25-30	15	10.00
30-35	20	13.33
35-40	25	16.67
40-45	30	20.00
45-50	10	6.67
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

The age group of the respondents are shows that out of 150 respondents, 33.33 percent were from 20-25 age group, 10 percent are 25-30 age group, 13.33 percent are 30-35 age group, and 16.67 percent is 35-40 age group, 20 percent are 40-45 age group and 6.67 percent are 45-60 age group. This collected data shows that 20-25 age group women are more employed than other age group and 45-60 age group women are less employed in this ward. This shows that middle age range participated in the outside country for working.

Work Sectors of the Respondents

Work sectors of the respondents plays an important role to create problems in their life. The researcher has been divided work into private, government and others.

Table 2.

Distribution of the respondents on the basis of the work sectors

Sectors	No. of respondents	Percent
Government	50	33.33
Private	70	46.67
Others	30	20
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows the distribution of the respondents on the basis of the work as three sectors like:- Government, Private and Other (Self-employed) sectors. This indicates most of the respondents (70 percent) works at the private sectors (private school, private business--etc). 50 percent of the respondent's works at government sectors as a permanent job like school teacher and administration and other 30 percent of the respondents are self-employed like small business (vegetable, clothes, canting----etc.)

Education of the Respondents

The level of education among the respondents has been divided in to four groups i.e. S.L.C. (SEE), Bachelor, Masters and above masters' level.

Table 3.

Distribution of the respondents on the basis of education

Education level	No. of respondents	Percent
S.L.C.(SEE)	90	60
Bachelor	50	33.33
Master	10	6.67
Above Master	0	0
Total	150	100

Sources: Field Survey, 2025

This table -3 shows out of 150 respondents 60 percent respondents are S.L.C.(SEE) pass only. 33.33 percent are bachelor degree pass and 6.67 percent are Master Degree pass in different subjects. There are no any respondents holding above Master Degree. Because of the various problems they cannot fulfilled their education at the higher level.

Marital Status of the Respondent

Marital status of the respondents has been divided into two sub-division i.e. married, and unmarried. Marital status is one of the important indicators to find the problems of the employed women.

Table 4.

Marital status of the respondents

Marital status	No. of respondents	Percent
Married	60	40
Unmarried	90	60
Total	150	100

Sources: Field survey, 2025

Above table-4 shows that 60 percent of the respondents are married and 40 percent of the respondents are unmarried. It means that among 150 respondents, 90 respondents are found unmarried and 60 respondents are married. There is majority of unmarried respondents in the study area.

Distribution of the respondents on the basis of hours spent on their households' chores

Task such as cleaning, washing, cooking and other duties have to be done regularly at home is called households chores. Household's chores is main problems of the employed women which make them difficult to do professional work. If they have to spent long time to households chores they could not progress their profession, education and other activities.

Table 5.

Distribution of the respondents on the basis of spent on their household's chores

Hours	No. of married	Percent	No. of unmarried	Percent
Not at all	0	0	10	11.11
1 – 3 hours	20	33.33	60	66.67
4 – 5 hours	30	50.00	20	22.22
Above 6 hours	10	16.67	0	0
Total	60	100	90	100

Sources: Field survey, 2025

This table – 5 presents the distribution of the respondents according to how many hours spent on their household's chores. It is divided into four main group i.e. not at all, 1 – 3 hours, 4 – 5 hours and above 6 hours. This data shows that out of 60 married respondents, nobody respondents without work at their home. 20 (33.33 percent) respondents spent 1 – 3 hours, 30 respondents spent 3 – 4 hours and 10 respondents spent above 6 hours. Similarly, out of 90 unmarried respondents, 10 respondents do not work at home at all time, 60 respondents spent 1 – 3 hours, 20 respondents spent 3 – 4 hours, and nobody spent above 6 hours. This indicate that married respondents spent more time than unmarried respondents at their household's chores because of their child and family responsibilities.

Distribution of the respondents on the basis of their salary

The problems of employed women can be found by their salary plays main role to maintain their economic problems. The researcher has been trying to find out their basic problems on their salary.

Table: 6.

Distribution of the respondents on the basis of their salary

Income (Rs. monthly)	No. of respondents	Percent
5,000 - 10,000	20	13.33
10,000 -15,000	20	13.33
15,000 - 20'000	40	26.67
20,000 - 25,000	30	20
25,000 - 30,000	20	13.33
30,000 - 35000	15	10.00
Above 35000	5	3.34
Total	150	100

Sources: Field survey, 2025

The above table – 6 shows that the salary earned by the respondents from their different jobs. This shows the maximum (26.67) percent respondents earned Rs.15, 000 – 20,000 monthly salary. 13.33 percent respondents earned Rs.5, 000 – 10,000, Rs.10, 000 – 15,000 and 25,000 – 30,000 respectively. Only 3.34 percent respondents earned above Rs.35, 000. This data shows most of the respondents earned below Rs.20, 000 per months who works at private sectors. The researcher found that the respondents who earned above Rs.35, 000 per month works in government sectors.

Satisfaction level with salary

Employees in Nepal often prioritized job security, and lack of it can negatively impact their overall job satisfaction. There are many factors that affecting salary satisfaction like: - job security, opportunities for growth working conditions, types of employers, work environment etc.

Table 7.

Distribution of the respondents on the basis of satisfaction level with salary

Level of satisfaction	Number of respondents	Percent
Fully	5	3.33
Partially	50	33.34
No at all	95	63.33
Total	150	100

Sources: Field Survey, 2025

Table – 7 shows that out of 100 percent respondent's 3.33 percent respondents fully satisfied with their salary. 33.34 percent respondents partially satisfied and 63.33 percent respondents are not satisfied at all. This indicate that few women employee out of 150 only 5 person fully satisfied with their salary because of work environment future security---etc. 50 respondents are partially satisfied. Most of the respondents about 95 are not satisfied at all.

Participation on social work/activities

Knowing about participation on social works activities indicates women status with references to their literacy and involvement in different sectors. Within the society, women have important role to perform. The role of women are primarily recognized in the social, political, economic, cultural and religious shares. The researcher presents the participation of women employees in social work in the study area.

Table 8.

Distribution of respondents by their participation on social work/activities

Participation on social work /activities	No. of respondents	Percent
Yes	30	20
No	120	80
Total	150	100

Sources: Field Survey,2025

This table shows that 20 percent of the respondents have participated in social work activities and 80 percent of the respondents not participated in different social works. Due to their time management and long time spent in their job they could not participated in social work activities.

Job satisfaction level

Job satisfaction means the women with high position in decision making, cooperation from co-workers, good economic status and good working environment which pays vital role to make decision in economic and other family matter in comparison male partners.

Table 9.

Distribution of the respondents on the basis of job satisfaction

Level of satisfaction	No. of respondents	Percent
Fully	10	6.67
Partially	90	60
Not at all	50	33.33
Total	150	100

Sources: Field survey, 2025

The above table – 9 shows that 6.67 percent respondents are fully satisfied on their job because of the various facilities and future security given by the government job. 33.33 percent respondents are partially satisfied and 60 percent of the respondent are not satisfied at all. Due to lack of various facilities on their job.

Sexual Discrimination in the work place

Sexual discrimination in the work place, which is illegal includes treating some one less favorably because of their gender, including gender identity and sexual orientation, and can manifest as direct or harassment related action, age, disability, gender, reassignment, pregnancy, and maternity, race and religion or belief----etc.

Table 10.

Sexual discrimination in the work place

Response	No. of respondents	Percent
Discrimination	90	60
No discrimination	60	40
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows that out of 150 respondents 90 respondents or 60 percent feeling discrimination in their work place. Similarly 60 respondents or 40 percent feeling no discrimination. This kind of discrimination is one of the major factors which creates problem to do work mentally and effects their future promotion on their job.

Management to dual role as a housewife and employment

Balancing dual roles as both mothers and professionals' parents unique challenges. On one hand, these roles brings benefits, such as increased self-confidence, financial well-being, and opportunities to engage more widely in society. However, on the other hand, dual role often bring challenges that can impact mental health, including fatigue, time pressure and role conflicts. Dual role pose a significant challenges to the mental health of working mothers.

Table 11.

Management of respondents to dual role as a housewife and employment

Responses	No. of respondents	Percent
Easily	15	10
Hardly	90	60
Anyhow	25	16.67
Somehow	20	13.33
Total	150	100

Sources: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows the discrimination of the respondents on the basis of a dual role as a housewife and a employed women. Out of 150 respondents 15 respondents easily manage their dual role i.e. after office they used to look after their children work as a housewife and during office time they used to work office task. 90 respondents more than 60 percent hardly manage their dual role. In this way, 25 and 20 respondents manage anyhow and somehow their dual role respectively. This collected data shows that most of the respondents managed hardly their dual role as housewife and employee.

Major problems of the employed women in the study area

For women employees there are many problems to continue their job and career development. In the context of Nepal, there are some problems to which is facing by Nepali women employees.

Households and family Responsibilities

Women have important roles to play in the households and family. They are primarily responsible for the functioning of the households, child development and taking care of the needs and requirements of other family members.

Lack of family Support

Lack of family support is another issue that working women experience. At the times, the family members encourage women to get engaged in households work and not in environment opportunities. When women have to work late in the office, the family members normally have an objection. When family members are not supportive towards working women, then it is an impediment within the course of their job performance, promotional opportunities and career development.

Job Insecurity

There are various factors that cause job insecurities. These include lack of knowledge, skill and abilities, long working hours, lack of facilities within the working environment, lack

of promotional opportunities, insufficient pay, Unrealistic expectation can be major source of stress and anxiety. Increased workload and strong pressure to perform at peak levels, at all time the same pay, can actually leave an employee physically and emotionally drained.

Prospects of employed women in the study area

In the study area, employed women have access to various opportunities through skill development programs, microfinances, and increased political participation. However, to fully realize these prospects, it is essential to address ongoing challenges such as socio-cultural barriers and wage disparities. Continued efforts in education, policy reform, and community engagement are crucial and environment where women can their professionally and contribute meaningfully to the municipality's development.

Conclusion

The challenges faced by employed women in the study area are deeply rooted in social, economic and cultural factors, socio-economic characteristics like:- Age, Work sectors, Education, Marital status, Households chores, Job and salary satisfaction level, Lack of family support. Despite progressing in gender equality and increasing female workplace participation, women continue to encounter workplace discrimination, wage gaps, lack of career development opportunities, work life-life balance struggles. Additionally, social expectations and traditional gender roles often burden women with household's responsibilities alongside their professional duties.

Addressing these issues requires a collective effort from the central government, local government, employers and society. Policies promoting equal pay maternity benefits, work place safety and flexible working condition must be enforced effectively. Encouraging gender sensitive workplace environments and changing societal mindsets through education and awareness can help empower women to thrive in their careers. By creating an inclusive and supportive work culture, Nepal can unlock the full potential of its female workplace,

contributing to economic growth and sustainable development. Ensuring equal opportunities for employed women is not just a necessity for the nation's overall progress.

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