

Gender Discrimination in Nepal: Does It Vary Across Socio- Demographics?

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Abstract

Gender discrimination is a pressing issue in gender research across the globe, including Nepal. The Government of Nepal has taken several measures against gender discrimination at all levels, but the prevalence of gender discrimination is still evident. Against this backdrop, this paper examined the prevalence of gender discrimination in Nepal by socio-demographic status. Micro-level data generated by Nepal National Governance Survey 2017/18 was used and analyzed employing a logistic regression model. The results showed that the experience of gender-based discrimination is varied by socio-demographic factors. Gender, age, urban/rural, education, and economic status all have an impact on gender discrimination in Nepal. Women have different experiences with respect to these factors. Some women with varying backgrounds experience discrimination or marginalization more intensely or greater than some women. Deeply ingrained patriarchal gender ideology, driven by traditional cultural values and practices, is leading to gender discrimination in Nepal.

Keywords: Discrimination, gender, patriarchal, women, Nepal.

I. INTRODUCTION

Although gender inequality is declining globally at a sluggish rate, more or less gender discrimination in different degrees can be seen everywhere. Gender discrimination or bias can also be seen even in developed countries. Gender discrimination is an universal societal problem, particularly in developing Asian and African nations, which is harming not only human civilization and the current global economy, but also each step forward with the next generation.¹ Gender discrimination is common in everyday experiences in developing countries², and Nepal is not far away from this reality. As per Nepal Demographic and Health Survey³, in Nepal, twenty-two percent of women between 15 and 49 years of age have encountered physical violence, and 7 percent have encountered sexual violence. The most usual type of spousal violence is physical (23%)

¹ Bishnu Adhikari, "Gender Inequality and the Problem with Girls' School Attendance in Nepal : A Qualitative Perspective of Patriarchal Nepalese Practice (Unpublished Master's Thesis)" (Norway, Nord University, 2013), <https://bit.ly/3kx2PFU>.

² Newman Wadesango, "Is Gender Equality Still an Issue? Tensions and Contradictions Embedding the Work of Feminists Today," *Journal of Social Sciences* 26, no. 3 (1 Maret 2011): 163–69.

³ Ministry of Health- MOH/Nepal, New ERA/Nepal, dan ICF, "Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2016," 1 November 2017, <https://bit.ly/2ICGSIg>.

followed by emotional (12%). Sixty-six percent of women who encountered some form of physical or sexual abuse did not seek support or speak to anyone about preventing or ending the abuse they endured. As per Nepal National Governance Survey⁴, just over one in ten people (11%) mentioned either they or their family members have experienced gender-based discrimination in the past year. This evidence shows that gender discrimination is prevalent.

Nepal is ranked 101st position among 153 countries with a score of 0.680 and 111th position in 2006 with a score of 0.548 according to the Global Gender Gap Report.⁵ Although Nepal has improved in the Global Gender Gap Index, gender disparity still exists. Hidden and unhidden discrimination against women continues to prevail. Nepal is far from wishing success in the fight against gender discrimination. The efforts to eliminate gender discrimination by state and non-state actors have achieved little success. Fighting against gender-based discrimination is indeed complex and challenging. It is because the origin of gender discrimination is constantly embedded in social and cultural tradition, and occurs in different forms in both the private and public spheres. Inherent patriarchal orientation, social and cultural structures/systems discriminate against women.

Gender is used to underline socially generated structures, meanings, and interactions that rely on, deepen, and shape but are not entirely understood or reducible to biological sex differences.⁶ Gender is a socially created notion, and the problem of disparity is created by society.⁷ Deeply ingrained patriarchal social-cultural norms and shared values lead to gender discrimination. Gender-discriminating laws and norms pose challenges for women and marginalize and omit them from certain realms and roles, and raise concerns about their morality.⁸ Women are typically discriminated against within patriarchal society. Patriarchy, as per Barlas⁹, is a sexual segregation strategy that favors males by turning biological sex into a political gender that gives preference to men when women are different (unequal), less than or otherwise. Patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices where men dominate, persecute and exploit women.¹⁰ Practicing patriarchal culture in Nepali

⁴ Nepal Administrative Staff College, "Nepal national governance survey 2017/18" (Jawalakhel, Lalitpur: Nepal Administrative Staff College, 2018), <https://bit.ly/2K8LFCb>.

⁵ World Economic Forum, "Global Gender Gap Report 2020" (Cologne, Switzerland: World Economic Forum, 2020), <https://bit.ly/36sE60s>.

⁶ Janaki Nair, *Women and Law in Colonial India: A Social History* (New Delhi: Kali for Women and The National Law School of India, 1996), <https://bit.ly/2WF6P14>.

⁷ Anita Shrestha dan R. Gartoulla, "Socio-cultural Causes of Gender Disparity in Nepalese Society," *Journal of Advanced Academic Research* 2, no. 1 (2015): 100–111.

⁸ Adel SZ Abadeer, *Norms and Gender Discrimination in the Arab World* (United States: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), <https://bit.ly/2Va2WAX>.

⁹ Asma Barlas, "Believing women" in Islam: unreading patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'ān, 1st ed (United States: University of Texas Press, 2002), <https://bit.ly/36wBFu8>.

¹⁰ S. Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Cambridge USA: Blackwell Publisher, 1990), <https://bit.ly/3xgw06P>; Hannelie J. Wood, "Gender inequality: The problem of harmful, patriarchal, traditional and cultural gender practices in the church," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 75, no. 1 (12 Maret 2019): 8.

society led to gender discrimination. Born as a woman in Nepali society, she has to face more or less discrimination based on her gender at different stages of her life. Probably, there is no single woman who does not experience discrimination in various spheres of her life. Some women experience more discrimination, while some women experience less.

Gender inequality and discriminatory behaviours occur in such a way as to limit, distort and often forbid women's right to work, travel, marry, divorce and engage in social-culture, economic, and political activities.¹¹ Gender discrimination is an appalling practise that negatively affects women's lives. Women have been victims of inequality, prejudice, and abuse.¹² The situation of women has worsened as a result of acutely ingrained hegemonic views on gender. In this backdrop, this paper aimed to examine the prevalence of gender discrimination in Nepal by socio-demographic status, using Nepal National Governance Survey 2017/18 data set. This paper generates empirical evidence and stimulus scholarly discussion on gender discrimination in Nepal by socio-demographic factors.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Gender Discrimination

Unfavourable, biased and negative treatment of anyone based on their personal attributes is known as discrimination. Discrimination, as per Dipboye and Colella,¹³ is undue conduct that transfer biases and stereotypes into action. Gender discrimination is a treatment which is unfair based on the sex of a person. It is a direct or indirect, wholly or partly unfair treatment and infringement of the right based on gender. Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women¹⁴ defines discrimination against women as "*...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made based on sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field*" (Article 1). Generally speaking, gender inequality or discrimination is the term used for women as they find the lowest and weakest part of society¹⁵. Indeed, women are not socially and culturally weak, nor mentally vulnerable. Sharma¹⁶ argued that gender

¹¹ Abadeer, Norms and Gender Discrimination in the Arab World.

¹² CN Shankar Rao, *Sociology: Principles of Sociology with an Introduction to Social* (Chand & Company Ltd., 2008).

¹³ Robert L. Dipboye dan Adrienne Colella, *Discrimination at Work: The Psychological and Organizational Bases* (North Carolina: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2005).

¹⁴ United Nations, "Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women," 1979, <https://bit.ly/2JWVLpx>.

¹⁵ Samidha Pokharel, "Gender Discrimination: Women Perspective," *Nepalese Journal of Development and Rural Studies* 5, no. 2 (1 Januari 2008): 80–87.

¹⁶ Indu Sharma, "Gender discrimination and status of women in India," *Contemporary Social Sciences* 27, no. 1 (2018): 105–14.

discrimination is implied only for women, as they are the only dupes of gender discrimination. She further said that gender discrimination is socially dogged, and thus can be modified by strong and consistent efforts. Shastri¹⁷ argued, along the same lines as Sharma¹⁸ that gender discrimination is socially and culturally determined and creates an atmosphere of gender discrimination. Based on all these points of view, it can be said that gender discrimination is the bias and unfair behaviour of individuals based on their gender. The majority of gender discrimination is directed at women. Women are discriminated and treated unequally in favour of a man. In this paper, gender discrimination is defined as wholly or partly unfavourable and biased treatment of women in their spheres of life.

B. Socialization and Gender Discrimination

Socialization takes place during childhood, where boys and girls learn about sexual behaviour.¹⁹ Gender socialization focuses on the socialization of offspring of diverse sexes in their gender characters²⁰ and teaches being men or women.²¹ Gender roles are largely fortified both culturally and institutionally; it is inside the home where kids learn about gender identities, manhood with power and authority, and womanhood with inferiority and subjection.²² Gender differences are determined by socio-cultural expectations and beliefs, and are learned via the socialization process. Parents have a stock of cultural capital which is transferred to their offspring via family and societal socialization.²³ Gender roles are learnt via socialization and are formed through systems like education, politics, economy, legislation, culture, and tradition.²⁴ The socially constructed roles have been structured hierarchically, with men wielding authority and control over women, and women subjection ideological and material bases.²⁵ Boys learn how to uphold their authority over girls, while girls learn how to comply.²⁶

¹⁷ Andrey Shastri, "Gender Inequality and Women Discrimination," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 19, no. 11 (2014): 27–30.

¹⁸ Sharma, "Gender discrimination and status of women in India."

¹⁹ Abeda Sultana, "Patriarchy and Women's Subordination: A Theoretical Analysis," *Arts Faculty Journal* 4 (13 Desember 2012): 1–18.

²⁰ Anthony Giddens, *Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).

²¹ Charles G. Morris, *Psychology: An Introduction* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1996).

²² Usha Ram, Lisa Strohschein, dan Kirti Gaur, "Gender Socialization: Differences between Male and Female Youth in India and Associations with Mental Health," *International Journal of Population Research*, 27 April 2014, 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1155/2014/357145>.

²³ Anil Kumar Gupta, "Significance of Girl Education: Parents' Perception from Rural Madhesh of Nepal," *Journal of Management and Development Studies* 29 (28 September 2019): 61–68.

²⁴ KU Omoyibo dan BI Ajayi, "Understanding gender and global Africa: A critical perspective," *Gender and Behaviour* 9, no. 1 (28 Juni 2011): 3729–51, <https://doi.org/10.4314/gab.v9i1.67470>.

²⁵ Nyambura Njoroge, *Gender Justice, Ministry and Healing: A Christian Response to the HIV Pandemic* (New North Road London: Progression, 2009), <https://bit.ly/2VceinL>.

²⁶ Ram, Strohschein, dan Gaur, "Gender Socialization: Differences between Male and Female Youth in India and Associations with Mental Health."

Patriarchy is bred thru socialization, which starts in the family and spreads in several parts of society like religion, education, economy, and politics.²⁷ To maintain male supremacy, patriarchy produced 'masculine' and feminine features in private- public spheres through the gender socialization process.²⁸ Young children are socialized to accept sexual differences, as patriarchal practices take place in the family.²⁹ Although the socialization process initiates in the family, imparting patriarchal norms in the young children, it does not end there; it spreads to other social institutions.³⁰ Social institutions such as peer groups, society, schools, media directly or indirectly foster deeply ingrained patriarchal traditions and practices. Young children are learnt gender roles, responsibilities, differences and discrimination. Learned gender differences and discrimination apply to the children in their future lives. If children are socialized in a non-discriminatory manner, it boosts fairness between men and women. Socialization is the underlying cause of gender differences and discrimination. Nepal's social values and customs have given a high degree of recognition and space to men who exercise power over women. The course of patriarchal socialization produces gender differences and discrimination. Parents should, therefore, socialize girls in such a way as to recognize themselves as equal to boys and fight against gender discrimination, while boys in such a way as to deconstruct patriarchal power structure and deeply ingrained gender hegemony.

C. International Commitments

Several international seminars, conventions, and conferences have been held globally to ensure gender justice. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights³¹ specified that one should not be discriminated based on sex. Another major conference called the Conference on Women's Political Rights³² explicitly safeguards women's rights. This convention acknowledges that everyone has the right to participate directly or indirectly in the government of the nation easily as elected members, and has the right to equal entry into the public service and to balance the role of men and women in the entertainment and use of political rights. The Convention on Married Women's Nationality³³ provides for a legal structure for the nationality of a married woman. The Convention retains the nationality of married women to maintain or revoke citizenship on an equal basis with men. A landmark convention for the protection of women's rights is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against

²⁷ Maureen Kambarami, *Femininity, Sexuality and Culture: Patriarchy and Female Subordination in Zimbabwe* (South Africa: ARSRC, 2006), <https://bit.ly/3j9i2hL>.

²⁸ Sultana, "Patriarchy and Women's Subordination: A Theoretical Analysis."

²⁹ Farai Maunganidze, "Dealing with gender-related challenges: A perspective of Zimbabwean women in the practice of law," ed. oleh Antonio Belso-Martinez, *Cogent Business & Management* 7, no. 1 (1 Januari 2020): 18.

³⁰ Maunganidze.

³¹ United Nations, "Universal declaration of human rights," 1948, <https://bit.ly/3nkd0Qb>.

³² United Nations, "Conference on women's political rights," 1952, <https://bit.ly/2UnJk8e>.

³³ United Nations, "Convention on married women's nationality," 1957, <https://bit.ly/2H0ybHv>.

Women.³⁴ The Convention recognized discrimination against women and sets out a national plan of action to eradicate discrimination. The Convention acknowledged and discussed all types of discrimination, whether found in law, regulations, and guidelines or performance.³⁵

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women³⁶ is the first leading global contract to tackle violence against women explicitly, establishes a legal basis for action at the national and international levels. It describes violence as any physical, sexual or psychological abuse of women/girls happening in the home, society, and state.³⁷ Four world conferences in the field of women were organized by the United Nations. It was held for the first time in 1975 in Mexico, for the second time in 1980 in Copenhagen, for the third time in Nairobi in 1985, and for the fourth time in Beijing in 1995. The last one was followed by a five-year review. The Beijing Platform for Action 1995 adopted 12 key areas of action to ensure greater equality. The International Conference on Population and Development³⁸ focused on reproductive health and rights, as well as equality and empowerment for women. Poverty reduction, universal primary education, gender equality and empowerment of women and maternal health are some of the themes relating to the gender domain, which were focused on the Millennium Development Goals.³⁹ Likewise, Sustainable Development Goals⁴⁰ are dedicated to achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls, which are essential and related to each of the 17 goals. In addition to these, there are many more international conventions, conferences, and declarations for fostering gender justice at all levels.

D. National Commitments

1. Women Issues in Development Plans

Several rules, laws, policies, and structural reforms have been implemented by the Nepal Government to ensure gender justice in a country. The issue of women was first time raised in the sixth five-year plan.⁴¹ This plan sought to integrate women into different programs, projects, recognized legal barriers to their economic empowerment,

³⁴ United Nations, "Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women."

³⁵ Sharma, "Gender discrimination and status of women in India."

³⁶ United Nations, "Declaration on the elimination of violence against women," 1993, <https://bit.ly/36xbCCU>.

³⁷ Anna King, "UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women," dalam *The Encyclopedia of Women and Crime*, 1-2 (American Cancer Society, 2019), 1-2, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9781118929803.ewac0505>.

³⁸ United Nations Population Found, "International conference on population and development," 1994, <https://bit.ly/3kyq0zI>.

³⁹ United Nations, "Millennium development goals," 2000, <https://bit.ly/36xxVZf>.

⁴⁰ United Nations, "Sustainable development goals," 2015, <https://bit.ly/3kvtYJp>.

⁴¹ National Planning Commission, "Sixth five-year plan (1980-1985)" (Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, 1980), <https://bit.ly/2ICGNEs>.

and set out special programs.⁴² The Ninth Plan⁴³ implemented three-pronged strategies, including mainstreaming, eradicating gender inequality and empowering women. As in the Ninth Plan, the Tenth Plan⁴⁴ set out three strategies for implementation, namely mainstreaming, gender equality, and empowerment to strengthen the status of women vis-à-vis men.⁴⁵

Establishing a gender-inclusive and equitable society, removal of all forms of discrimination and violence against women, and providing social integration of conflict-affected women was emphasized in the Three-Year Interim Plan.⁴⁶ The latest 15th Development Plan⁴⁷ has a vision for a gender-egalitarian nation. This plan focused on removing all sorts of discrimination, abuse and oppression against women and institutionalizes gender-responsive governance. Through these development plans, Nepal Government seeks to eliminate gender discrimination at all levels.

2. Women Issues in Constitution

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990⁴⁸ stated that no one shall be discriminated based on sex and that special arrangements shall be laid down for the protection and advancement of the welfares of women. The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 addressed non-sexual discrimination, reproductive rights, right against violence, equal rights to ancestral property, the right against abuse, education and social security rights, equality, social justice, and representation in state institutions based on proportionate inclusion. The Government of Nepal introduced and institutionalized inclusive policies in 2007 for achieving fair gender balance in civil service, as proposed by the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 via the second amendment of the Civil Service Act 1993.⁴⁹ This civil service acts 1993 guaranteed 33 percent of seats filled by women.

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 aimed at creating an equitable society founded on proportionately inclusive and participatory values to ensure economic equality, stability, and social justice by removing all forms of discrimination based on personal

⁴² G. Subedi, *Population and social justice: Concept, theories and empirical evidences* (Kathmandu: Kriti Prakashan, 2010).

⁴³ National Planning Commission, "Ninth plan (1997-2002)" (Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, 1997), <https://bit.ly/3lAex44>.

⁴⁴ National Planning Commission, "Tenth plan (2002-2007)" (Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, 2002), <https://bit.ly/2IDzBIB>.

⁴⁵ Subedi, *Population and social justice: Concept, theories and empirical evidences*.

⁴⁶ National Planning Commission, "Three-year interim plan (2007/08-2009/10)" (Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, 2007), <https://bit.ly/3lxOElN>.

⁴⁷ National Planning Commission, "15th development plan (2019/20-2023/24)" (Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, 2019), <https://bit.ly/32ISEYY>.

⁴⁸ Government of Nepal, *Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990* (Kathmandu: Government of Nepal, 1990), Article II, <https://bit.ly/2Lz15Pi>.

⁴⁹ Anil Kumar Gupta, Gobinda Bhandari, dan Shushma Manandhar, "Representative Bureaucracy in Nepali Civil Service: Exploring the Encounters of Women," *Journal of Asian Review of Public Affairs and Policy* 5, no. 1 (18 Maret 2020), <http://dx.doi.org/10.222.99/arpap/2020.64>.

attributes. This constitution ensured the rights of women as a fundamental right under Article 38. The Article further focused on equal right without discrimination based on sex, right of reproductive health, right against all forms of violence or exploitation, equal right to property and family affairs, right to obtain an education, right to employment and social security, right to participate in all entities of the state. The constitution guaranteed that the total number of elected representatives from each political party represented in the Federal Parliament must be one-third of the women.⁵⁰ The constitution also envisaged the creation of a National Women's Commission.⁵¹ Directive Principles, Policies, and Obligations of the State (Part-4) highlighted on policies relating to social justice and inclusion. It has also several provisions for gender justice. Besides, there are also several policies (Gender Equality Act 2006, Domestic Violence (Offence and Punishment) Act 2009) and good practices (Gender Responsive Budgeting, Gender Audit) to ensure gender justice in Nepal.

III. METHODOLOGY

Data for this study is taken from the national representative perception survey called 'Nepal National Governance Survey 2017/18'⁵² which was carried out by Nepal Administrative Staff College with the technical assistance of the Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal. The 2017/18 NNGS sampled 12920 Nepali adults aged 18 years and older across 43 districts of Nepal, using four-stage multiple cluster sampling designs. The overall response rate was 99.6%, whereby a total of 12872 individuals were successfully interviewed from December 2017 to March 2018. In the NNGS 2017/18, people were asked, 'In your experience, did you or your family members experience gender-based discrimination within the past 12 months?'. There were four responses to this question, that is, frequently, sometimes, never and can't say/don't know. One-hundred five respondents were reported can't say/don't know. Can't say/don't know the option was debarred from the analysis because it offers no clear cut decision. The analysis of the study is, therefore, delimited to 12767 individual respondents.

The study variables were divided into two groups: predictor and outcome. The experience of gender-based discrimination was treated as an outcome variable and socio-demographics (gender, urban/rural, age, education, and economic status) were treated as a predictor variable. Logistic regression was used to create a model for predicting the probability of individual or family members experiencing gender-based discrimination. Gender discrimination experience was classified into binary variables [Frequently and Sometimes =1 (Yes, experience gender-based discrimination) and Never=0 (No, not experienced gender-based discrimination)]. The Logistic Regression Equation:

⁵⁰ Government of Nepal, Constitution of Nepal 2015 (Kathmandu: Government of Nepal, 2015), Article 84(8), <https://bit.ly/2IqkaUj>.

⁵¹ Government of Nepal, Article 252.

⁵² Nepal Administrative Staff College, "Nepal national governance survey 2017/18."

$\ln [P/(1-P)] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1(\text{gender}) + \beta_2 X_2(\text{urban/rural}) + \beta_3 X_3(\text{age}) + \beta_4 X_4(\text{education}) + \beta_5 X_5(\text{economic status})$.

Where, P is the likelihood of experiencing gender-based discrimination; (1-P) is the likelihood of not experiencing gender-based discrimination; β_0 = the constant of the equation and P/(1-P) is the "Odds Ratio". The likelihood of experiencing gender-based discrimination is $P = \text{Exp}(\beta_0 + \beta_1 X) / (1 + \text{Exp}(\beta_0 + \beta_1 X))$. Conversely, the probability of not experiencing gender-based discrimination is $1-P = 1 / [1 + \text{Exp}(\beta_0 + \beta_1 X)]$.

The slope represents the ratio of the probability of experiencing gender-based discrimination to the probability of not experiencing gender-based discrimination compared against each comparison group. The statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$, and analysis was carried out using SPSS version 26. The odds ratio was stated in this analysis. More than 1 odd ratio for predictor variables indicates positive effects on the outcome variables and vice versa.

IV. RESULTS

The distributions of the sample population are shown in Table 1. Male and rural municipalities are slightly underrepresented in the sample (47.7% male and 46.5 % rural municipality). The lowest group is comprised of age groups 18-24 (15.1%) and 60 and above (17.4%), while age groups 25-39 and 40-59 are more or less equally distributed. The majority of survey respondents reported that they have no education (37.4% of the total sample). Basic education and secondary education is the most common level of schooling completed by respondents (59.34%), with higher education accounting for just 1.6 % of the total sample. The majority of respondents are of medium economic class (60.9%), followed by poor (37.5%) and rich (1.6%).

Table 1: Sample Distribution

	Number	Percentage
Sample size	12872	100.0
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	6145	47.7
Women	6727	52.3
<i>Urban/Rural</i>		
Municipality	6890	53.5
Rural municipality	5982	46.5
<i>Age Group</i>		
18-24	1683	13.1
25-39	4405	34.2
40-59	4545	35.3
60 and above	2239	17.4
<i>Education</i>		
No education	4810	37.4
No formal education	2172	16.9
Basic education	2728	21.2

Secondary education	2676	20.8
Higher education	486	3.8
<i>Economic Status</i>		
Rich	210	1.6
Medium	7836	60.9
Poor	4826	37.5

Source: Nepal National Governance Survey 2017/18

Table 2 provides the logistic regression coefficient beta (β) and odds ratio for each variable category. Several remarkable results have been found. A finding of the study showed that gender discrimination is divergent in intensity and varies by demographics (gender, urban/rural, age, education, and economic status) of respondents at a micro-level. Women (OR=2.386, $P<0.05$) are more likely to report having experienced or seen a family member experience gender discrimination (hereafter referred as 'experience gender-based discrimination') in the past 12 months. Citizens living in rural municipalities (OR=1.176, $P<0.05$) are more likely to report the experience of gender-based discrimination than those living in municipalities. It points out that the residence of citizens of municipalities is less affected by gender-based discrimination than the residence of citizens in rural municipalities. By age, citizens aged 25-39 years (OR= 1.155, $P>0.05$) are more likely to report the experience of gender-based discrimination compared to those aged 18-24, while those aged 40-59 years (OR=.949, $P>0.05$) and 60 years and older (OR=.594, $P<0.05$) are less likely to report the experience of gender based discrimination.

Citizens with no formal education, basic education, secondary education, and higher education are less likely to report experience of gender-based discrimination compared to no education, but the level of gender-based discrimination experience is varied within the education. Less gender based discrimination is observed for basic education (OR=.693, $P<0.05$), followed by secondary education (OR=.753, $P<0.05$), non-formal education (OR=.854, $P>0.05$) and higher education (OR=.973, $P>0.05$). This suggested that no educated citizen reports more experience of gender-based discrimination. Compared to rich citizens, medium (OR=.465, $P<0.05$) and poor citizens (OR=.644, $P>0.05$) are less likely to report experience of gender-based discrimination. This evidence indicates that experience of gender-based discrimination differs by demographic characteristics of citizens.

Table 2. Odds ratios for logistic regression models of gender discrimination

Predictor Variables	B	S.E	Odds Ratio
<i>Gender</i>			
Male (Ref.)			
Women	.870	.064	2.386*
<i>Urban/Rural</i>			
Municipality (Ref.)			

Rural Municipality	.162	.056	1.176*
<i>Age Group</i>			
18-24 (Ref.)			
25-39	.144	.099	1.155**
40-59	-.053	.108	.949**
60 and above	-.521	.130	.594*
<i>Education</i>			
No education (Ref.)			
No formal education	-.158	.083	.854**
Basic education	-.367	.090	.693*
Secondary education	-.284	.099	.753*
Higher education	-.028	.163	.973**
<i>Economic Status</i>			
Rich (Ref.)			
Medium	-.765	.190	.465*
Poor	-.441	.193	.644**
Constant	-1.816	.232	.163

* $P < 0.05$ and ** $p < 0.05$

V. DISCUSSION

Women's marginalization, prejudice, and injustice have existed since the dawn of time. The past of women in the world is permeated with sorrow, disgust, injustice, and disrespect in every aspect of their lives.⁵³ Discrimination against women in Nepal is a mega trend. Nepali women are historically subjected to discrimination based on their gender. The origin of this discrimination in Nepali society is deeply rooted.⁵⁴ Traditional Nepali society has undergone much gender injustice. Hamal Gurung⁵⁵ argued that 'Nepal is a patriarchal, patrilineal and patrifocal society and its norms are heavily patriarchal'.⁵⁶ Historically and traditionally, the position of women and girls within the patriarchal society of Nepal was described as inferior.⁵⁷ The influence of patriarchy can be seen in Nepali society, and it has led injustice, underprivileged, underrepresentation, exploitation, discrimination against women in all spheres of society.⁵⁸ According to the research of Shrestha and Gartoulla,⁵⁹ it is observed that

⁵³ Balkrishna Baral, "Gender Development Perspective: A Contemporary Review in Global and Nepalese Context," *Geographical Journal of Nepal* 10 (31 Mei 2017): 141-52, <https://doi.org/10.3126/gjn.v10i0.17395>. ⁵⁴ Susann Rothe, "Gender Discrimination in Nepal and How Statelessness Hampers Identity Formation" (Netherlands: Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, 2015), <https://bit.ly/36zzt4X>.

⁵⁵ Hamal Gurung, "Sex Trafficking and the Sex Trade Industry: The Processes and Experiences of Nepali Women," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 35, no. 2 (26 Maret 2014): 163-81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2014.885415>.

⁵⁶ Gurung, 175.

⁵⁷ Rothe, "Gender Discrimination in Nepal and How Statelessness Hampers Identity Formation."

⁵⁸ Sujata Paudel, "Women's Concerns within Nepal's Patriarchal Justice System," *Ethics in Action* 5, no. 6 (2011): 30-36.

around 90 percentage of respondents reported that patriarchal culture led to gender disparity in Nepali society. While some statistics reflect the progress of women's status in recent years as compared to the previous year, it is difficult to predict whether there is gender justice. Discrimination based on gender is still prevalent in Nepali society, and a substantial portion of women are subjugated, abused, and exploited. Discrimination against women continues to be pervasive and systemic, and has strong cultural and historical origins.

Women in Nepal have historically faced discrimination based on gender, caste, ethnicity, and geography.⁶⁰ Gender discrimination exists in the form of a gender identity that is strongly linked to a socially formed, predefined identity.⁶¹ Gender discrimination is ingrained, both socially and culturally. In Nepal, socio-culture customs, values and norms support patriarchal gender ideology, where male family members often control women's lives. Men possess more power and opportunities than women in both private and public life. Women are being suppressed and victimized by patriarchal gender ideology. Patriarchy, as a supremacist ideology, encourages male superiority in spiritual and physical realms, as well as social and personal arenas.⁶² As a discriminating force, patriarchy has a long history that spans national and cultural boundaries, and it is a system that limits women through male control.⁶³ Patriarchy supports a hierarchical system in which men have authority over women, and men are indoctrinated to get the agreement of the women they enslave.⁶⁴ Women are submissive, either to their father or to their husband, and their roles are typically limited to the home sphere.⁶⁵ Preoccupied patriarchal gender ideology and practices create a vicious cycle of discrimination. Knowingly or unknowingly, men's mentalities are built to uphold the patriarchal status quo. Still today, the majority of women are living as second-class citizens, and being victims of patriarchal gender ideology. In patriarchy, women are vulnerable to exclusion/subjugation, and have fewer opportunities to choose how to live their lives. Discrimination against women is, therefore, the manifestation of patriarchal gender ideology, driven by traditional socio-

⁵⁹ Shrestha dan Gartoulla, "Socio-cultural Causes of Gender Disparity in Nepalese Society."

⁶⁰ Meena Acharya, "Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women," *Achieving Millennium Development Goals: Challenges for Nepal*. *Achieving Millennium Development Goals: Challenges for Nepal* 15, no. 49 (2006): 48; Rita Manchanda, "Maoist Insurgency in Nepal Radicalizing Gendered Narratives," *Cultural Dynamics* 16, no. 2–3 (1 Oktober 2004): 237–58, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0921374004047750>.

⁶¹ aSharma, "Gender discrimination and status of women in India."r

⁶² Wood, "Gender inequality: The problem of harmful, patriarchal, traditional and cultural gender practices in the church."

⁶³ Loreen Maseno dan Susan M Kilonzo, "Engendering Development: Demystifying Patriarchy and Its Effects on Women in Rural Kenya," *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 3, no. 2 (2011): 45–55.

⁶⁴ Wood, "Gender inequality: The problem of harmful, patriarchal, traditional and cultural gender practices in the church."

⁶⁵ Acharya, "Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women."

cultural norms and practices. Deeply ingrained traditional cultural norms and practices are largely affecting the lives of women.

To some extent, women themselves are responsible for discrimination as they see it culturally, and accept gender bias without finding it to be discrimination.⁶⁶ Women accept discrimination as a social norm and part of their lives.⁶⁷ Several oppressed women are not conscious of their disadvantaged status because they inherit and are conditioned to acknowledge their inferior status.⁶⁸ Women's self-perception is often shaped by a traditional cultural role via the socialization process. Women's stereotypes depict them as inferior to men on a psychological level,⁶⁹ and gender role expectations, manifested in individuals' values and attitudes, limit women's opportunities.⁷⁰ It is really a great challenge for women to improve their situation crossing men dominated culture and gender-related stigmas and stereotypes.⁷¹ Women also have a role to play a role in combating injustice, and the more they speak out against injustice, the more they help to reforming and eliminating societal inequity.⁷² Discussions of gender discrimination by socio-demographics are as follows:

A. Gender

Men and women perceive gender discrimination based on their gender.⁷³ Women are more likely to be concerned with gender discrimination than men. Men see less gender discrimination than women do.⁷⁴ A similar result is also found in this study. This study found that more women than males report experience of gender based discrimination.. It indicates that women feel greater gender discrimination than men, and vice versa. It is because of various reasons. One of the reasons for this is that women are encountered with gender discrimination directly or indirectly, while men in Nepal

⁶⁶ Pokharel, "Gender Discrimination: Women Perspective."

⁶⁷ Rukhshanda Zarar, Muneera Moulou Bukhsh, dan Waheed Akbar Khaskheli, "Causes and Consequences of Gender Discrimination against Women in Quetta City," *Arts and Social Sciences Journal* 8, no. 3 (2017): 1–6.

⁶⁸ Abadeer, *Norms and Gender Discrimination in the Arab World*.

⁶⁹ John P. Fernandez, *Racism and Sexism in Corporate Life: Changing Values in American Business*, 1st edition (Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1981).

⁷⁰ James A Wiggins, Beverly B Wiggins, dan James Wilfrid Vander Zanden, *Social psychology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994).

⁷¹ Adhikari, "Gender Inequality and the Problem with Girls' School Attendance in Nepal : A Qualitative Perspective of Patriarchal Nepalese Practice (Unpublished Master's Thesis)."

⁷² Wood, "Gender inequality: The problem of harmful, patriarchal, traditional and cultural gender practices in the church."

⁷³ Barbara A. Gutek, Aaron Groff Cohen, dan Anne Tsui, "Reactions to perceived sex discrimination," *Human Relations* 49, no. 6 (1996): 791–813, <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872679604900604>; James E. Cameron, "Social identity, modern sexism, and perceptions of personal and group discrimination by women and men," *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research* 45, no. 11–12 (2001): 743–66, <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1015636318953>.

⁷⁴ Sharon Foley, Hang-yue Ngo, dan Raymond Loi, "Antecedents and Consequences of Perceived Personal Gender Discrimination: A Study of Solicitors in Hong Kong," *Sex Roles* 55, no. 3–4 (6 Desember 2006): 197–208.

are nearly nil. All negative and conventional gender social practices are applicable to women not to men. Conventional social practices create unequal and iniquitous power relationships in which men control and dominate women, and are treated women as subordinates.

Societal structures are constructed in such a way that they maintain and reinforce men privilege while subjecting women to prejudice and discrimination.⁷⁵ As a result, women experience gender discrimination, and report more discrimination than men. It does not mean that men do not report, and are never experienced gender discrimination; they do report and experience, but to a lesser extent than women, because the majority of victims of gender discrimination are women.⁷⁶ Women in Nepal endure gender discrimination because of traditional social and cultural practices that unfairly treat women in comparison to men. The socio-cultural system and practices favour traditional gender roles, which reproduce and expand men's dominance over women. Therefore, women report more gender discrimination than men.

B. Urban/Rural

Everywhere women are subjected to inequality, discrimination and exploitation.⁷⁷ Even though gender roles are slowly changing at present, it has been concentrated more in rural areas. Rural women's condition is very poor compared to their urban counterparts. In rural areas, more women are experiencing gender discrimination than their urban counterparts. Citizens in rural municipalities reported higher gender-based discrimination than those in municipalities. In rural Nepal, one out of every four young women had been physically assaulted in the last 12 months.⁷⁸ As per Nepal Demographic Health Survey,⁷⁹ gender discrimination is more normal in rural areas (23.8%) than in urban areas (20.5%). Women residence in rural areas have experienced 3.3 percent point more physical violence than in urban areas. In rural areas, more women have witnessed physical, sexual or emotional violence (14.5%) than in urban areas (12.9%).

These evidence suggest that rural women experience more violence than urban women. This doesn't mean urban women never experience violence; they do experience violence, of course, but less than rural women. Urban women suffer slightly less from gender-based discrimination than rural women. This is because discriminatory traditional cultural values, customs and practices against girls and women are deeply

⁷⁵ Richard T. Schaefer, *Racial and Ethnic Groups* (New York: Longman, 1998).

⁷⁶ Charles B. Thomas, "Characteristics correlated with perceptions of gender inequality," *Michigan Sociological Review* 15 (2001): 10–28.

⁷⁷ Rao, *Sociology : Principles of Sociology with an Introduction to Social*, 813.

⁷⁸ Prabhat Lamichhane dkk., "Women's Status and Violence against Young Married Women in Rural Nepal," *BMC Women's Health* 11, no. 1 (25 Mei 2011): 19, <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6874-11-19>.

⁷⁹ Ministry of Health- MOH/Nepal, New ERA/Nepal, dan ICF, "Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2016."

rooted in the rural area.⁸⁰ Deeply ingrained discriminatory traditional cultural beliefs and practices influenced by patriarchal ideology are heavily practiced in rural areas than urban areas, which have a substantial impact on women's lives. Patriarchal ideology and practices silently preserve gender-based discrimination in rural areas. Undoubtedly, hegemonic views of gender, which are acutely embedded with masculinity behaviour, create discrimination against women in rural areas.

C. Age group

Over time, age is a strong predictor of individuals' perceptions of discrimination against men and women.⁸¹ The experience of gender discrimination differs from age to age. Women experience higher gender discrimination at some age, while at some age they experience less discrimination. However, it is difficult to indicate the actual age at which women experience more gender discrimination as it differs among women. Some women experience greater gender discrimination at one point of age, while others experience discrimination at another point of age. Scholars like Sidanius and Pratto⁸² and Norton and Sommers⁸³ assumed that older men (35 years and older) had a zero-sum view of gender discrimination in the wake of increasing anti-men bias to accompany a decrease in anti-woman bias, when compared to younger men (18–34 years of age).

As per Nepal Demographic Health Survey,⁸⁴ the physical violence experienced by women upsurges severely with age, from 11 percent of women aged 15–19 to 28 percent of women aged 40–49. This evidence shows that the experience of violence increases with age. This may be that younger adults may be less likely to obey conventional gender roles compared to older adults.⁸⁵ Younger individual resists the traditional gender roles and practices and believe in gender equality. Evidence from this study indicates that more young adults reported experience of gender-based discrimination, particularly between the ages of 18 and 39, which is decrease after the age of 40. It points out that the perception of gender discrimination in the older age group has shrunk. Younger individuals report more gender discrimination than older because they are better educated, and more willing to challenge traditional harmful gender customs and practices. Gender discrimination is typically seen as a normal

⁸⁰ Gupta, Bhandari, dan Manandhar, "Representative Bureaucracy in Nepali Civil Service: Exploring the Encounters of Women."

⁸¹ Andre Kehn dan Joelle C. Ruthig, "Perceptions of gender discrimination across six decades: The moderating roles of gender and age," *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research* 69, no. 5–6 (2013): 289–96, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-013-0303-2>.

⁸² Jim Sidanius dan Felicia Pratto, *Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁸³ Michael I. Norton dan Samuel R. Sommers, "Whites See Racism as a Zero-Sum Game That They Are Now Losing," *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 6, no. 3 (Mei 2011): 215–18.

⁸⁴ Ministry of Health- MOH/Nepal, New ERA/Nepal, dan ICF, "Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2016."

⁸⁵ Kehn dan Ruthig, "Perceptions of gender discrimination across six decades: The moderating roles of gender and age."

cultural course of action by older individuals, and are less likely to report it than younger.

D. Education

Education and gender discrimination are closely related. Within an educated family and community, the chance of experiencing gender discrimination is lower than those of the uneducated family and community. It doesn't mean that discrimination is not prevalent in educated families or communities; there is certainly discrimination in some ways, albeit less than educated families and communities. Discrimination exists primarily among those with limited education experience.⁸⁶ As educational status increases, the chances of experiencing discrimination decrease. As per the study of Shrestha and Gartoulla,⁸⁷ it is observed that seven out of ten respondents strongly agree that illiteracy is one of the causes of gender disparity in Nepal.⁸⁸ According to Nepal Demographic Health Survey,⁸⁹ the likelihood of experiencing physical violence decreases with educational attainment. Thirty-four percent of women without education witnessed physical violence compared to fewer than one in ten women with SLC or higher education (8%).

This research found that, opposed to no education, citizens without formal education, basic education, secondary education, and higher education reported fewer gender-based discrimination. This suggested that illiterate citizens experience more gender-based discrimination. All of this evidence indicated that education affects gender discrimination in Nepal. Education is a fundamental tool for fighting against gender-based discrimination and inequality. Education is a means of contesting gender stereotypes and discrimination, as well as to achieve gender equality. Education plays a positive role in eliminating biased patriarchal gender ideologies that are deeply ingrained. Education identifies and addresses gender-biased customs, values and practices in the family and society. Educated families and society resist traditional harmful gender practices and support women in every aspect of their lives and empower them to combat gender discrimination.

E. Income

Income and gender discrimination are closely linked. Mainly gender discrimination exists in lower economic classes.⁹⁰ It doesn't mean rich people don't experience gender discrimination, of course, they experience. This study indicated very

⁸⁶ Adeline Delavande dan Basit Zafar, "Gender Discrimination and Social Identity: Experimental Evidence from Urban Pakistan," Staff Reports (New York: Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 2013), <https://bit.ly/2H3o7xq>.

⁸⁷ Shrestha dan Gartoulla, "Socio-cultural Causes of Gender Disparity in Nepalese Society."

⁸⁸ Shrestha dan Gartoulla.

⁸⁹ Ministry of Health- MOH/Nepal, New ERA/Nepal, dan ICF, "Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2016."

⁹⁰ Zarar, Bukhsh, dan Khaskheli, "Causes and Consequences of Gender Discrimination against Women in Quetta City."

alluring results. Even if there is a widespread perception that, for the most part, gender discrimination occurs in lower economic positions, however, this study found that compared to rich citizens, more middle and poor economic citizens have reported less experience of gender-based discrimination. Rich citizens and their family members experience more gender discrimination compared to the middle and poor economic class. This result indicated that gender discrimination can occur regardless of whether a person is rich or poor.

Generally speaking, there is a common belief among ordinary citizens that patriarchal ideologies have less impact on rich citizens, but this study counters this. Whether citizens are rich or poor, deeply ingrained patriarchal gender ideologies have more or less impact on everyone. Traditional gender practices, led by patriarchal gender ideologies, function within a social system in which men oppress, subjugate, and exploit women, whether women are from rich or poor families. Patriarchal gender ideology is practiced in both rich or poor families. Gender discrimination is seen in families and societies where patriarchal gender ideology is extensively practiced, regardless of whether women are rich or poor.

VI. CONCLUSION

Fostering gender equality and eliminating gender-based discrimination at all levels is a major issue of gender justice in Nepal. Gender justice demands the absence of discrimination. Although several measures are taken against gender-based discrimination by state and non-state actors, it is still prevalent. Gender discrimination is putting women's lives at risk. Women face and experience more or less gender inequality and discrimination in different aspects of their lives and are varied by socio-demographic factors. Discrimination against women in Nepal is structural/systemic, and cannot be eliminated overnight. This is because deeply ingrained patriarchal gender ideology, driven by deeply ingrained cultural values and practices are leading to gender discrimination in Nepal. The patriarchal customs, values and practices have tacitly created unbalance power relations and favour men as a supreme category. To disrupt the vicious cycle of unequal power relations, it should intervene in the patriarchal gender ideology.

Promoting gender justice and eliminating gender inequality and discrimination by dismantling patriarchal gender ideology is complicated and daunting, but possible. Progressive and collective actions are needed at all levels. Women should also resist and defend all kinds of gender bias proactively as well as reactively. The vision 'Happy Nepali and Prospers Nepal' can't be fully achieved until gender discrimination prevails in the country. Women must have the equal rights and liberty everywhere, and be allowed to live free of abuse, violence, bigotry, and discrimination as spelt out in the constitution. For this, gender justice should be permanently institutionalized, and everyone including the government, should have a duty to do so.

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