

# PROBLEMS OF WOMEN PHOTOJOURNALISTS IN NEPAL



A STUDY REPORT

SAURAV  
RANABHAT

# Problems of Women Photojournalists in Nepal: A Study Report

SAURAV RANABHAT

Published by:



Nepal Institute of Research and Communications (NIRC)  
Tinkune, Kathmandu, Nepal  
[www.nepalcomms.org](http://www.nepalcomms.org)

July, 2020

*This study was carried out by Saurav as part of his dissertation for Bachelor in Development Studies degree from National College, Kathmandu, affiliated with Kathmandu University. For correspondence, email Saurav at: [youthranabhat@gmail.com](mailto:youthranabhat@gmail.com)*

*Cover Photo: Women photojournalists and video journalists at a felicitation programme in Kathmandu. Courtesy: Naresh Shrestha*

Nepal media has bloomed especially after the restoration of democracy in 1990. Photojournalism is one of the most developed specialized forms of journalism in Nepal. As a part of visual element of news, story or journalistic writing photograph is used for authentication and proves the truth. However, there seems to be no sufficient effort to conduct research on photojournalism in Nepal. In other words, photojournalism seems mostly ignored by media researchers of both the academic and applied sector. There are some occasional media reports but hardly any academic level of contribution in terms of a thesis paper or a journal article. This field is emerging here in Nepal and the conditions of women photojournalists have not been documented yet.

Therefore, this study has tried to focus on the current situation of women photojournalists associated in different media here in Kathmandu. It is important and useful for the women photojournalist, professionals, teachers and students of photojournalism. In addition, it serves as a direction for further studies on the discipline, Moreover, with an overview of the present state of women photojournalist in Nepal. It will be helpful to the planners and policy makers too as we need to tell stories about diverse people from diverse perspectives from a female perspective, people of colour and the lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and queer or LGBTQ community. Thus, you can make big mistakes when you do not have those voices in your newsroom.

The study focused on the challenges faced by women as photojournalists. The study also involved analysing the situation of women in the field of photojournalism in terms of participation, involvement, benefits and employment. This involved doing Key Informant Interview or KII with executive member of PJ Club (Photojournalist Club is a non-for-profit organization established to promote photography and photojournalism in Nepal), senior staffs of eight media houses located in Kathmandu Valley and female photojournalists of Kathmandu Valley. The data collection was carried out from March to July 2019.

### **Concept of Photojournalism**

Photojournalism is the process of storytelling using the medium of photography as your main story-telling device. While a journalist will use their pen and paper to tell stories, a photojournalist will use their camera to capture the visual representation of a story. Most of us are familiar with the old adage “a picture is worth a thousand words”. Well this is the theory behind photojournalism. News publications are willing to pay top dollar to those photojournalists who can capture the most dramatic images on film or their CCD chip (Icon Photography School, n.d.).

Simply put, photojournalism is about capturing verbs. This does not mean simply taking an action photo. Communicating the verb is much more than that. Stories are captured in slices while photojournalism strives to convey what is happening in one shot. Although it is great when it happens, photojournalism isn't about the best composition, or the best technical details, or a pretty subject. Photojournalism is about showing the world a story of something that really

happened. "Bearing witness" is a phrase that comes to mind in regards to photojournalism (Masoner, 2018).

Photojournalism allows the world to see through the eyes of the photographer for just a moment. When photojournalism is done right, that one moment conveys volumes of time. Conveying the full story is part of environmental portraiture where the setting tells us as much about the subject as the subject themselves. The emotion is often raw in photojournalism. The photographer is not directing the scene as a portrait or commercial photographer would. Instead, the best of them blend into the background and become a shadow figure (unlike the paparazzi). They are there to observe and capture, not become the story or interrupt it. It is this attitude, the "I am a mere observer" approach that allows the journalist's subjects to not react to the camera, but to be themselves. The photojournalist has a different attitude than other photographers and it's necessary to capture those memorable photos. Quite often, that single photo can become a call to action for the millions of people who see it (Masoner, 2018).

## **History of Photojournalism**

The history of photojournalism is long and fascinating. Since the camera was invented, photographers have been busy documenting the world around them, and it wasn't long before an early form of photojournalism began to take shape. In the years since, photojournalists have been responsible for documenting and sharing history's most important stories with the public. Because of the powerful effects that are created when striking images are combined with strong words, photojournalism has not only played the role of documenting history, but has also been responsible for shaping it (Casper, n.d.).

To put it simply, photojournalism is a type of journalism that combines photographs with news stories. These stories can be disseminated through any type of media including newspapers, magazines, television, and the Internet. In fact, in the contemporary world, it is hard to conceive of any type of journalism that is not photojournalism, because consumers of news have become accustomed to expecting some sort of image to accompany an article or television story. As the world becomes increasingly visual, with the advent of new handheld devices that stream news stories to the public the instant they occur, this trend will surely increase (Casper, n.d.).

Photojournalism started to take shape when photographers could easily transport cameras into war zones. For the first time, ordinary citizens could see the impact of the fighting right there in their newspaper. It was a pivotal moment in photography and it became more and more real between the Civil War and World War II. Yet photojournalism is not just about war or photographers working the beat for a local newspaper. It's much more than that. Photojournalism tells a story and it often does so in a single photograph. Think of the Depression Era photos of Dorothea Lange or those famous photos of Mickey Mantle hitting home runs. They evoke a feeling, whether its astonishment, empathy, sadness, or joy. That is the mark of photojournalism;

to capture that single moment in time and give viewers the sense that they're part of it (Masoner, 2018).

Photojournalism has its roots in war photography, with Roger Fenton pioneering the field during the Crimean War. Fenton was the first official war photographer, shooting images that demonstrated the effects of war. His work was published in the *Illustrated London News*, bringing these images to a mass audience for the first time. Illustrating news stories with images was only possible due to advances in technology. Early photographs were printed using engravings, with the *Illustrated London News* being the first weekly publication to make extensive use of the technology (Stewart, 2017).

During the American Civil War, photographer Mathew Brady captured scenes of camp life and the battlefields for *Harper's Weekly*. Brady began by photographing troops prior to their departure, playing on the idea that they might not return and would want a portrait for their relatives. His interests soon turned to the war itself, and he applied directly to President Lincoln for permission to travel to the battle sites (Stewart, 2017).

In 1861, he began his journey photographing the American Civil War, at times placing himself in danger during battle—though technological limitations stopped him from being able to shoot photos while the subjects were in movement. In the second half of the 19th century, the field would expand beyond war and disaster photos. Photographer John Thomson paired with journalist Adolphe Smith for a monthly magazine that depicted the lives of people on the streets of London. From 1876 to 1877, *Street Life in London* revolutionized the field by using images as the dominant means of storytelling (Stewart, 2017).

Two important technological developments also helped push the field forward—halftone printing and flash powder. Halftone, which eventually replaced engraving, allowed the full range of shadows in photographs to be printed and sped up the printing process greatly. By the early 1900s, the technology would be adopted by most daily papers. Flash powder allowed for candid, indoor photography, something that would be fundamental for the foremost social photojournalist of the time, Jacob Riis (Stewart, 2017).

A Danish immigrant, Riis arrived in the United States in 1870. His seminal work, *How the Other Half Lives*, documented the lives of immigrants living in New York's slums and tenements. Used as a catalyst for social reform, his work showed the real power that photojournalists can have for spurring change (Stewart, 2017).

From the 1930s through the 1970s, photojournalism saw its “golden age,” where technology and public interest aligned to push the field to new heights. Innovations like the flash bulb and compact Leica 35mm camera made photography more portable than ever. Photo-driven magazines like

Berliner Illustrate Zeitung, The New York Daily News, and LIFE employed large staffs of photographers and used the photo-essay as a means to disseminate news (Stewart, 2017).

Women also became leading figures in the field, with Margaret Bourke-White being the first American female war reporter and the photographer of the first LIFE cover. Dorothea Lange was one of many photographers employed by the Farm Security Administration to document the Great Depression. A pioneer in documentary photography, her Migrant Mother image became an iconic representation of the era (Stewart, 2017).

In the context of Nepal, there is lack of evidence highlighting the historical backdrop of photojournalism and the present situation. Taking into account the accessible proofs J. P. Losty notice, British resident Clarence Comyn Taylor was the main individual to take photographs in Nepal. Taylor took photos amid 1863-65. His photos incorporate the pictures of Janajatis, Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Patan durbars, Jung Bahadur and his family photos. Susan Heide proposes that Dambar Shumsher, child of Dhir Shumsher and the more youthful sibling of then Prime Minister Bir Shumsher, was the primary Nepali picture taker. She composes that there is no persuading proof about who taught Dambar the specialty of photography and insights that Bourne and Shepherd the most likely did. Dambar Shumsher's son Samar Shumsher and grandson Balkrishna Sama later proceeded with photography as a family leisure activity. Sama incorporates a portion of the photos taken by Dambar Shumsher and Samar Shumsher in his personal history '*Mero Kavitako Aaradhana*'. Under the benefactor of Dambar Shumsher and Gahendra Shumsher, Purna Man Chitrakar got a chance to learn photography. Dirgha Man Chitrakar learnt under the guidance of Purna Man Chitrakar (Thapa, 2016).

NFPJ has perceived Gopal Chitrakar as the principal photojournalist. 'With probably Gopal Dai is the primary photojournalist of Nepal' NFPJ Secretary Deependra Bajracharya said 'there were other people who acted as a photojournalist before me yet I was formally designated in Gorkhapatra 1973' Chitrakar told. Nepali photograph columnists recollect 1973 as the start of another calling. It was the primary day when photojournalist was perceived. It took years to begin photojournalism as a calling however the credit of distributed first news photo and in addition beginning of new calling go to Gorkhapatra (Thapa, 2016).

### **Women in Photojournalism and their challenges**

Women face greater challenges in photojournalism: from gender discrimination when it comes to hiring for assignment; sexual harassment; and the incompatibility of the strain on personal lives with societal expectations that still so often fall on female shoulders. Female photojournalists are in a unique position of strength. What is often overlooked is their ability to access people and places that men simply cannot (Arete, 2018).

While the news photography industry has spent the last decade bemoaning the diminishing numbers of photography positions in large news organizations, a small group of researchers are shedding light on another unsettling number crunch: the gender gap. In a field dominated by men—who made up 85% of the respondents in the recent State of News Photography study—researchers found that women photographers were less likely to be employed by large media companies (7%) compared to men (22%). Among those few who did work for such organizations, the women were assigned work less often than their male counterparts and they were more likely to work part-time and not have another job. As for salary, more women earned less than \$9,999 (42%) compared to men (34%), and many more men (5%) earn \$80,000 or more, compared to 1.5% of women (Lowry, 2015).

To date, there has been very little research or data available concerning the work patterns and challenges facing women photojournalists. As the digital era places professional photojournalists as a whole under more pressure than ever, this study seeks to unravel the particular challenges facing women photographers. Using data from 545 women photojournalists from 71 countries collected between 2015 and 2016, this article finds that women photojournalists face even more demanding circumstances than their male counterparts, in spite of the fact that they are more likely to have higher education and have more often received a higher level of training in photography. The data, collected in partnership with the World Press Photo Foundation, suggest the historical underrepresentation of women in photography is ongoing. We argue this pattern of underrepresentation will likely continue in the future meaning an even smaller proportion of women photographers presenting visual stories on the world's most pressing issues and the further decline of the female gaze (Hadland & Barnett, 2018).

The study also looked at the psychological effects, finding that there was a considerable degree of stress among women respondents about the rapidity and expense of the evolution of image-oriented technology. Male photographers were also slightly more positive than their female counterparts about the future of photography. For Golden, it's no wonder that women are stressed about their future as journalists. "We hear stories about our colleagues whose pregnancies rendered them radioactive. When clients find out, assignments dry up, it never gets much better. There are constant threats of sexual harassment and violence, often with no [Human Resources] department to appeal to. We're surrounded by damaging and diminishing words and actions," (Lowry, 2015).

But despite these stress triggers, there is a great deal of enjoyment, and optimism among women in the lifestyle that photography provides, the researchers wrote: "Photographers feel valued in their communities. They feel their work is important. They are positive about the new opportunities that visual storytelling offers. They feel satisfaction with the creativity and variety of the work. And, notwithstanding the low earnings, they mostly feel better off now than five years ago, and they expect things to continue this way for the next five years. Whatever the

challenges—and they abound—this is not a story of professional anguish and decay but one of diversification, resilience, and of hope,” (Lowry, 2015).

Anastasia Taylor-Lind, a documentary photographer based in the U.S., agrees. “How much a photographer earns is only one measure of success,” she says. “The more competent I become as a storyteller, the less I earn (or the more I spend), because I have the courage to turn down editorial assignments, and the self-belief to produce only self-initiated, self-funded work that I think is important,” (Lowry, 2015).

But more can always be done, says Golden. “Here’s my advice to men and women on how to retain women in the field,” she says. “Support them. Make them feel valued and competent (assuming they are) and don’t dismiss them when they bring up concerns pertaining to their gender. Yeah, we all have to be tough to make it in this line of work, but women (and other marginalized groups) often have to put up with some really damaging treatment— damaging to their confidence and well-being and pursuit of happiness—and to dismiss this shows a lack of compassion that does not belong in journalism, ” (Lowry, 2015).

In Context of Nepal, according to an editor at the Kantipur daily, Hari Bahadur Thapa, an average stay of Nepali woman in media is five years. Similarly, executive editor at Naya Patrika daily, Umesh Chauhan argues that the state of gender balance in media house is the reflection of entire political and social construct of the country. Many argue that journalism should not be limited to study- but pursued with passion. And, the passion in women to pursue this profession faces numerous obstacles including family, social and economic. Equal payment is limited to words. A male journalist gets more payment than the female, argue female journalists, pointing out the need of changing perspective towards women (Ghimire, 2017).

In this regard, Chairman of Nepal Bar Association, Sher Bahadur KC observed that the foundation itself is not clear and pure that encourages women to work, and claim equal payment as stipulated by the laws. He also shared the similar problem that the legal sector also faces in case of maintaining gender equality. During a programme Freedom Forum organized in the capital city this Friday, Mr KC urged the State to bring more friendly policies that attract and retain women to Nepali media, so that the advocacy of change become more vibrant. “More number of women in media would not only boost their professionalism, but also encourage other sectors to bring women on board,” he underscored (Ghimire, 2017).

At the same programme, a report Freedom Forum prepared by scanning the byline and news sources for the last three Months-January to March 2017, was unveiled which painted women’s presence dismal. The presence of women in news byline and sources were studied in a total of 1,080 stories from the nine national dailies- Kantipur, Kathmandu Post, Annapurna Post, The Himalayan Times, Nagarik, Republica, Gorkhapatra, The Rising Nepal, and Naya Patrika.

According to the study report, 92 percent bylines read male names while 8 percent of females. Similarly, 90 percent quotes were taken from male sources, while the remaining from the female (Ghimire, 2017).

When such report was shared before the editors, their common argument was: We're very positive towards increasing women's participation in the media. But, the market is so small that we get few women having keen interest and passion to work in media. We encourage them, but they don't continue for the years a male colleague does due to their family problem. The family problem they were indicating that a woman has less chance of joining media after marriage and child birth (Ghimire, 2017).

In a question relating to why few females were quoted for news stories, Chief Reporter at Naya Patrika daily, Parshuram Kafle, said, "It is natural to have the males quoted often because they are close to the news source or have the news we want." To support this, Vice-Chairperson of Federation of Nepali Journalists, Anita Bindu, says, "The structure of political party, the information sharing mechanism is so faulty that females are not given the role of Spokesperson except few cases." Durga Karki, a long time radio journalist opined that one of the reasons behind less number of women's quotes in Nepal media was that women generally did not want to take risk of sharing news, while male ones for many times themselves became proactive and shared the information to media (Ghimire, 2017).

One of the reasons behind less number of women in Nepali media, according to editor at Republica daily, Thira Lal Bhushal, is, "The journalists (woman) are picked by the NGO and INGOs with lucrative salary after they hone their skills in reporting and build knowledge on the particular issue, and media houses should not/can't say they stick to media." For the payment, the Working Journalists Act has clearly mentioned about the payment and facilities to the journalists, disregarding the gender. Similarly, the Minimum Wage Fixation Committee has been prodding the media houses time and again to pay minimum wage to journalists. Gender balance is certain to be a long time advocacy issue in Nepal. Slowly and gradually, the views surfaced on women's presence in media, engagement of editors on this point and the subsequent debates would help create the atmosphere more conducive to the women in Nepali media (Ghimire, 2017).

Journalism as a profession is a challenging task, which obviously is an odd hour job. The social situation of the country also determines the visibility of female journalists in media house. Talking about Republica, lately, there has been increasing number of female journalists though the number is not balanced in terms of gender. "My media's reporters are free to decide their bylines based on the weight of news," he stated. Obviously political news covers larger portion of newspaper, getting huge space in the first and second pages (Freedom Forum, 2017).

Moreover, he said major political decisions are taken during the night or evening time, while women reporters tend to go home before 7pm, resulting in more number of males reporting political news. But it does not mean female are incapable of doing that. Generally, women journalists want to write feature news. “The Friday edition- WEEK and the next one are entirely handled by female journalists in my newspaper,” he shared, suggesting FF to incorporate it in the report (Freedom Forum, 2017).

Senior Reporter of Himalaya Times (Nepali), Ms Rama Luintel added, female sources themselves are confused about their opinions and hence, ask to cross check from other sources as well. Number of female journalists who study journalism is increasing but they do not continue to work in media houses and but begin career at I/NGO. Similarly, stringer with the National News Agency (RSS), Ms Kalpana Poudel, supported Luitel adding that women usually did not like to explore much on political issues. That’s why, the presence of women on this specific part seems weak (Freedom Forum, 2017).

Reporter with the Himalayan Times daily, Ms Anita Shrestha, said most women were fascinated towards feature based news stories. Adding suggestions to the study, Ms Bidhya Rajput, desk editor at online news portal Setopati.com, that it incorporated the overall presence of female in media. Similarly, women leaders quite hesitate to give information which creates doubt. So, they prefer male leaders over females, she added (Freedom Forum, 2017).

Advocate Ms Poonam Kaphle suggested Freedom Forum to identify and analyse the root causes behind less than 10% female bylines in news stories in Nepali print media. She questioned why women are discouraged in this sector. As a political beat correspondent, Mr Ashok Dahal from Republica daily made it clear that female byline in media could be taken as reflection of socio-political situation of Nepal. Sometimes, the odd hour (nature of media) is most concerned by the family of female journalists which hampers their long-term stay in media. Living in a society where females are bound to take care of their family, it is itself a major cause behind their absence in Nepali media, he added (Freedom Forum, 2017).

FF’s vice-chairperson, Sahajman Shrestha, stated that in these recent years, Nepal civil services are likely to be dominated by female counterparts, which could be taken as a positive aspect. Concerning about the theoretical angle of the study, Associate Professor at KU, Dr Sudhamshu Dahal, urged FM to pay attention on deep rooted patriarchy and red tape patriarchy. He also advised to improve the graphical presentation to make the study more impactful. He then suggested checking how the patriarchy is determining the less number of females in media and Who and What define the working hours in media (Freedom Forum, 2017).

Information Officer at Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Mr Dorendra Niraula told FF to incorporate whether the women were included in management of media houses. For

an example, he said that in this program, 2-3 women left program because they failed to manage time, that is to say, they were in need to go to office to ensure their early return to home- before evening. “Only female of “voice” and “choice” are highlighted more than other key points,” he added. While, advocate Ms Sushma Thapa said although there is a large number of aspiring female journalism students, they were less interested to practice journalism. Why? She wondered, adding that at the same time, why media houses do not provide special incentive to retain them because they face biological constraints (Freedom Forum, 2017).

Editor of the Himalayan Times (Nepali), Govinda Luitel, said, “We need news- not how balanced the news sources are. Working as a journalist is quite challenging job indeed.” Again, reminding a past experience he quoted one of the female reporters as saying, “No, I don’t stay long to read news at 9:30 pm because my mother doesn’t allow me”. It is a family problem which is constructed by our patriarchy; a major reason behind women’s participation in the mainstream media. He further said every media has its policy on byline. “If there are males in the post of Spokesperson, how can media quote female,” he questioned (Freedom Forum, 2017).

Historically, Women have had to make great effort to achieve rights, opportunities and treatment that have been naturally given to Nepalese men, for a greater part of Nepal history, and women were not encouraged to work outside the home. During interface Freedom Forum organized on Women’s Presence in Nepali Media in Kathmandu on June 28, 2018, report of the monitoring of news byline, contents sources, presentation of women issues in major national dailies published from capital city, and from provincial level and six online media was presented by FF. The study period covered three months from January to March 2018. As per the report, women were underrepresented in the Nepali media contents with only 9% in bylines and 13% as news sources in 2,397 new stories. Majority of female bylines and sources were found in the social and legal news except for maximum female sources in economic news from online (Freedom Forum, 2018).

According to an editor at the Kantipur daily, Hari Bahadur Thapa, an average stay of Nepali woman in media is five year. Similarly, executive editor at Naya Patrika daily, Umesh Chauhan argues that the state of gender balance in media house is the reflection of entire political and social construct of the country. Many argue that journalism should not be limited to study- but pursued with passion. And, the passion in women to pursue this profession faces numerous obstacles including family, social and economic. Equal payment is limited to words. A male journalist gets more payment than the female, argue female journalists, pointing out the need of changing perspective towards women. Although the negligible number of women in Nepali media is not a big wonder in the sense that most of the sectors including national politics, bureaucracy, security, private offices, and NGOs in Nepal are dominated by male ones, why women are not encouraged and retained in media is pressing questions for long. (Freedom Forum, 2017).

## Research Methodology

In this research, mixed method (quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches) study design has been used to collect the information in line with research objectives and research questions. The study was conducted among eight selected media houses, PJ Club executive and women photojournalists who are members of the PJ Club. The study area of this research is limited only to Kathmandu valley. Regarding primary data collection, key informant interviews have been conducted with the general secretary, Ms Shruti Shrestha, of PJ Club and editors of media houses. Likewise, 8 in-depth individual interviews have been conducted with the photojournalists who are the members of PJ Club. The media houses for the study were chosen based on simple random sampling, while the female journalists were done on the basis of snow ball sampling where their contact was given by the PJ Club. Regarding secondary data collection, relevant readings were collected using search engines Google and search terms such as “photojournalism”, “female photojournalists in Nepal” and related words.

## Findings

### PJ Club

The following are the findings taken from the KII with the General Secretary of PJ Club, Ms Shruti Shrestha.

#### Enrolment and gender ratio of members

According to the Key Informant Interviewer, there have been only 3 female photojournalists enrolled in the PJ Club over the last 3 years. Out of the members of PJ Club the ratio of female to male in general member is 6:65 and board member is 1:13.

#### Enrolment criteria and privileges

According to Key informant interview there are no special requirements for female photojournalists to be part of PJ Club. Moreover, there are no special privileges or opportunities also given specifically to a female photojournalist. Both male and female photojournalists are given equal priority, opportunities and privileges while being the member of PJ Club.

#### Photojournalist Involvement

The key informant stated that both male and female member’s involvement is equally active in the club activities. There is no higher participation of either gender however it has been noted that male photojournalist remains member of PJ Club significantly longer than female photojournalist.

#### Media Houses

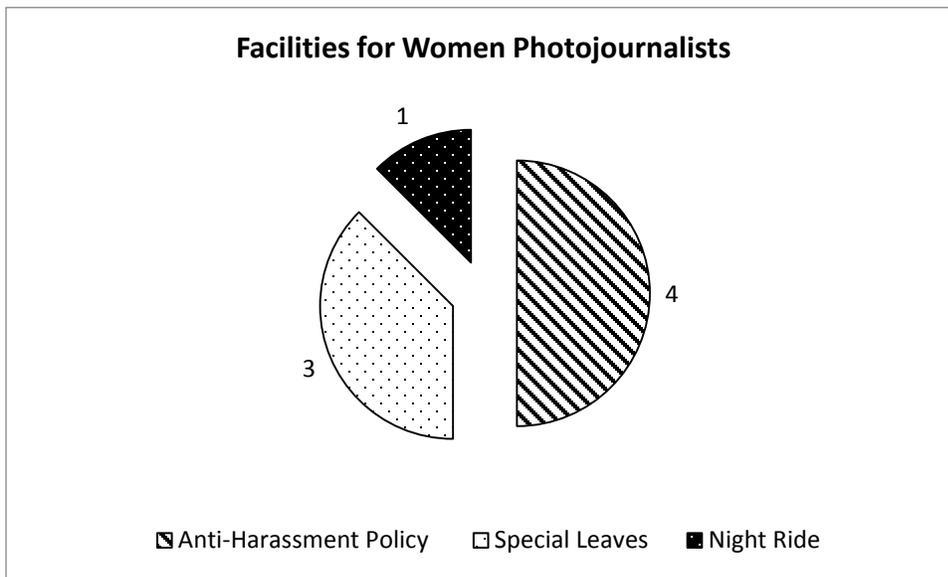
The following are the findings collected after interviewing with the senior staffs of 8 media houses in the Kathmandu Valley.

### Number and demand of female photojournalists in media houses

According to the interviews, most of the media houses have noted that they have more male photojournalist compared to female photojournalist. One out of the eight respondents responded that they have only 1 photojournalist which is a female, while three out of eight media houses stated that they don't have any women photojournalist at all. Two out of eight media houses even further stated that they prefer to hire male photojournalist over female photojournalist.

### Facilities for female photojournalists

Figure 1 shows the response of the media houses' key informants when asked about the special facilities the media house has provided for their female photojournalists.



**Figure 1: Facilities for Female Photojournalist**

Figure 1 shows that according to the interviews done four out of eight media houses reported that they have anti-harassment policy in their media houses specifically targeted towards protection of female journalists. Three out of eight media houses said that they provide special treatments to females which include leaves during festive seasons as well as health leaves such as menstrual cramps and pregnancy. One media house even stated they provide night ride for women photojournalist when covering late night events for the purpose of safety.

## Female photojournalists

The following are the findings drawn from the interviews with eight photojournalists.

### Work experience

Figure 2 shows the responses of the female photojournalists when asked how long have they been working in this field.



Figure 2: Work Experience

From the above figure two we can see that, two out of eight respondent noted that they have been working in this field for less than a year while 2/8 respondent stated that the have been working in this field for 1-5 years. Similarly, other two out of eight respondent have been working in this field for 5-10 years whereas the last two of eight have been working for more than 10 years.

When asked how they feel about their job as a photojournalist, only 2 out of 8 stated that they found their job satisfying, while 3 out of 8 stated that the have had average experience and the rest three have stated that they find their job very challenging. Furthermore, only 1 out of 8 respondents stated that her family doesn't support her job as Photojournalist while all the others stated that their family supports their job as Photojournalist.

### Challenges

According to the respondents, the challenges they feel in this working field is that they feel creativity barrier, burden of having sole responsibility of managing photo department alone, fieldwork challenges such as harsh words from the public, discrimination and another challenge they stated is that they feel like they don't get paid as equal to the male Photojournalist even though the amount of work and work pressure is similar.

Figure 3 below shows the response of the female photojournalists when asked if they see themselves working in this field for a long time.

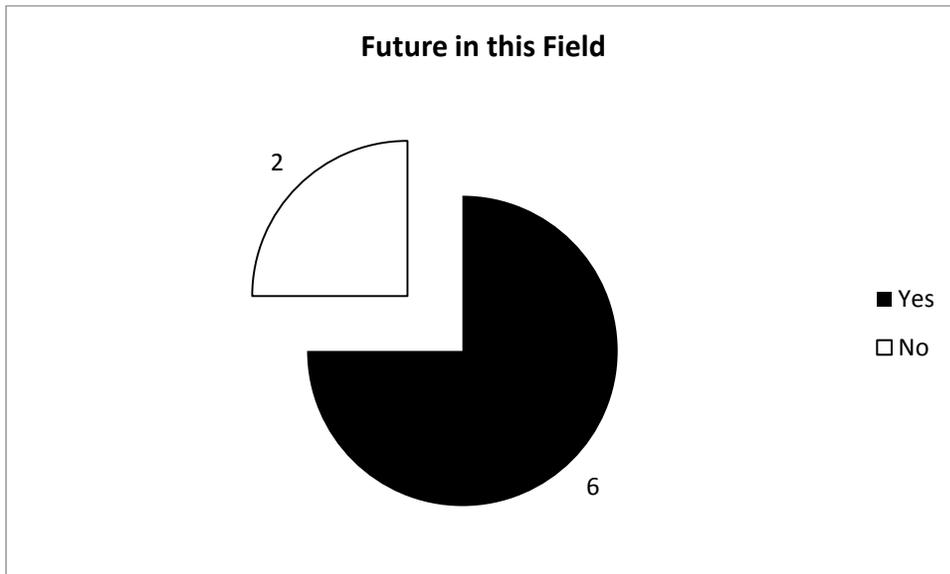


Figure 3: Future in this Field

From the above figure 3 we can see that only 2/8 participants said that they do not see themselves working in this field for a long time, whereas 6/8 participant's respondent responded that they see themselves working in this field for long time.

It is also noted that 8/8 participants responded that they are willing to cover late night shifts.

## Analysis

### Identification of Participation Level of Women Photojournalists:

The enrolment of women in PJ club in comparison to male is far too less. Despite being a skill-based work and not very challenging physically the difference, we can see the number of females is far too less as compare to male. In this tenure of PJ Club has only 6 females participating as compared to male which numbers out to 65. Even for those who are not enrolled in PJ Club male to female ratio is very saddening. Women Photojournalist inside Kathmandu working in mainstream media can be counted on our fingers but the participation of males could be more than 100. The participation of male being so high can be because women haven't been in this field long as opposed to males who stay in this field for a long period of time. With regards to media houses, in general too, the male to female ratio is very low. Findings show that the male photojournalists outnumber females hugely.

The number of years' female journalists commit to this field is also very less. In fact, two decades ago women being seen in this field were rare. One of the reason for this could be their lack of

support from home. As we know the support to women being in this field is very less from their family as it requires confrontation with different kinds of people and also requires working in flexible timings. Women photojournalists don't see themselves working in this field for a long time, even if they wish to stay included various circumstances such as marriage, child birth and family support of her own and in laws.

#### Problem of Gender Inequality:

It is noted that there is occurrence of gender inequality in this field in terms of employment. Media houses have shown preference over hiring male photojournalist as to female journalists. As stated earlier this profession requires confrontation with different types of people and cannot be in accordance to your favoured timings, so to ensure the safety name of their organisation media houses prefer male photojournalist to women.

#### Present Status of Women Photojournalists:

Currently no special requirements are said to be given to either female or male both; they are both given equal opportunity to work. Once they are in this profession they have to be available 24/7 as it is a very demanding and spontaneous job. This makes women empowered as it makes them work and even do night shifts. However, almost every institution has the policy to provide leave privilege to women during mensural cramps, health related problem and pregnancy. Some institutions even have anti-harassment policies and safety assurance facilities such as night ride during late night events.

#### Challenges of Women Photojournalists

The challenges of this job as photojournalist faced by women are numerous such as gender biasness such as women are not sent to events at night or to the places that is crowded (like fair, protest, mob etc.) as they are considered unsafe, despite women being willing and wanting to cover such events. Furthermore, they are not given as much dignity and respect as male PJs and they face issues like being a 'cat' called at times. Lack of safety assurance in the field especially night shifts due to the lack of policy of media houses is another challenge they face.

Moreover, it is difficult for them to commit to this work after being married due to lack of support from their in-laws, pregnancy and family obligations. Lack of harassment policy in the organisation providing openness to some male co-workers to call names and harass females is also one of the most important and serious challenges women face in this profession.

Hence, even in this modern era, there still is occurrence of gender biasness in professional working field such as journalism. Journalism has the scope to bring change in the society and bring awareness among the citizens of the country. Yet, the area of journalism is dealing with addressing the key issue such as gender inequality. Female journalists have come a long way over the years and are still facing challenges such as inability to work after marriage. Over the years, employment

of female journalists has been increasing slowly. Perhaps, by having more women in this field the challenges over time will be mitigated.

## **Conclusion**

This research is a collection of reflections and discussions about what it means to be a female photojournalist and how these photojournalists are satisfied towards their workplace. This study examined job satisfaction and its predictors among the Nepali female photojournalists. The study is also representative enough as it included female photojournalists from all the major media organizations in Kathmandu.

The research focused on these central questions: What is the level of perceived job-satisfaction among female photojournalists in media? What factors contribute to the female photojournalists' decision to continue in their career? What is the relationship between job satisfaction and career motivation of the female photojournalists? What kind of barriers or problems do female photojournalists face?

As we know the importance of women in this field is very crucial as we know that different people with different perception brings different angles and ideas to this field. During certain times there can be cases that could require soft motherly emotions of a women where male intervention can worsen the situation. Naturally being emotional in nature female Photojournalist and always introduce emotional aspect to any story. So the need of female Photojournalist is very important in this field and cannot be excluded.

Findings indicate that the photojournalists are highly satisfied with their profession—but at the same time they are highly dissatisfied with their monthly incomes and the way they are treated. The major predictors of job satisfaction were found to be income, differentiation, and job security. Despite the fact that the research provides very useful insights and information about job satisfaction among these female photojournalists in Nepali media. Future research should, however, include all media organizations in the country. Doing so would provide more useful data and findings resulting in a complete reflection of the female photojournalism population—in relation to their perceived job satisfaction.

Findings further indicate that female photojournalists are having difficult time working in this field not just due to the way they are treated in their office but also the way they are treated in their house regarding their profession. Most family are still sceptic about their girl child working as a Photojournalist as this profession has no time barriers and in a country like ours where security of a women isn't assured this is a serious problem and treat and parent would feel.

On the other hand, the married females are then discouraged by in laws for working as they don't feel secure about this job and also regarding the timing as they feel that a female (wife) after her

marriage has to give adequate time to their family and households. Pregnancy, child birth and raising that child add more to their problem as they cannot commit their time to their office and work and since being updated to current affairs and available for any work is a very important requirement for this job most of the female photojournalist don't carry on with this work after their marriage. So security and lack of job security has been the biggest problem for the involvement of female photojournalists in media.

Hence, even in this modern era, there still is occurrence of gender biasness in professional working field such as journalism. Journalism has the scope to bring change in the society and bring awareness among the citizens of the country. Yet, the area of journalism is dealing with addressing the key issue such as gender inequality. Female journalists have come a long way over the years and are still facing challenges such as inability to work after marriage. Over the year employment of female journalists has been increasing slowly. Perhaps, by having more women in this field the challenges over time will be mitigated.

## **Recommendations**

The following are the recommendations that the findings suggest in order to encourage more female professionals into the field of photojournalism and make it more inclusive and have a balance of narratives and perspectives, particularly from the gender lens:

1. Assurance of their security by the media houses and the press union lobbying with the government. Ensuring their security can inspire more numbers of females and their family, as there are huge number of the females who have will to do this work but don't dare due to lack of security.
2. Government should have a better rules and regulations to ensure the safety of journalists such as having strict rules against those that does or intend to harm journalists based upon their work.
3. Media houses should provide more privileges and priority to women photojournalists and pay them equally as per their competence and not differentiate based on their gender.
4. Introduce more strong and established female photojournalists in the higher position of PJ Club and other smaller associations of photojournalists in order to inspire other emerging female photojournalists to be involved in this field for a longer time and not hesitate to choose this field as their carrier and start seeing themselves working in this field for a very long time.
5. Every media houses should introduce very strict policy against harassment, catcalling and eve teasing inside the office and ensure a healthy and neat working environment inside their office.
6. Marriage, menstrual cramps, childbirth and raising a child is a natural process of every human and everyone has their part to play. In such conditions exceptions have to be made and more facilities need to be provided in order to inspire and encourage women professionals to continue working in this field and not give up their profession just in order to fulfil the natural role they have to fulfil such as role of a mother.

## References

- Acharya, U. (n.d.). *Print*. Retrieved August 1, 2019, from Media Landscapes: [https://medialandscapes.org/country/nepal/media/print?fbclid=IwARlWfwZvISlccGgDbjOBIZhmwg9IPRu\\_AzauDI5UB4rpvd4ImGGRf6oBscg](https://medialandscapes.org/country/nepal/media/print?fbclid=IwARlWfwZvISlccGgDbjOBIZhmwg9IPRu_AzauDI5UB4rpvd4ImGGRf6oBscg)
- Arete. (2018, March 8). *A Medium Corporation*. Retrieved August 1, 2019, from Women in photojournalism: <https://medium.com/arete-stories/women-in-photojournalism-272b91656c6d>
- Casper, K. (n.d.). *History of Photojournalism*. Retrieved August 1, 2019, from Love To Know: [https://photography.lovetoknow.com/History\\_of\\_Photojournalism](https://photography.lovetoknow.com/History_of_Photojournalism)
- Freedom Forum. (2017, August 23). *Less number of females in Nepali media a reflection of social family construct, agree speakers*. Retrieved August 1, 2019, from Freedom Forum: <http://freedomforum.org.np/socio-political-and-economical-arena-determines-female-presence-in-media-media-editors-say/>
- Freedom Forum. (n.d.). *Data Visualization*. Retrieved August 1, 2019, from Freedom Forum: <http://freedomforum.org.np/data-visualization/>
- Ghimire, N. P. (2017, June 11). *Debate on women's presence in Nepali media gains pace*. Retrieved from Freedom Forum: <http://freedomforum.org.np/debate-on-womens-presence-in-nepali-media-gains-pace/>
- Greenslade, R. (2010, June 4). *Pay, the big headache for graduates seeking jobs in journalism*. Retrieved August 1, 2019, from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2010/jun/04/journalism-education-newspapers>
- Hadland, A., & Barnett, C. (2018, July 26). *The Gender Crisis in Professional Photojournalism. Journalism Studies, 19, 2011-2020*. Retrieved August 1, 2019
- Icon Photography School. (n.d.). *What is Photojournalism*. Retrieved August 1, 2019, from Icon Photography School - Photography Classes Online: <https://photographyicon.com/photojournalism/>
- Lowry, R. (2015, September 25). *New Study Shows Gender Inequality in Photojournalism Is Real*. Retrieved August 1, 2019, from Time: <https://time.com/4049405/gender-photojournalism-study/>
- Masoner, L. (2018, April 9). *An Introduction to Photojournalism*. Retrieved August 1, 2019, from The Spruce Crafts: <https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/an-introduction-to-photojournalism-2688644>
- Stewart, J. (2017, June 20). *The History of Photojournalism. How Photography Changed the Way We Receive News*. Retrieved August 1, 2019, from My Modern Met: <https://mymodernmet.com/photojournalism-history/>
- Suddath, C. (2011, October 13). *Chicago Ideas Week: The Future of Journalism*. Retrieved August 1, 2019, from Time:

[http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2096504\\_2096506\\_2096799,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2096504_2096506_2096799,00.html)

Thapa, A. (2016, May 15). *History of photography and photojournalism in Nepal*. Retrieved August 1, 2019, from Photography: <http://arbinthapa.blogspot.com/2016/05/history-of-photography-and.html>

The Art Carrer Project. (n.d.). *How to Become a Photojurnalist*. Retrieved August 1, 2019, from The Art Carrer Project: <https://www.theartcareerproject.com/become/photojournalist/>

The Himalayan Times. (2006, May 27). *Telling stories in pictures*. Retrieved August 1, 2019, from The Himalayan Times: <https://thehimalayantimes.com/entertainment/telling-stories-in-pictures/>

Wanke, M. (n.d.). *Why Is Photojournalism Important*. Retrieved August 1, 2019, from Love to Know: [https://photography.lovetoknow.com/Why\\_Is\\_Photojournalism\\_Important](https://photography.lovetoknow.com/Why_Is_Photojournalism_Important)