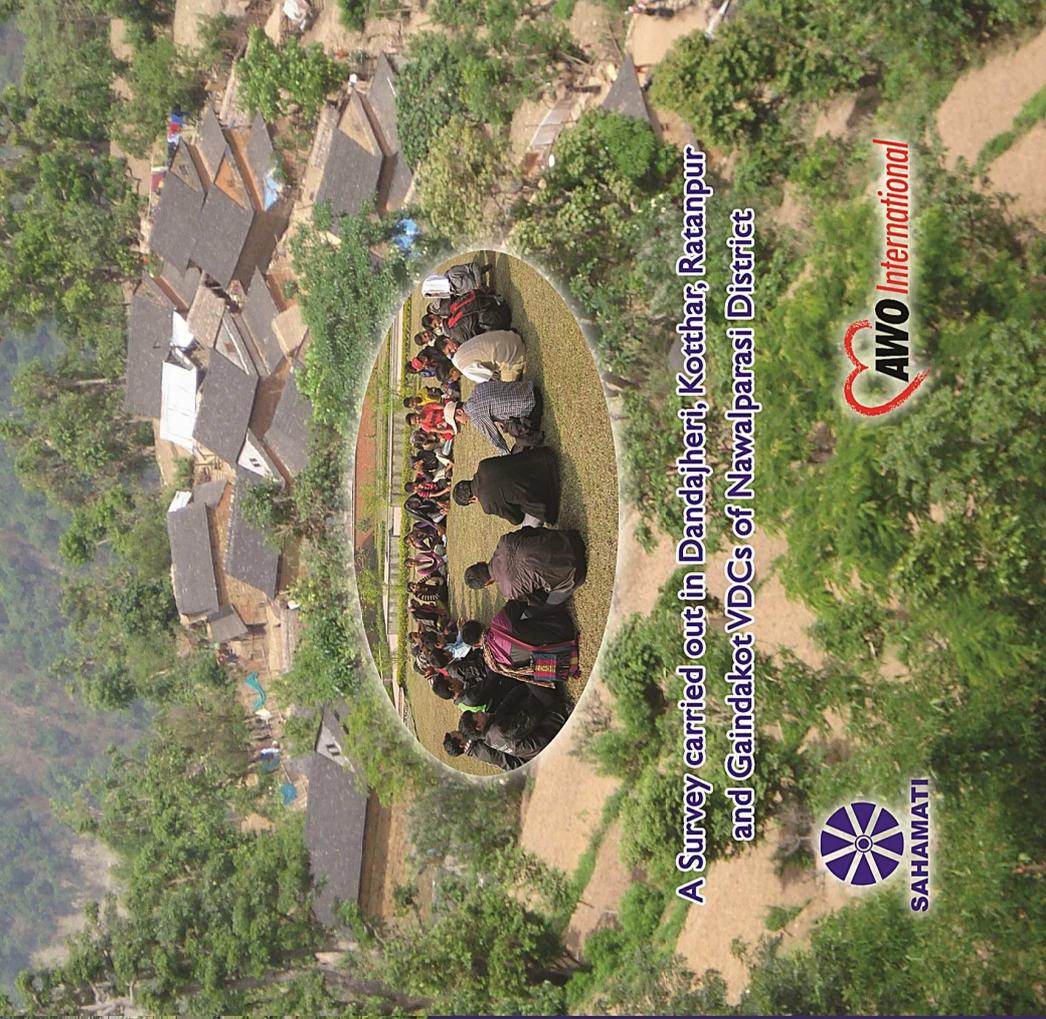


Causes & Consequences of Overseas Migration



A Survey carried out in Dandajheri, Kotthar, Ratanpur and Gaidakot VDCs of Nawalparasi District



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SAHAMATI



Causes & Consequences of Overseas Migration

**A Survey carried out in Dandajheri,
Kotthar, Ratanpur and Gaindakot
VDCs of Nawalparasi District**

**SAHAMATI
2011**

Causes & Consequences of Overseas Migration

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Organizational Word

This survey report on “Causes and Consequences of Overseas Migration” carried out in Dandajheri, Kotthar, Ratanpur and Gaidakot VDCs of Nawalparasi District is a second publication of SAHAMATI Rural Youth Development Program (RDP) with the help of AWO International e.V. Germany. This report is able to represent the overall scenario of migrants, causes and consequences in Nepal, especially in rural areas.

Because of poverty, lack of employment opportunity, illiteracy, lack of skill and knowledge, social insecurity and so on, people have to leave their native place with hopes for better life. For that, state needs to take some key strategies and policies to make favorable environment within the country. We hope this report would help the policy makers to develop some strategies for reducing the uninformed and unsafe youth migration in rural areas of Nepal, even though this report represents only four VDCs of Nawalparasi District.

We thank to Prakash Dahal, Lead Consultant and Ramendra Singh Rawal, Research Assistant for their incredible efforts to make this survey report as a strategic document for policy formulation and implementation. We are very thankful to RDP team; Rabindra Nath Adhikari, Chudamani Sharma and team member for their remarkable contribution to preparing this document.

We would not have been able to publish this document without the generous support of our partner organization. Our sincere thanks go to the AWO International e.V. Germany for their cooperation.

Finally, we wish all the best for the youths to create a self-reliant society in rural Nepal.

Karuna Sagar Subedi
President / Executive Director
SAHAMATI

FOREWORD

Youth Migration to overseas, which has been a trend in Nepal especially in rural parts for quite some time now, has social, economic, and political effects in the community and the country as a whole. This survey has been carried out in Rural Youth Development Program areas, and it has given a clear picture of the causes, trends and processes, and the consequences of overseas migration.

Migration to overseas for a better and economically secured life is not a bad thing, but in Nepal, the scenario is a little different. Due to a decade long armed conflict, youth migration continued to increase to get better employment opportunities overseas, but many of the migrants have suffered due to the lack of information about the visa and migration process, lack of required job skills, and because they have no idea about the working environment in their countries of destination. Also, the problem is that this migration includes majority of the youth, and the country is left totally dependent on the remittances, and there is no other economic development works that would generate the employment opportunities for youth in future.

I am sure this survey would help in understanding the overall scenario regarding youth migration, its causes and consequences, and would help in finding possible alternatives to this major issue, i.e. "Youth Migration".

I would like to thank Prakash Dahal, Lead Consultant and Ramendra Singh Rawal, Research Assistant for their painstaking efforts in conducting this survey successfully, and finally bringing the report in publishable format. I am grateful to SAHAMATI family including RDP team for their participation in the completion of this survey.

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to our partner, AWO International e.V. South Asia office team for their support.

Rabindra Nath Adhikari
Program Manager
Rural Youth Development Program
SAHAMATI

Acknowledgments

We are extremely grateful to SAHAMATI for its offer to conduct the survey on *Migrants: Causes and Consequences* in four north-east Village Development Committees of Nawalparasi district.

The issue of youth migration overseas, the survey centered on, has been the main object of our interest.

We thank SAHAMATI President, Karuna Sagar Subedi, who approached us with the proposal. We are equally grateful to Rabindra Adhikari, Rural Youth Development Program Manager; the survey took a lot out of him to make it a success.

Not least helpful was Chuda Mani Sharam, Rural Youth Development Program Coordinator, who was deeply involved in charting survey strategy.

The fifteen enumerators who spared no effort in extracting information to complete the questionnaire deserve praise for the job.

Last but not the least; the survey team is indebted to RDP Accountant, Ms. Sita Paudel, Community Facilitators, Tarapati Tripathi, Kamal Rijal, Gita Pandey and Local Community Faciliator Premkala Lungeli, functionaries of Youth Information Centers, and local community and Santa Bahadur Ale, RDP Driver who left no stone unturned to make the survey possible.

Prakash Dahal
Lead Consultant

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Migration and remittance has come to stay as a way of life, both in the hills and the plane, in Nepal, of late, blamed squarely on shrinking employment opportunities at home, and, indeed poverty at the root. The phenomenon gained momentum after the country plunged into armed conflict, thanks to the Maoist rising up against the state, for over a decade. Youth fled the country to escape war at home, and also to seek fortune overseas. The trend hasn't reversed even after the Maoist and State smoked pipe of peace, rather gone up.

Going overseas for employment is all the fashion, even adds to social status of a family - so much so that it has gained widespread cultural acceptance. Family elders puff up with pride over sending members for overseas employment. So far so good!

The whole thing is not without a cost, though some say it is worth the trouble. They press the point that it is far worse to stay back home idle doing nothing. That makes sense. The raw, the green, and the underage, drop out of school, and go over to the Gulf countries even if the choice bears heavily on them.

The maladies afflicting overseas migration for jobs are far more than meets the eye. The victims seldom, if ever, tell the truth for social, personal and psychological reasons. Overseas migration has social cost, economic cost, psychological cost, physical cost, and it involves several unforeseen and unaccounted for difficulties for aspiring migrants. Moreover, the mass exodus of youth cost hugely to the country in the long run. Not enough thought has gone to the issue at the national level nor have the planners and policymakers have given serious thought to the matter.

The question that stand up before everyone is, Is economic revolution, as politicians tend to talk, possible when the country is empty of youth? Should Nepal be rendered a country of people

put out to grass? Are Nepalese youth destined to sweat their brow and shed their blood for a country other than their own?

Will the country ever make quantum leap forward, as politicians' dream, with Nepalese youth sweating their guts out in foreign soil?

We leave that to the planners and policymakers of this country.

This survey conducted covering the length and breadth of predominantly *Magar* populated north-east hills of Nawalparasi, is focused on social, economic, physical and psychological cost involved in the migration of an individual youth. This apart, the survey is given to the whole cycle of migration, information/knowledge base of migrants, their choices & preferences, causes that conspire to send them overseas, cost involved, risk involved, troubles, sufferings, loss and gains, opportunities, the good and bad of migration, their own perceptions and so on.

The trouble begins at home where legal and illegal manpower agencies, imposters, frauds, get around the credulous country-folks, promise them the moon, and defraud them. There have been cases galore about it reported in the newspapers.

Underage boys and girls, disqualified under prohibitive regulations of Labour Department, are smuggled out of the country to India by human traffickers, and dispatched to the Gulf. Young people that fall prey to unscrupulous human traffickers and smuggled out of the country are the ones who get hell. They are often treated like dirt, violated, abused, exploited, and denied rightful wages and dignified life. Once away from home in alien land they have nothing to it but grin and bear it. They are often shown the glamour and glitter of Gulf countries and not the wolves under lamb's skin living in there. They don't know how to redress an injustice nor do they have language, resource and information to take the matter up with concerned authorities and slog it out.

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They live like a slave and deported a pauper, sunk deeper into debt and depression, weighed by worries. People back home are happy-go-lucky to live off their remittances

Many a manpower agency charges them far more higher than the actual cost. They sell or take mortgage on farming land, cattle, house and whatever asset and property they have to pay their way out to overseas. They are blinded by the promise and cannot see a sting in the tail. They are illiterate, uninformed, unskilled, and simply desperate to go overseas. That makes them a sitting duck.

Those staying back home, particularly their women, live to tell the tale. Few fortunate husbands overseas win woman splashing money around while their wives scrape living in reduced circumstances in hope that their patience will be rewarded at the end. But this is not to be. They don't come back to them or come high and dry and end up in millet toddy.

There is also different angle to the tale. The young wife run away with a new man and run off with money while her husband is sweating blood at foreign country. Whatever way it is, it certainly leads to break up of marriage and family which may have a huge social cost in the long run.

There are countless tales of woes about migrants which this pilot survey (limited to four VDCs) runs short of space to cover them all. The results thrown up by this survey may only be the tip of iceberg.

Nevertheless, the survey by means of both quantitative and qualitative data will bring out both grim and rosy pictures that should give real reason to national level planners and thinkers to give a serious thought to the issue of migration. One of the key objectives of the survey is to explore a safe and sound route to overseas migration. And also, bring to light the factors that make

Causes & Consequences of Overseas Migration

the credulous folks vulnerable and possible ways and measures to protect them. Finally, the survey will come up with way-forward standing on ground realities that may go far in giving a human face to migration.

I. Objectives of the survey

The survey set out SEVEN key objectives as given herein:

- I. Understand overall causes of overseas migration
- II. Understand consequences of overseas migration
- III. Understand trend, process and pattern of overseas migration
- IV. Understand economic, social, physical and psychological cost of overseas migration
- V. Compare and contrast migrants' family with non-migrants' family in terms of social and economic standing, their choices and preferences
- VI. Explore potential alternatives to overseas migration in the context of hills and in the context of whole country
- VII. Explore ways and means to reduce vulnerability of aspiring migrants
- VIII. Explore requisites for overseas migrants to ensure safe and sound migration and rightful wage

II. Methodology

Since the survey is underpinned by both qualitative and quantitative data strategically designed to mirror the actual situation, it warranted different methodologies which were as follows:

- I. Sheets of 210 structured questionnaire (105 for migrant households and 105 for non-migrant households spread over four VDCs) to solicit information for the purpose of a compare and contrast study
- II. Fifteen local (from the said four VDCs) enumerators were mobilized for data collection
- III. Focused groups discussions held in all four VDCs by lead consultant and assistant

- IV. Interviews with individuals held in all four VDCs by lead consultant and assistant

III. Actual Coverage

Total 208 households (98 migrants' families and 110 non-migrants' families) spread over four Village Development Committees namely:

Dandajheri, Kotthar, Gaindakot and Ratanpur

** Note: All four are hilly VDCs lie in the north-east of Nawalparasi district with **Magar** being predominant population. There has been some **Dalit** and other households too included in the survey.*

IV. Survey Team

The Survey Team composed of:

Prakash Dahal	Lead Consultant
Rabindra Nath Adhikari	Program Manager, Rural Youth Development Program
Ramendra Singh Rawal	Research Assistant
Chuda Mani Sharma	Program Coordinator, Rural Youth Development Program

V. Constraints & Limitations

The survey was begun in the mid of monsoon period a week or two before *Dashain*, Nepalese' biggest festival. Torrential rain forced surveyors to cut it short halfway. The survey was resumed after *Dashain*. Except for the nature-induced hiatus, no significant constraints were faced. The enumerators, however, fell short of target (105 migrants' families) making it to 98 only. The non-migrants exceeded the target by five additional households, making it 110 altogether.

OVERALL FINDINGS

The survey findings are split into two. The first section gives in-depth analyses of the statistical findings about the migrant's families and non-migrant families' overall situation in tandem with the other.

The second section brings out salient (key) features of both migrant and non-migrants' households put juxtaposed for a compare and contrast study.

The third section underscores key issues and concerns associated with overseas migration based on the findings.

The fourth section recommends a way-forward for future interventions.

The overall findings will be underpinned by both quantitative and qualitative data (case studies).

A Compare and Contrast of Migrants' Households findings with Non-Migrants Households

In doing this we look into things that the migrants households have in common with non-migrants and the things that contrast with the other.

Firstly, we list the common things that either group share. In the box below are given things they share and things they contrast.

Common features that migrants and non-migrants households share

- Either of them has farming (agro-based activities) major occupation
- Neither of them favors sending women overseas for employment
- Either of them sees 'Earning Money' as main reason for going overseas
- Either of them prefers friends and relatives for obtaining information over manpower agents
- Neither of them has idea about who they should contact/seek help from in the event of trouble, abuse and exploitation overseas
- Either of them favors youth stay back home and work if there is opportunity
- Either of them believe that youth should acquire skill and language before going overseas (*Refer to survey for details*)

Things migrants' household contrast with non-migrants

- ❑ Greater number of migrants' households (77%) has larger family compared to non-migrant households (61%)
- ❑ Migrants' households have lesser number of breadwinners compared to non-migrant households
- ❑ Nearly all migrant families are found to have run into debt (*refer to case studies*) compared to non-migrants (3%) only
- ❑ Non-migrants' households own land and livestock to fall back on when struck by crisis, migrants households run into debt
- ❑ Migrants' households have better knowledge about the problem faced by migrants overseas compared to non-migrant households
- ❑ Non-migrants' households have better food security compared to migrant households
- ❑ Poverty is the pressing reason for migrants' household for sending their family member overseas, it is not so in the case of non-migrant households
- ❑ The incidence of family break-up, running away with other man, keeping other woman is endemic in migrants' households compared to non-migrant households
(Refer to survey for details)

Some intriguing facts about migrants

- ❑ Only 2% women are working overseas compared to 98% men
- ❑ The migrants don't trust manpower agency, rely on friends and relatives for information
- ❑ Women bear greater share of pain (two third), men control greater share of remittance
- ❑ Over 50% says going overseas does more harm than good, yet 31% want to go back
- ❑ Migrants 69% say overseas stay 'Good'. Almost 99% say they suffer physically, mentally or both (*Refer to survey for details*)

Causes & Consequences

Interested readers are advised to give the survey-report a thorough reading to see the overall cause and consequences for themselves. For a quick look, the causes & consequences are summed up as follows:

Causes	Consequences
Poverty	Run into debt
Lack of employment opportunity	Overseas Migration
Illiteracy, lack of skill, knowledge	Abuse, exploitation, confinement
Making money overseas	Gradual settlement on roadside
Living long away apart	Family break-up, Social ills

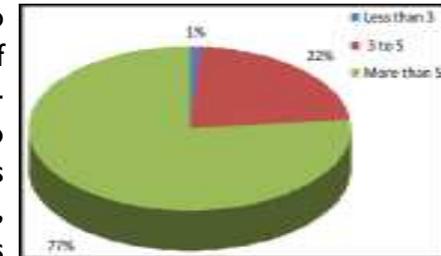
SECTION ONE

Overseas migrant’s family’s overall situation

(total 98 households = 100 percent)

Family size

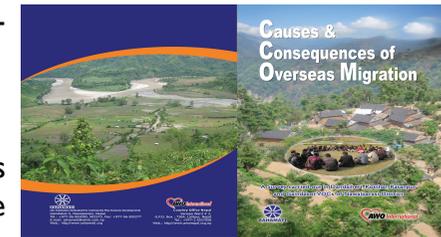
The family size is taken into account for reason of understanding how hard-pressed the family is to survive. Whether or not it is a crucial factor, among others, that affects overseas migration!



Statistics, as showed in graphic display, speaks volumes about the fact that large number of households (77%) has more than five members in family to take care of. Nearly ¼ of 98 households have family size in between 3 to 5. The family size seems to have some bearing on migration though it can be said with some sureness only after contrasting it with non-migrant’s family.

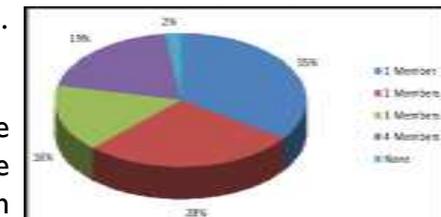
Earn living

A sizeable migrant’s households (68%) live off the land. Nearly ¼ of them have been on job of sorts. That means a good many migrant’s households own land, though the size vary from household to household. The number of households earning living from farm-laboring weren’t any the less.



Breadwinners

As most of them live off the land, breadwinners include both farm and off-farm

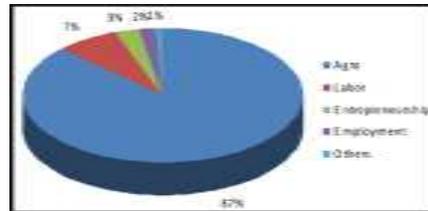


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earners. In our case, it is mostly farm-based as job-holders are negligible few. The household having large family have more farm-hands than those having small family. The pie-chart above illustrate the highest number of households (35%) having one breadwinner, followed by two breadwinners (28%), three breadwinners (16%), and four breadwinners (19%). It gives us idea that the bigger the family size the greater the farm-hands.

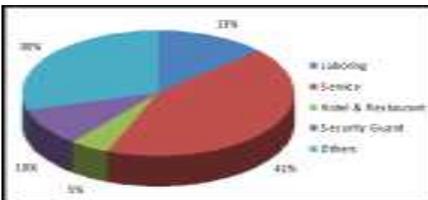
Traditional occupation

By inquiring into traditional occupation, the survey seeks to find out if it is the value decline of their traditional occupation that forced people to migrate overseas. On the contrary, it is found that agriculture (farming) has been the dominant occupation (87%) among the migrants' households. There has been no shift in patterns of living over the years. They continue to live off the land.



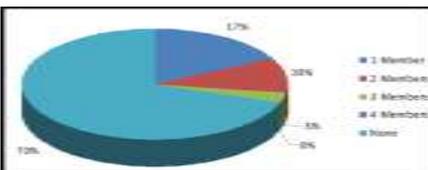
Types of employment

Of nearly 1/4 on jobs of some sort, the survey seeks to dig out the truth about nature of work they are engaged in. The largest number are employed in service sector (42%), followed by laboring (13%), security (10%), hotel and restaurant (5%), and undisclosed (30%). It shows that most of them are on blue-collar jobs blamed at poor skill and education.



Members away from home on job within country

This was to learn facts about if overseas migration is an extended version of in-country migration, and whether more people, driven



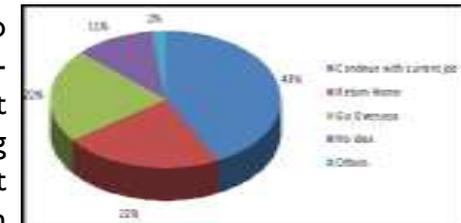
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by poverty, have been away from home within country. It wasn't the case.

It was discovered that large number of migrant's households (70%) had no one on job within the country. Less than 1/4 (17%) had one member away from home on job within the country, followed by 10% households having two members on job within the country.

Future course of action

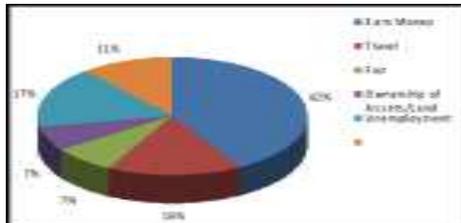
The question was put to people on job at home (in-country) and their kin. It aimed at extracting information from them that goes to suggest, even narrowly, whether in-country jobs engender overseas migration or has it no bearing on it whatsoever. To put it simply, we wanted to know if jobs at home go on building their confidence and skills and that prompt them to go overseas for better income.



The findings supported the assumption to some extent, although responses varied from household to household. Maximum number of households (43%) said they would put up with the job against all the odds. Nearly half of that (22%) favored going back home once they quit. Another 22% expressed interest to go overseas citing that the goings is not good at home.

Reason for going overseas

What exactly those willing to go overseas expected from overseas migration? This question was put to them who expressed interest to go overseas. The reason they gave was quite simple. Nearly half of the respondents (households) said earning money was their end goal. The next



Causes & Consequences of Overseas Migration

17% respondents held unemployment at home responsible for compelling them to go overseas, followed by 16% respondents who wanted to see what a foreign country look like.

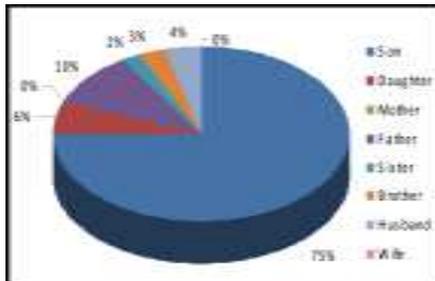
Jumping from frying pan into fire

Ram Chandra Rana Bhat, a resident of Matthar #1, Dandajheri VDC, is a married man with one child to take care. Raw and green, he spent 2 years in Saudi Arabia working for a juice company. He saved some money, paid all his debts, and little left in pocket he spent on house renovation. He is empty hand, no job, sitting idle, living in reduced circumstances, killing hours and days. When asked what he has in mind, Ram Chandra had this much to say, "Nothing, the appalling hardship abroad make flesh crawl. Sitting back home doing nothing is like waiting in death row. Don't know! I was in frying pan there. I jumped out of it into fire."

"You have no choice but to grin and bear it. I've made up my mind to go", Ram Chandra bared his heart.

Family members overseas

This question was meant to search out households' preference between sexes over overseas migration. In the predominantly Magar populated area, women are least favored for overseas migration as shown by the finding, yet still they are not altogether ruled out.

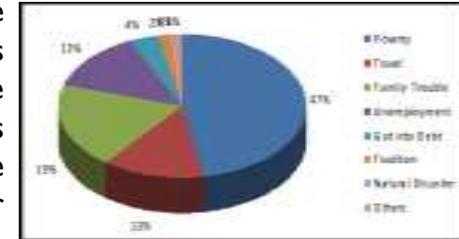


As illustrated in pie-chart above, the bulk of overseas migrants (75%) have been sons, followed by father (10%). Some households had their daughters (6%) working overseas. From gender perspective, size of women population working overseas is not even a quarter as big as men.

Causes & Consequences of Overseas Migration

Pressing problems to go overseas

Conditions of poverty come to the fore of problems putting pressure on people to go for overseas employment. There have been scores of other problems like family trouble, unemployment, debt and so on.



Nearly half of respondent households (47%) went overseas to fight poverty at home. Less than that (19%) flew overseas to escape family trouble, poverty at the root, followed by unemployment (13%). Another 13% are tempted into going by the glamour and glitter of foreign country.

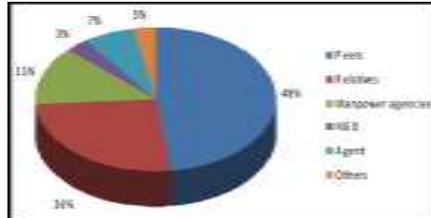
We go hungry if he doesn't earn

Dev Maya Pariyar of Ratanpur #1 is a Dalit woman married with 2 sons and 1 daughter to feed, clothe and educate. She got into debt to send her husband to Qatar. He spent 2 ½ years in Qatar, came back, paid debt, enrolled children in school, purchased land. He went back to Qatar. She is all joy to see her children walking to school. Dev Maya lives with her children in a house of a distant relative. Her husband has promised her a home of her own, come next year. When asked if it was okay the husband and wife living long way apart, Dev Maya's face fell, her eyes dropped. She lifted her wet eyes looking forlorn, spoke in an anguished, halting voice, "The food produce runs for six months only. No parents can withstand their children starving. Sending children to school is like dreaming up a crazy scheme. You don't get paid work here. What choices do you have?"

Dev Maya wishes her husband had stayed home with her. But she doesn't want to live in a fool's paradise. She says, "Our dream is to own a house of our own and educate children. Nothing comes without a price. No pain no gain! Though we live the hard way, it is for a cause. Perseverance pays"

Information source

Information level of households' respondents is an important factor that goes to determine the vulnerability level of credulous youth. Informed



are empowered ones. The uninformed are prone to fleeing, trafficking, abuse, exploitation, and end up in suffering and so on.

The survey seeks to find out their information source (who do they seek information from or who provide them) before taking decisions over overseas migration.

The statistical evidence shows nearly half (48%) of overseas migrants get information from peers. Peers, particularly those who have been around, have influence on them and they take it from them. Next in line come the relatives (26%) who they approach for information or get information from. The manpower agencies get the third priority (13%) on matters of information collection. The NGOs working in the area have also been source of information (7%).

Lok Bahadur put a foot wrong

Lok Bahadur Thapa from Dhodeni #3, Gaidakot VDC, was a Grade VIII student when he ran away from home and worked for a furniture factory in Kathmandu. There he got into company of boys who were in the process of going overseas. He wanted to join the ranks of them and sought advice from a distant relative in Kathmandu.

At his recommendation, he got into contact with one EKA manpower agency that demanded Rs. 95,000 for finding him a job in Malaysia.

Lal Bahadur got his parents arrange for money to have him sent overseas. As he was underage, hence disqualified under Nepal's prohibitory regulation, the manpower agency suggested him to fly from India as a way of getting round the regulation. They took him to India and flew him out from New Delhi to Kualumpur.

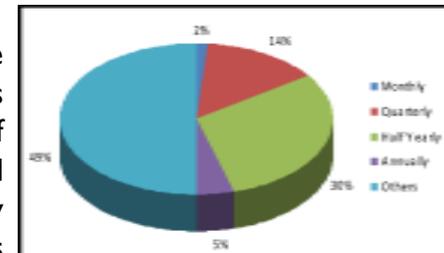
He went through terrible ordeal at Kualumpur airport. The agent who was supposed to pick him up from the airport didn't show up.

Recalls Lok Bahadur, "We didn't know who to go for help and seek support. None of us spoke English language nor did we have any knowledge of the language spoken there. We waited day in and day out in the hope that the agent would roll up one day. We lived only on water for nine days, and slept on naked floor. I lost weight, my energy drained away. No one gave a shit about us. It was only after one group of Nepalese labour arrived from Nepal, we received help."

He adds, "In Malaysia, I was illegal. I worked for peanuts for survival. Somehow I raised money to fly back home, high and dry. In Nepal, I came to learn that the said travel agency was illegal and had pulled its shutter down. I am in heavy debt. A chastening experience taught me that one shouldn't go overseas without proper information, language and skills"

Remittance frequency

Remittances are sent home at different intervals. There is no similar pattern. Nearly half of migrants (49%) wired money home on monthly basis. Nearly 1/3 of migrants which is (30%) did so in every six months. Another (14%) sent remittances on quarterly basis. The other (5%) sent them on annual basis.



Bishnu Maya Pariyar spent remittance on building roof over head

Bishnu Maya's husband, Chabi Lal Pariyar, a resident of Damahar #1, Ratanpur VDC, spent two years in Qatar. He came back home putting his hand in his pocket. They spent the money on building a house for themselves. When he went out of pocket, he flew back to Qatar. They have one son and two daughters to feed, clothe and educate. All three children are enrolled in school.

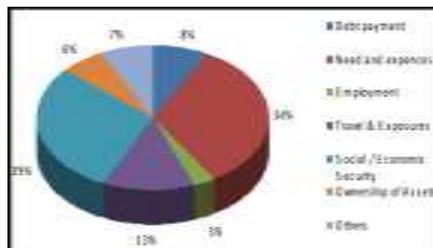
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Bishnu Maya receives remittance to the tune of 30 to 35 thousand rupees every six month. Her in-laws are happy with her. They have been cooperative and shown good understanding. They get along well.

Bishnu Maya recalls “Initially I was opposed to his decision over going overseas. Then our children were too small. Now, I feel the need for feeding, clothing and educating them. He took a good decision. Our children are better-fed and go to school. I receive remittance every six months. That keeps us going”

The good of overseas migration

The respondent households were asked about what to their mind is good thing about overseas migration. Their responses varied from households to households. They saw it differently.



Largest number of migrants' family (34%) held the view that it helped cope with family's need and expenses. The latter group of migrant's families (29%), coming on the heel of former, had two-word answer 'Debt Payment'.

A small number of migrant's family gave priority to Travel and Exposure, Asset Ownership, Employment and so on.

Dev Maya happy at debt payment

Dev Maya's husband, Nanda Lal Pariyar, from Damahar #1, Ratanpur VDC, ran into debt while running a tailoring shop. The couple had two sons and one daughter and themselves to fend for. They didn't have ancestral property and assets. They could barely pull the family off for six months. Their trouble worsened as children grew.

Nanda Lal Pariyar decided to go overseas for earning. Dev Maya didn't want to part with her husband but she had no choice. He borrowed loan from a money lender and went to Qatar where he

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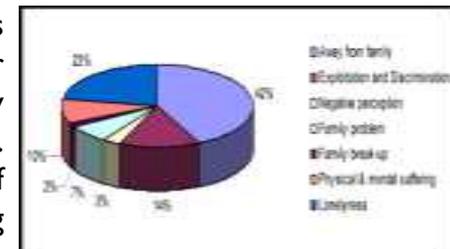
was put in a blue-colour job with a manufacturing company. He came back after 2 ½ years, paid all his debts, and also bought a patch of land.

Nanda Lal went back to Qatar. He is now working there.

Dev Maya says, “We have dreamed of building a house this time. He is working hard to make it come true. Our children go to school. We are better off now. We talk to each other over phone every week. He says, he'd come back this time for good.”

The bad of overseas migration

On bad of overseas migration a trio of major problems is cited by household respondents. Greater number of households (42%) sees living away from the family is major



problem. Nearly ¼ of respondents say loneliness is a difficult problem to bear with. The third category of respondents sees threat of family break-up as major problem, followed by physical & mental suffering (10%), family problem (7%), and negative perception of society (3%) and so on.

Tara lost her husband

Tara Maya's husband, Surendra Bika, a resident of Damahar #1, went to Qatar leaving behind his wife and two daughters and one son. He spent 2 ½ years in Qatar working as a driver in an oil company.

During this period he wired money home worth Rs. 1,25,000. He came back, enrolled children in school, gave some money to his wife, frittered away the rest on drinking and flew away to Dubai. He's is currently working as a driver in some undisclosed company.

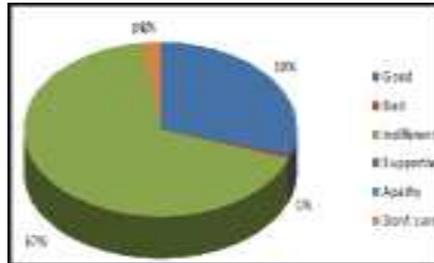
From Dubai, he's sent only 10,000 rupees in an interval of six months. He's stopped calling her up. She hasn't heard a word from him over the past six months. Tara has come to learn the bitter fact from his

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colleagues that her husband has kept another woman in Dubai. He's splashing money about on her. Tara is thinking of seeking legal remedy to the injustice done to her.

How does the larger society, other than the households under survey, respond to overseas migration?

This question was important to understand whether society's view on migration has some effects on migration trend. The question was asked to migrant families to learn about their own impression about society's response.



Only one third (30%) opined that the society appreciated overseas migration as something good. Nearly two third (67%) said that the society didn't bother about the whole thing, followed by (2%) who said they didn't lose their sleep over it.

Husband away from home is double whammy for Chaal Maya Thapa

Man Bahadur Thapa, husband of Chaal Maya Thapa, from Dhodeni # 3, Gaindakot, lived in Qatar and is now working in Malaysia. He's been away from home for 4 years. Chaal Maya receives regular remittance (quarterly), and talks to her husband over phone every fortnightly.

Financially, she feels quite secure but mentally she feels like Damocles' sword hanging over her head.

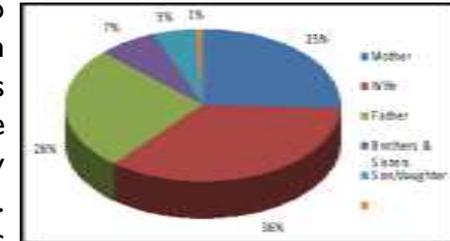
She says, "In his absence I should carry the whole family burden on my shoulder. Even in emergencies, I can't seek help from any man in the village. Doing that will mean we have something cooking between us. The society is more of a liability than an asset to women like us. And if you shut your eyes and ears to prying eyes and wagging tongues, soon you make your in-laws your enemy, and they throw you out"

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She further says, "They blame us that we run away with other man in absence our husband. It is they who conspire against us and compel us to cross our threshold"

Who suffer the most at home?

This question is pertinent to the issue under survey from both gender perspectives as well as to see whether the pain of migration is shared by all together with remittances. The opposite is true in this



case. It is the women who suffer the most and bear the pain as illustrated by the graphic display above.

It is the wives (36%) who stay back home and suffer the most. Fathers (26%) and mothers (25%) suffer physically and mentally at the absence of their sons. From gender perspectives 61% women alone suffer at the absence of husband and son though everyone in the family benefit from the remittance sent by them.

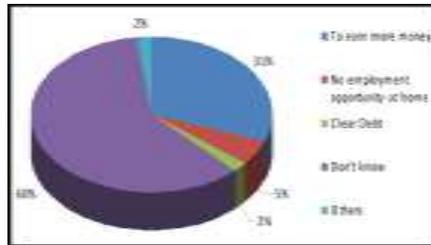
Dil Maya needs husband not money

Dil Maya Shrestha, from Kotthar VDC # 5, has been a loner for 2 years after tying knots with her husband. Immediately after marriage, he went Saudi Arabia where he works as a driver. He's been regularly wiring money home. The money doesn't make her happy. She herself makes money at home working as a social mobilizer in some government funded project. Her face was wrinkled with worries while talking to the team of surveyors.

Dil Maya says, "I am alone. My father and mother-in-laws are old. My job requires me to keep traveling from village to village. There are men in society who keep dirty eye on me. I feel vulnerable and weak in absence of my husband. I can say that much"

Will he/she go back on return? If yes, why?

This question was asked to know the mind of migrants as well as of families whether they go back to the overseas job once they are home. Majority of them (60%) said that they haven't thought over it or stand undecided. Nearly one third (31%) wanted to go back to earn more money. The other (5%) said that they had no choice as there was no employment opportunity at home.



Pratima won't send her husband back to overseas job

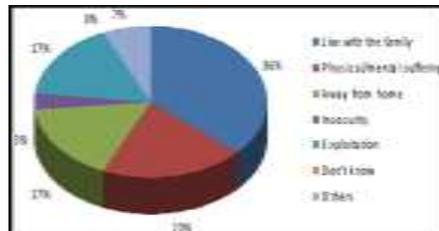
Pratima Ramdan, from Thambesi #5, Kotthar VDC, has her husband in Dubai working in a furniture factory. He's completed 2 years of his 3 years contract. His earning is good and paid all his debts. He wires money home from time to time. Pratima has set up a grocer shop in the village with the help of that money.

Pratima says, "I sent him away from me for economic security. We are economically stable as I won a shop that gives us some return. Now, I need social security. You need both, can't live at the expense of other. I have asked him to scrimp and save. I want to put that money into my shop and grow it.

We have decided that he won't go back. We'll stay back home and live together."

Why not?

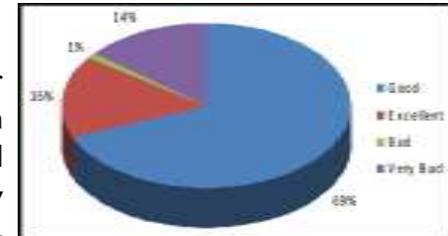
This question was asked to those who were negative about sending migrants back to overseas job. Apparently, it was aimed at uncovering the reason behind their loathing for it.



The majority of household respondents (36%) said that they wanted live together. Next (20%) respondents said that they underwent sort of physical and mental suffering living long away from each other. The other (17%) respondents said that they don't want send their sons/daughter away from home. Another (17%) respondents cited exploitation as reason for not sending them.

Overseas stay

How did they find their overseas stay? This question was directed to migrants and their families. The survey tried to record their first-hand impression about it as Good, Bad, Excellent, Very Bad.



Two third of migrants and their families (69%) gave it Good, (16%) of respondents gave it Excellent, and (14%) respondents gave it Very Bad.

Overseas is hell

Meena Rana Bhat, resident of Matthar #1, Dandajheri VDC, has 4 sons to look after. Her husband has been to New Delhi, India for the past 15 years. The whole burden of running family is on her shoulder. She pulls it off alone.

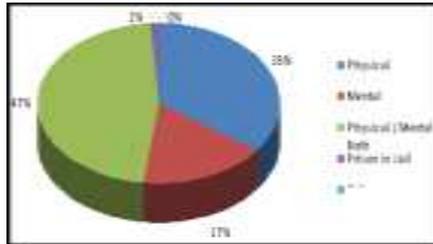
Her husband comes and goes, doesn't bother his head about the family.

Meena says, "He is more of a liability than asset. It makes no difference whether he is at home or away from it. Previously, he was okay. I don't really understand how he got changed after he went to New Delhi. Going overseas is hell. I recommend no body to go there"

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Kinds of trouble faced

Migrants and their families were asked to share various difficulties they encountered working overseas. Nearly half of the respondents (47%) said that they suffered both physical and mental stress. Nearly one third of respondents (35%) said that they suffered physically, followed by (17%) who said they were under tremendous mental stress.



I was locked away in a room for two weeks

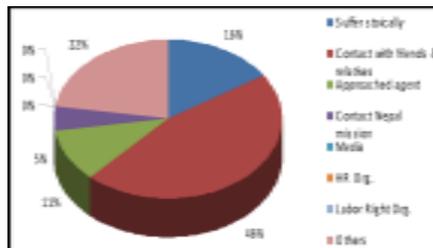
Tilak Ramdan, a resident of Thambesi # 5, Kotthar VDC, has been working as a driver in an oil-drilling project in Qatar. He gets back home every 2 years as per his contract. He earns enviable 40,000 rupees a month. He's got his son and daughter into a good school. He's also purchased land by the highway side and put away some money to start off a business after retirement. All was not well with him when he first went to Qatar raw and green.

Tilak tells his tales, "In the beginning I did hard labor in a company. The company owner refused to pay the wage agreed upon. I threw a protest. They locked me away in a room for two weeks. I was all by myself in foreign land at the mercy of alien people. I didn't lose heart, kept opposing them. They fired me from job. My colleagues helped me. I learnt local language and driving. That opened up several avenues for me. I got driving job:

"It didn't begin well but ended well", Tilak gives a triumphant smile.

Coping strategy

How did they cope with the difficulties they faced? Their responses varied from respondents to respondents. Their responses served as a



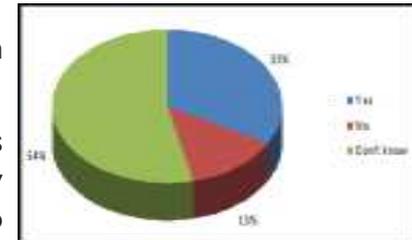
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reminder that their knowledge base and capability has been pathetic. They have very poor means and ways to get their woes redressed in foreign land.

Nearly half of the migrants (46%) didn't know any better than contacting friends and relatives and sharing their pains. The other (16%) respondents said that they grinned and bore it. Yet other (20%) respondents didn't want to be specific. The other (11%) approached their agent, followed by (5%) who approached Nepalese mission overseas.

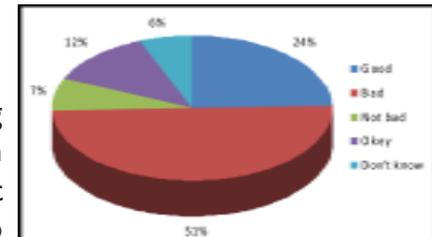
Any idea who to approach in the event of difficulties?

Once again their responses show how poorly equipped they are to face any eventualities. Two third (67%) of migrants and their families have no idea who they should approach/contact in the event of difficulties. One third of respondents (33%) said that they know who they should contact.



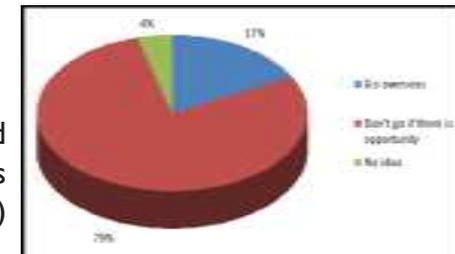
Overseas going does good or bad?

Over (50%) says going overseas does more harm than good. They admit that it is not a good idea to go overseas. The other (24%) respondents say it is good, followed by other (12%) who says it is okay, and (7%) says not bad.



Do you recommend your friends to go overseas?

When asked if they would still recommend their friends to go overseas for job, (79%)



of respondents rejected the idea of going overseas given there is opportunity at home. Only (17%) favored overseas migration for employment, followed by (4%) who were undecided.

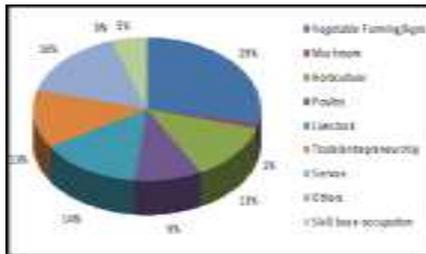
Going overseas waste of money

Chum Maya Rana Bhat, from Matthar #1 DandajheriVDC, sees red when people talk of overseas. Why? Her husband came back from Saudi Arabia out of pocket. He spent two years for nothing.

Chum Maya tells her tale, "We spent 110,000 rupees to send him to Saudi Arabia. I was all myself looking after two sons back home. We suffered in hope that it will be rewarded. He came empty-handed. His overseas stay didn't help me and my family in any way. Going overseas is waste of money, waste of time."

Given opportunity at home what would you like to do?

This was the final question to the migrants' households. The survey seeks to find out what kind of opportunity can keep them from going overseas. What do they really expect to happen?



Little less than one third of them (29%) said that they would go for vegetable farming if some sort of support and incentives given to them. The other (14%) respondents preferred livestock keeping to vegetable farming if support and incentives are given to them. The other (13%) favored horticulture, followed by (16%) service (job), (13%) skill-based entrepreneurship, (9%) poultry and so on.

SECTION TWO

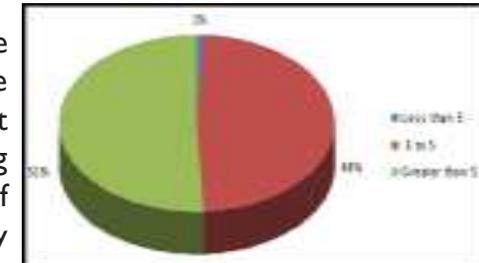
Non-migrant's family's overall situation

(110 HH = 100 percent)

This section deals exclusively with life situation, problems, challenges, constraints, preferences and choices, of the non-migrant households. Please note that the 110 households being looked into are also from the same four VDCs namely *Dandajheri, Kotthar, Ratanpur and Gaidakot*. The facts and figures thrown up by the survey with regard to non-migrants households will be compared and contrasted with the migrants' household in Section Three and draw the commonalities and differences.

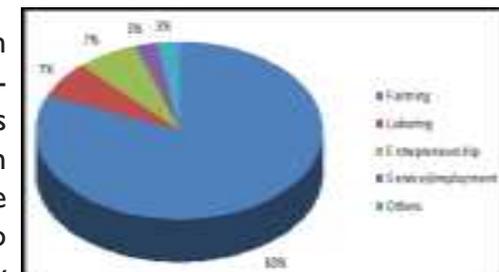
Family size

Some similar and some different questions were asked to non-migrant family households. Among the non-migrants (51%) of households have a family size comprised of more than 5 members. Little less (48%) have family size in between 3 to 5. Only (1%) have family size comprised of less than 3 members.



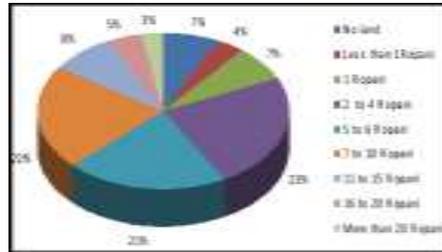
Earn living

As to how they earn their living, (80%) non-migrant households earned living from farming. Only (7%) have been in entrepreneurship of some sort followed by other (7%) who earned living from laboring.



Land holding/ownership in terms of *Ropani*

Among non-migrants, the position of land-holding (owning) is fairly strong when compared with migrant's households though this question was skipped in the former's case. As a matter of fact, as showed by qualitative survey (case studies), almost all of the migrants had gotten into debt which they paid all upon return from overseas (refer to case studies). This reflects well that the migrants' families didn't own much land and assets to use in time of need, consequently, went to the money lender for loan. Also, poverty being the dominant factor (47%) followed by family trouble (19%) and unemployment (13%) among migrant's households for sending them overseas speak volumes about their hard up position back home.

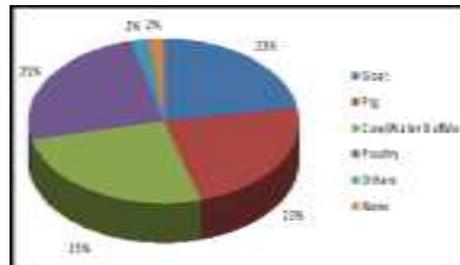


The question to the migrant's household what they would like to do at home given opportunity, only (29%) migrant's households said they wanted to start off vegetable farming, the rest favored job, skill-based entrepreneurship, and others. This again point to the fact that they own very little or no farming land.

On the contrary, the non-migrants households (3%) own farming land more than 20 *ropanis* (something of a Zamindar), (5%) 16 to 20 *ropanis*, (8%) 11 to 15 *ropanis*, (22%) 7 to 10 *ropanis*, (21%) 5 to 6 *ropanis*, (23%) 2 to 4 *ropanis*, (7%) 1 *ropani*, (4%) less than 1 *ropani*. Only (7%) among the non-migrants households didn't own land.

Owning livestock

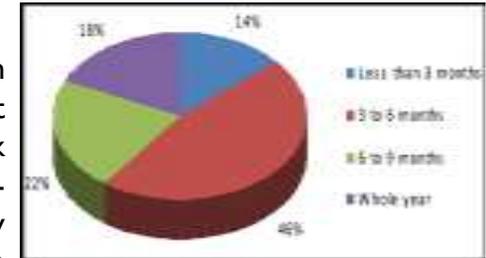
The non-migrants households own livestock alongside land ownership which is an added value to their economic security.



Among non-migrants households (25%) own cow and water buffalo, (25%) keep poultry, (23%) keep goat, (23%) keep pig. Only (2%) of households have none of them. There is no denying that the owning of livestock include their asset.

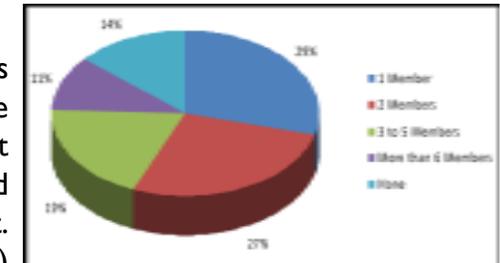
Food sufficiency

The food supply condition even among non-migrant households doesn't look all well. Only (18%) non-migrant households enjoy sufficient food for one whole year. The other (22%) have food off for 6 to 9 months (short by 3 months). The other (46%) have food running 3 to 6 months. At the bottom of social pile are (14%) who produce food sufficing for 3 months or less than that.



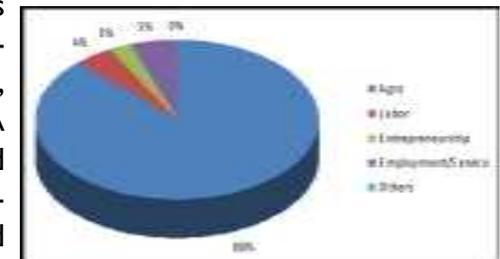
Breadwinners

Among the non-migrants households (29%) have only 1 breadwinner that means less hand to feed and more mouths to eat. Another (27%) households have 2 breadwinners followed by (19%) 3 to 5 breadwinners, (11%) more than 5 members, and (14%) have none.



Traditional occupation

Agriculture (farming) is the major occupation of either category of respondents. This includes farming, farm-based laboring, tenancy, leasing land and so on. A total of (88%) earned their living from agro-based activities, followed

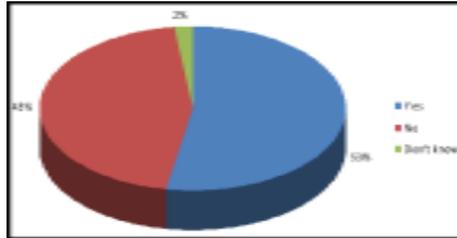


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by off-farm laboring (4%), entrepreneurship (3%), job (5%), and so on.

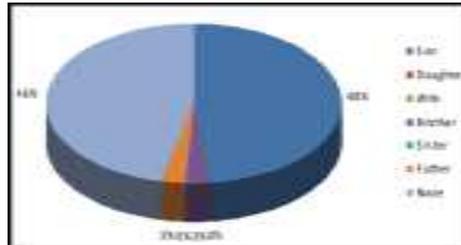
Looking forward to send someone from family overseas?

The non-migrants households were clearly divided over the issue. They were almost fifty-fifty for and against it. Among total respondents (53%) said they were looking forward to send someone overseas from the family. The other (45%) were opposed to the idea of sending youth overseas. Only (2%) were undecided.



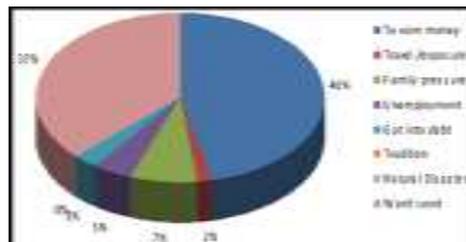
If yes, who would you like to go?

Majority of respondents (48%) favored sons to go for overseas employment, followed by (3%) father and (3%) brother. None of them favored women (daughter and wives). The other half was opposed to the idea of sending anyone.



Why overseas?

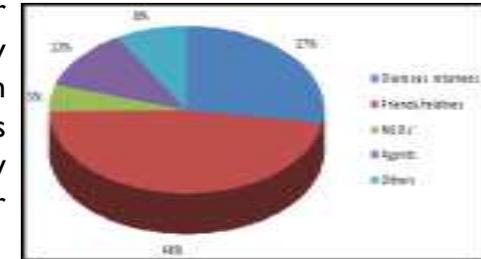
The main point of argument for the majority (46%) was 'Earning Money'. Another significant number of households (37%) wanted to go for travel and exposure, followed by (7%) family pressure, (5%) unemployment, and (3%) gotten into debt.



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Source of information

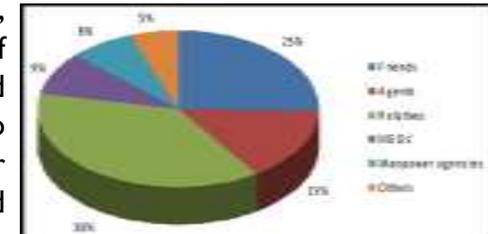
If they were to send their children, where will they obtain the information from? This question was asked to understand how safe and sound their process is.



Majority of households (48%) said that they would listen to friends and relatives. Another (27%) said that they would obtain the information from overseas returnees. Only (12%) said they would rely on manpower agent's information.

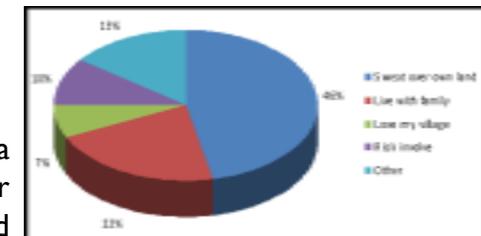
Who would you go through?

In answer to this question, large number of households (38%) said that they would go through relatives. Another (25%) said that they would go through friends, followed by (25%) who said they would go through manpower agents.



Reason for not going overseas

Those opposed to the idea of going overseas for employment gave varied reasons for not sending their children overseas.

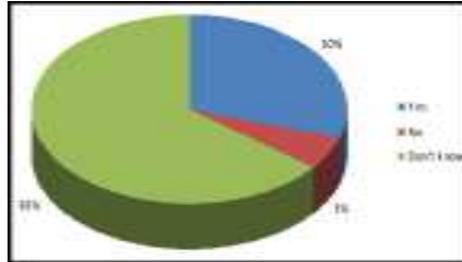


Large number of respondents (46%) favored sweating over their own land. Another (22%) favored living together in the family, followed by (10%) who don't want to run the risk of going overseas, (7%) love their village and so on.

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In your view can they make money overseas?

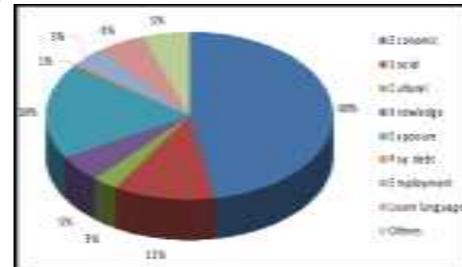
To this question, majority of them said they didn't think so. A total of (65%) were negative. Another (30%) were with the view that they earned money overseas, followed by (5%) who said they had no knowledge about it.



Good about overseas employment

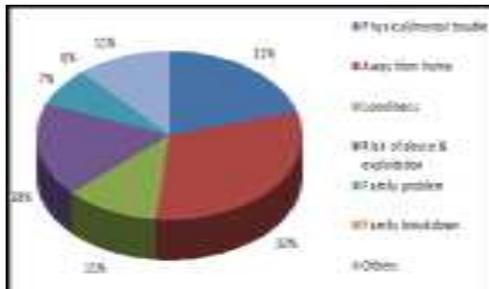
The respondents households were asked to give their opinions about Good and Bad of overseas employment.

On Good (48%) opined that they earned money. Another (18%) stressed on exposure, followed by (11%) who said it would help solve social problems.



Bad about overseas employment

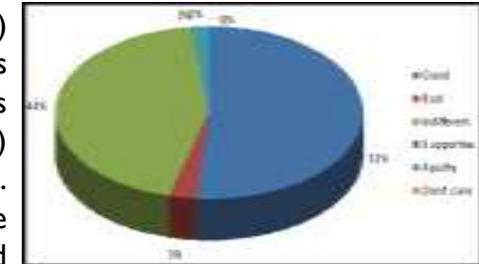
On Bad (32%) opined that it took loved ones away from home. Another (21%) said that it gave physical and mental trouble, followed by (18%) who said it involved risk of abuse and exploitation. Similarly, (11%) feared loneliness, followed by (7%) who said it causes family problem.



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How does the larger society, other than the households under survey, respond to overseas migration?

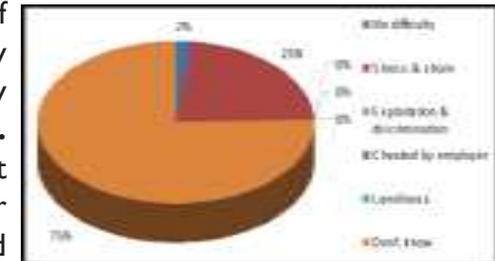
In their opinion, (51%) thinks larger society sees overseas migration as good. The other (44%) thinks they are indifferent. Additional (3%) thinks the society doesn't care, and the other (2%) thinks it is apathetic.



Any idea about difficulties migrants face overseas?

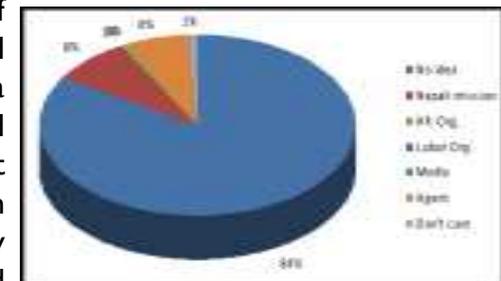
This question was aimed at respondents to learn about their understanding/impressions, if any, about overseas stay.

Large number of respondents (75%) flatly denied having any knowledge about it. Another (23%) said that migrants came under stress and strain, followed by (2%) who said they didn't face any real difficulty.



In the event of difficulties who do you think they should sick help from

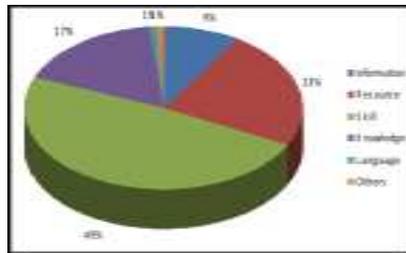
Large number of respondents (84%) said that they had no idea about it. Only (8%) said that they should contact Nepalese mission overseas, followed by another (6%) who said they should contact the manpower agent.



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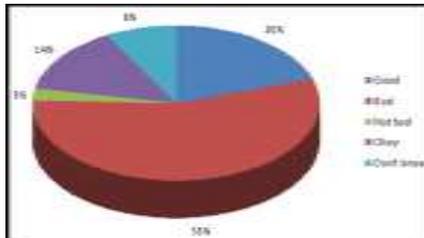
What groundwork do you need to lay for going overseas?

In answering this question, nearly half of the respondents (49%) unanimously emphasized on skill of migrants. Another (25%) stressed on resource, followed by (17%) who gave importance to knowledge, and (9%) voted in favor of information.



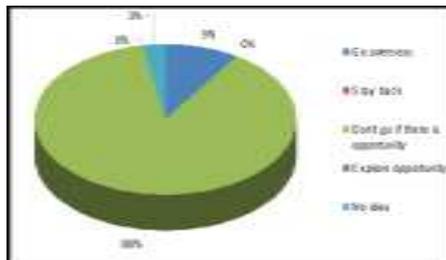
In your overall assessment, going overseas does good or bad ?

To this question, (55%) of respondent households told straight out that it was 'Bad', followed by (20%) who said it was 'Good'. The other (14%) said it was okay, followed by (8%) who denied any knowledge about it.



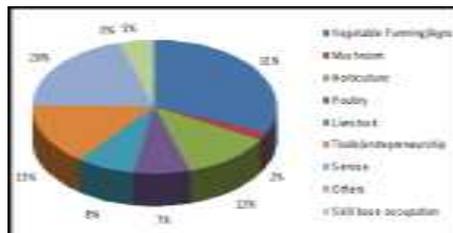
Do you recommend youth to go overseas or stay back?

Overwhelming majority of non-migrant households (88%) was in favor of youth staying back home and working if there is an opportunity. Only (9%) favored overseas migration, followed by (3%) who were undecided.



Given opportunity at home what would you like to do?

When asked to make a choice over different



Causes & Consequences of Overseas Migration

options given to them to stay back home and work, (31%) said that they would like to do vegetable farming, (2%) said mushroom farming, (12%) horticulture, (7%) poultry keeping, (8%) livestock keeping, (15%) trade/ entrepreneurship, (20%) job, (5%) skill-based occupation and so on.

SECTION THREE**Major issues and concerns**

The survey on Migration: Causes and Consequences have brought to light some important issues and concerns supported by empirical evidences which may be recapped as follows:

- ❑ Migrant youth pay heavy price overseas. They are put through severe physical and mental pain. Yet still, they have no choice but to go as they see no opportunity back home. If offered opportunity and skills, they'll have choices to make. They need to be given alternative opportunities at home.
- ❑ Credulous youth have fallen victim to defrauding, trafficking, fleecing, and other abuses at the hands of frauds, illegal manpower and imposters. Their information level is pathetic. They need to be protected against all odds.
- ❑ Going overseas raw and green brings all sorts of trouble. Adequate information, armed by skill and language-knowledge is absolutely necessary to avoid trouble and enjoy rightful benefits.
- ❑ Migrant youth are vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, discrimination and confinement in foreign soil. They have little or no knowledge over how to redress injustices, who to approach in the event of trouble, and how to seek help from organizations/ agencies/ machinery in place in foreign soil. It is absolutely imperative that they are armed with the knowledge about it.
- ❑ Family break-up and incidence of other social ills are on the rise among migrant families. Women are found bearing the full brunt of the problem. Women back home need to be empowered from gender and rights perspectives. Besides, they need to be empowered and enabled to have access and control over resources.

- ❑ The society at large (particularly men) needs to be sensitized so much so that they change their conventional outlook (male-dominating attitude) and adopt a more moderate, tolerant attitude towards women staying back home.
- ❑ The women are likely to fall victim to polygamy, abuse, physical assault and discrimination. There is an urgent need to empower them through legal education/training and legal aid support.
- ❑ There is growing trend among migrants to purchase land by the highway side, build home and settle there. It is going to create problem in the long-run for the country. While on the one hand urban population pressure will further increase, on the other hand, the hills will be left with aging population who cannot work in farm fields and fend for themselves. The trend needs to be reversed.

SECTION FOUR

Conclusion and Way Forward

Conclusion

Overseas migration of hill youth can safely be attributed to factors ranging from poverty, illiteracy, lack of skills, and lack of opportunity at home, to peer pressure and family pressure, to list the key factors.

The consequences have been several ranging from family break-up, social ills, defrauding and fleecing, abuse, exploitation and confinement, to gradual settlement in the highway side, leaving the village at the hands of old to fend for themselves.

Migration is an individual's choice and they are in full liberty to make that choice. In the case of hills under survey, the youth have limited or no choice blamed at lack of opportunity at home. This has also to do with illiteracy and lack of skills which narrow down opportunity possibilities and prospects.

As thrown up by the survey, over 80% of both migrant and non-migrant households favor youth staying back home and working given there are opportunities.

Even for them who want to go overseas against all odds, they need to be trained, skilled, empowered with knowledge and language skills to avoid any untoward situation.

Besides, the women staying back home bear greater pain compared to men. They live hard up under both physical and mental stress. There is greater need for empowering them as well as sensitizing the society at large from gender and rights perspectives. Also, the women are likely to fall victim to social ills like polygamy, abuse, physical assault and mental torture. They need to be empowered from that angle too and accessed to legal and support services.

Based on findings of the survey, and on the strength of collusion drawn above, we suggest the following way forward to mitigate migrants' woes:

Way Forward

1. Set up Youth Information Centers in the villages manned with trained youth capable of informing, educating, counseling, organizing training/orientation and holding interactions/exchanges between overseas returnees and aspiring youth
2. Equip Youth Information Center with needful resources (knowledge/information/books/materials) relevant to overseas migration
3. Develop Youth Information Center as library
4. Train/empower functionaries of Youth Information Centers so much so that they can independently handle migrants problems and become resourceful center for aspiring migrants
5. Explore and create viable agro-based opportunities for youth inclusive of livestock, transfer skill, and tie up with Cooperatives for resource back up
6. Encourage Youth Information Center to publish quarterly Newsletters highlighting experiences (pain & pleasure) of overseas returnees
7. Set up a monitoring cell in the Youth Information Center to monitor incidence of abuse, torture, physical assault committed against women
8. Provide legal aid and support services when and if need be
9. Motivate Youth Information Center to conduct community-sensitization programs using tools liker streets drama, campaign, and newsletters.
10. Youth Information should hold periodic interaction and exchanges between youth and old to reduce generation gap
11. Youth Information should serve as point for women to address their grievances
12. Help poor migration-aspirants to acquire needed skills before they embark on overseas employment