

## Migration-Livelihood Nexus in Development: A Theoretical Review<sup>1</sup>

Bhupendra Bahadur Shahi, Kamalesh D. C., & Puspa Raj Jaishi

### Abstract

This paper offers an in-depth discussion about the theory of migration, change in livelihood, and development. Using a qualitative literature review method, this paper reviews scholarly literature chosen from both national and global sources with an emphasis on the theories in migration. This paper is mainly concerned with important theories of migration, including the neoclassical and push and pull theories, functionalism approach, historical-structural and Marxist theories, and contemporary theories trying to move away from economics in explaining migration. It is found that migration theories have always been influenced more by economic assumptions, considering migration a rational process based on spatial inequalities. Although historical-structural theories have been useful in giving us a critical perspective regarding power and uneven development, it too is still heavily based on economics. A key area in which the literature is weak in theoretical consideration is the aspect of socio-cultural values, identities, hopes, and changing attitudes influencing livelihoods of the people and migration. Contemporary theories have also added much to the discussion, although they need further theorization and conceptualization. This article makes an important contribution to migration studies through a systematic review and synthesis of existing theory. The analysis of existing gaps and conceptual problems within mainstream theories demanded to quest of more holistic approaches to understanding migration through socio-cultural dimension or social context.

**Keywords:** migration, livelihood-nexus, development

---

<sup>1</sup>Cite this article as: Shahi B. B., DC, K., & Jaishi, P. R. (2026). *Contemporary Research: An Interdisciplinary Academic Journal*, vol. 9 (1), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/10.3126/craiaj.v9i1.96041>

**Bhupendra Bahadur Shahi**, Assistant Professor, Mid-West University, PhD Scholar, TU, [shahibhupendra45@gmail.com](mailto:shahibhupendra45@gmail.com); **Kamalesh D. C.**, Assistant Professor, Mid-West University, [kamalesh.dc@mu.edu.np](mailto:kamalesh.dc@mu.edu.np); & **Puspa Raj Jaishi**, Assistant Professor, Ghodaghodi Multiple Campus, Kailali, [puspajaishi100@gmail.com](mailto:puspajaishi100@gmail.com). Corresponding Email: [kamalesh.dc@mu.edu.np](mailto:kamalesh.dc@mu.edu.np)

Article history: Received on April 12, 2026; Accepted on June 3, 2026; Published on June 25, 2026.

Peer reviewed under the authority of CRAIAJ, academic journal of Ghodaghodi Multiple Campus, Kailali, Nepal, with ISSN 2717-4611 (Print) and ISSN 2717-462X (Online).

© 2026 CRAIAJ, A JPPS Star Rated Journal Indexed in Nepjol



Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License

Full text can be downloaded: <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/craiaj> & <http://www.craiaj.info/>

## **Introduction**

Migration is spatial movement of people for change that mostly depends on principle of intervening opportunities proportional to the number of viable opportunities between origin and destination (Stouffer, 1960). Furthermore than this, the nexus between the issue of migration and livelihood is more important in social science research because every aspect of social existence is impacted by migration, which also creates its own complicated internal dynamics. Migration frequently has an impact on the communities and way of life of the vast majority of people worldwide. The issue of migration is interdisciplinary and more relevant for research in all areas (Brettell & Hollifield, 2014).

Theoretically the concept of migration is not a singular phenomenon; rather, they are virtually always the result of migrations of people and goods, capital, and ideas. By disseminating information about life and prospects national and the global cultural exchange made possible (Samers, 2010). Supporting this argument, Papademetriou and Martin (1991) stated migration as more beneficial for many families and communities all over the world to secure and improve their standard of living. This is evidence of the migrants' determination to change their fates and the agency they use to do so for able to secure better their living conditions, health, housing, education, and prospects because of internal and international migration. However, this does not imply that national processes of economic and human development can be initiated by migration alone (de Sherbinin, et al., 2022).

Thus, the research issue understanding 'migration-livelihood nexus', conceptually and theoretically found to be more fluid on the change issue with the causation of migration in the research issue of change in the livelihood of people and on change agents is associated with different issues with relating multiple factors of reality. This paper is therefore designed to explore concepts, theories, models, and frameworks that explain the interrelatedness of 'migration and changing livelihood'. The study further identifies the gap associated with theories and frameworks and provides possible direction for scholars to pave the future path in the issue of studying migration and changing livelihoods nexus.

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study was to explore and then synthesize the major concept through theoretical discourses, frameworks, and approaches related to migration

and livelihood nexus as development and seek possible gaps associated with those theories and concepts.

### **Methods and materials**

This research study has been done based on the qualitative design on the base of thematic content based analysis depending on theme saturation through secondary sources of theoretical literature (Cresweil & Poth, 2018). Information has been collected through authentic secondary literatures books, articles, and reports using authentic both manual and internet online sources. For this study, I have reviewed 24 books, 33 journal articles, and 17 gray reports related to different theories available at national and global levels propounded by various scholars to conceptualize the theoretical aspect and find out the variation (research gap) among them. For this purpose, I used the following keywords migration, livelihood-nexus, concept & theories, development. Important sources for theoretical review (Ernst Georg Ravenstein, Everett S. Lee, Michael P. Todaro, John R. Harries, Douglas S. Massey, Hein de Haas, Ronald Skoldon, and Wibur Zeelinsky) were reviewed, for the livelihood framework analysis, relevant literatures (Robert Chamber and Gordon Conway, Frank Ellis, Ian Scoones, and Nitya Natarajan) were selected for this study, and for rigor analysis on the issue from historical structural/ political economy perspectives, the core literatures (Ander Gunder Frank, Samir Amin, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Saskiya Sassen) were reviewed based on thematic analysis that different ideas from different sources were compared and synthesized.

### **Result and Discussion**

#### **Theme-1: Theories on migration and livelihood nexus**

In this theme, some of the major theories concerning migration and livelihood nexus have been reviewed systematically. A theoretical literature review gives an overview of a theory from a historical point of view (Turner et al., 2018). A theoretical literature review offers a theory's historical context. Finding out what ideas already exist, how they connect, and how much study has been done on them is made easier with the use of the theoretical study. It is also beneficial for developing fresh, testable hypotheses in the research.

Many literatures have investigated how people migrate to various regions of the world. The question “why do people migrate?” has been addressed by certain academics. Such studies, whether theoretical or empirical, are often limited to identifying the traits, patterns, reasons for, and effects of migration in various regions of the world. Numerous

studies on migration have been conducted at various levels. However, exploring theories should be more than just a theoretical exercise. Understanding the causes of migration may reveal processes of global structural disadvantage and inequality that demand our attention. The fact that various (groups of) people may have diverse explanations for migration throughout time and space is a significant theoretical challenge (Samers, 2010).

For addressing scientific concept of migration in Eastern philosophy, Saraswati (1983) *Sukra Neeti*, written in the Vedic era, is the earliest literature based on philosophical idea of migration. It philosophized in depth about migration using a questionnaire paradigm, in which the chief reported migration statistics to *Dharmashala* by asking migrants that has tried to conceptualize the meaning, types, causes and trend of migration.

From the perspective of a Western philosophical base Ravenstein (1889), the first effort at creating a theory of migration may be found in “The Law of Migration“. This historical experience of West Europe served as the foundation for this dissertation's argument. According to this notion, migration volume varies with distance. The rate of migration will decrease lower over longer distances. His law examines the demographic and financial situation of migrants to distance and marks the start of an effort to organize migration theory (Zipf, 1946) contributed more to his “The principle of last efforts” about migration model, the model was based on Raven Stein's theory of migration that Zipf agrees to Stein, migration is inversely related to travel distance. He argued the larger the distance, the more effort is needed to overcome the barrier, and as a result, there are fewer migrants. Similar to how the effort required to travel a shorter distance decreases, so does the number of migrants.

Following a more broad distinction in social sciences between “functionalist” and “historical-structural” theoretical paradigms, most migration theories can be categorized into two primary paradigms. However, theories of migration can be studied under four general perspectives: functionalist, historical structural, new economics and households theories/ approaches, and others (de Haas et al., 2020).

Society is viewed as a system made up of interconnected pieces (people, agents), similar to how an organism functions and having a natural propensity to balance things out. In general, functionalist migration theory views migration as a good thing, an “optimization” process that advances the interests of the majority of people, boosts

productivity, and promotes greater equality both within and across communities (Chiswick, 2000; de Haas et al., 2020). In contradiction, historical-structural theories, which have their roots in neo-Marxist political economics, essentially view migration as an exploitation mechanism (Baeck, 1993). They also view the unequal distribution of economic and political power as well as the propensity of cultural ideas (including religion and tradition) and social behaviors to perpetuate these structural disparities that migration as a source of a cheap, exploitable labor force that primarily serves the interests of the rich in receiving regions, results in a "brain drain" in origin areas, and hence feeds social and geographic inequality (de Haas et al., 2020).

### ***Functionalist theory of migration***

Functionalist theory views society as an integrated system whose interdependent parts work together to maintain stability and solidarity; change in one part triggers adjustments in others. In migration and livelihood studies, this perspective underpins the push-pull model, neoclassical migration theory, and human capital theory (de Haas et al., 2010). The push-pull model also explains migration through forces driving individuals from origin areas and attracting them to destinations. Push factors include population pressure, limited opportunities, and political repression, while pull factors involve labor demand, land availability, and better economic prospects (Passaris, 1989).

Despite its significant contribution, the model remains largely descriptive and lacks causal depth (Bauer & Zimmermann, 1998). Neoclassical migration theory views migration as a process of economic equilibrium, where labor moves from low-wage to high-wage regions due to wage differentials (Lewis, 1954; Todaro, 1969; Rostow, 1960). Migrants are seen as rational actors maximizing income (Borjas, 1989). Human capital theory similarly treats migration as an investment in skills and productivity (Sjaastad, 1962; Chiswick, 2000). However, these theories are criticized for unrealistic assumptions, including perfect rationality, full information, and ideal market conditions.

### ***Historical structural theory through Marxist perspective on migration***

Historical-structural approach to migration, emerging in the 1970s and 1980s, views migration as a mechanism of exploitation rather than an optimization process, contrasting with neoclassical theories. It argues that the sustainability of capitalism depends on the control and exploitation of labor by states, multinational corporations, and recruitment agencies, which are seen as key drivers of migration.

Unlike functionalist perspectives that treat the state as an intermediate factor, this approach emphasizes structural constraints such as limited access to resources, information, and networks. These constraints, along with historical ties, recruitment systems, and structural inequalities, significantly shape migration decisions and behaviors (Portes & Böröcz, 1989). It further suggests that capitalism intensifies inequality unless countered by redistributive policies. Migration, therefore, often exacerbates social inequality by widening income disparities across regions and classes while channeling resources from poorer to wealthier areas (Cohen, 1987).

In the similar argument dependency and world-systems theories, grounded in Marxist political economy, extend this perspective. Frank (1966) also argues similarly that global capitalism produces the “development of underdevelopment” through resource extraction. Similarly, world-systems theory highlights the division between core and peripheral nations within a global capitalist system (Amin, 1974; Wallerstein, 1974), maintained through hegemonic and exploitative relations (Baack, 1993). Thus, migration reinforces global inequality and dependence, though initially focused on internal migration (Massey, 1998)

#### ***New economics and households theories/ approaches***

The new economics of labor migration approaches, which was developed as a critique of neoclassical migration theory (Stark, 1978), viewed that, in the context of migration to and from the developing world, choices about movement are often made by families or households rather than by lone individuals. Economic and households theory emphasizes additional elements that affect migration decisions aside from revenue maximization. Migration is a household practice of risk-sharing that such social groups may decide that one or more of their members should migrate, not so much to earn higher wages as to spread and minimize income risks that migration is a tactic used by families or households to participate in economic ventures like the family farm or another small company, and it contends that relative deprivation from poverty as opposed to absolute poverty is a key immigrant-motivating element within origin communities (de Has, et al. 2019).

Using this theoretical base, economists started to address family composition issues that had hitherto been the domain of anthropologists and sociologists (Lucas & Stark, 1985). The 'livelihood techniques' that emerged in the late 1970s among geographers, anthropologists, and sociologists performing micro-research in developing

nations have striking similarities to this concept. They challenged the dependence theory by pointing out that despite the challenging circumstances they face, the poor do not just act as passive victims of global capitalist forces but instead exercise human agency by actively seeking to change their circumstances (Lieten & Nieuwenhuys, 1989). Zelinsky (1971), emphasizes that each stage of demographic transition is associated with mobility transition as modernization leads to increased mobility and changes in migration processes. During the early stages of transition, population pressure, unemployment in rural areas, and quick technological advancements result in internal and external migrations, as evident in the experience of nineteenth-century Britain as well as that of twentieth-century Japan, Italy, Korea, and China. As such, migration transition sees migration being a consequence of social changes in general.

The views on transition and mobility is a vital component of larger social and developmental processes connected to modernization and industrialization (de Haas, 2010b), theories of transition describe how migratory patterns tend to alter during this period of development. They contend that growing levels of migratory and non-migratory mobility are often linked to development processes, but they also emphasize that this relationship is complicated and inherently non-linear.

The human potential was described by the economist and philosopher Amartya Sen as "the capacity of human beings to increase the substantive choices or freedoms they have" that it gives more emphasis on capabilities as determinant of the people being migrate along with house hold decision (Sen, 1999). However, Sen did not examine migration, but his paradigm may be used to do so to have a deeper knowledge of human mobility (de Haas, 2014a). According to this viewpoint, human mobility improves people's skills and, consequently, well-being for both intrinsic which directly improve well-being, and instrumental means to goal reason. The concept that migration is a tool that individuals may use to attain better opportunities is central to the instrumental component. The intrinsic component is the happiness that results from knowing that migrants have the opportunity to explore new opportunities.

Thus, this theory has contributed more to the issue of migration and development to conceive individual migration as a function of capacities and ambitions to migrate to better understand how development processes impact people's migration behavior that transition theories have lack in their ability to explain why individuals would be motivated to move when such growth does place (Carling, 2002; de Haas, 2003) which

transition theories of migration have not given emphasis in such components of larger processes of growth and social transformation contending that the many demographic, economic, and cultural changes that civilizations go through as they industrialize, modernize, and urbanize initially tend to increase levels of both internal and international migration.

Similarly, system theory of migration philosophically followed the concept of new economic household theoretical approach. Mabogunje (1970) argued how information flows and novel concepts, such as those regarding the good life and consumption habits shape migratory networks both inside and across national boundaries. Thus the central additional contributed argument of systems theory is to examine how migration is inextricably linked to other forms of exchange, particularly flows of goods, ideas, and money, and how this changes the initial conditions under which migration occurs, both in origin and destination societies that it seems to lack in migration network theories because the network theory only concentrates on the role of social capital (de Sherbinin, et al., 2022).

Held et al., (1999) differently argued migration linking with globalization that it is "the widening, deepening, and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life." The fast expansion of cross-border exchanges of all kinds, from commerce and finance to media products and ideas, is a sign of globalization. Globalization is frequently portrayed as primarily an economic process linked to the increase in FDI, the liberalization of cross-border flows of capital, goods, and services, as well as the emergence of new international divisions of labor. However, Gore (200) argues adding the view of the Washington Consensus, a development ideology that emphasizes the importance of market liberalization, privatization, and deregulation as development recipes, summarizes globalization from the perspective of philosophical ideology.

Migration and globalization's consequences are more complicated than they first appear. Migration is frequently attributed to globalization as a result of rising inequality and advancements in communication and transportation technologies. Although certain kinds of migration, market liberalization, and the transfer of industrial output to low-wage economies may have been replaced, such advancements have also broadened the potential for trade and the outsourcing of production and services (Froebel et al. 1980).

Strongly, dual labor market theory explains international migration as driven by structural demand in advanced economies for low-skilled labor. Piore (1979) argues that sectors such as manufacturing and services (e.g., cleaning, catering, and care work) require a continuous supply of migrant workers. The theory emphasizes labor market segmentation shaped by institutional factors, as well as racial and gender inequalities. A clear division exists between the secure, well-paid primary labor market and the unstable, low-paid secondary labor market (Sassen, 2001). Consequently, immigrants are often concentrated in jobs avoided by native workers, reflecting the structural needs of capitalist economies and the persistent demand for both low- and high-skilled migrant labor.

### **Theme-II: Concept of migration-livelihood development nexus**

Historically, many studies relating to migration have been done to establish the concept and models of migration and changing livelihood development in the case migration decisions of individuals and households. However, theoretically (Lewis, 1954) has first purposed the theoretical model based on the economic explanation of rural-urban migration from the perspective of transitions from a stagnation economy; a traditional rural economy to an urban economy driven to the development of a modern urban sector. This theory has mainly guided by the economic perspective rather socio-cultural aspects. In the line of theoretical history of migration, Stouffer (1960) brought the theory of migration based on the principle of intervening opportunities that the range of migration depends on opportunities available in the destination to an area it is directly proportional to the number of viable opportunities and inverse proportionate to the opportunities intervening between origin and destination. Thus, this theoretical model of Lewis stated the issue of transitions from a stagnation economy and Stouffer gave more emphasis on opportunities viability as a key factor of migration for livelihood change.

Ghosh (1987) challenged universal explanations, arguing migration decisions stem from human behavior and psychology rather than fixed laws. This perspective aligns with later arguments emphasizing socio-cultural influences (Massey, 2019; Binford et al., 2021). Hans Raj (1996) stressed economic motives as primary drivers, while Sen (1999) introduced the capability approach, viewing migration as a matter of individual freedom and choice. O'Brien (2016) further expanded the debate using quantum social theory to highlight complexity and uncertainty in migration processes.

Overall, migration theories remain diverse and sometimes contradictory. While many focus on economic

Therefore, literatures claims major three perspectives; first functionalist macro perspective, second dependency micro perspective and third new economic household approach hybrid meso-level perspective to study the issue of migration and changing livelihood where, Frank (1966) suggests dependency theory as an example of the interpretation of migration that exist based on unequal power relation and structural economy and it has been dominated by the historical paradigm as a conflict theory. The recent ways of hybrid thought of meso-level theories have been given more emphasis on symbolic actionist perspective as given such as the migration system theory of (Mabogunje, 1970) and Internal Dynamics of the migration process (de, Hass, 2010b). Thus, livelihoods can be defined as the abilities, assets, and actions necessary for obtaining basic requirements, which include financial capital, human capital, social capital, natural capital, and physical capital (Chambers & Conway, 1991). Furthermore, it can also be defined as how people earn their livelihoods (Stienstra & Lee, 2019). Therefore, migration can be viewed as a process of change that seeks better livelihoods (Hidayati, 2020).

Furthermore, migration as one of the approaches used by people, households, or communities to improve their livelihoods guided by new economic household approach probably be relevant because it breaks the concept from past narrow functionalist economics approaches and Marxist techniques of political and institutional analysis (Skeldon, 2002; Ellis, 2000). Other adds contemporary ideas go beyond the conventional meanings of Marxism and neo-classical economics by including different perspectives on livelihoods and social exclusion (Deshingkar & Start, 2003). Similarly in supporting to this view, Kothari (2002) argues that although there are many other ways for individuals to make a living, migration is still a major factor of livelihood for many underprivileged people in poor countries. Therefore, this research is also guided by this new household economic approach/theory to support the analysis of the argument.

### **Theme-3: Policy of migration and livelihood as development implementation global and nation level**

In the case of global policy of migration, Ellis (2003) argues for a UK parliamentary policy review linking global poverty reduction efforts with the growing recognition of both domestic and international migration in promoting sustainable

Full text can be downloaded: <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/craiaj> & <http://www.craiaj.info/>

livelihoods. The United Nations (1994) Cairo Conference similarly highlights migration as shaped by awareness levels, natural disasters, socio-cultural and economic linkages, political conditions, and internal conflict, which together drive population flows from developing and transitional economies to developed ones. Similarly, O'Brien (2016) introduces a quantum social theory perspective, using concepts such as entanglement, uncertainty, complementarity, and superposition to understand social change and emphasize people as key actors in addressing climate change. In Ghana, Ackah & Medvedev (2010) find that households with migrants tend to be better off, with migration decisions influenced by both individual (pull) and community-level (push) factors; younger and more educated individuals are more likely to migrate, especially from areas with better facilities.

In the case of SAARC, Agunias (2009) notes that migration remains the most restricted yet least effectively governed factor of production globally, with intermediaries playing an important but poorly regulated role in migration processes. In Nepal, the Immigration Act 2049 provides a legal framework for migration governance, but it has limitations and requires reform to become more flexible compared to other SAARC countries.

In the case of National Level migration policy, Gurung (1983) led Nepal's first scientific migration study under the National Population Commission, contributing to the National Population Strategy during the Sixth Plan (1980–85), assessing causes and impacts of internal and international migration. Later, Nepal recognized migration as central to economic development, with policies addressing labor migration, mobility, and data needs (Country Profile, 2019). Pokhrel (2018) links migration to livelihood transformation influenced by economic, environmental, and socio-political factors, while the World Bank (2021) highlights structural challenges of Nepal, including low income status, limited exports, and vulnerability, contributing to migration-driven development and marginalization

#### **Theme-4: Major migration and livelihood frameworks/ models/ approaches for development**

Research frameworks, methods, and models are crucial because they lay the intellectual foundation for the study. Various livelihood approaches and models/frameworks are available in the issue of migration however I have reviewed those

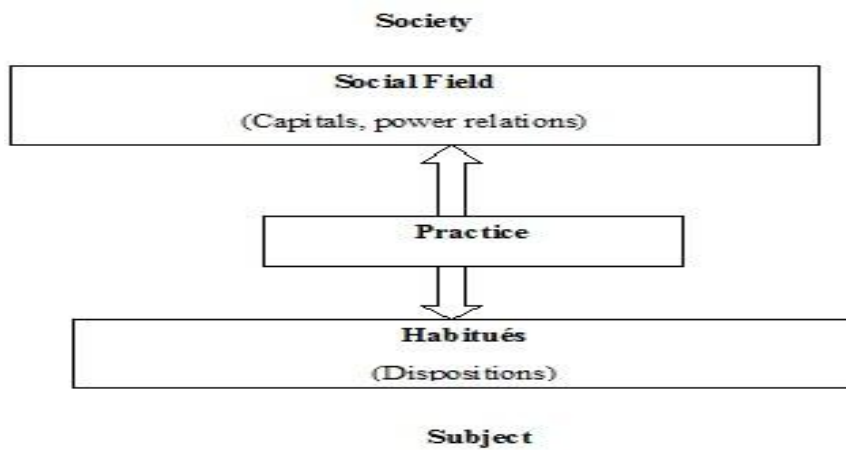
major frameworks and techniques concerning migration and changing livelihoods have been explored in this area.

### ***Livelihood model***

Bourdieu (1977) first brought the model that overcomes the duality between theories that prioritize a person's subjective purpose and experience and explanations that link social change and social reproduction to certain overarching structures. The social practice of an individual or a social group must be analyzed as the outcome of the interaction of habitus and the social field, which is a response to the dualism of objectivism and subjectivism. These two key notions are backed by theories of strategy, conflict, and diverse forms of capital that shape social activities (Thime, 2008).

### **Figure 1**

#### ***Livelihood Model***



Source: Bourdieu (1977); and adapted by Thime (2008)

Figure 1 this model/ framework describes to the dualism of objectivism and subjectivism and also states that social practice of an individual or social group must be studied as the result of the interplay between habitus and the social field which determines the migration trends. Theories of strategy, conflict, and other types of capital that influence social activities support these two key ideas in migration issue.

### ***Migration in a livelihood approach***

The livelihood concept seeks to describe not only what people do to earn a living, but also the resources that give them the capacity to do so, the risk factors they must take

Full text can be downloaded: <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/craiaj> & <http://www.craiaj.info/>

into account when managing those resources, and the institutional and policy context that either supports or obstructs their pursuit of a sustainable or improving standard of living. The fundamental livelihoods strategy or framework is shown (Ellis, 2000).

**Figure 2**

*The Basic Livelihood Framework of Migration and Livelihood*



Source: Ellis, (2000)

In the figure 2, resources are referred to as assets or capitals in the livelihoods approach, and they are frequently divided into five or more different asset types that family members own or have access to human capital (skills, education, and health), physical capital (produced investment goods), financial capital (cash, savings, loan access), natural capital (land, water, trees, etc.), and social capital (networks and associations); the livelihood framework refers to people's "activities" as their "livelihoods," which are what they do to make a living. Access to a group of activities that are too varied degrees removed from the resident's home is made possible by migration.

The vulnerability context is defined as the risk elements that surround earning a living, while the policy and institutional context is defined as the structures connected to government (national and local), authority, laws and rights, democracy, and participation. People's attempts to make a living within these environments produce consequences such as increased or decreased material well-being, decreased or increased susceptibility to hunger, improved or degraded environmental resources, and so forth.

### ***Migration and sustainable livelihood approach***

Robert Chambers and Conway (1992) working paper Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: Practical Concepts for the 21st Century, which was published by the Institute of Development Studies, served as the framework for further research. As they point out, the Brundtland report Our Common Future (WCED, 1987) foresees the "turn" toward sustainable lifestyles since it was based on prior work by an advisory group to the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). DFID (2000)

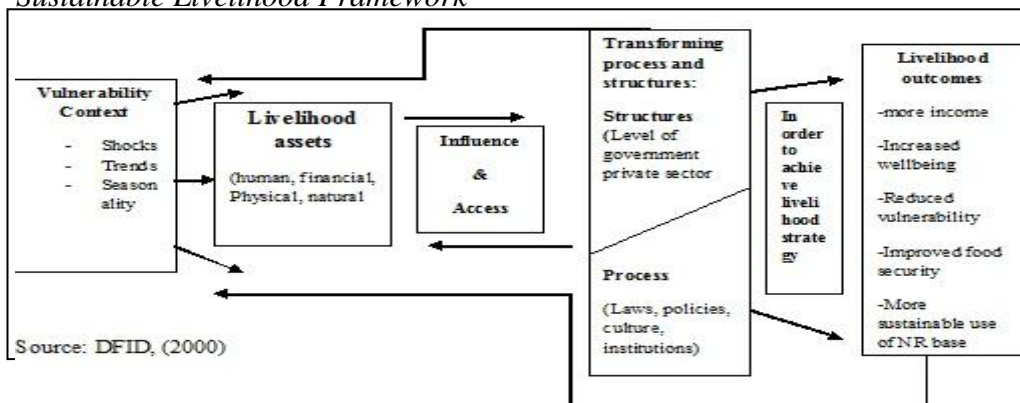
Full text can be downloaded: <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/craiaj> & <http://www.craiaj.info/>

framework aims to conceptualize how people work within a context of vulnerability that is shaped by various factors, including shifting seasonal constraints (and opportunities), economic shocks, and longer-term trends. It also aims to conceptualize how they draw on various types of capital for their livelihoods in various combinations that are influenced by the following factors: the context of vulnerability; a variety of institutions and processes; and how they use their asset base to develop a variety of livelihoods. However, despite using the phrases livelihood and sustainable livelihood, the report of our common future does not define either. The first UNDP Human Development Report is a second important document that is occasionally seen as crucial in outlining the sustainable livelihoods objective (Solesbury, 2003).

Figure 3 the sustainable livelihood framework created by Scoones (1998) is expanded upon in the DFID Sustainable Livelihood Framework. In contrast to the Scoones model, this paradigm views reduced vulnerability and increased food security as results of sustainable living. Going one step further than Scoones, the model has incorporated laws, policies, and institutions as transferring procedures for the five capitals for attaining livelihood goals. It has also given significance to the role of the government and private sector as a framework for transferring the five capitals. With the publishing of a second IDS working paper, sustainable livelihoods transitioned from an approach (SLA) to a framework (SLF). The framework's depiction put institutions and organizations at the center of the diagram and Scoones (2015) notes that there was little to dispute with, it appeared and admits that the bandwagon had gathered too much momentum and the necessary resistance of argument was absent at this point.

**Figure 3**

*Sustainable Livelihood Framework*



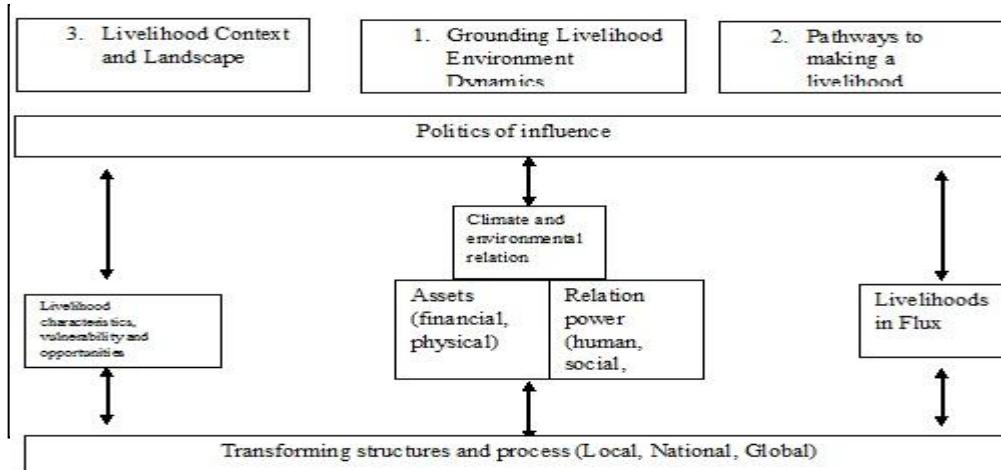
Full text can be downloaded: <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/craiaj> & <http://www.craiaj.info/>

**Proposed sustainable livelihood framework for 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Natarajan, et al. (2022) have proposed the reformulation concept of sustainable livelihoods framework (SLF) in the 21<sup>st</sup> century published on World Development 155 (2022) ELSEVIER focusing on the issue of problems of theory both neo-classical and historical structural argument. This suggests to both historical critiques and more contemporary arguments hopes that it would open the door for many theoretical traditions to more effectively collaborate with developing rural livelihoods; the research provides a framework rather than a strategy. The research has tried to propose an SLF for the 21st century that emphasizes a structural, spatially-disaggregated, dynamic, and ecologically-coherent approach to conceptualizing rural livelihoods.

Figure 4 sustainable livelihood framework for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this purposed framework implies to both historical criticisms and more modern arguments expectations in migration that it would pave the way for various theoretical traditions to more successfully engage with enhancing rural lifestyles; the research offers a framework rather than a method by emphasizing a structural, regionally disaggregated, dynamic, and environmentally coherent approach to conceptualizing rural livelihoods. As a result, this is shifted to a horizontal box that crosses all livelihood groundings and paths in the revised architecture. It serves as the explanatory hook between these parts, describing who, how, and why of livelihoods in addition to what and where.

**Figure 4**  
*Sustainable Livelihood Framework*



Source: Natarajan, et al. (2022)

Full text can be downloaded: <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/craiaj> & <http://www.craiaj.info/>

### **Major research gap**

Some of the major gaps associated with theories, policies and methods are explored, that theoretically the migration issue found to be merely based on problem-solving response to poverty and geographical Inequalities because the major theoretical gap in migration-livelihood studies has the dominance of economic perspectives, with limited attention to socio-cultural, political, and environmental dimensions. Most theories frame migration as a pathway to improved socio-economic conditions, emphasizing opportunities, facilities, and positive change.

However, alternative perspectives suggest that migration may also result from natural disasters, conflict, and insecurity in origin areas, and does not always lead to improved livelihoods. Despite this diversity, dominant frameworks largely rely on push-pull explanations, treating migration as a function of economic causation while overlooking human behavior, selectivity, capabilities, and contextual variability. This limits deeper understanding of migration as a complex development process. Thus, the research issue of understanding ‘migration and livelihood nexus’ conceptually and theoretically found to be more fluid in the case of changing the livelihood of people because most of the theories have not provided enough evidence on how migration and livelihood change be sustained and they lack a description of the relationship between migration and livelihood models.

### **Conclusion**

Theoretically, the issue of migration-livelihood nexus as development is found under-theorized because the concept and theatrical background are more contradictory observing from the functionalist and historical structuralism perspective that one view mainly focused on migration for better opportunity emphasizing to the economic point of view and another also found arguing strong logic is as exploitation through a historical structured agency, third emerging perspective about the issue is in the stage of under-theorized. Reviewing all the literature related to migration, the present research comes to drive the conclusion that factors relating to socio-cultural, economic, risk, uncertainty, natural climates, awareness, skill, intervening opportunity relation, access, and resource viability, push and pull factors that determine the state of migration. However, the research issue of understanding migration and changing livelihoods as development conceptually and theoretically found to be more fluid in the research issue of changing livelihood of people and on change agents is associated with different issues with relating multiple factors of reality not absolute.

Full text can be downloaded: <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/craiaj> & <http://www.craiaj.info/>

### References

- Ackah, C., & Medvedev, D. (2010). *Internal migration in Ghana: Determinants and welfare impacts*, WB. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org>
- Agunias, D. R. (2009). *Guiding the invisible hand: Making migration intermediaries work for development*. UNDP.
- Amin, S. (1974). *Accumulation on a world scale*. Monthly Review Press.
- Baeck, L. (1993). *Post-war development theories and practice*. UNESCO.
- Bauer, T., & Zimmermann, K. F. (1998). Causes of international migration: A survey. In P. Nijkamp, P. Gorter, & J. Poot (Eds.), *Crossing borders: Regional and urban perspectives on international migration* (pp. 95–127). Ashgate.
- Binford, M., et al. (2021). *Home and away: Drivers and perceptions of migration among urban migrants and their rural families in the Lower Mekong River Basin of Cambodia*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3914359>
- Bogue, D. J. (1969). *Principles of demography* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Borjas, G. J. (1989). Economic theory and international migration. *International Migration Review*, 23(3), 457–485.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Brettell, C. B., & Hollifield, J. F. (Eds.). (2014). *Migration theory: Talking across disciplines* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Carling, J. (2002). Migration in the age of involuntary immobility. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 28(1), 5–42.
- Chambers, R., & Conway, G. R. (1992). *Sustainable rural livelihoods: Practical concepts for the 21st century*. Institute of Development Studies. <http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/775/dp296.pdf>
- Chiswick, B. R. (2000). Are immigrants favorably self-selected? In C. B. Brettell & J. F. Hollifield (Eds.), *Migration theory: Talking across disciplines*. Routledge.
- Cohen, R. (1987). *The new helots: Migrants in the intl division of labour*. OUP.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- de Haas, H. (2010a). Migration and development: A theoretical perspective. *International Migration Review*, 44(1), 227–264.
- de Haas, H. (2010b). The internal dynamics of migration processes: A theoretical inquiry. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36(10), 1587–1617.

Full text can be downloaded: <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/craiaj> & <http://www.craiaj.info/>

- de Haas, H., et al. (2019). International migration: Trends, determinants and policy effects. *Population and Development Review*, 45(4), 885–922.
- de Haas, H., Castles, S., & Miller, M. J. (2020). *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world* (6th ed.). Red Globe Press.
- de Sherbinin, A., et al. (2022). Migration theory in climate mobility research. *Frontiers in Climate*, 4. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fclim.2022.882343>
- Dudwick, N., Hull, K., Katayama, R., Shilpi, F., & Simler, K. (2011). *From farm to firm: Rural-urban transition in developing countries*. World Bank.
- Deshingkar, P., & Start, D. (2003). *Seasonal migration for livelihoods in India: Coping, accumulation and exclusion*. Overseas Development Institute.
- Ellis, F. (2000). The determinants of rural livelihood diversification in developing countries. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 51(2), 289–302.
- Ellis, F. (2003). *A livelihoods approach to migration and poverty reduction*. Department for International Development.
- Frank, A. G. (1966). The dev of underdevelopment. *Monthly Review*, 18(4), 17–31.
- Froebel, F., Heinrichs, J., & Kreye, O. (1980). *The new intl division of labour*. CUP.
- Ghosh, B. N. (1987). *Fundamentals of population geography*. Sterling Publishers.
- Gore, C. (2000). The rise and fall of the Washington Consensus as a paradigm for developing countries. *World Development*, 28(5), 789–804.
- Gurung, H. B. (1983). *Internal and international migration in Nepal*. NCP.
- Harris, J. R., & Todaro, M. P. (1970). Migration, unemployment and development: A two-sector analysis. *American Economic Review*, 60(1), 126–142.
- Lee, E. S. (1966). A theory of migration. *Demography*, 3(1), 47–57.
- Lewis, W. A. (1954). Economic development with unlimited supplies of labour. *Manchester School*, 22(2), 139–191.
- Lucas, R. E. B., & Stark, O. (1985). Motivations to remit: Evidence from Botswana. *Journal of Political Economy*, 93(5), 901–918.
- Mabogunje, A. L. (1970). Systems approach to a theory of rural–urban migration. *Geographical Analysis*, 2(1), 1–18.
- Massey, D. S. (1988). Economic development and international migration in comparative perspective. *Population and Development Review*, 14(3), 383–413.
- Massey, D. S. (2019). The perils of seeing twenty-first century migration through a twentieth-century lens. *Intl Social Science Journal*, 68(227–228), 101–104.

- Natarajan, N., et al. (2022). Sustainable livelihoods framework for the 21st century. *World Development*, 155, Article 105898.
- O'Brien, K. L. (2016). Climate change and social transformations: Is it time for a quantum leap? *WIREs Climate Change*, 7(5), 618–626.
- Piore, M. J. (1979). *Birds of passage: Migrant labor and industrial societies*. CUP.
- Polanyi, K. (1944). *The great transformation: The political and economic origins of our time*. Farrar & Rinehart.
- Portes, A., & Böröcz, J. (1989). Contemporary immigration. *International Migration Review*, 23(3), 606–630.
- Ranis, G., & Fei, J. C. H. (1961). A theory of economic development. *American Economic Review*, 51(4), 533–565.
- Ravenstein, E. G. (1889). The laws of migration. *Jour of the Royal Stat Society*, 52(2).
- Samers, M. (2010). *Migration*. Routledge.
- Scoones, I. (2015). *Sustainable livelihoods and rural development*. PA Publishing.
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Anchor Books.
- Sjaastad, L. A. (1962). The costs and returns of human migration. *Journal of Political Economy*, 70(5, Part 2), 80–93.
- Skeldon, R. (1990). *Population mobility in developing countries*. Belhaven Press.
- Skeldon, R. (2002). Migration and poverty. *Asia-Pacific Popn Journal*, 17(4), 67–82.
- Skeldon, R. (2012). Migration transitions revisited: Their continued relevance for the development of migration theory. *Population, Space and Place*, 18(2), 154–166.
- Todaro, M. P. (1969). *Internal migration in developing countries: A review of theory, evidence, methodology and research priorities*. International Labour Office.
- UN. (1994). *Population distribution, urbanization and internal migration*. UN.
- Wallerstein, I. (1974). *The modern world-system I: Capitalist agriculture and the origins of the European world-economy in the sixteenth century*. Academic Press.
- WCED. (1987). *Our common future*. Oxford University Press.
- Zelinsky, W. (1971). The hypothesis of the mobility transition. *Geographical Rev*, 61(2).
- Zipf, G. K. (1946). The P1 P2/D hypothesis: On the intercity movement of persons. *American Sociological Review*, 11(6), 677–686.