

After Covid-2019 Pandemic: Returnee Migrants' Economy Management on Their Household

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Abstract

This paper is based on returnee migrants' economic management of their households of ward no. 4 in Gauradaha municipality, Jhapa district. The objectives of this paper are to identify the returnee migrants' economic management of their households and to find out the used of their remittances after the COVID pandemic. The paper used a descriptive and analytical research design with the primary source of data method. The study selected 247 households and 163 numbers of forms filled up within one month and used the purposive sampling method (non-probability sampling). These data are analyzed through frequency distribution, cross table and the main output. The paper concludes that the majority of international labour migrants seek better income in cities, job seeking on forced idleness during the part of year and services. They are compelled to send their husbands and sons to gulf countries to earn for the subsistence of the households. After returning, the foreign migrant workers to the homeland by the cause of the COVID-19 pandemic increase the household workloads the financial problems day by day, when they stay in foreign countries improving their economic status from household to community basis level. However, they have the difficulty in getting government services characterized with corruption like nepotism, favoritism and briberies to secure jobs. Low-paid work and illegal transfer, employment discrimination with respect to colour, age, sex, ethnicity, religion and others are major problems facing migrant workers. Although they are trying to engage different types of income generation works or self-employment at the different local levels, it is necessary for the developing countries to solve these problems.

Keywords: pandemic, returnee migrants, economy management, change remittance and change life activities

Introduction

The majority of remittance and migration literature available focuses on transnational population movements. The economic and social impacts on the area of origin and destination due to the flow of human resource is less understood and studied as compared to goods and capital flows among the countries in the globalized world. The detailed studies on remittances encounter controversies. First, whether or not migration and remittance decisions are separable or not is not clear. When a migrant does not send money in the form of remittances, the economic effect of remittance to the place of origin becomes non-measurable. Second, whether or not the remittance income is different to

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any other source of income or not is subject to debate. If remittance income is different to other sources of income for the household, how and why it is different but it is different to the financial or capital flows in the international level as the remittance income receipts are the households and the capital flow receipts are the businesses or the government. So, remittances will have a direct impact on the household level (Pyakurel, 2018).

With the rise in migration of workers across countries, the economic and social well-being of migrants, their families and their communities has been increasing. Growth in the number of international migrants has been robust over the last two decades, reaching 281 million people living outside their country of origin in 2020, up from 173 million in 2000 and 221 million in 2010. Currently, international migrants represent about 3.6 per cent of the world's population (UN DESA, 2020).

Poverty and lacks of opportunities in the home country are the reasons and obligations of Labour Migration. Gulf countries followed by East/South-East Asian countries have been the major destination of Migrant workers. Due to the lack of higher education and proper training, they face problems with languages, and skills and are compelled to work as unskilled manual workers. Therefore, they have been working abroad for lower-wage and salaries due to their lesser skills. Bank and Hundi/IME are the major sources to transfer the remittances to their households. To buy essential goods and maintain the house expenses have been the first priorities of using the remittances. Besides, they have invested in the education of their children and the construction of houses (Mishra, 2021).

Total registration of returnee migration workers has received unprecedented attention in the recent years. The emphasis has been on the productive use of financial and social remittances, as captured experience, skill, exposure, networks and know-how can be acquired abroad for local and national development. The government has divided the destination countries into four groups, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Malaysia, India and other countries. Among the working-age population, 26 percent of the returnee workers were from India and Malaysia each, 43 percent from the GCC countries and only 4 percent from the other countries. Similarly, there are approximately 756 thousand in Nepal working-age returnee migrants workers. Females account for a mere 3.8 percent of this population given that the majority of outgoing migrants from Nepal are male. The average age of male returnee migrant workers ages 33 years and 30 years of females. The 25-34 age group accounts for the highest proportion (44%) of all countries, followed by the 35-44 age groups (26%). In terms of the current resident in Nepal, 60 percent of the recent returnee population resides in urban areas. Similarly, 60 percent of the returnees are based in provinces 1, 3 and 5 collectively. The GCC countries were reported as the most recent migration destination by 43, 3 percent of the returnees. Over 25 percent of returnees each reported India and Malaysia as their last destination country. In the Karnali and Sudur Paschim provinces, an overwhelming majority of returnees reported India 73.6 percent and 90.3 percent respectively as their last destination. Employment in India is mostly seasonal migration, especially during the off-farming season in Nepal (DOFE, 2020).

After COVID -19, a large number of foreign labour migrants returned to their homelands which are 2, 25,808 in different countries. The last Six months' data are published by DOFE -2020, 47,760 numbers of Nepalese people went to different Countries. Similarly, 1,92,828 numbers of Nepali migrants returned from Malaysia and Gulf Countries, and 40,535 Nepalese people went only to Malaysia and Gulf countries (Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, 2020).

Remittance has a large benefit to the receiving country at an aggregate level as well as at the household level. The volume of remittance inflow in study areas is increasing day by day and season by season. While the remittance income of household increases certainly the pattern of consumption will change Remittance has helped to boost education, and reduce poverty providing temporary financial relief to the household in the study area. This paper plays a vital role to provide knowledge of the economic situation of returnee Nepalese international labour migration, particularly including ward no 4 of Gauradaha municipality, Jhapa district. Several studies have been doing labour migration but still, any study does not conduct on this topic and is especially a concern in Gauradaha municipality in the Jhapa district. Its objective the returnee labour migrants' how to manage their household economy in the study area with special attention to leveling patterns.

Objectives

The objectives of this paper are:

- To identify the returnee migrants' economic management of their households.
- To find out the use of their remittances after the COVID—19

Method

This paper used a descriptive and analytical research design. The descriptive method is used to describe the situation of the research site and economic situation and use of remittance in the household economy. Both types of data (primary and secondary) sources were used in the paper. Semi structure questionnaires and mixed data (qualitative and quantitative data) are used in this paper. Primary data was collected via the field survey adopting various participatory means via household surveys, interviews and focus group discussions. The total numbers of returnee migrant households in the study area are 247 in ward number 4 of Gauradaha Municipality. The study selected 163respondents of these total returnees' households of forms to fill up within one month and used the purposive sampling method (non-probability sampling). In the final analysis of the collected, these data are SPSS (**Statistical Package for the Social Sciences**) program. Frequency distribution and cross-table analysis are the main outputs.

Limitations

This paper generalized to a certain place in the Jhapa district. It covered only ward 4 of Gauradaha municipality which is one of the limitations. The foreign returnee migrant families HH163 were selected as the respondents. The interview mainly focused on the socio-economic management of their households and remittance used patterns after the return of labour migration.

Results and Discussion

Countries wise Returned Migrants by Sex

Some illegal channels play vital role in fraud migrants but nowadays, there is no department and strong policy or law to punish such illegal channels. To solve the problems and challenges which are facing by foreign labor migrants in host countries, of government should make appropriate and strong policies to solve such problems. Out of the 163 respondents, the highest percentage of respondents returned from Malaysia.

In countries wise returned migrants, 95.1 percent of respondents were male and only 4.9 percent of respondents were female returned migrants. The highest i.e. 39.9 percent respondents returned from Malaysia, 15.9 percent respondents returned from Saudi Arabia, 14.2 percent respondents returned from Kuwait, 12.3, 12.8 and 4.9 percent respondents returned from Qatar, UAE and other countries except for India. Such as Oman, Afghanistan, Maldives etc.

Similarly, the highest i.e. 39.9 percent of returned migrants are male from Malaysia, 15.3 percent male returned from Saudi Arabia, 11.7 percent male are returned from Kuwait, 12.3 percent are returned from Qatar and so on.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Country Wise Returned Foreign Labour Migrants by Sex

S.N.	Countries	Male		Female		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1	Malaysia	65	39.9	-	-	65	39.9
2	Qatar	20	12.3	-	-	20	12.3
3	UAE	18	11.0	3	1.8	21	12.8
4	Saudi Arabia	25	15.3	1	0.6	26	15.9
5	Kuwait	19	11.7	4	2.5	23	14.2
6	Others	8	4.9	-	-	8	4.9
7	Total	155	95.1	8	4.9	163	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

The table 1 shows that the total 8 females are returned migrants. Among them, 2.5 percent of female respondents returned from Kuwait, 1.8 percent of female respondents returned from UAE and only 0.6 percent of female respondents returned from Saudi Arabia, respectively.

Age and Sex of Returned Foreign Labour Migration

Out of the total 161 returned foreign labour migrants, the highest i.e. 37.2 percent of respondents aged 28 years and above who were returned foreign labour migration and again want to go foreign labour migration 27.3 percent of respondents age is 26 – 28, nearly 20 percent of respondent's age is 23-25 and 15.5 percent respondent's age 20-22 years respectively. This data proved that the higher age of respondents has returned more than the younger respondents.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Foreign Labour Migration by Age and Sex of Returned Migrants

Age Group	Sex				Total	
	Male		Female		Number	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
<20	-	-	-	-	-	-
20-22	24	14.9	1	.6	25	15.5
23-25	29	18.0	3	1.9	32	19.9
26-28	42	26.1	2	1.2	44	27.3
28 and above	60	36.0	2	1.2	62	37.2
Total	155	95.0	8	5.0	161	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Most of the respondents were above the age of 28 and 15.5 respondents were of age 20-22 years which shows that young respondents are keen to go to foreign labour migrants as well. In the context of the female age group 26-28 were likely to go to foreign labour migrants.

Educational Status of Returned Migrants

Educational attainment is directly related to the economic status of people. Education indicates the literacy condition of foreign labour migration. Education is one of the most influential factors affecting an individual's attitude, knowledge and behaviour in various factors of life. It can be said that the majority of the foreign labour migrants had low educational attainment. The highest i.e. 36.2 percent returned foreign labour migrants had to get secondary level education, 30.1 percent had to get primary education, 17.2 percent returned migrants had get lower secondary level education and only 10.4 percent returned migrants received intermediate level of education. Similarly, 6.1 percent of returned migrants were illiterate and all illiterate returned migrants were male.

Duration of Stay in Foreign

Duration of stay in foreign labour migration means the duration of time spent by the foreign labour migrants in the host countries. The duration of stay depends on the agreement with the foreign country, salary, job types, working environment, health and other family problems. The duration of stay is presented in the following table:

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Foreign Labour Migration by Duration of Stay in Foreign

Countries	Duration of Stay in Foreign								Total	
	<1year		2-4		4-6		6 and above		N	P
	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P		
India	1	.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.6
Malaysia	35	21.5	15	9.2	3	1.8	4	2.5	57	35.0
Qatar	6	3.7	38	23.3	3	1.8	-	-	47	28.8
UAE	1	.6	16	9.8	1	.6	-	-	18	11.0
Saudi Arabia	7	4.3	20	12.3	4	2.5	5	3.1	36	22.1
Kuwait	2	1.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1.2

Others	-	-	1	.6	-	-	1	.6	2	1.2
Total	52	31.9	90	55.2	11	6.7	10	6.1	163	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 3 shows that 55.2 percent of foreign labour migrants stayed foreign for 2-4 years followed by 31.9 percent for less than one year, 6.7 percent for 4-6 years and 6.1 percent for 6 years and above respectively. Similarly, most of the foreign labour migrant's place of destination country was Malaysia and second country Qatar and the third country was Saudi Arabia.

Types of Jobs in Destination Countries

Types of job means, what types of jobs did the foreign labour migrants do in the host country. Most of the Nepalese workers are unskilled and uneducated, so, they were engaged in construction and factory labour. The highest i.e. 35 percent returned migrants engaged in factory labour followed by 17.8 percent engaged in construction, 14.1 percent on Hotel/ Restaurants and security guards, 3.1 percent on agriculture and 13.5 percent on other types of jobs respectively. The highest 43.6 percent of foreign labour returned migrants received NRs. 20,000- 25,000 salary per month followed by 29.4 percent <20,000 salaries per month, 17.2 percent received 25,000- 30,000 salary per month and only 9.8 percent received 30,001 and more salary per month respectively.

Use of Remittance

The flow of remittances in Nepal from a foreign country is increasing in the last decade. Remittance refers to that portion of migrants' earnings sent from the migration destination to the place of origin. The term remittance is normally limited to monetary and other cash sent by migrants, to their families, which sector of the earned money spent is known as the investment sector of earned money.

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Foreign Labour Migration by Investment of Earned Money

Investment Sectors	Monthly Salary								Total	
	<20000		20000-25000		25001-30000		30001 and above		N	P
	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P		
Households work	13	8.1	23	14.5	11	6.9	3	1.9	50	31.4
Buy land	7	4.4	9	5.7	5	3.1	6	3.8	27	17.0
To build house	8	5.0	4	2.5	-	-	2	1.3	14	8.8
Child education	4	2.5	2	1.3	1	.6	1	.6	8	5.0
To pay loan	6	3.8	15	9.4	1	.6	-	-	22	13.8
Housework and buying land	3	1.9	8	5.0	4	2.5	2	1.3	17	10.7
Housework and paying the loan	6	3.8	10	6.3	3	1.9	2	1.3	21	13.2
Total	47	29.6	71	44.7	25	15.7	16	10.1	159	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Nearly 20 percent of foreign labour migrants had invested their earnings in household work followed by 17.0 percent had invested their earnings to buy land, 13.8 percent had invested for pay loans, 13.2 percent had invested their earnings for housework and pay the loan, 11.9 percent had invested housework's and children education, 10.7 percent respondents had invested their earnings for housework and buy land, 8.8 percent had spent for built house and only 5 percent had spent for pay loan only respectively.

Returnee's New Occupation

Types of job means, what types of jobs do returnee migrants in their own country. Most Nepalese workers are unskilled and uneducated, so, they were engaged in construction and factory labour in the host countries. When the COVID pandemic affected all over the world, many more labour migrants were also returned to their homes and they still stay, they are engaged in different occupations such as farming (agricultural farming, poultry farming, animal farming and fishery),driving (four wheels),driving (Auto, Rickshaw, Safari),currently no working and politics (full-time politicians) categories.

The highest i.e. 58.3 percent returned migrants currently engaged in farming (agricultural farming, poultry farming, animal farming and fishery) followed by 15.3 percent of respondents still do not engage in any job only involving on households choruses, 13.5 percent on Own Business (Hotel, Restaurant, grocery shop, meat shop, readymade and fancy shop (clothes and shoes)), 6.1percent of respondents engaged on driving (Auto, Rickshaw, Safari), 4.3 percent on driving (four wheels) and only 2.5 percent respondents involved in politics.

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Returnee Migrants by involvement in Different Activities Destination

Types of Work	Number	Percent
Farming (agricultural farming, poultry farming, animal farming and fishery)	95	58.3
Driving (four wheels)	7	4.3
Driving (Auto, Rickshaw, Safari)	10	6.1
Own Business (Hotel, Restaurant, grocery shop, meat shop, readymade and fancy shop (clothes and shoes))	22	13.5
Current not working (households choruses)	25	15.3
Politics (full-time politicians)	4	2.5
Total	163	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Monthly Income of the Respondents

The highest 43.6 percent of respondents of returned migrants received NRs. 20,000-25,000 salary per month followed by 29.4 percent <20,000 salaries per month, 17.2 percent received 25,000- 30,000 salary per month and only 9.8 percent received 30, 001 and more salary per month respectively in the homeland.

Table 6: Percentage Distribution of returnee Migrants' monthly income in the different job by sex

Age Group	Sex				Total	
	Male		Female		Number	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
<20000	43	26.4	5	3.1	48	29.4
20000-25000	67	41.1	4	2.5	71	43.6
25001-30000	26	16.0	2	1.2	28	17.2
30001 and above	15	9.2	1	0.6	16	9.8
Total	151	92.6	12	7.4	163	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

The Economic Situation of Returnee migrants

Most of the returnee migrants are involved in different income generation activities in their local areas. The researcher conducted the focus group discussion with different people (political activists, social and community workers (who are directly involved in local government and NGOs, women groups, co-operatives members, youth clubs members and housewives) and expressed that all members of the family have their equal responsibility in each household. Everyone's responsibility may not be bear by others so all the members should come on a general understanding to run a house with good earnings. The entire member should work together and co-operate with each other in the matters related to the household and its members. According to this study, it has been found that most of the housewives of migrant workers may feel lonely and marry due to their long absence; a lot of the wives of migrant workers are less educated. Therefore, they are disappointed and distressed even by a simple problem. They can't evaluate which is right or which is wrong they can't decide their children's progress in their studies or can't keep track of the children's activities. So, the returnee migrants are involved in different income-generating activities which are support to run the family and directly observing their children, taking care of their family and social activities.

During the time period of the focus group discussion with the political workers, social workers and housewives and interview with the returnees migrants, people expressed migration has resulted in the possession of the assets of the households. It has changed culturalisation. socialization, living standard, lifestyle and other household facilities. Income from foreign employment has improved the condition of the house of many households as well as improvement of the individual members in education, behaviour, and food and dresses habit. Consequently, the migrant household is constructed cemented. Their houses are equipped with modern equipment, accessories and other luxurious goods. Because of the facilities of electricity, many of the households of migrants have been able to use television, radio, Refrigerator, electric heater, electric iron as well as rice cooker in their kitchen. Due to the good income, varieties of food have been included in their cuisine. Most households cook foods on biogas, a gas stove instead of firewood because of the easy availability of cooking gas cylinders in the market. They have also brought

enough ornaments and gold. Numbers of rich families have brought private motor vehicles and motorbikes.

Conclusion

Migration is an ongoing process of human being and their nature and its history are very long with human being development. There are different causes of migration lack of employment opportunities and desired types of work in the place of origin force the people to seek other sources of income. The majority of international labour migration is found to seek better income in cities, job seeking on forced idleness during the part of year and services. They are compelled to send their husbands and sons to gulf countries to earn something to maintain the subsistence of the households. Despite their poverty and workloads, the women are very much aware of improving their economic status. They are not interested in getting a higher level of education and will have the difficulty in getting government services which have characterized corruption like nepotism, favoritism and corruption of secure jobs. Unproductive utilization of labour uncontrolled outflow of labour low paid work and illegal transfer, employment discrimination with respect to colour, age, sex, ethnicity, religion and others are major problems being faced by migrant workers. After a long time, they are involved in foreign labour migration in different countries, they have gained different skills and work which are shared and used at the local level in their homeland. It is going to be a change in society, community and household level (cultural, economic, social structure, physical structure and education). Therefore, the local government also financially supports these people who want to do different income-generating sectors at their local level.

COVID—19 affected the world and a national wide lockdown had an instant and prolonged effect on unemployment rates in Nepal. Therefore, the government should develop employment opportunities to incorporate foreign migrant workers and domestic workers creating maximum jobs.

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