

## Foreign Labor Migration: Causes and Educational Impact

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### Abstract

Foreign labour migration has been a common source of discourse along with socio-economic consequences on the place of local, federal, state, region and the world. It has brought impacts on different aspects of life including education. So, this study examines the causes of foreign labour migration and its educational impact on the households of Chhewetar, Gorkha. The study followed the quantitative method and survey design. The participants were selected by using systematic random sampling procedures. The questionnaire was used as the tool for data collection. The data were analyzed and interpreted by using descriptive statistics. The findings indicate that lack of employment, the poverty of the family and the wish of improving the economic status of a household were the major factors causing foreign employment. However, foreign employment has a positive impact on the educational status of the households because it improved the schooling of their children and enhances literacy levels. The income from foreign employment supported them in educating the children in urban areas, purchasing educational materials and paying tuition fees. The study concludes that foreign employment has been a boon in improving the educational status of foreign-employment migrant children.

*Keywords:* Foreign, labour, educational, change, impact

### Introduction

Migration of people from one place to another is a usual phenomenon since the beginning of human civilization (OHCHR, 2014). The migration, in the beginning, was for the sake of food and exploring new places for security purposes, but gradually the migration took the shape in a diverse forms and now has become very essential and common in each corner of the world. International labour migration is one of the integral components while taking international migration into consideration millions of people from around the world (especially from the developing world) are learning their usual place of residence for seeking better employment opportunities and supplying food for their dependents. Globalization and integration of regional economics have added impetus to the growing mobility of workers across borders (ILO, 2007). Poverty and the inability to earn enough or produce enough to support oneself or one family are major reasons behind the movement of work seekers from one place to another. These are not only characteristics of migration from poor to richest; poverty also fuels movement from one developing country to others where work prospects seem at distance, at least to be better (NHRC, 2008/09).

According to (OHCHR, 2004) the migrant worker is not a product of the twentieth century. Women and men have been leaving their homelands in search of work elsewhere ever since payment in return for labour was introduced. The difference today is that there are far more migrant workers than in any period of human history. Millions of people are now earning their living--or looking for paid employment--came as strangers to the States where they reside. There is no continent, no region of the world, which does not have its contingent of migrant workers.

Explicit information has been lacking in every step for potential labour migrants. Most of them are not aware of where they are going, what work they have to do, the actual cost they need to spend to go to work and other social and cultural information about the country of destination. As a result, there are numerous realistic stories of the suffering of Nepalese migrant workers abroad. It is believed that Nepalese workers are accepted in East and South Asia as well as Gulf countries only because they are cheap and they do whatever job was given to them. Most of the migrants are educated from middle and lower-middle-class families (NHRC, 2008/09) and go abroad with the hope of earning much within a short period a large number work illegally.

One of the serious population problems emerging during the last few decades is the foreign labour migration of people from heterogeneously gathered urban areas to various countries of the world. The sending areas are facing various problems like an exodus of the energetic and educated workforce. Migration is universal and inevitable, yet the social and economic impact of foreign labour migration in both sending societies as receiving intolerable. In the migration theory, safe and unsafe two types of migration have been in practice. Safe migration is legally approved while unsafe migration is not legally accepted. People can have both positive and negative impacts of migration in different aspects of their life, for example, education, employment, income and so on. The people of Chewetar (the study area) of Gorkha municipality might have been suffering from both types of both safe and unsafe migration.

From the initial observation, I came to see many people of Chewetar have been in foreign employment migration. It has created my interest in researching this topic. The study on foreign employment and its impact can be useful to see a clear picture of foreign employment and its effect on demographic and other social aspects. Many migration studies emphasize collecting and analyzing data either for model building or for a scientific explanation for determinants of both internal and international migration over time and space. Similarly, many studies focused on characteristic causes and consequences of migration in the different parts of the world or Nepal.

Previous studies have been carried out on classical issues such as the causes and consequences of economic migration. However, the uniqueness of this study is its focus on the educational impact of foreign labour migrants' household family members residing in Chhepetar, Gorkha municipality where heterogeneous people are gathered from Dhading, Tanahun and other parts of Gorkha district. At the core of the study, it attempted to answer the questions like what is the status of foreign employment at Chewetar? what are the causes of foreign labour migration and what could be the educational impacts of foreign labour migration? By addressing these questions, the study aimed to examine the cause of foreign labour migration in the study area and explore the educational impact of foreign migration in the study area. When addressing the educational levels of migrants, it is necessary to mention that overall the educational level of migrants has fallen over the past 10 years.

The question arises if the drop in the educational level of migrants is related to the deterioration of human capital in Tajikistan or rather to the negative effects of labour migration (such as the unregulated legal status of migrants). In response to this question we have made the following hypothesis: Collective experiences during migration cause a decrease in the level of migrants' education throughout the migration development process. Due to an unregulated legal status, many migrants in destination countries are faced with conditions in which their educational background is becoming irrelevant. This collective experience discourages young

prospective migrants to improve their educational level. (<https://journals.openedition.org/remi/5239>).

Education and skills acquisition plays an important role at many stages of an individual's migration (at the country/community of origin, transit and destination), and they are indeed the main drivers of migration. Likewise, migration flows have an impact on the educational outcomes of a society (Economics of Education Review, 2009:739–749). Education helps people learn the local language and develop new skills. The economic success of the migrant will to a large extent be determined by his/her educational background, how the skills acquired are relevant to the host country's labour market, and how much he/she will invest in further skills after arrival. Educational infrastructure and teachers may not be prepared to accommodate the arrival of migrants with specific needs. Curricula may be unsuited for different cultural values or for accommodating diversity. Designing inclusive education systems is essential for people of all backgrounds to succeed. The United Nations Secretary-General has already recognized its importance and highlighted the fact that people migrate to overcome poverty, escape conflict, or cope with economic and environmental shocks. In his words, migration is “an expression of the human aspiration for dignity, safety and a better future. It is part of the social fabric, part of our very make-up as a human family” (UNESCO, forthcoming).<sup>6</sup> Learning is understood to be the process of acquiring *Kn*[https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iom\\_migration\\_education\\_report.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iom_migration_education_report.pdf)).

### Methods and procedures

The study was undertaken in Chewetar of Gorkha which is ward number 10 of Gorkha Municipality, Gorkha district, Gandaki Province, Nepal. It is scattered in 131.86 square kilometres areas. The municipality is surrounded by Bhimsen Thapa Rural Municipality, Shahid Lakhani Rural Municipality in the east and Palungtar Municipality, Siranchok Rural Municipality in the west and Shahid Lekhan Rural Municipality in the South. Chewetar is near the border of the Tanahun district. The total population of Gorkha municipality 49,272. The population of Chewetar is 2848. According to the Municipality profile, Gorkha Municipality A Short Profile of Chewetar are in foreign employment.

This study followed a descriptive explorative research method and survey research design. Descriptive explorative research describes the phenomena under study and explores the interrelated aspects that help understand the phenomena (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). A survey of causes of foreign employment and its impact on the educational status of the households has been made in this study.

The research was based on primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources of data were 163 households in Chewetar, Gorkha. The primary data were collected by using a questionnaire form for the participants of the study. Similarly, the secondary data was collected from the population census, a review of earlier studies, a record of Gorkha municipality, the Central Bureau of Statistics and other related documents. Thus, the study was based on both the primary and secondary data sources obtained from the field survey and review of the literature, respectively.

The population of the study comprised all the households of foreign employment migrants of Chewetar of Gorkha Municipality. However, the sample size for this study comprises only 163 households from ward number 10 of Gorkha Municipality. The participants

were selected by using a systematic random sampling method. While selecting the respondents, the researcher employed 4.5 interval households. The selection of households has been given in the table below:

**Table 1**

*Distribution of households and sample size*

S.N	Total HHs	Sample HH		
		Male	Female	Total
Ward No.10	809	115	48	163

*Source:* Field survey 2021

The sample size from the study population has been calculated by using the formula of sample determination as discussed by Bryman (2016):

$$\begin{aligned}
 n &= \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \\
 &= \frac{809}{1 + 809(0.07)^2} \\
 &= 162.9701255010979 \\
 &= 162.97 \\
 &= 163
 \end{aligned}$$

Here N = Total Household = 353(ward no. 09) + 456(ward no.10) = 809HH

n = sample size = 163

e = 0.07

HH size = Total Population /HH = 763/163 = 4.680981595092025 = 5

The final HH sample size was 163 in this study. The number of foreign employment migrant in the study area and their distribution by sex is given in the following table:

**Table 2**

*Distribution of Foreign Labor Migrants by Sex*

SN	Male	Female	Total
HH member	397	366	763
Foreign labour migrants	149	28	177

*Source:* Field Survey 2021

A questionnaire including closed-ended items was used for the survey of causes and educational impact. So, all the required data from the primary sources were elicited with the help

of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed considering the objectives and research questions. The collected data were analyzed and interpreted by using simple statistical tools like frequency count and percentile. The data have been displayed in the form of a table.

### Results and Discussion

In line with the objectives of this study, the discussion has been made and supported by the results. At first, the demographic information of foreign employment migrants has been presented and then the causes and effects have been examined.

#### *Distribution of Involvement HH Population*

The distribution of employment of the households from the entire population has been presented in the table below:

**Table 3**

#### *Distribution of Involvement HH Population*

Occupation	Population	
	No.	%
Agriculture	312	40.89
Cottage Industries	7	0.92
Service	60	7.86
Business	19	2.49
Daily Wages (Agricultural)	14	1.83
Daily Wages (Non-Agricultural)	2	0.26
Physically Unable to Work	25	3.28
Student	234	30.67
Currently not Working	9	1.18
Others	81	10.62
Total	763	100.00

Source: Field survey 2021

The data in table 3 shows that the majority of the HH (40.89%) in the study area are involved in agriculture while the minority of them (0.26%) are involved in daily agricultural wages. Besides agriculture, they are involved in the study, services, and other areas.

#### *Distribution of Educational Level of the Respondents*

The educational status of the foreign employment migrants has an important role in causing foreign employment, gaining higher education and developing socio-economic status. Table 4 shows that out of 163 respondents 35 are literate only and 54 are primarily educated. Similarly, 19 of them are having lower secondary education, 35 have secondary education, 14 of them have higher secondary education and 8 of them have bachelor's degrees.

The data in table 4 indicates that the highest number of the participants obtained primary education and the lowest number of them had bachelor's degrees. The number of educated might be the determinant of foreign employment migrants.

**Table 4***Distribution of Educational Level of the Respondents*

Literate Only	Educational Level					Bachelor's Degree	Total
	Primary	Lower Secondary	Secondary	Higher Secondary			
0	6	2	4	2	3	17	
27	43	15	28	12	5	130	
0	0	1	2	0	0	3	
6	5	1	1	0	0	13	
33	54	19	35	14	8	163	

*Source:* Field Survey, 2021

For the explicit presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data, the two major themes were developed at first and then the discussion has been made with data evidence in the following ways:

***Causes of Foreign Employment Migration***

One of the objectives of this research was to explore the causes of foreign employment migration in the study area. For this, the researcher used a questionnaire including closed-ended items and asked the participants to show their responses. The causes and the responses of the participants have been presented in the following table:

**Table 5***Causes of Foreign Employment Migration*

S.N	Causes of Foreign Employment	Frequency	Percentage
1	Lack of employment opportunity	67	41.10
2	Situation of poverty	45	27.60
3	Socioeconomic status of the family	33	20.24
4	Interest to improve socio-economic status	12	7.36
5	Increase life standard	6	3.68
Total		163	100

*Source:* Field Survey, 2021

Table 5 shows that one of the major causes of foreign employment migration was a lack of employment opportunities. In total, 41.10% of participants chose lack of employment. Similarly, the situation of poverty was the cause for 27.60% of respondents, the socio-economic status of the family was the cause for 20.24% of the participants and interest to improve socio-economic status was the cause for 7.36% of respondents. The least number of them, i.e., 3.68% realized increased life standards as the cause of foreign employment migrants. The data indicate that many youths of Chewetar are in foreign employment because of the lack of employment opportunities. However, an interest to increase living standards was not the major cause of them.

### *Educational Impact of Foreign Employment Migration*

The second objective of the study was to assess the educational impact of foreign employment migration. Foreign employment migration has both positive and negative effects on education. Comparably, a positive impact is higher than the negative one. Table 6 presents the data related to the educational impact on the participants of the study:

**Table 6**

#### *Educational Impact of Foreign Employment Migration*

S.N	Educational impact	Frequency	Percentage
1	Increase in literacy status	35	21.42
2	Educating children in private school	51	31.28
3	Change in the living standard after education	15	9.20
4	Leaving the study incomplete	16	9.81
5	Giving importance to income than the education	21	12.88
6	Increased awareness of the value of education	25	15.33
Total		163	100.00

*Source:* Field Survey, 2021

The data presented in table 6 indicate that foreign employment has a significant contribution to educating the children of foreign employment migrants in private schools. In total 31.28% of the respondents felt that foreign employment increased their income and they became able to enrol their children in private schools. Similarly, the educational impact has been seen in increasing the literacy status, increasing awareness of the value of education and giving importance. Foreign employment also has a positive impact on changing the living standard. However, it has a negative impact too. In total 12.88% of respondents viewed that they gave importance to income instead of education and they left their study incomplete because of foreign employment opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

Foreign employment has been a compulsion for many poor and working-class people in the community because of the lack of employment opportunities and the absence of good income inside the nation. Many youths in developing countries including Nepal are in foreign employment. There are different causes of foreign employment however, this study identified the lack of appropriate job opportunities within the country, poverty and interest to improve the socio-economic status of the family as the major ones. Foreign employment migration has been found as having both a positive and negative impact on education. As a positive impact, foreign employment has been seen significant in increasing the literacy status of the participants, educating their children in private schools, and the increased awareness of the value of education. In contrast to these, foreign employment has some negative impact on education too. The finding shows that leaving the study incomplete and paying more attention to money than that education is the negative impact of foreign employment.

The results of the study enable me to conclude that like the youths of other places of Nepal, the youths of Chewetar of Gorkha municipality are also in foreign employment mainly because of the lack of employment opportunities and poverty. Foreign employment has been a

boon as well as a bane to them in the sense that it has supported them in educating children and enhancing literacy levels. However, many foreign employment migrants are obliged to leave their studies incomplete and run after money because of the income from foreign employment. The results indicate that foreign employment, its causes and its impacts on different aspects of life should be examined through large-scale quantitative and in-depth qualitative research so that we can be able to draw a more real graph of foreign employment and its impact. Foreign employment is seen as important for the financial benefits; acquisition of skills, entrepreneurship, explore opportunities for further investment. Equally, it has some negative impacts such as increased workload for women and exposure to health risks and can lead to social malpractices (ICMOD, 2010). One of the prominent positive impacts of foreign employment in education is the children's educational attainment.

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