

Effects of Parental Death on their Child Education

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Submitted: March 9, 2024; Accepted: July 12, 2024; Published: January 31, 2025

Abstracts

Research on labor migration has recognized that parental migration has dual impacts on their children's education. This study tries to investigate the implication of parental death on their child's well-being in Kathmandu Valley. The objective of this article is to explore the effects of the death of parents in foreign labor migrations on the educational implications of children left behind. This cross-sectional study has followed a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative). It used a purposive sample of Kathmandu Valley and schools, respondents were selected using simple random sampling. Out of 83 students, 56 were selected aged 10-18 for the interview for this research. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect the information, and has collected through face-to-face interview methods. Data were processed using the SPSS 20th version and analyzed in descriptive and analytical forms. Parents' migration positively impacts their children's education, but the sudden death of parents negatively affects their school education. Parental death also negatively impacts the household economy and finally affects children's school enrollment, attendance, and educational activities and achievements. About 75 percent of respondents stated that the death of parents increases financial burden and one in ten students wants to drop out of school. Poor attendance and academic outcomes are major causes of school dropouts. To address this, the government should raise and continue scholarship programs to secure schooling for children left behind.

Keywords: Attendance, academic achievements, child education, scholarship, and parental death

Introduction

People leave their origin places for better opportunities for themselves and their families. Nepalese young people leave the country and send billions of remittances to their families. Millions of people have crossed the international border worldwide to search for opportunities in 2019. They were about 4.9 percent of the total migration worldwide and approximately 69 percent of the world's migrant people (ILO, 2021). Over 4 million Nepalese workers have taken

approval from the Department of Foreign Labor Employment during the last decade (MoLESS, 2020; Adhikari, 2022). Many Nepalese migrant workers make the journey home in a coffin. About 90 migrant labour died in 2009 which increased by 1395 in 2020. More than ten thousand (10,666 people) migrant laborers have died during the last decade in foreign labor migration (Mandal, 2020; MoLESS, 2022; Adhikari & Paudel, 2022).

Himaz (2013) outlined that parental death in childhood affects the child's schooling. It has a significant negative impact on a child. It impacts on their school enrolment. Gertler et al. (2004) also explain that parental deaths were associated with child schooling and it reduced school enrollment among children.

Research in labor migration has recognized that parental migration or the absence has negatively impacted children's diets and health outcomes (Gibson et al., 2011; Adhikari & Paudel, 2022). Parental death in adolescents impacts school enrolment on children (Himaz, 2013). It is also related to reducing children's school enrolment (Gertler et al., 2004). When parents move for labor, older children may become heads of household and should care for their younger siblings and additional household responsibilities. This burden of work impacts their school. They suffer from anxiety and depression and live with high levels of stress (UNICEF, 2020).

Parent's migration decisions can negatively impact the non-cognitive development of school-going children who are left behind. The presence of parents with their children, rather than their relatives or grandparents, has a more significant impact on their children's development. Therefore, parents should stay with their children instead of leaving them with relatives or grandparents (Abbasi et al., 2023).

Parental migration can improve children's living conditions by generating remittance and increasing investment in their educational development. However, it removes adult human capital and sources of care from the household, generating emotional and practical pressure on children. The impact of parental migration vary by children's age, and gender, migration timing, and duration, and household and social and economic status (Murphy & Zhang, 2023).

Parental loss is a traumatic event for children, it reduces investments in child education which may have long-term implications. Parental death may lead to a child's temporary exit from school, this death mainly affects child enrollment. And higher at the primary level than

others. The school drop-out is mainly caused by reducing expenditure on education and relocation of the family due to the death of parents. Nearly 50 percent of children have school drop-out from death family (Gertler et al., 2004).

Kunwer (2022) described the positive and negative impacts of parental migration on children left behind. Remittance improves children's health and education, while the absence of parents increases loneliness and psychological problems.

Nearly 378 children were provided scholarships from the Foreign Employment Board of Nepal for those who died, were physically disabled, or became seriously ill during foreign labor migration. These students were 54 students in Kathmandu, 18 in Bhaktapur, and 11 children in the Lalitpur districts (MoLESS, 2021; Adhikari, 2022).

The number of children who lost their parents has increased in Nepalese society. Nearly 90 migrant labours lost their lives for various reasons in 2009 which increased by 1395 in 2022. In total, 10,666 migrant labours lost their lives in foreign labour migration during the last decade (MoLESS, 2022). The death of parents will bring multiple problems to children. It influences the health, education, and development of children. This article mainly focused on the educational effects of children from parental death at foreign labour employment in Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur districts).

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this article is to focus on the educational implications of children from the death of parents at foreign labour migration.

Research Question of the Study

To achieve the target objectives, the following research questions have been raised in this study.

- a. What types of incentives have they got to continue their education from the government of Nepal?
- b. What implications do they face from the death of parents to continue their education?

The Rationale of the Study

This study tries to establish the relationship between the deaths of a parent's effects on a child's education. The loss of the family's breadwinner is crucial to schooling children. They

face psychological as well as educational problems at this time. This cross-sectional study has covered the three districts of Kathmandu Valley. Therefore, this study is helpful to the authority of policymakers to fill the gap between the child situation and the death of migrants in the foreign labour migration of Kathmandu Valley.

Review of Literature

The most popular theory of migration, Ravenstein's seven migration laws, has explained that most migrants move only a short distance. The distance between the origins determines the volume of migration. The migration occurs with streams and counter streams (Ravenstein, 1889). Everett Lee has focused on factors associated with the decision to migrate and the process of migration. Migrants would have been influenced by the four factors (push, pull, intervening obstacle, and personal). The Gravity model states the volume of migration between two centers is a function of distance and population size. Stouffer's model proposed that the number of migrants is a direct function of the number of opportunities (Adhikari, 2022).

Theory of New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) has explained migration and remittances. It focused on the implications of migration-driven remittances on the microeconomic incentives of family members left behind. In this theory, a hypothesis is that migration has an effort to overcome households from market failures through constraining local production. Migrants provide their households with the liquidity of remittances. It may be used to finance new production technologies, inputs, and activities. They offer income insurance by access to an income source. NELM theory leads to specific hypotheses about migrants' motivations to remit and the impacts of remittances on the migrant-sending economy (Taylor, 1999; Adhikari, 2022).

A longitudinal study on the impact of parental death in middle childhood around a sample of 850 children in Ethiopia shows the different effects on a child's schooling and psychosocial outcomes. That study explained the significant negative impact of parental death on a child's psychology about their future life (Himaz, 2013). Parental deaths helped reduce school enrolment of children. Older children are higher at risk of dropping out when a parent dies (Gertler et al., 2004).

Studies show that parental migration hurts school attendance. Father's contributions to the family are very vast in a poor family that connects the father's absence from the family to the

absence of a child in school (Lahaie et al., 2009; Antman, 2011a). The father supports playing discipline in the family. When a father migrates to foreign employment then his absence impacts on child's schooling. Lahaie et al. (2009) show that migration of a spouse is significantly associated with academic, behavioral, and emotional problems for children in the family.

Meyerhoefer and Chen (2011) have explained about different effects of parental migration different ages and genders of the child. It is directly associated with girls' educational progress and migration for boys. Mother's migration harms children's education and is more harmful than paternal absence. A mother's long-term absence from the family harms children's education (Jampaklay, 2006).

The migration of parents has positive and negative effects. The positive effects tend to stress the importance of migrant remittances that relax the household resource constraint. Negative effects tend to dominate any improvements in income. Antman (2011a) finds a negative effect of paternal migration on study hours for boys within the first year after the migration took place. In contrast, parental migration has a positive effect and ultimately affects girls' educational attainment (Antman, 2011b).

According to Gibson et al (2010), child well-being is associated with the migration of parents. It has positive effects on child health. Sometimes parental migration hit lower health inputs for children left behind. The migration of a household head leads to worse diets and health outcomes for children. Macours and Vakis (2010) explained a positive impact on childhood development from the migration of parents. The positive effect of remittances is a fulfilment of the nutrition of children in migrant families.

Parental migration has social implications. From men's migration, women and children received remittance. They were able to afford better education, educational materials, and clear due on time. This helped children to study better but expenses of remittance in child education placed in third priority. A study on parental migration on social implications shows that 5.7 percent of children of migrant households have dropped out of education. It also explains that the migration of fathers hurts children's education. Sometimes, investments in child education are unequal between son and daughter. The mother's aspiration is a son. They took their sons to take up higher education rather than their daughters. They think a daughter's marriage is better than higher education in adulthood (Ghimire, Bhujel & Tiwari, 2019).

An online database research shows that there was a relationship between the mental health of older parents and the migration of adult children. Left behind older parents had higher levels of mental health problems, depressive symptoms, and higher levels of loneliness. They have lower life satisfaction, lower cognitive ability, and poor psychological health. They had faced living arrangements, gender, education, and income level problems (Thapa, Visentin, Kornhaber & Cleary, 2018).

A school-based study of international parental migration and the psychological well-being of children in Ghana, Nigeria, and Angola shows that children left behind suffer psychologically from parental migration. Children's psychological well-being is measured through a strength and difficulties questionnaire. This study focused on four characteristics of transitional families. Children were selected purposively from biological families and children living in transitional families with at least one parent who had migrated for three months or more. All schools were selected randomly and the response rate ranged from 85 to 90 percent (Mazzucato, et al., 2014).

Government's Response to the Children

A scholarship program for the children of foreign labor migrants has been guaranteed under the social scheme of the Foreign Labor Employment Board. Such scholarship has been provided to the family members of migrant labor who died- or became physically disabled or seriously ill at the workplace. They should be below the age of 18 and should be enrolled in schools. The amount is NRs. 8000 for the primary level and NRs. 12000 for the secondary level. One scholar will be paid the annual amount for one class at a time (MoLESS, 2071). They should gather the following documents to get the scholarship: the labor approval form, Citizenship of the guardian, a passport photocopy of the deceased or completely physically impaired individual, a copy of the death certificate, a certificate of disclosure of disability during foreign employment, a copy of the birth certificate of the student, document to prove the relationship between the applicant and the employed person and recommendation letter from the local authority. About 378 children got the scholarships last year. The scholarship has been distributed to 54 students of Kathmandu, 18 students of Bhaktapur, and 11 students of the Lalitpur district (MoLESS, 2078; Adhikari & Paudel, 2022).

Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework on Effects of Parental Death in Child Education*

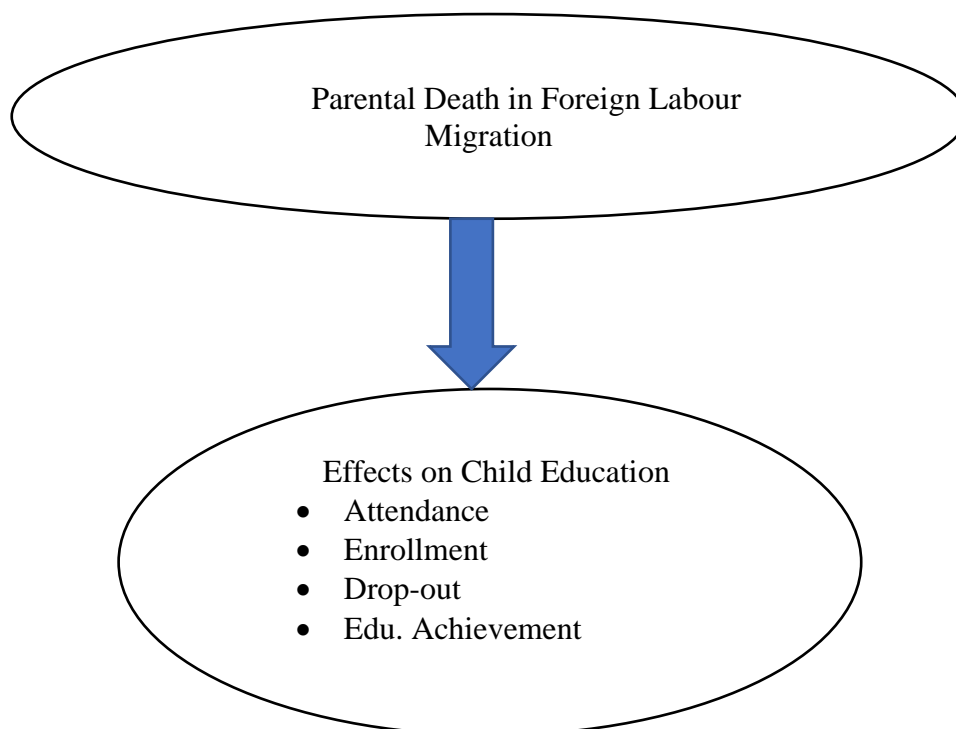


Figure (1) explains that parental death in foreign labour migration impacted their children's left-behinds. It mainly impacts their educational outcomes. Although parental migration has a positive impact on the household economy through remittances. The remittances positively support child care and schooling. When a migrant person dead in foreign employment, it negatively impacts to their household economy. It suffer psychologically and economically in the family. It mainly effects on children's school enrolment, regular attendance, and educational activities at home and in the classroom and educational achievements. Finally, in poor economic situations, children face problems in school attendance and classroom discussions, and this results in poor academic outcomes, children have been forced to drop out of school.

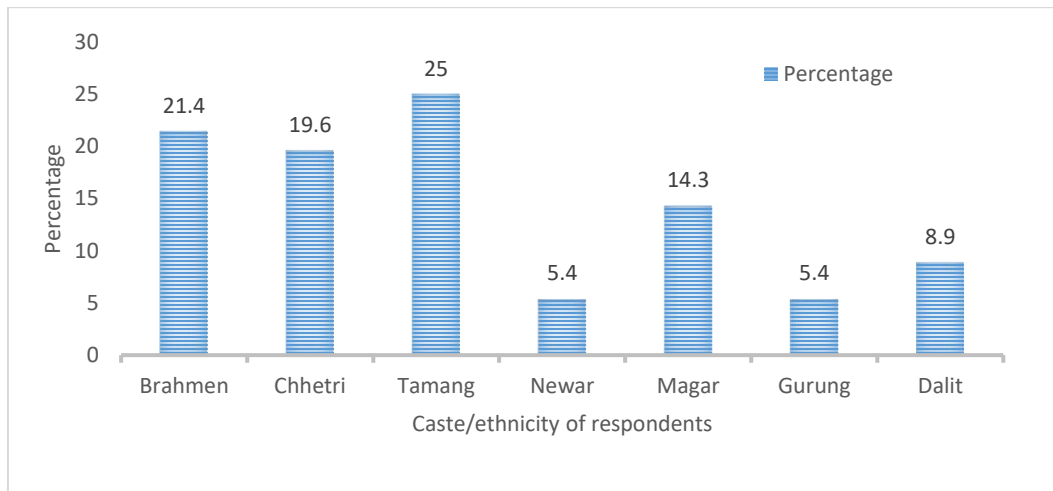
Methods

This research has followed a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative). The design was exploratory and the procedure of the field survey. The study used a purposive sampling method to select the Kathmandu Valley, and schools and students using simple random sampling. The data was collected from the roster of the scholarship program 2077 from the foreign labor employment funds in Nepal. There are 83 respondents in total, this research has used a two-round process for the sample selection. For the first-round selection of the sample, respondents aged 10–18 years were considered a cut-off point (the reason for selecting this group is that a 10-

year and above child can respond to the question about his family and education). Out of 83 respondents, 17 were excluded from the interview due to under-age, and 10 did not provide complete information. Finally, this research has covered 56 respondents. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect the information from the students and teachers. Information was collected through face-to-face interview methods from the students, and school teachers were asked about the academic progress and regularity of students. Data were processed using the SPSS 20th version and analyzed in descriptive and analytical forms.

Data Analysis

Out of 56 respondents, 54 percent of respondents were female and 46 percent were male in the study area. They range from age 10 to 18 years. Age 14 years has the highest proportion (20 percent) of respondents. They studied in grades 3 to 12 class. According to the sex of respondents, male respondents were higher proportion in grades 6 and 7 (19 percent), and nearly 23 percent of female respondents were in grades 4 and 9. According to caste/ethnic group, the Tamang caste was observed to have the highest (25 percent) proportion in foreign labor migration, Brahmin (21 percent) and Chhetri (20 percent) placed in second and third positions (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. *Distribution of Respondents by Caste/Ethnicity (n=56)*

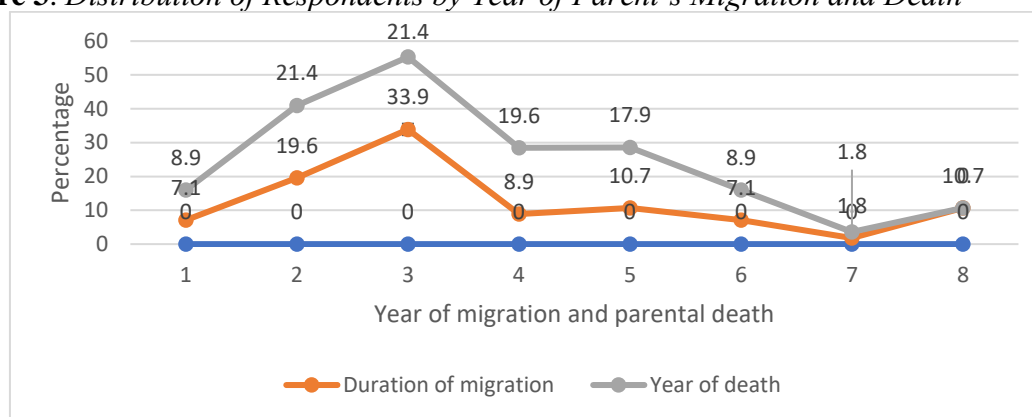
The flow of parental migration for foreign labor migration was observed higher in Saudi Arabia (29 percent), Malaysia 27 percent, and Quarter 23 percent respectively. The death of the parent impacts in respondent's education. More than 91 percent of respondents accept that parental death impacts their education. It varies by the sex of respondents. About 48 percent of females and 43 percent of males accept the effect of parental death on their education (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Impact of Parental Death on Child Education*

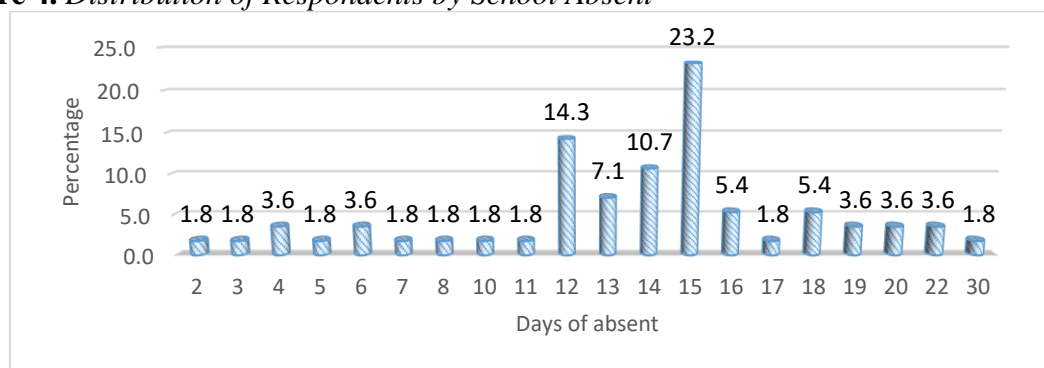
Parent's Death Impact on Education	Sex				Total	
	Boys	Percent	Girls	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	24	42.9	27	48.2	51	91.1
No	2	3.6	3	5.4	5	8.9
Total	26	46.4	30	53.6	56	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Nearly 21 percent of respondents had faced death 2 to 3 years before they migrated. It decreased by 18 percent in 5 years and, 2 percent in seven before migration to a place of destination (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. *Distribution of Respondents by Year of Parent's Migration and Death****Parental migration and schooling of children***

The parental death impacts the schooling of respondents. The mean days of school absence are 14, where the maximum absentees are 30 days, and the minimum is two days. The death of a parent impacts the exam and their output, 93 percent of students attain the first and second exams only. It also impacts the results of students. Only 4 percent of students accept that their results are excellent, and 5 percent have gotten poor results. About 79 percent of students have achieved a medium level of results in their final exam of the class (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. *Distribution of Respondents by School Absent*

More than 90 percent of respondents accepted that parental death impacts their schooling, and 9 percent of respondents wanted to drop out of their studies.

Table 2. *Distribution of Respondents by School Attendance and Drop-Out*

Response	Death of Parent Impacts on Education					
	Yes	Percent	No	Percent	Total	Percent
Impact on school attendance	51	91.1	5	8.9	56	100
Feel school drop-out	5	8.9	51	91.1	56	100

Source: Field survey, 2022

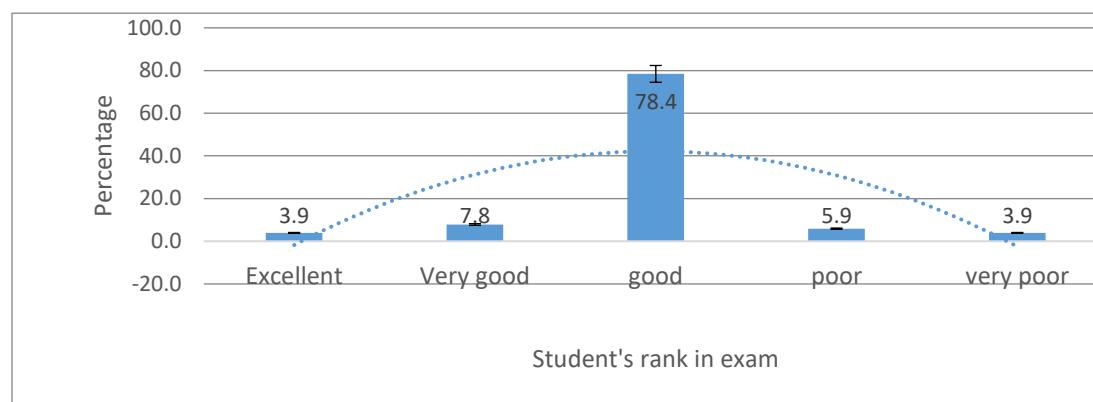
Nearly 9 percent want to drop out of their study. The causes of school dropout are poor school attendance and poor results. About 14 percent wanted to drop out because the scholarship did not cover educational expenses, 80 percent due to poor school attendance, and 20 percent due to poor academic achievement (see Table 3).

Table 3. *Relation between Student Dropout and Education Expenses*

Feel School Dropout	Scholarship Covers Education Expenses					
	Yes	Percent	No	Percent	Total	Percent
Yes	1	14.3	4	8.2	5	8.9
No	6	85.7	45	91.8	51	91.1
Total	7	100.0	49	100.0	56	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2022

Parental death also impacts the attendance, and results of respondents. About 25 percent of respondents had accepted school attendance as responsible for getting a good rank in exams, 50 percent for academic achievement, and 76 percent for financial reasons to attain good marks. Nearly 10 percent of respondents wanted to drop out of their studies due to poor school attendance and poor results. Other reasons are poor school attendance, academic achievement, and educational expenses. It also impacts on their academic outcomes. Nearly 7 percent of students couldn't pass their first and second exams this year. It impacts the final year results of the study. About 79 percent of students have achieved medium-level results in the final results of the class. Gertler et al., (2004) have explained that the death of parents affects a child's schooling and psychosocial outcomes. It reduces to school enrolment of children. The death of a father in adolescence hurts school enrolment, maths scores, and a child's sense of agency (Himaz, 2013).

Figure 5. *Distribution of Respondents by Academic Achievements*

The death of parents impacts their schooling and academic outcomes. A Majority of respondents (75 percent) said that parental death increased the financial burden on the family, 8 percent of respondents said parental death impacts school attendance, and 16 percent said could not get better academic achievements. About 80 percent could not pass both (first and second) exams due to the death of their parents, and it impacted the final year results of the study. About 79 percent of students have achieved medium-level results in the final results of the class. About 25 percent of respondents accepted that school attendance was responsible for getting a good rank in exams. Therefore, very few (4 percent) students have get excellent marks and nearly 80 percent of students have got average (good) marks from the impacts of parental death (see Table 4).

Table 4. *Impact of Parental Death on Educational Achievements*

Response	Scholarship does not cover educational expenses				Total	
	Yes	Percent	No	Percent	Number	Percent
Impact in school attendance	0	0	4	7.8	4	7.8
Academic achievement	0	0	8	15.7	8	15.7
learning environment	0	0	1	2	1	2
the financial burden on the family	6	11.8	32	62.7	38	74.5
Total	6	11.8	45	88.2	51	100

Exam						
1st term	0	0	2	3.6	2	3.6
2nd term	0	0	2	3.6	2	3.6
1st and 2nd term both	7	12.5	45	80.4	52	92.9
Total	7	12.5	49	87.5	56	100
Obtain rank in exam						
Excellent	0	0	2	3.6	2	3.6
Very good	2	3.6	2	3.6	4	7.1
Good	9	16.1	35	62.5	44	78.6
Poor	1	1.8	2	3.6	3	5.4
Very poor	2	3.6	1	1.8	3	5.4
Total	14	25	42	75	56	100

Source: Field survey, 2022

Discussion

It seems that the duration of work varies according to the safety status of workers at foreign labor migration. Workers faced various health hazards and risks for their years at their destination. Gertler, Levine, & Minnie (2004) explained that if family income is reduced in the household economy, it impacts the school enrolments of bereaved children, he suggested that the government provide some social funds to the children to support their education. Children of dead parents need support to continue their education. A scholarship program was set up for children to secure their education under the social scheme in Nepal (MoLESS, 2071), such scholarship has been provided to the family members of migrant labor who died at the workplace. But, the amount is insufficient to continue their education. About 14 percent of respondents said that the scholarship did not cover their educational expenses.

There is an association between orphanhood and children's school enrolment (Case & Ardington, 2004). The event of the father's death pushed the household into poverty, and the mothers' deaths are associated with schooling, and it was four to five times larger than the fathers' deaths (Case & Ardington, 2006). A parent's death may lead to a child's temporary exit from school due to a change in residence, and it also depends on the length of time away from school and the probability of re-enrolment, the long-term effect on a child's schooling could vary dramatically (Gertler, Levine, & Minnie, 2004). Nearly 75 percent of respondents have faced

financial burdens in the family, and 16 percent of respondents said that the death of parents impacts academic achievement. About 10 percent of respondents wanted to drop out of their studies due to the death of parents, the reason for school dropout is poor school attendance and poor results. Nearly 80 percent of respondents accept that they dropped their school due to poor school attendance, and 20 percent said poor academic achievement.

Himaz (2013) explained that the death of a father in adolescence hurts school enrolment. It was a direct association with child education. It impacts the enrolment, continuity, and educational outcomes. Nearly 93 percent of respondents said that parents' deaths were hampered in 1st and 2nd term (both) exams, and 80 percent of respondents had average-level rank in their exam in Kathmandu Valley.

Limitation of the Study

This study has focused on the effects of parent death on child education from both (community and private) schools at different locations in three districts of Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. Due to the diverse sample, the researcher was not able to connect with parents of children to ask about socio-economic issues. Due to very sensitive issues (death of a parent), some schools (17) have refused to provide complete information about respondents.

Conclusions

Parental death in foreign labour migration has negative impacts on their children's education. Reduction of family income impacts the schooling of bereaved children. About 75 percent of respondents have faced financial burdens from the death of parents, and 16 percent of respondents said that the death of parents impacts academic achievement. It impacts both (1st and 2nd term) exams, and have get average level rank in their class test. Therefore, 10 percent of respondents wanted to drop out of their studies, the reason for school dropout is poor school attendance and poor results. To continue their education, the government should raise and continue the scholarship program for students who have lost parents at foreign labour migration.

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