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### Why do Labour Migrants Cross their Border? : A Comparative Analysis between Nepal and India

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#### Abstract

Cross-border labour migration is the livelihood strategy between Nepal and India for a long. The purpose of this research is to compare and contrast the causes of cross-border labor migration between Nepal and India, with a particular focus on Nepal's Sudurpaschim Province. Research is designed in the post-positivism paradigm, using a mixed method with a strong emphasis on quantitative methods, i.e. QUAN-qual mixing. Field survey and Key Informant Interview (KII) including Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted. The sample size was determined statistically where 370 samples (Nepali labour-migrants to India) and 280 samples (Indian labour-migrants to Nepal) were calculated. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics for both groups of migrants and then compared between Nepali labour migrants to India and Indian labour migrants to Nepal. The main causes of labour migration between Nepal and India are observed as a short distance, easy entry exit, open border, social network, travel cost, easily communicable, language similarities, climate match and migration decision. The job insecurity and irregularities of getting employment at origin seems major pushing factors in case of Nepali labour migrants but in case of Indian labour migrants, they choose their destination for better opportunities. About 93.0 percent of Nepali labour-migrants and 100 percent of Indian labour-migrants are migrated due to economic causes (i.e. lack of better opportunities, unemployment, poverty) while seven percent of Nepali labour-migrants are found migrate due to the political conflict in Nepal. The result of this study is applicable to understand the current situation of cross border labour migrants which can be supportive to develop the new strategies for economic and safer migration between two countries.

**Keywords:** labour migrants, cross-border, causes of migration, comparative analysis

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## Introduction

Migration is a movement of people from one place to another place for their survival. For getting food and shelter, people moved from one place to another place and they started to live as their conveniences. International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2015) defines migration as movement of individuals or a group across countries and that movement can be temporary, seasonal, permanent due to various reasons including economic, environmental, family, and political. However, United Nation (1993) defined the migration as a change of residence or crossing administrative boundaries.

Cross-border labour migration between Nepal and India has been starting since the generations. It is a major livelihood option in the rural areas of Karnali and Sudurpaschim province (Bhatt, 2016; ICIMOD, 2010; Nepal Rastra Bank, 2016).

According to International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD, 2010), weak agriculture production in hilly region of Karnali and Sudurpaschim province is not enough for their sustainability and hence people are compelled to migrate India for 4 to 6 months and was mostly to hill and mountain areas of India like Nainital, Badrinath, Kedarnath, Ladhak, and Himanchal Pradesh for their livelihoods. Similarly, a large portion of the Indian migrants in Nepal are from the lesser developed Indian states Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. A number of them migrate to Nepal due to higher wage rates in the destination companies. The key reason for migration to Nepal is due to marginally higher wage, no work permit required and near to boarder areas (ICIMOD, 2010).

According to Revenstein theory (1885), there are certain undesirable factors (push factors) in the place of origin, which stimulates or compels the individual to migrate to the other places. Likewise, there are certain desirable factors (pull factors) in the destination that attracts the migrants. Moreover, the distance between the origins determines the volume of migration between place of origin and destination i.e. higher the distance, lower the volume of migration and vice versa (Gurieva & Dzhioev, 2015). People having poor socio-economic background of Sudurpaschim province exemplifies as seasonal migrants to the India while some resourceful people go to Malaysia, the Gulf States, and other third-world nations. According to Bhatt (2015), the main reasons for migration to India are the ease of access to lower class occupations and the country's lower travel costs compared to the Gulf and other nations however Khatiwada (2014) highlighted that India migration has been decreasing order in last decade due to rise of labour migration to other destination countries (like GCC and Malaysia). The India-Nepal treaty (1950) of peace and friendship established a close and strategic relationship between two neighbouring countries. Due to open

border policy, there is not exact data of migrants across the borders. Larger number of cross-border marriages, seasonal migration and a long history of permanent settlement between the neighbour is difficult to measure magnitudes of migration (Sharma & Thapa, 2013).

The interested question arises that the people from Nepal migrated to India for work and at the same time Indian people are also migrating to Nepal for work. In this condition, it is important to distinguish the causes of cross-border labour migration to each other countries. Many scholars have studied the causes and consequences of labour migration from Nepal to India but there is limited studies regarding labour migration from India to Nepal. In this situation of literature gaps, this comparative study will contribute to evaluate the causes of cross-border labour migration between Nepal and India. The major question for this study is to understand the causes of labour migration between Nepal and India.

### **Methods and Procedures**

Research is designed in the post-positivism paradigm (pragmatism), using a mixed QUAN-qual with a strong emphasis on quantitative methods. The qualitative study assisted in capturing and generating meaning from participants' experiences and feelings. For gathering the qualitative data, focus group discussions, field observation, and key informant interviews were conducted with individuals who had extensive experience and knowledge of Nepal-India migration.

Bhimdatt Municipality of Kanchanpur District is selected as the study area. According to municipality report (Bhimdatt, 2019), 4865 people from different wards migrated to India for work but the population of Indian migrants to Bhimdatt Municipality was not exactly known. For this, survey was carried out for identifying the Indian labour migrants in Bhimdatt Municipality (Mahendranagar). According to nature of jobs (Agriculture, Construction, Manufacture and Service sectors), it is enumerated that 924 Indian labours working in Mahendranagar (Nepal) as a labourer. For quantitative study, a total of 370 samples were used for Nepali labour-migrants to India and 280 for Indian labour-migrants to Nepal. The sample size was determined statistically. Samples in each stratum were drawn randomly. A set of questionnaire was used for data collection through face to face interview. Data have been analyzed using descriptive statistics for both groups of migrants and compared them using a t-test and chi-square test. The qualitative method included two focus group discussions (FGDs), field observation, and two key informant interviews (KIIs) with individuals who had long experience and knowledge of Nepal-India migration. KIIs are selected as purposive sampling technique.

## Results and Discussion

The migration between Nepal and India is running for a long. It is observed that Nepali labour migrants choose different far and big cities of India for working destinations whereas Indians choose mostly the nearer distance. However, the destination does not seem a significant factor; rather socioeconomic causes seem the prominent one. This study explored the different causes of cross-border labour migration between Nepal and India. As mentioned by different scholars worked in the migration area, the main cause for labor migration is economic however place of origin and destination, trend and time of migration, selection of destination, causes of selection of particular cities/destination, working history and food status of migrants at their origin describe the causes of migration.

### Major Causes of Migration

According to Revenstein and Lee, the migration occurs on the basis of certain push and pulls factors in the place of origin and destination. Most of the scholars expressed that the main cause of migration is related to social and economic factors. CafDowlah (2020) highlights that the migration in the contemporary world is mostly found economic (85%) whether they are legal or illegal or any political refuses. The main cause of cross-border labour migration between Nepal and India also seems economic (Brusle, 2006). Czaika and Reinprecht (2022) explained that of 9 dimensions (Demographic, Economic, Environmental, Human Development, Individual, Politico-Institutional, Security, Socio-cultural and Supranational) and 24 different driving factors are the causes of labour migration however they agreed that socio-cultural dimension are still dominant.

**Table 1**

*Distribution of Labour Migrants by Causes of Migration*

Causes of migration	Nepali labour migrants to India		Indian labour migrants to Nepal		Both groups	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
Economic causes	344	93.0	280	100	624	96.0
Political (Conflict/Instability)	26	7.0	-	-	26	4.0
Environmental(Natural)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	370	100.0	280	100.0	650	100.0
Pearson Chi-Square Test	<i>Value</i>		<i>Df</i>		<i>Sig.</i>	
	20.495		1		0.000	

Main Causes of Economic Migration						
For getting better opportunity/ Income	56	15.2	111	39.6	167	25.7
For getting basic needs (Poverty)	97	26.2	30	10.7	127	19.5
For getting employment	191	51.6	139	49.7	330	50.8
Total	344	100.0	280	100.0	624	100.0

Note. Main cause of economic migration denotes the causes under the economic migration.

Table 1 shows that about 93.0 percent of Nepali labour migrants and 100 percent of Indian labour migrants migrated due to economic causes (i.e. lack of better opportunities, unemployment, poverty low income) while 7 percent of Nepali labour migrants are found to migrate due to political conflict in Nepal. Among this population, they didn't have a job at their origin though they are not poor (having access to food and other basic needs, but not engaged in any employment at origin). Thus, it can be concluded that the Indian labour migrants (15.2%) are searching for better opportunities/income as compared to Nepali labour migrants (39.6%). In Nepal, as discussed earlier, Indian labour migrants can earn much more than in their origin.

As testing the result by observing the association between different variables i.e. causes of migration, major causes of economic migration, and decision for migration with their country of origin, the p values for each test were found less than 0.01 level of significance and hence null hypothesis was rejected. ( $H_{01}$ : There is not significant association between causes of migration and their country of origin). It indicates that there was a statistical significance association between causes of migration and country of origin.

The above data shows that more than double of the Indian labour are migrated for searching better income than Nepali labour migrants which indicates that Indian labour migrants have opportunities in their origin but they are pulled by higher wage in Nepal. In case of Nepali labour migrants, poverty (lack of basic needs) is the main cause of migration to India. It means they don't have access on basic needs in their origin. It is clear that India migration is the livelihood strategy for the Nepali migrants. One of the respondents of this study has shared his bitter experience of poverty which becomes the cause of his migration. One of the respondents says,

“I am 22 years young man with the potentiality to do physical work but due to lack of working opportunities at my origin, I am compelled to migrate to India in search of job. I have 2 Kathha land including my home. So, I used to do

agricultural work with half sharing (Adhiya) of my neighbor. Even after hard work, we didn't have enough money for food, buying medicine or other needful desires. Now I have been working in a hotel in Delhi since then and earn NRs. 20,000.00 per month. It is quite supportive for home expenditure at present and it makes me and my family happy.”

The above mentioned statement is an example of happiness of labour migrants. Most of the labour migrants don't have any opportunities at their origin and hence they have alternatives to cross their border for their livelihood. According to them, lower levels of jobs are easily available at the destination which supports to their livelihood.

According to Thieme (2006) and Gill (2003), the major causes of migration to India is poverty, unemployment, declining natural resources, impoverishment, indebtedness, social discrimination, lack of infrastructure, and the Maoist insurgency. Where Gill (2003) urged that seasonal labour migration in Nepal occurs both from push factors (high-level poverty and food insecurity) and pull factors (seasonal employment opportunities elsewhere). Wage rates in India are significantly higher than in Nepal (especially in non-agriculture sectors). The wage differential is the cause of seasonal migration. Wage rates are higher in India and the non-farm sector than in the agriculture sector. Likewise, Samuels et al. (2011) argued that employment opportunities and higher wages were the driving forces for migration from Nepal to India. The main pull factors for migration were economic opportunities in India. Supporting to above statement, Gautam (2012) explained the causes of migration i.e. unemployment, food deficiency, increased expenditure and interest in being economically prosperous, population pressure, and conflict is the push factors while easy availability of work for unskilled labours, cash payment, and other benefits are the pull factors for the Nepal-India migration.

Nepali migrants have been spending their entire life in India for their survival only. Some of the migrants are staying in India since the third generation however they get back to their origin to celebrate their social faiths and cultures. It shows the real panic situation and poverty of Nepali rural citizens however India migration is the livelihood strategy for many of the people at the present as well. The scenario of migration seems clear by the statement of another respondent below:

“I am 70 years old man migrated from Achham to the Kanchanpur district in his childhood. When I became 10 years old, I went to India to work with my relatives. I spent 50 years of my young energetic age working in hotels and as a watchman. In the beginning days in India, I searched for jobs in several hotels and started working for survival. I was not able to continue my job longer time

in any of the hotels because I was too young to serve and do cleanings properly so I was fired from several hotels. For many years, I used to sleep by arranging the benches and tables inside the hotel. I suffered from several problems like a shortage of proper bedding and sleep during both summer and winter seasons. I was not excused by owners even at the time of fever, cold and other sufferings. Gradually, I managed my job security after having long experiences. Now, I am in Nepal but my sons and grandsons are still working in India.”

The long statement expressed by one of the respondents shows the real situation of Nepali labour migrants in India. According to his story, Nepali people have been migrating since long and even now his third generation is living in India. Feeling annoyed, he expressed that they have been surviving in India for their livelihood for generations but they are the citizens of Nepal. Supporting the above statement, Lokshin and Glinkskaya (2008) highlighted that the effect of male migration on the work pattern of women left behind has important implications for social status.

Chaurasia (1980) has conducted “Migration of Labour in Nepal-its causes and consequences”. He conclude that 94.38% migrated to India where as 5.63% migrated to other countries. According to Bala (2017), The cause of labour migration in rural areas of India are less employment opportunities, low wages, drought, lack of basic amenities, landlessness, social factors act etc. They are able to get more employment opportunities, higher income, better wages, better facilities where they migrate. The main pull factors for migration were economic opportunities in India (Samuels et al., 2012). Employment opportunities and higher wages were the driving forces for migration from Nepal to India.

**Table 2**

*Distribution of Labour Migrants by Reason for Family Migration*

Reason of Family Migration	Nepali Labour-Migrants to India		Indian Labour-Migrants to Nepal		Both Groups	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
Medical treatment	5	4.4	-	-	5	2.3
Housewife	14	12.4	18	17.5	32	14.8
Economic purpose	94	83.2	85	82.5	179	82.9
Total	113	100.0	103	100.0	216	100.0
Pearson Chi Square Test	<i>Value</i>		<i>Df</i>		<i>Sig.</i>	
	5.501		2		0.064	

Note. Family migration denotes respondents migrated with female (wife).

Pearson Chi square test was carried out and found the result in table 2, shows that there is significant statistical association between reason of migration and migrants' origin but not found significant relationship (p value is accepted) between mode of migration and migrants' country of migration. It indicates that there was no any relationship between reasons of migration (with family) to their country of migration (i.e. origin of migrants). It shows that there could be different other reasons for their migration (family).

Likewise, the reason for female migration with their husband is for medical treatment and household support rather than economic benefits however few females are working at their destination in support of their husbands. Similarly, Lokshin and Glinkskaya (2008); Thieme and Muller (2010) highlighted the gender issues in migration that the work pattern of women left behind due to social status (dependent on their husbands) and lesser bargaining power on household activities. In addition to this, Kansakar (2001) has discussed the issue of the immigration of Indians in Nepal due to various development activities done in the Terai belt of Nepal. Similarly, the increasing number of construction projects and shortage of labour in Nepal is the main cause to receive seasonal Indian workers in groups as demand in hill and mountainous areas of Nepal. Favourable climate/weather in the hilly region of eastern Nepal lures Indian labours, especially from Bihar and Himachal Pradesh (Karki, 2018). At the same time, Bala (2017) highlights that fewer employment opportunities, low wages, drought, lack of basic amenities, landlessness, social and cultural factors are the main causes of migration in rural areas of India and hence the people migrated for searching better opportunities. But, Piya and Joshi (2016) described the causes of migration differently than other scholars. She explained the major causes of labour migration are the existing policies, political transformation and instability, agriculture trends, and political environment in Nepal. But, the findings from this study are not agreed to above mentioned statement properly however the open border policy is the intervening factor for the cross-border migration between Nepal and India.

### **Time of Migration**

Time of migration is one of the prime factors for influencing the migration process. In general, India migration is measured as seasonal migration. Seasonality has different issues coupled with not merely a climatic or environmental issue of adaptation and suitability. Rather, it is also associated with different kinds of socio-cultural, economic, and political causes. In the international discourse of migration, various scholars empirically show that seasonality has dual characteristics being a pull factor as well as a push factor in the migration process (Crawford & Campbell, 2012).



In this particular study, the timing of migration seems to be more regular (i.e. 64.1%, and thus less seasonal) both for the Nepali and Indian labour migrants, 54.6 percent and 76.8 percent, respectively. Mostly the labour migrants of both countries continue their work since migrated however they followed going and coming (*aunejane*) which can say circular migration. It indicates that there is need of jobs at their origin hence they migrated for searching jobs and opportunities at destination. In discussion with migrants, they mostly go to their destination after harvesting their agricultural works in origin however they continue their work at their destination. The causes of migration are their leisure time and unemployment at their origin in some cases.

**Table 3**

*Distribution of Labour Migrants by Time of Migration*

Time to migration towards destination	Nepali labour migrants to India		Indian labour migrants to Nepal		Both groups	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
After harvesting agriculture	66	17.8	-	-	66	10.2
During vacation	32	8.7	-	-	32	4.9
At the time of being unemployed	67	18.1	65	23.2	132	20.3
Continuity of work since migrated	202	54.6	215	76.8	417	64.1
No fixed	3	0.8	-	-	3	0.5
Total	370	100.0	280	100.0	650	100.0

Note. No fixed means migrants didn't have fixed schedule for migration, they just moved as per their desire and situation.

**Status of Food Security at Origin**

Food insecurity seems to be one of the push factors for the migrants at their origin in both cases (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2009), where the causes of migration to India is due to lack of food security in terms of production. Migration to India is the livelihood strategy for the Karnali and Sudurpaschim hills of Nepal. It is because of the lack of food security in terms of production. Migration to India is a long-established practice due to the nearby distance from the cheapest destination (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2009; Brusle, 2008). In Brusle's other study in 2006, he described migration as a household supporting factor to have access to basic needs in particular by paying back loans taken out in the village. A strategy for the management of food security is one of the important livelihood outcomes both for migrants and non-migrants.

**Table 4***Distribution of Labour Migrants Reporting the Food Security Status at Origin Place*

Status of food security	Nepali labour migrants to India		Indian labour migrants to Nepal		Both groups	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
Landless	5	1.4	53	18.9	58	8.9
Less than 3 months	76	20.5	45	16.1	121	18.6
3-6 months	109	29.4	105	37.5	214	32.9
6-9 months	99	26.8	71	25.4	170	26.2
More than 9 months	81	21.9	6	2.1	87	13.4
Pearson Chi-Square Test	<i>Value</i>		<i>Df</i>		<i>Sig.</i>	
	106.590		4		0.000	

*Note.*Data is calculated on field survey, 2021.

In this study, it is found that a few i.e. 1.4 percent of Nepali labour migrants and 18.9 percent of Indian labour migrants are landless. The landlessness in rural social structure is itself an indicator of poverty and dependency. Similarly, 20.5, 29.4, 26.8, and 21.9 percent Nepali labour migrants and 16.1, 37.5, 25.4, and 2.1 percent Indian labour migrants have food sufficiency for less than 3 months, 3-6 months, 6-9 months and more than 9 months, respectively. Thus, food insecurity seems to be one of the push factors for both the migrants at their origin. Statistically, there is a significant association between the status of food security and their country of origin (as the p-value is less than the level of significance).

In this context, Crush (2013) argues that the issue of food security is strikingly absent from current debates about the relationship between migration and development. Nepali labour migrants manage their food by taking borrowing/debt, engaging in labour work, and practicing half-sharing in agriculture productions. Including this, there is the provision of food provided to Indian poor families by the government. Every member of a family gets 5 kg of food (wheat or rice or including both as per their choice) per month. Likewise, the sources of income for the family of migrants are found to be diverse. Most of the (i.e.43.5%) have the main source of income at their origin is remittance based on foreign employment. At the same time, ICIMOD (2010) explained that India migration is the livelihood strategy for Nepali migrants because there is not enough food in rural areas and hence they are compelled to migrate to India. Food insecurity (due to the small size of land, less productive, fragmentation of land, and little cultivated land), unemployment, political conflict, poverty, and lack of opportunities are the main factors of migration.

## Reason for Selection of Particular Destination

India is the preferred destination for western mountain/hills migrants of Nepal but the choices of migration vary with the forms of social exclusion and inclusion as represented by the socio-economic status of the households.

Table 5 describes some interesting facts that are the sources of information for migration. The main source of information seems to be generated with relatives and friends (50.9%) for both migrants. It is followed by the sources of information related to the contractor and employer (25.4%), though it seems more significant to the Indian labour migrants as compared to the Nepali labour migrants. The family-related source of information holds also an important role in migration as evidenced by the Nepali labour migrants to India (33.8%), and less by the Indian labour migrants to Nepal (10.4%). Moreover, the reason for choosing a destination due to parents/social relationship seems to be more important for Nepali a labour migrant (56.5%), which does not stand anymore with the case of the Indian labour migrants. The table shows more than half (i.e. 53.9%) of the total Indian labour migrants took a migratory move to Nepal because of easy availability/easy entry exit. To determine the relationship between the source of information and country of origin, the Pearson Chi-square test was carried out where the p-value was found less than its level of significance (0.01) which indicates that there is a statistical association between these two variables. Likewise, it was also seen that the relationship between the reason for choosing a particular destination and their country of origin.

**Table 5**

*Distribution of Labour Migrants by Source of Information and Reason for Selecting the Destination*

Source of Information	Nepali labour migrants to India		Indian labour migrants to Nepal		Both groups	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
Relatives/friends	204	55.1	127	45.3	331	50.9
Family	125	33.8	29	10.4	154	23.7
Contractor/employer	41	11.1	124	44.3	165	25.4
Pearson Chi-Square Test	<i>Value</i>		<i>Df</i>		<i>Sig.</i>	
	109.139		2		0.000	

### Reason for Choosing Destination

Easy availability/Entry-exit	51	13.8	151	53.9	202	31.1
Parents/Social relationship	209	56.5	-	-	209	32.1

Higher wage rate	110	29.7	129	46.1	239	36.8
Total	370	100.0	280	100.0	650	100.0
Pearson Chi-Square Test	<i>Value</i>		<i>Df</i>		<i>Sig.</i>	
	252.393		2		0.000	

*Note.* Contractors are agents to bring job offers to labour migrants at destination.

Furthermore, social networks play a vital role in migration and the choice of destination too (Gurung, 2012) and it reduce the migration cost (Lamichhane, 2018). At the similar prospect, Bhardwaj (2010) described the open border between Nepal and India as a viable bond of a mutual relationship between the two societies and it is a matter of trust between the two governments.

According to Thieme (2006), the migration between Nepal and India is due to the strong bonding of social capital. Family and kinship are the most important coping mechanism. Likewise, Subedi (1991) further described that the extension of the Indian railway network up to the border of Nepal raised migration between both countries. He further stated that a large number of Nepalis and Indians are Hindus and have common festivals and faiths, as well as the majority people of the Tarai, are similar in their physical appearance, language, and social behaviours to the Indian people including kinship after marriage in cross border districts. In support of this study, K.C. (1998) and Basyal (2020) concluded that emigration from Nepal to India has been influenced by employment in unskilled jobs, income, and unrestricted rules of entry and exit. Indian immigration to Nepal is influenced by the differential opportunity for employment, demand for skilled and semi-skilled manpower, small distance, low cost of transportation, unrestricted entry and exit, and closer affinity in religion, culture, language, and family ties. In addition,

### **Transport Cost for Traveling to Destination**

The cause of labour migration between two countries is due to easy availability/easy entry exit. It could be due to the open Nepal-India border and the larger potentiality of availability of jobs in nearby the border area (from Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh in particular) that would ease their travel and save the cost by reducing other formalities and difficulties in the adjacent Nepali destinations like Bhimdatt Municipality as described by Ravenstein theory (migrants move to near distance or step by step). Devkota (2016) describes that the Nepali people from poor family migrated to India; it is because both the cost of migration and wage rate is lowest in the India.

### **Table 6**

*Distribution of Labour Migrants according to Transportation Costs*

Transport cost in Rs. (Indian Currency)	Nepali labour migrants to India		Indian labour migrants to Nepal		Both groups	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
Below 500	14	3.8	262	93.6	276	42.5
500-1,500	167	45.1	11	3.9	178	27.4
1,500-3,000	66	17.8	7	2.5	73	11.2
3,000-5,000	122	33.0	-	-	122	18.8
Above 5,000	1	0.3	-	-	1	0.1

*Note.* Transportation cost is taken as Indian currency; it is because both groups of migrants use Indian currency for transportation cost.

Table 6 shows that the volume of cross-border labour migration between Nepal and India is high because of the low transport cost. Most (93.6%) Indians come to Mahendranagar (Nepal) from near borders and are paid less than Rs. 500 in Indian Currency while Nepali labour migrants are paid comparatively higher than Indian labour migrants to reach their destination.

### **Traveling Hours and Means of Transportation, and Crossed the Border**

There are 22 official entry points to cross the border between Nepal and India where six extra points are referred to as the immigration points for the nationals of any third country, i.e. Banbasa-Mahendranagar, Gourifanta-Dhangadi, Rupadiya-Nepalganj, Sunouli-Bhairawa, Raxoul-Birganj and Naxalbari-Kakarbhitta (Ministry of Commerce and Industry/ GoI, 1991). Migration to India is a long-established practice due to the nearby distance with the cheapest destination.

**Table 7**

*Distribution of Labour Migrants by Travelling Hours to Reach the Destinations*

Time for travel	Nepali labour migrants to India		Indian labour migrants to Nepal		Both groups	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
< 3 hours	-	-	235	83.9	235	36.1
3-8 hours	15	4.1	27	9.7	42	6.5
8-12 hours	174	47.0	11	3.9	185	28.5
12+ hours	181	48.9	7	2.5	188	28.9
Total	370	100.0	280	100.0	650	100.0

*Note.* Time to reach from origin to destination is taken as travel hours in this data.

As evident in Table 7, the majority of the Indian labour migrants (i.e. 83.9%) arrived at Mahendranagar (destination) below 3 hours due to the short distance and only 2.5 percent migrants belonging to West Bengal takes more than 12 hours to arrive at their destination, while 47.8 percent takes (8-12 hours) and 48.9 percent of Nepali labour migrants takes more than 12 hours for travel to reach their destination due to selection of long distances. Only 4.1 percent of Nepali labour migrants take (3-8 hours) to reach their destination while 9.7 percent of Indian labour migrants expending a similar time traveling.

According to Brusle (2008), the availability of work, networks, and distance are the factors to influence the choice of a destination made by migrants. It is found that local labour contractors actively recruit seasonal laborers to work in road and house construction in Uttarakhand and Himanchal, where many Nepalese also get involved. Mainly, India migration is organized and supported by kinship networks. Over the years, the cause of migration is social networks and kinship. When they (labour migrants) come to visit their family in Nepal during festivals, they take one or more of their relatives or neighbours with them to India (Donini et al., 2013). The cause of larger size of the population migrated to Delhi from Bhimdatt Municipality is due to the higher chances of job availability, near distance and social network. Basyal (2014), Seddon and Gurung (2001) have pointed the main destinations of Nepali labour migrants in India are Delhi, Mumbai, Gujarat, Bangalore, Kerala, Pune, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Varanasi, Agra, Kolkata, Lucknow, Kanpur, Chennai, and the hill towns of Almora, Nainital, Shimla and Pithoragarh. Likewise, Bhagat and Keshari (2010) showed that seasonal migration from Nepal to India is highest in Uttarakhand followed by Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Bihar.

The wage differential is the cause of seasonal migration. Wage rates are higher in India and non-farm sector than in agriculture sector. Seasonal migration is the main livelihood source of the poor households in villages (Gill, 2003). According to Haas (2000), migration takes place due to so many reasons such as conflict, political and social instability, and economic incentives. Whereas the Chettri (1987) explains the main causes for migration in Nepal are economic disparity between population and productive land, the low productivity of soils, lack of employment opportunities in the hills, and the perceived economic and social advantages in the low land by the migrants. Social networks based on kinship, friendship and community ties are central components in migration systems analysis. These components link sending and receiving countries and mediate between individuals actors to larger structural forces which continue the migration long after the original impact of migration has ended. Kinship ties are major sources of personal networks in migration and it reveals the importance of social relations in migrating behavior as well as it provides insight into the origins, composition, direction, and persistence of migration flows (Boyd, 1989).

## Conclusion

The findings reveal that the major factor of migration includes the wage differences, job availability, food security, open border corridors and the networks of family and relatives. Comparatively, it is observed that the causes of labour migration between Nepali labour migrants to India and Indian labour migrants to Nepal is slightly different. Indian labour are found migrated to Nepal due to opportunities of jobs in near border (short distance), low transportation cost. In addition, some of the Indian migrants are landless and hence they do not have work at their origin. At the same time, Nepali labour are migrated to India for getting opportunities which support to their livelihood strategies. They mostly engaged on agricultural activities at their origin but do not have excess food for their family. Nepali labour migrants do have alternative options at their origin and hence compelled to migrate towards India. The economic causes were dominant to have migration for both the migrants of Nepal and India. In conclusion, Indian labours are found migrated to Nepal for better employment or opportunities however Nepali labour migrants to India for their livelihood strategy rather than getting better opportunities. This study compares the ground realities of migrants from both countries which also supports to the policy makers to recommend for the safe, prestigious and economic migration.

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