

## Motivating Factors of Youth Selecting Labor Migration Rather Than Higher Education: A Systematic Review

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### Abstract

*There are many underlying factors those are compelling youths for selecting labor migration rather than continuing their higher education. Hence ,to comprehend what factors are deterring youths towards higher education in the context of Nepal, the study was carried out. For that, researchers used a systematic review method and overviewed secondary sources likewise book, article, and research reports published in the similar area. Through this review, multiple and multidimensional factors i.e., social, cultural, economic, educational, political, environmental, and miscellaneous of youth labor migration were identified. In most cases, youths were compelled for the labor migration, however, in some cases, youth were migrated for pursuing education. Also, youth labor migration was found throughout the globe including Nepal. Finally, it was concluded that youth migration was varied and the context specific especially in the developed, developing, and underdeveloped countries, hence the trend and patterns of youth labor migration was diverse.*

**Keywords:** *Migration, factors, labor, youth, studies*

### Introduction

Labor migration is common in the context of Nepal. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, people migrated into India, especially forest of Assam and tea states of Darjeeling for economic benefits, however, Nepal has already made its entrance into the global economy (Kunwar, 2015). Thus, the trends of labor migration have been changed now as Nepalese are spread transversely in the world, mainly in the Gulf countries and Malaysia over the last 10-20 years that covers the larger segment of Nepal's labor migration.

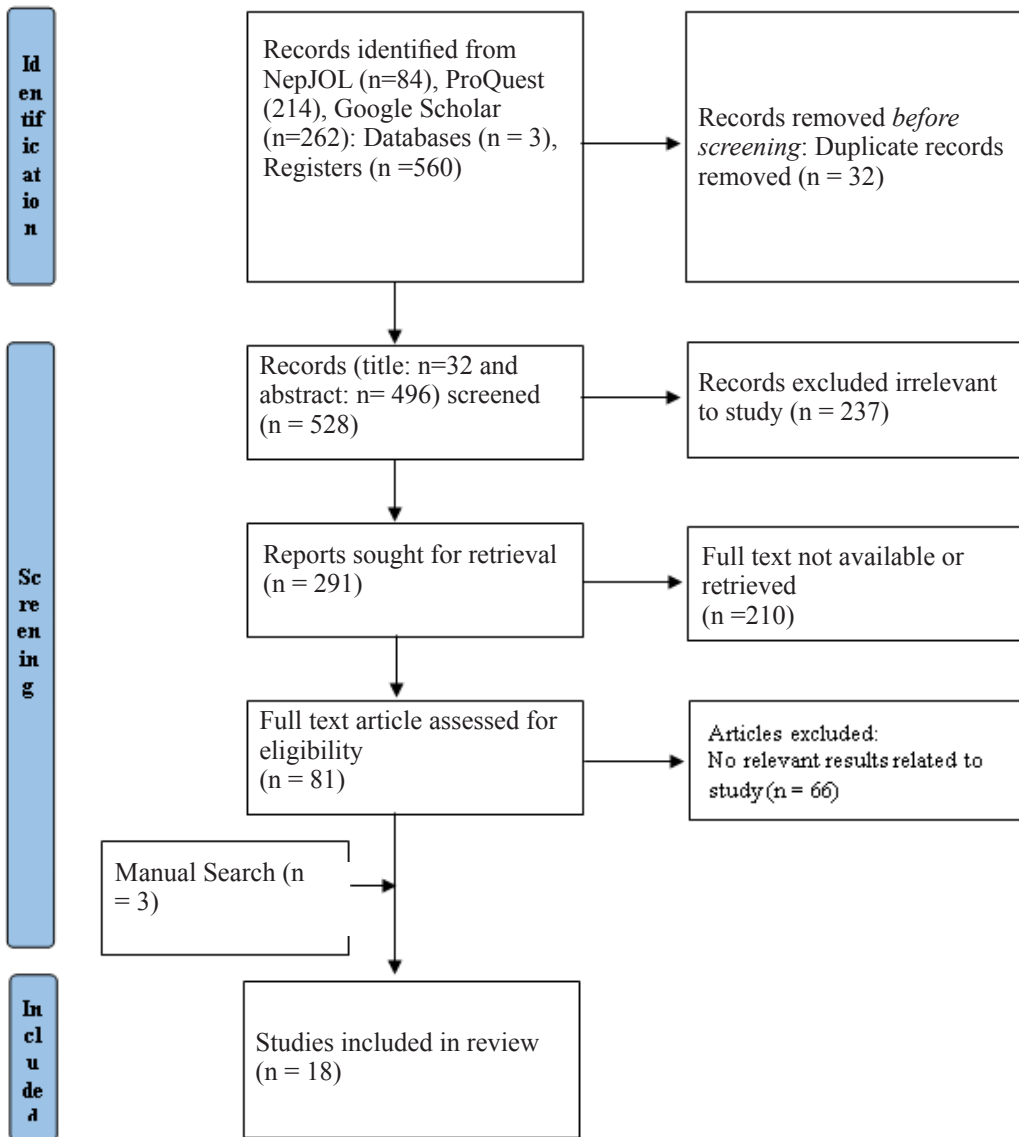
Though, labor migration played a vital role in improving literacy and basic education, brings change in the behavior, and social status of the people, at the same time it generated various negative impacts like the use of remittance in unproductive work, making people addiction of alcohol, affected with venereal diseases, family breakup, death of family members, drop out from education system, demotivation of higher education in the absence of local employment

opportunities (Kunwar, 2015). On the other hand, high dropout of students is one of the major impairment in attaining educational goals of Nepal despite a tremendous progress achieved by Nepal through enrolling 93 percent of children in basic education (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2018). Also, 22 percent of students do not complete grade eight who enrolled in grade one. The students who dropped and out of schools are from marginalized communities i.e., *Dalit*, *Janajati* (an indigenous nationality), mountainous regions, mainly from Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahottari, Dhanusha and Bara districts (Ministry of Education, UNICEF, & UNESCO, 2016). The main reason behind remaining high dropout rates of boys in those areas is lack of parent's interest. They have the perception that their son can earn more from overseas as a migrant labor than the jobs available in Nepal. In addition, they could not afford the expenses for the higher education for their children. Therefore, this step has been taken to understand what are motivating factors of youth selecting labor migration rather than continuing higher education in the context of Nepal.

### **Methods and Materials**

This research paper is based on the systematic review method (Zawacki-Richter, Kerres, Bedenlier, Bond, & Buntins, 2020) that overviewed different types of documents likewise book, article, and research reports published for labor migration and higher education system. In doing so, different steps were applied by researchers. Those were 1. formulation of research questions and preliminary search by following PICO (Methley, Campbell, Chew-Graham, McNally, & Cheraghi-Sohi, 2014) framework where P for the problem, I for intervention, C for comparison, and O for outcome, 2. search strategy with inclusion and exclusion criteria including "AND" and "OR" Boolean search operator (Siddaway, Wood, & Hedges, 2019), 3. search databases, import export results to library and an excel sheet using AMSTAR (assessment of multiple systematic review) guidelines (Shea et al., 2017), and 4. data extraction and quality assessment by using a mix method appraisal tool (Hong et al., 2018).

Finally, researchers analyzed the data from table (quantitative) and presented narratives (qualitative) thematically (Given, 2008) in line with the objective of the study. In addition to that, they triangulated those findings with other studies as well. Based on the evidence drawn from the review, researchers originated research gaps and generated new ideas that will be grounding (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) a further research theory, generating research questions, and hypothesis, and finalizing research methods for the scholars.



**Figure 1:** PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic and Meta-Analyses) flow diagram of studies' youth and migration (Page et al., 2021)

## Results and Discussion

According to Nepal Demographic Health Survey 2016, 57.6 percent of the youth of the age group 15-24 were migrated (Ministry of Health, 2016). Also, 10.4 percent children were migrated. Out of total migrated people 49.1 percent was migrated for work and 12.8 percent of the study, 27.7 marriages, 9.5 accompany family, 0.2 security, 0.6 others, and 0.1 don't know. In this way there is a bulk of youths who were migrated to work in comparison to study. Researchers found below

mentioned different motivating factors that deteriorate youths to choose labour migration rather than continue higher education.

### **Social Factors**

Researchers inserted all the motivating factors of youth choosing labour migration like social status, living standard, and personal development those were found in the different studies and having social dimensions of a place under social factor.

#### **Social status**

According to UN World youth report, most of the youths migrated for labor work due to establishing a social status in the society(DSPD/UNDESA & ILO, 2013). Because upon their return, they were respected, however, they were conquered and categorized as failure initially (Subba, Maharjan, Bhatta, & Bhattarai, 2019). They relate social status with marriage as well because they get married in the well-heeled family. Also, they wanted to prove themselves amongst elders and younger in the society because migrated people were supposed to be prolific. The similar case was in Uttarakhanda India as 54.55 percent of people were migrated to rural areas because of social caste and status struggle in their villages (Yadav, Sharma, & Gangwar, 2018).

#### **Living standard**

Kharel (2018) pointed out in the study that young people of Nepal migrated due to the better living standard because a significant effect of living standard was found on migration in the study. Similarly, people aged 17-35 from Komsomolsk-on-Amur city of Russia were migrated due to the displeasure with the life living on the city (Bakina, Yaremtchuk, Orlova, & Krasnoperova, 2019). In the case of Georgia and Moldova, youths decided to migrate for their life aspirations (Bastianon, 2019).

Also, advanced lifestyle with use of modern appliance by the families of migrant people are the motivating factor for youth migration among young people in the *Terai*, Nepal because they also want to pursue modern lifestyles (Gartaula & Niehof, 2013).It was also justified by the findings in the study of Farah, Zafar, and Nawaz (2012) where 70 percent people were migrated from the village to the city for achieving better life living standard.

#### **Personal development**

A different kind of motive of young people for migration was found in the case of rural China. It was found that young people from there migrated for their personal development(Chiang, Hannum, & Kao, 2013). Similarly, youth from Indonesia, Georgia and Moldova do migrate in improving their individual capacity development (Malamassam, 2016 & Bastianon, 2019).Also, the youth from Romania were determined to migrate in relation to advance their knowledge (soft skills and competences) as their personal and professional development (Suciu & Florea, 2017).

#### **Household capabilities**

A new dimension of migration was found in Georgia and Moldova because the youth was taking decision of migration for the improvement of their households capacities (Bastianon, 2019). In Uttarakhanda India, 53.64 percent people were migrated from rural areas to urban one in

response to improve household's capacities because they perceived that they could not cope with the debts with the existing income in the rural area (Yadav et al., 2018).

### **Lack of awareness**

One of the interesting factors of determination of youth migration was identified in Tsegede Wereda i.e., lack of awareness among youth about the consequences of migration like social, political, economic, education, and psychological in their life (FW, 2017).

### **Personal aspiration**

In the same way, in the case of Tsegede Wereda the youth was migrated because they were desired to be a rich in a very short period (FW, 2017).

### **Cultural Factors**

Similarly, team categorized family support, family pressure, and family decision as cultural factors as those were found related to the cultural dimensions of youth migration in the various studies.

### **Family support**

Most of the young people from Ghana migrated due to the collapse of the family support system as the parents were not performing their roles better for them (Edwin & Glover, 2016). However, in the case of Haiti a different trend of family support was found. Many of the youths were getting financial assistance from their families to continue study rather than sending money to their families (Heckert, 2015) but for females they were getting less support from their families of origin.

### **Family pressure**

Subba, Maharjan, Bhatta and Bhattarai (2019) mentioned that most of the youths were migrated due to the family pressure. The family members usually pressurized them because they had perceived that there was no saving, despite the earning of youth was same in Nepal and overseas. In the case of Afikpo South Local Government Area of Ebonyi State 12.5 percent of youth migrated due to the peer pressure (Ifeanyichukwu, Enyinnaya, Lazurus, & Innocent, 2016).

### **Family decision**

The youth from the *Terai*, Nepal were migrated for labor due to the collective decision made by their families at household level and they were not in a position to deny the decision of the family (Gartaula & Niehof, 2013).

### **Economic Factors**

In the same way, researchers found different motivating factors of youth choosing labour migration i.e., financial support to the family, economic security, job unavailability, low incentive for educated manpower, and better opportunity of earning in the various studies those were related with economy, hence, placed under economic factors.

**Financial support**

UN World Youth Report pointed out that most of the youth people migrated because they had a pressure of earning to financially support their families (DSPD/UNDESA & ILO, 2013). Also, the labor migration was found negatively associated with educational attainment in the case of men, according to the study of youth labor migration in Nepal because they were engaged in either wages or services (The World Bank Group, 2018). The same report shows that the labor migration of women was positively associated economic status of households.

**Economic security**

Youths from Nepal also migrated due to economic security because one of the study shows that people do migrate for foreign employment because they do not want to be stay at home with unemployment and economic insecurity (Sharma, 2019). Also, youths from the *Terai*, Nepal were decided for the migration in terms of enrichment of their income safety in the future (Gartaula & Niehof, 2013). Similarly, 16.6 percent of youth from Afikpo South Local Government Area of Ebonyi State weremigrated due to economic reasons (Ifeanyichukwu et al., 2016). In the case of rural China, young people do migrate due to the non-economic spurs (Chiang et al., 2013). People from Russia were also migrated due to the poor economic situation in the city (Bakina et al., 2019).

**Job unavailability**

The youths from Nepal migrated due to unemployment and limited opportunities of employment for them at local level (Kharel, 2018; Gartaula & Niehof, 2013). In a case of Ghana, it was found that 10-24 years, adolescent were decided to migrate due to poor job opportunities available at the local level and rural settings (Edwin & Glover, 2016). Also, youths from Burkina Faso and Kosovo used to migrate due to high local level unemployment rate and opportunities of skilled works (Blazhevskia, 2017 & Girsberger, 2017). Similarly, another study shows that redundancy and absence of job opportunities are the main factors of youth migration between 15-34 years age group (Milasi, 2020). Also, in the case of Indonesia youth are migrating from rural areas to big cities due to the limited opportunity for employment (Malamassam, 2016). However, in the case of Romania, youths were migrated due to uncertainty of jobs (Suciu & Florea, 2017). The findings were justified by the study that 73.64 percentage of people from rural settings of Uttarakhanda, India agreed that they were forced to migrate due to lack of proper employment opportunities in their villages (Yadav et al., 2018).

**Low incentive for educated manpower**

In the case of Nepal it was found that youths were motivated for migration because low levels of incentive were provided to skilled manpower (Gartaula & Niehof, 2013).

**Better opportunity of earning**

One of the migration determination factors for youth is better opportunities of earning because they were either guided from their migrants relative or fiends for secured economy for their family members by sending remittance (FW, 2017). Similarly, Romanian youths were preferred to migrate for cultivating their economies in response to invest in enduring possessions in their country (Suciu & Florea, 2017). Also, better employment opportunities attracted rural youths

from an Osun state of Nigeria to migrate in the urban areas in relation to improve their living condition (Alarima, 2018).

### **Educational Factors**

Further, team found different educational factors i.e., pursue study, high investment and low returning, quality of education, investment in education for lifelong learning those were driving youth for migration in the various studies.

#### **Pursue study**

Some of the youths had migrated to pursue their higher studies as well in response to develop their educational profile (DSPD/UNDESA & ILO, 2013). However, a study found that there is a significant association between economy and their employability based on their skills. Hence, they choose skilled based employment rather than continuing their studies in the destination countries (Silwal, 2019).

Among migrated youths, women were migrated for their studies because the labor migration was found positively associated with education attainment of women in the study of youth labor migration in Nepal(The World Bank Group, 2018). Also,young people from Nepal chosen educational migration due to the availability of inadequate fields of study in the country (Kharel, 2018). In the same way, people in Russia migrated because they were not satisfied with the educational opportunity available in the Komsomolsk-on-Amur city (Bakina et al., 2019). In the case of Indonesia, education is the key motivation factor for youth to migrate to the big city because there are less educational opportunities for youth in rural areas (Malamassam, 2016).

#### **High investment and low returning**

One of the interesting factors found in a case of Burkina Faso was youths were migrated due to their high investment in education, but having low returning, however, at the same time there was a huge gain from migration and labor works (Girsberger, 2017). Similarly, the parents in Laos had perceived that education requires lots of investment (Keoviphone & Wibowo, 2015). This was also pointed out by Yadav et al. (2018)in the study were 33.18 percent of people from Uttarakhanda agreed that they were unable to meet educational expenses of children.

#### **Quality of education**

In the case of Laos, it was found that the parents of the students were not satisfied with the performance of teachers because their children were not competent and qualified as much they expected (Keoviphone & Wibowo, 2015). Due to that, they were not convinced and engaging their children in education.

#### **Invest in education for lifelong learning**

Parents in Romania were investing in education for lifelong learning, hence, youths were migrated for education in a top university abroad (Suciu & Florea, 2017).

**Political Factors**

Also, a team found different political factors those were motivating youth for migration during review of journal articles those were political instability and feeling conflict.

**Political instability**

Youth from Kosovo aged 25-35 years were decided to migrate due to the political and security instability in the country (Blazhevskaja, 2017). The same status, political instability was found in Africa and Tsegede Wereda (Mlambo & Mpanza, 2019 & FW, 2017). In the context of Nepal, youths were used by political leaders and a type of frustration found among them, hence, they decided migration (Subba et al., 2019). Also, youth has not believed secure themselves and easy access to government services.

**Feeling conflict**

Youth from Africa do migrate because of feeling uncomfortable due to the conflict in the country (Mlambo & Mpanza, 2019). However, in the case of Uttarakhand India, 46.36 percent of rural people would prefer to migrate when they faced conflict in the family.

**Environmental Factors**

The below mentioned key environmental factors were identified by the research team those were motivating people to migrate.

***Lack of land to plough***

In Tsegede Wereda, adults were migrated in the absence of sufficient land to plough (FW, 2017). Similarly, in Nepal people migrated either due to the inadequate arable land or landlessness (Subba et al., 2019).

***Boredom of farming***

However, the reason behind youth migration in Ebony State of Nigeria was boredom from farming because a study shows that 20.8 percent of youth migrated due to tediousness of farming (Ifeanyichukwu et al., 2016).

**Natural environment**

In addition, young people from Romania elected to migrate because of a safe working environment, unsatisfied quality of the natural environment, and pollution (Suciu & Florea, 2017).

**Miscellaneous Factors**

In addition to that, a team found some interesting and unique factors those were driving youth for migration in the different countries. Researchers were interested to test those variables in the study in the Nepalese context as well hence categorizes under miscellaneous factors.

**Nepotism**

One of the fascinating factors of demotivation of young people migrate found in the case of Kosovo was nepotism (Blazhevskaja, 2017) because they realized that people were having political approaches were getting job opportunities rather than the people having quality.



### **Corruption**

Also, young people of Kosovo were taken decision of migration due to the high corruption in the country (Blazhevska, 2017)

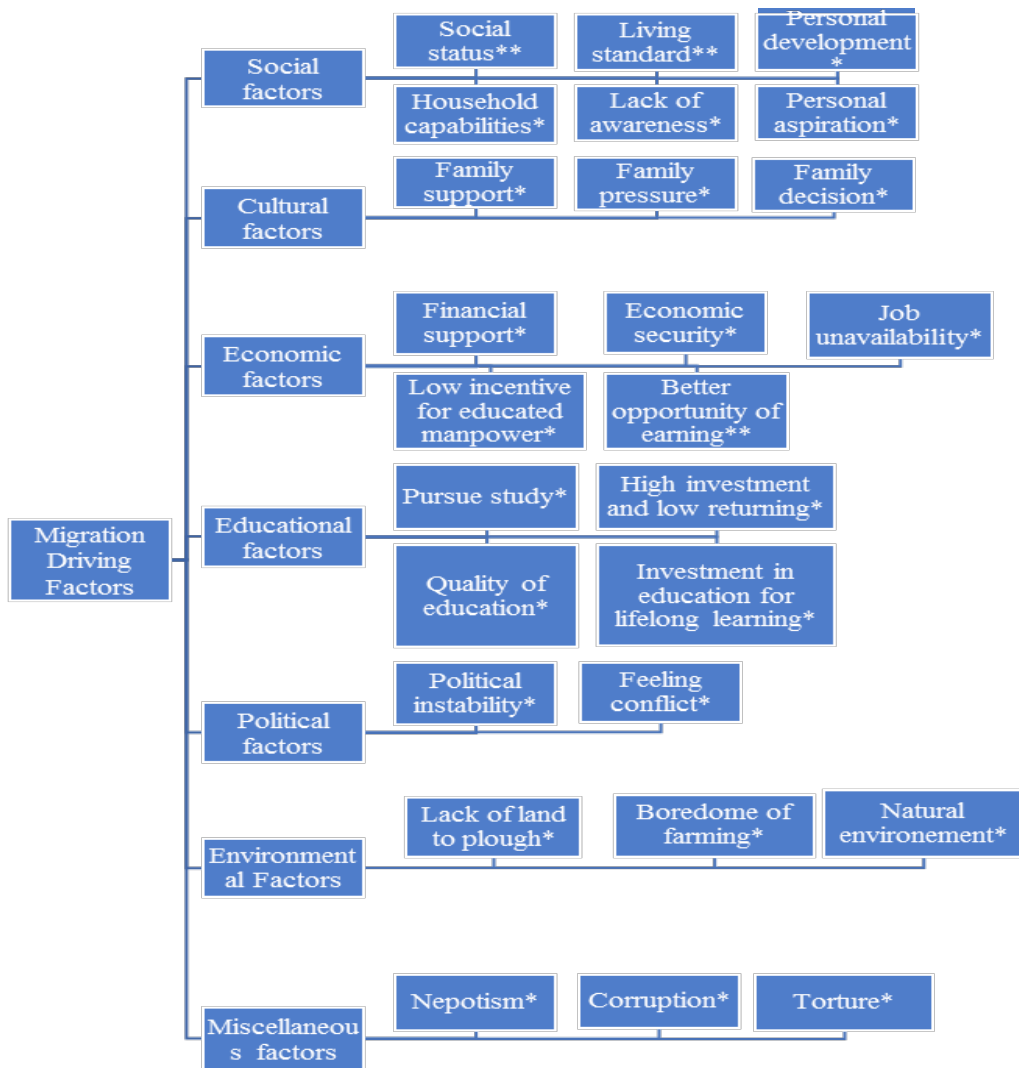
### **Harassment**

One of the major cause of migration of youth found in Afikpo South Local Government Area of Ebonyi State was harassment because 23.2 percent of youths were migrated there due to harassment (Ifeanyichukwu et al., 2016).

### **Discussion**

Some of the authors categorized factors related with migration as pull and push factors (Subba et al., 2019) that is related with the classical migration theory (Lee, 1966). They have placed status, esteem, and learning after the migration as a pull factor while issues related to family, discrimination, and frustration under push factor. Others defined driving factors of youth migration as a macro, meso, and micro (Castelli, 2018). According to the author, the factors like environmental, political, socio-economic, and demographic comes under macro.

Similarly, living standard and information technology also attracts youths for migration placed under meso. In the same way, pursue study, individual choice, and decision for marriage are micro factors of migrating youths. However, these categorizations have limited the understanding of factors driving youth migration because one of the studies conducted in the *Terai*, Nepal shows that the decision of youth migration is not static one and they are not fixed because different context specific factors are affecting for the migration of youth (Gartaula & Niehof, 2013). Hence, researcher thematic all the motivating factors listed in the result section in a new frame for broader understanding and linking with the study.



Note: \* used for push factors, \*\* denotes pull factors

**Figure 2:** A framework derived from the different migration related driving factors

As presented above in the result section, it was found that there are multiple and multidimensional factors i.e., social, cultural, economic, educational, political, environmental, and miscellaneous those are motivating youth for the migration. There are many sub-factors like social status, living standard, personal development, household capabilities, lack of awareness, personal aspiration for social factors; family support, family decision, family pressure for cultural factors; financial support, economic security, job unavailability, low incentive for educated manpower, better opportunity of earning for economic factor; pursue study, high investment and low returning, investment for lifelong learning, quality of education for educational factor; political instability, feeling conflict for political factor; lack of land to plough, boredom of farming, and absence

of natural environment for environmental factor; nepotism, corruption, and harassment for miscellaneous factors those are playing a vital role in stimulating youths for the migration.

In most of the cases, it was found that youths were compelled for the labor migration, but in some cases, they were migrated for pursuing their higher education in the preferred field and getting support from their families for continuing their studies as well. However, youths favored employment and dropped their studies in the destination countries. Furthermore, it was found that youth labor migration is not limited in Nepal but also existing throughout the globe because it was found in the case of Russia, Nigeria, Georgia, Moldova, Ghana, Haiti, Indonesia, Laos, Republic of Kosovo, Romania, Tsegedie Wereda, Africa, Germany, Sweden, USA, China, UK, India, and Germany. It means youth labor migration is not only the issue of developing or underdeveloped countries, but also it is rampant in developed countries, however, the trends and patterns of youth labor migration are different.

In the studies different methods were used like quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. However, in 11 research quantitative research methods used by the authors while 6 research followed qualitative methods and 1 research conducted with both qualitative and quantitative i.e., mixed methods. In the context of Nepal social factors like social status and individual development, cultural factors like family pressure and decision of family, economic factors like unemployment, economic insecurity, advancing economic opportunity, and low incentive for educated manpower, education factors like pursuing study, and political factor like political instability were found as the motivational factors for youth to migrate for labor. However, social status (in Ghana) and individual development (in China, Indonesia, Georgia, Moldova, and Romania) the social factors were driving youth for labor migration. Similarly, cultural factor i.e., family support was found as a migration motivating factor for youth in Ghana and Haiti. Also, unemployment an economic factor that was driving youth for migration was found in the Republic of Kosovo, Ghana, and Indonesia.

In the same way, high investment and low returning and quality of education were the driving factors of youth migration found in the case of Laos, however, pursue study was found in the case of USA, UK, Germany, Sweden, Nigeria, and China only (in either developed or developing countries). Youth migration driving political factor i.e., political instability was found in the case of the Republic of Kosovo and Afrika. Also, environmental factor lack of land to plough found in Nepal and Tsegedie Wereda, the boredom of farming in Nigeria, and poor quality of the natural environment in Romania. Similarly, nepotism and corruption were the migration driving factors found in the Republic of Kosovo and harassment as miscellaneous factors in China.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the major findings presented in result and discussion section, it was determined that multiple and multidimensional factors were motivating youth for labor migration and are playing a vital role in motivating youth for their migration. Hence, for the broader understanding about the motivating factors of youth labor migration illustrated rather than limiting them to pull and push as well as macro, meso, and micro factors. As youth migration was found throughout the globe, including Nepal, it is not only rampant in Nepal but also globally. Similarly, motivating factors

of youth labor migration were found vary and the context specific in developed, developing, and underdeveloped countries, hence, the trend and patterns of youth labor migration are diverse. In addition to that, some interesting and unique factors of youth labor migration were found in other countries should be tested in Nepalese context.

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