

EVIDENCE-BASED STUDY ON PROBLEMS
AND CHALLENGE OF MIGRANT WORKERS
IN INDIA AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC
EFFECTS OF COVID-19 IN THEIR FAMILIES



Submitted to
Nepal Environment & Education Development Society
(NEEDS)

Foreword

In the recent years, the discourse on migration has clarified new perspectives in terms of both challenges and opportunities. Due to various 'pull' and 'push' factors people are on the move, and this will continue; migration is a reality of the current world. So, within migration contexts, it is important to recognize and ensure the rights of migrants, and their safety and dignity is always upheld. This is not happening and migrants, especially labor migrants, face harassment and exclusion; the status of women labor migrants is even more critical due to patriarchal systems, structures, and practices.

Indian cities have historically been popular work destinations for a large proportion of Nepalese migrants, especially those from the far western province. From the far western region of Nepal the migration was a major source of income for the family; most of the hill as well as the terai people are migrating to India, either seasonally or long-term. India has also become a corridor for undocumented migrants from Nepal to move to the Gulf and other locations. That is, India is both a destination country for Nepalese migrants and a staging location for Nepalese migrants going to 'third' countries.

The districts of Doti and Kanchapur in western Nepal are among the poorest in the country. Challenging topographical and complicate living conditions in a region dependent on agriculture causing a hardship for its population. Almost half of all inhabitants live in poverty without access to basic health care. Gender and cast-based discrimination is widespread. For many people, migration is the only solution in their hope for a better life. Due to their geographical proximity to India, both districts are considered as transit regions, reflected in their high migration rate.

We believe the document will help NEEDS Nepal to identify and design program interventions for the migrants, economic empowerment and to ensure the safety and dignity at all levels. We are pleased to share that the commitment of both NEEDS and the AWO to improve the conditions of migrants is commendable. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all members and staff of the NEEDS Nepal and AWO Kathmandu office for providing strategic guidance to the report. Our sincere thanks are also due to the Program coordinators, stakeholders for their inputs. We would like to

express our sincere thanks to the NEEDS Nepal for their support, including in mobilizing locals and supporting in many ways to get this report.

Research Consultants:

Prakash Pandey

Bipin Thapa

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our Appreciation to Nepal Environment and Education Development Society (NEEDS) Nepal and AWO team for supporting in commissioning the work, facilitating, and participating in several rounds of discussions to get the information and coordination. We are also thankful for the thoroughly reviewing and providing comments on the earlier version of the report.

We would like to express our appreciation to the migrant workers, their families, NEEDS Nepal's staff members, political leaders, government employees who contributed by providing their views, experiences and the context that was relevant to this work. We appreciate to the staff members who supported and facilitated to coordinate to get information from the field.

We hope that this report would be useful for the NEEDS Nepal as well as to the AWO Nepal for the further move to plan the activities in the future. It could be especially useful in evidence-based programming. The wider audience of the report includes development partners, civil society organizations, and migrants and potential migrants related development activities. We would like to thank NEEDS Nepal for supporting to manage logistics to orient enumerators, during field visits, arranging discussion, focus group discussions and to get the contact address of the key informants.

Table of Content

Abbreviation	5
Executive Summary	6
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	9
1.1 Background	9
1.2.Objective of Study.....	11
1.3.Scope of the Study.....	12
Chapter 2: Methodology	13
2.1 Study design:.....	13
2.2 Study sites:	13
2.3 Study Population:	13
2.4. Sampling design and sample size:.....	13
2.5 Data Collection and Techniques:	14
2.6 Organization of field team and training.....	14
2.7 Supervision and monitoring plan of the study	15
2.8 Data management and analysis.....	15
Chapter 3: Data Analysis and presentation findings	16
3.1 Socio-demographic characteristics and Employment History of Respondents	16
3.2 Key issues and challenges faced by Migrant Workers in course of migration and place of destination.....	23
3.4 Options for livelihood and income generation.....	41
3.5 Modality and Approach for Advocacy and legal justice.....	49
3.6 Key findings	57
Chapter 4: Conclusion	59
Chapter 5: Recommendations/Next steps	61

Abbreviation

AWO	
BSF	Border Security Force
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
Dofe	Department of Foreign and Employment
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HH	Household
ILO	International Labour Organization
IME	International Money Express
INR	Indian Rupees
IOM	International Organization of Migration
KII	Key Information Interview
MoLeSS	Ministry of Labour, Employment & Social Security
NEEDS	National Environment and Equity Development Society
NLFS	Nepal Labour Force Survey
NLSS	Nepal Living Standard Survey
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPR	Nepalese Rupee
UIDAI	Unique Identification Authority of India

Executive Summary

- Indian cities have historically been popular work destinations for a large proportion of Nepalese migrants, especially those from the far western province.
- As per the Census of 2011, Province Seven is among the provinces that have witnessed higher rates of out-migration. Only three districts— Kanchanpur, Kailali, and Dadeldhura—have a net population of people migrating in, and the rest of the districts have a population of people moving out.
- The Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950 between the two countries provide the similar rights to the citizens of the other country in its land as is available to the citizen of that country, except voting rights.
- Labor migration has remained a salient aspect of Nepal's socio-economic landscape. The social and financial remittances and the exposure gained abroad have contributed positively to the Nepali economy but the context of the India going labor migrants is different.
- The study area was 4 Municipalities/Rural Municipalities (Krishnapur, Punarbas, Shikhar and Adharsha) of the two projects working districts Kanchanpur and Doti. Study population (i) Returnee Migrants (ii) Non – Returnee Migrants and, (iii) Government Authorities at Municipality as well as the administrative staff of provincial government. Field observation, questionnaires, focused group discussions, KII were the main tool to collect the information to provide the shape of the report.
- More than 77 percent of the respondents were from returnee migrants (migrants who is aiming to go back to India again). More than 90 % migrants were male. Bramin and Dalit were almost similar in numbers in respondents. There were only 12.1% of the respondents were illiterate and 88% of the respondents were married.
- More than 50% of total respondents reported of spending more than 10 years of their life-span working in India with 27.8% from 5 – 10 years and 17.9% with less than 5 years of employment history.
- The main reason of the migration is to find the jobs. About 72% of the respondents replied that they didn't find opportunities for job at the source/home town and with

poor educational/economic background, working in India was only the option for the respondents.

- Cook/Helper, security guard, daily wage labor, labor on small scale factories and driver for small and large vehicles were the major areas of employment in the destination cities.
- The income of the majority of the migrants in the destination cities has been found 5000-10000.
- The migrants started to prepare (pre departure preparation). 79.2% of the total respondents replied they made some kind preparation like gathering information and getting self-aware on safe migration, managing travel fund and others. Migrants also connected to the friends and relatives to ensure the job is available.
- The survey interviewed respondents to explore various challenges faced by Nepalese migrant workers during their stay at transit and crossing of border.
- As a major issue, the respondents were faced inadequate management of food and accommodation during their temporary stay at transit. Cheating by hoteliers, difficulty in exchanging currency, money stolen by the thieves, unfavorable treatment by the border officials, finding legal support is also an issue for the migrants at transit.
- Excessive hardship as a major issue faced by migrant workers at the workplace backed by their opinion which included working many hours, no holidays, forced to work during sick leave and others.
- Remittance sending with friends and relatives is still in practice. The use of banking system (IME) is also increasing among the migrants to send money to home.
- Communicating to the family at source communities is still an issue. ISD call from India to Nepal is expensive.
- At destination cities, most of the migrants 94.8% did nothing to see the justice. Only 2.2% reported and filed cases at local police station.
- lack of awareness on local laws and procedures was one the major issue faced in seeking legal support

- Migrants returned during lockdown and after the lockdown period from the destination cities when they became unable to manage the job and cost of living. Half of the respondents lose their job temporarily and the very limited migrants continued their jobs with limited working hours. As migrant workers and their families back home were pushed hard with inadequate access to basic necessities such as health care and food during the lockdown period
- More than 50% migrants were neglected and discriminatory behavior at place of destination from community people and their employers during COVID-19 crisis, while 45.8% of respondents experienced similar treatment from community at source after returning back.
- There is interest of migrants to participate in the training for improving their livelihood opportunities. Three months skill training and the entrepreneurship training are the interest areas of the migrants.
- Poultry farming and vegetable farming were the two major areas of interest. Fish farming was the lowest preferred options. Vegetable and fruits, handicrafts, fishery, goat raising and poultry farming are the areas of interest of the migrants. Carpenter, infrastructure labor, tailoring, agriculture, house construction labor bamboo crafting are the jobs available jobs at local market.
- Interaction sessions with BSF forces, establishing help desks, engage with policy administration, information dissemination through local media and manage the cases of violence at border are the advocacy methods.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Migration to India of Nepali workers is a historical phenomenon. Due to open borders and multidimensional linkages, high mobility exists between the bordering countries of Nepal and India (1). Mobility has been necessary for the economic survival of families in both urban and rural communities of Nepal due to poverty, high unemployment, political instability, and differential economic opportunities across the borders in India (2). Choice and destinations are dependent on the economic and social resources and the power of potential migrants and their families. This mobility causes separation from spouses, families, and familiar social and cultural norms. They suffer from language barriers, substandard living conditions and exploitative working condition including sexual violence. Majority of nepali migrants are represented in informal and seasonal work and approximately 86% of those workers are daily wage earners in the informal sector without any formal employment contracts and benefits placing on contractual obligations on their employer to provide food, accommodation and health care (3).

Labor migration has remained a salient aspect of Nepal's socio-economic landscape. The social and financial remittances and the exposure gained abroad have contributed positively to the Nepali economy but the context of the India going labor migrants is different. Despite over two centuries of history, Nepali workers who migrate to India for work continue to be excluded from Nepal government's plan and policies, hundreds and thousands of Nepalese working in Indian cities are subjected to discrimination and made to be feel unsafe as there is no policies in place to protect them and address their concerns (4).

Government of Nepal to work to regulate the labor migration to India and the discussion has been started from the initiation of the efforts of Sudur Paschim projects. The issues of labor migrants have been raised in different forums. A significant number of workers migrate to India, which does not require labor approvals and are unrecorded. Although there is no official record in terms of the number of Nepali migrant workers residing in India for foreign employment, as per the National Force Survey 2017/18, there is estimated 587686 Nepali migrants in India, most of whom are engaged in service sector

(5). The National Living Standard Survey 2010/11 reported that 11% of total remittance was contributed by migrant workers from India (6). The labor migration reports of Nepal have started to state the situation of Labor migration to India.

Several factors come into play when considering the origin provinces and districts for foreign employment. In particular, the low share of workers from districts in Karnali and Sudur Paschim does not paint a full picture of the labor mobility from these regions because migration from these provinces is concentrated to India and is unrecorded. The nature of migration to India is also different as it is low-cost, informal, and includes seasonal work (7). The self-perpetuating nature of labor migration whereby migrant workers make decisions on destination choices based on social networks could be one of the factors defining the persistent characteristics of the provincial and district-wise trends in outmigration. Social networks, among other factors, can influence the decision to migrate as individuals with migrant workers in their networks can overcome information, psychological and financial barriers associated with moving. In addition, in case of labor migration to India, given its proximity to Nepal, the cultural affinity and the relatively lower costs and paperwork associated with moving, mobility to India including for seasonal work can be preferable for many workers, particularly from Karnali and Sudur Paschim.

Limited studies among Nepali migrants going India has always affected in decision making and developing policies for government at various levels. However, a recent study conducted among 300 Nepalese workers in India concluded the patterns, trends, causes and consequences of Nepali migration to India have not remarkably every after many years of migration (8). However, the attachment with family has increased, also started educating their children and some migrants involved in self-employed business in India.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced an exceptional level of reverse migration of nepali workers from different destination countries. Nepal experience significant influx of migrant returnee as there was increase rise of cases in India. Estimated 700000 migrant workers returned from India due to job loss during COVID-19 pandemic as reported by World

Bank Report (9). A survey undertaken by Danchurch Aid among 1572 migrants of Sudurpaschim Province revealed around 98.7% of household lost their household livelihood due to COVID-19. Migrant workers in other destination countries endured reduced working hours, non –payment of wages with inadequate access to basic necessities like food health care and food as stated by ILO report (10). In addition to economic and health impact, migrant worker was subjected to discriminatory behavior in destination as well as at source. After slowdown of pandemic, many migrant workers returned back to India because of lack of jobs in Nepal and worsening COVID-19 situation in Nepal.

NEEDs Nepal is implementing 'Enhancing Safe Labor Migration through Capacity Strengthening the Targeted Beneficiaries in Doti and Kanchanpur Districts' with AWO International funding. The project works for awareness raising on safe migration, against human trafficking and livelihood improvement of the migrants and their families. Through project established social structure (spouse of migrant, migrant network etc.) in the source communities, the project strengthens their capacity, advocate on rights of migrant workers and address Nepalese-India migration issues. The project has also established and served through migrant information centers at Mahendranagar, District administration offices of both districts and Punarbas municipality office in Kanchanpur. The project conducted an 'Evidence-based study on problems and challenge of migrant workers in India and socio-economic effects of COVID-19 in their families' focusing on four municipalities namely Krishnapur and Punarbas municipalities in Kanchanpur district and, Shikhar Municipality and Adarsha Rural Municipality in Doti district.

1.1. Objective of Study

- To explore specific problems and challenges of migrant workers who came back from major cities of India
- To explore a detailed socio-economic impact in the life of migrants and returnee migrants in the project municipalities.
- To identify appropriate livelihood and income generation options including major advocacy modules to address labor migration and anti-human trafficking issues

1.2. Scope of the Study

The overall scope of the assignment is as follows.

- Review and analyze the present situation of labor migration in Nepal in context of India going migrants including impact of COVID-19
- Explore existing national policies and programs in terms of safer migration, livelihood and social reintegration of the local, province and federal government
- Mapping existing data of migrant workers who came back from India in project implementing sites.
- Identify key issues/challenges experienced by migrant workers in terms of safer migration and explore factors behind it.
- Explore positive and negative impact on socio-economic life of the migrant workers and their families as a result of labor migration and identify appropriate options of improving livelihood
- Review the existing practice of advocacy on issues of safer migration and human trafficking and interact with migrant workers, migrant networks and relevant organization working in migration and trafficking
- Provide evidence-based recommendations to NEEDS Nepal/AWO International

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Study design:

A cross-sectional survey was conducted to determine issues/challenges of migrant workers and their families in relation to safer migration, context of socio-economic status and identify possible approaches in improving their livelihood and practice for advocacy. The survey followed by qualitative study to strengthen study conclusion and validate findings. Mixed methods (both qualitative and quantitative approaches) was used to collect information. Qualitative information was obtained through semi-structured interview of migrant workers and their families. Quantitative information was obtained through interview of migrant workers using structured questionnaire and observations.

2.2 Study sites:

The study was conducted in the 4 Municipalities/Rural Municipalities (Krishnapur, Punarbas, Shikhar and Adharsha) of the two projects working districts Kanchanpur and Doti where NEEDS Nepal is implementing “Enhancing Safe Labor Migration through Capacity Strengthening. Each district was considered as separate domains for data collection.

2.3 Study Population:

The study included two sets of study population for the collection of data. (I) Returnee Migrants as key respondents for identifying key issues and challenges, (ii) Non – Returnee Migrants for socio-economic impact & (iii) Government Authorities at Municipality gaining boarder insight on the safer migration issues and government’s policies/plan for socio-economic rehabilitation of migrant workers.

2.4. Sampling design and sample size:

The data collection team purposively recruited participants for collection of qualitative data and simple random sampling design was used to collect information for the household survey. Total 205 samples participated in the study which included 140 from household survey, 59 from focus group discussion and 6 from key informant interview.

Table 1: Sample size for qualitative data collection

Method	No of events	Total	Respondents	Total sample
Focus Group Discussion	8 (2 in each 4 Municipalities)	At least 7 participants in each event	Returnee Migrants	59
Key Informant Interview	6 (Provincial and Municipality Authorities, Media Personnel, Migration Specialist	1 participant for each event	Provincial Authority (1), Municipality Chairperson(1), Deputy Mayor (1), Migration Specialist (1), Journalists (2)	6
				65

Table 2: Sample size for quantitative data collection

Total study population (4 Municipalities)	Gross Migration rate of Nepal	Total Sample	Projected affected people (30% ultra poor, marginalized, disabled)	Average Household size	Total Sample of household (per ward)
174257	11.23 per 1000 popn	1917	693	4.6	140 (35 per wards)

2.5 Data Collection and Techniques:

Face to face interview was done to collect information from household survey using a semi structured questionnaire. Similarly, open ended questionnaire was designed was developed to collect information from participants through focus group discussion and key informant interview.

2.6 Organization of field team and training

The research team was organized to complete data collection in all 4 Municipalities of 2 districts. Total 8 research enumerators from Kanchanpur and Doti districts were trained

for 2 days to orient on questionnaires, sample size, sampling procedure and data collection procedure. After training, pre-test of survey questionnaire was done among 5 participants and then it was finalized for wider application. The training was conducted in kanchanpur and facilitated by Research consultants in support of Needs Nepal

2.7 Supervision and monitoring plan of the study

During data collection, close supervision was done at field level to reduce sampling errors, coverage error (when sample does not represent the target population), non-response error, response error, incorrect information obtained from respondents (due to poor recall, prestige bias) were paid attention that encountered in the survey. The research team visited all the enumerators and reviewed the initially collected samples to ensure the quality of data collection and supervised team providing necessary feedback and suggestion.

All measures were made for the research assistants whose training included both inter and intra-observer standardization. Each research assistant was trained in preparation for the work and was regularly supervised including random controls of their recording procedures. Indirect validity testing was done through interviewers' observation about how the question were responded to, internal consistency checks built into the questionnaire where similar questions were asked twice, for example, children age vs. date of birth, 5% re-interview was taken as a check of the consistency of data collection.

2.8 Data management and analysis

The collected data went to series of checks for consistency and completeness. After which the database was prepared into a data software and data was entered and cleaned before analysis. Before entering data, training was provided to data entry persons so as to ensure consistency and quality. After completing the entry, data cleaning was performed. The descriptive as well as inferential statistics were calculated and 5% level of significance was taken

For qualitative data management and analysis, data was translated into English and extracted into tabular form based on variables (questions built in the questionnaires) and

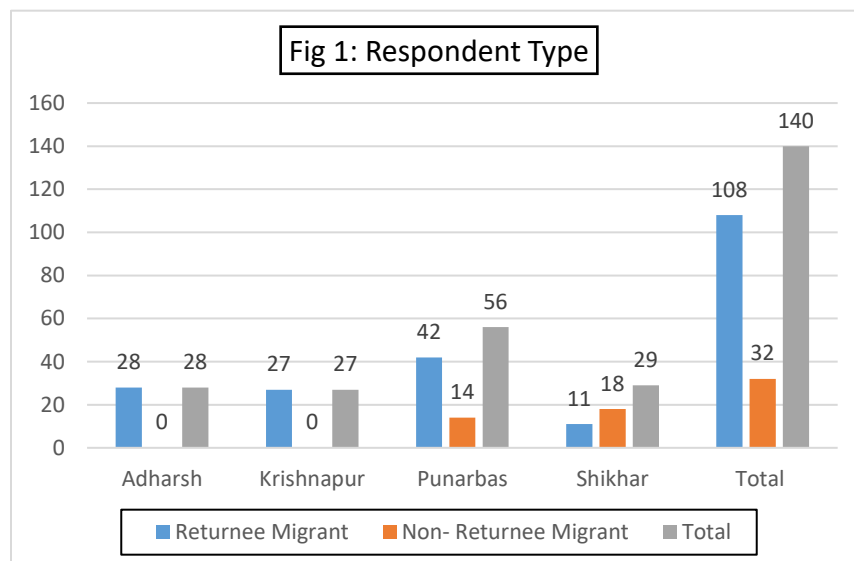
respondent categories. Data synthesis and analysis was done based on the themes as per qualitative data analysis guideline. The triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data was carried out to strengthen validity of information through convergence of data collected from both the sources.

Chapter 3: Data Analysis and presentation findings

This section of the report shares the key quantitative and qualitative findings and results of the data collected from the survey and focus groups discussion.

3.1 Socio-demographic characteristics and Employment History of Respondents

3.1.1 Respondent Type



A total 140 samples were interviewed from 4 Rural/Municipality of Kanchanpur and Doti Districts, among which 108 were returnee migrants and 32 were non-returnee migrants. In terms of Municipalities, all the respondents from Adarsha and Krishnapur were returnee migrants while respondents from shikhar accounted more number of non-returnee migrants (18) as respondents compare to returnee migrants (11).

In Krishnapur and Adharsha Rural municipality non returnee migrants were not participated in the process. It means, the respondent migrants again aiming to go back to India for the work.

Table 3: Socio-demographic characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Adharsh (28)		Krishnapur (27)		Punarbhas (56)		Shikhar (29)		Total (140)
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No (%)
Sex									
Male	28	100	23	85.2	51	91.1	26	89.7	128 (91.4)
Female	0	0.0	4	14.8	5	8.9	3	10.3	12 (8.6)
Age									
Below 16 years	1	3.5	0	0.0	1	1.8	1	3.4	3 (2.1)
16 – 24 years	15	53.6	3	11.1	9	16.1	5	17.2	32 (23.0)
25 – 34 years	9	32.1	5	18.5	12	21.4	8	27.6	34 (24.3)
35 – 50 years	4	14.3	14	51.8	22	39.3	9	31.0	49 (35.0)
Above 50 years	3	10.7	1	3.7	12	21.4	6	20.7	22 (15.7)
Caste									
Brahmin/Chhetri	13	46.4	5	18.5	35	62.5	15	51.7	68 (48.6)
Disadvantaged Janjati	1	3.5	0	0.0	2	3.6	0	0.0	3 (2.1)
Dalit	14	50.0	22	81.5	19	43.9	14	48.3	69 (49.3)
Education									
Illiterate	2	7.1	3	11.1	7	12.5	5	17.2	17 (12.1)
Informal Education	1	3.5	2	7.4	9	16.1	3	10.3	15 (10.7)
Primary	18	64.3	16	59.3	18	32.1	15	51.7	67 (47.9)
Secondary	7	2.5	4	14.8	17	30.4	6	20.7	34 (24.3)
Higher Secondary	0	0.0	2	7.4	5	8.9	0	0.0	7 (5.0)
Marital Status									
Unmarried	2	7.1	0	0.0	7	12.5	2	6.9	11 (7.9)
Married	26	92.9	27	100	46	82.1	24	82.8	123 (87.9)
Widow	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	5.4	3	10.3	6 (4.3)

Sex:

Majority 91.4% (128) of the total respondents were male while the proportion of female participants was less to 8.6%(12) in the survey. Krishnapur had highest percentage; 14.8% of female respondents compared to others while there was no female among respondents from Adarsha Rural Municipality.

Age:

In terms of age group, the highest number of total 49 (35%) respondents were from age group (35 – 50 years) while only 3 respondents were below age of 16. Similarly, the

proportion of respondents from age group (35 – 50 years) was found to be dominant also among in 3 municipalities except Adharsha Rural Municipality where majority (53.6%) of respondents were from 16-24 years.

Caste:

Likewise, there was no significant difference observed in proportion of respondents in terms of their caste especially between Brahmin/Chhetri and Dalit groups which was 48.6% and 49.3% respectively. However, Krishnapur Municipality had highest number of 22 (81.5%) Dalit respondents compared to other Palikas while Punarbas with highest proportion of 62.5% of Brahmin/Chhetri as their respondents among the Palikas.

Education:

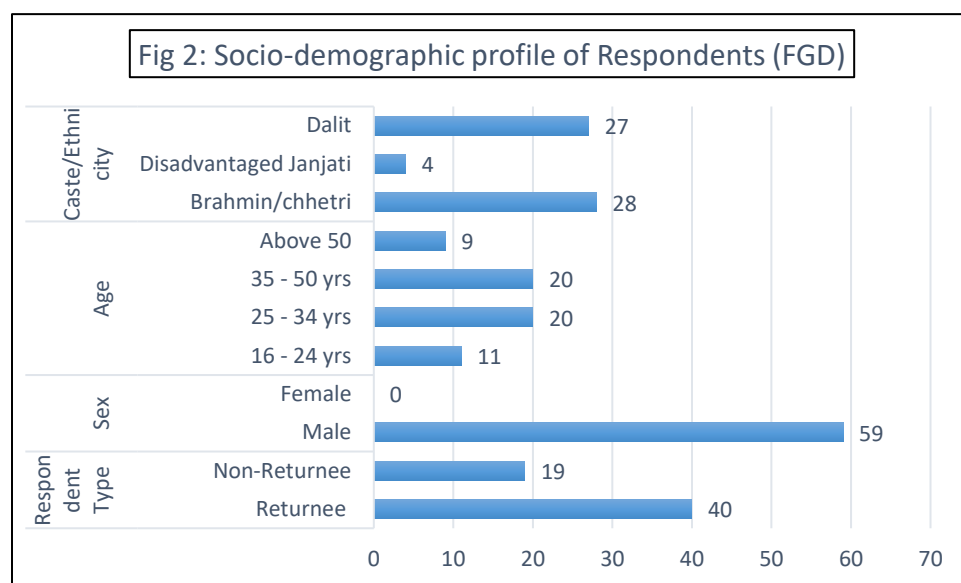
Overall, the highest level of education attended by majority of 47.9% (67) respondents was primary, those with secondary or higher secondary level accounted 29.3% of total respondents and 12.1% were illiterate. More than 50% of respondents from Adharsha, Krishnapur & Shikhar had primary level of education which was comparatively low to 32.5% among respondents from Punarbas. While respondents with secondary level education was reported highest i.e. 30.4% in respondents from Punarbas followed by 20% among respondents from Shikhar.

Marital Status:

Nearly 88% (123) of the total respondents were married and 7.9% were found to be unmarried. All the respondents from Krishnapur who participated in the survey were married compared to 92.9% from Adharsha, 82.8% from Shikhar & 82.1% from Punarbas Municipality.

Qualitative findings;

Respondent Type and socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (Focus Group Discussion)



Total 7 focus group discussions were conducted which included 59 participants, among them 40 were returnee migrants and 19 were non-returnee migrants. All 59 participants were male and total 31 participants were aged between 16 – 34 years and 9 of them were above age of 50. Regarding the caste/ethnicity of participants, 28 were Brahmin/Chhetri, 27 of them were Dalit while total 4 participants were disadvantaged Janjati.

3.1.2 Employment History of Respondents

Table 4: Age of Respondents at first time migration for employment

Variable	ADARSH (28)	KRISHNAPUR (27)	PUNARBAS (56)	SHIKHAR (29)	TOTAL (140)
Age at first time Migration for employment					
Below 16 years	7 (25.0)	12 (44.4)	11 (19.6)	19 (65.5)	49 (35.0)
16 – 24 years	21 (75.0)	11 (40.7)	35 (62.5)	9 (31.1)	76 (54.2)
25 – 34 years	0 (0.0)	4 (14.8)	7 (12.5)	1 (3.4)	12 (8.5)
35 – 50 years	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (5.4)	0 (0.0)	3 (2.1)
Years of engagement in foreign employment					
Less than 5 years	4 (14.3)	2 (7.4)	14 (25.0)	5 (17.2)	25 (17.9)
5 – 10 years	11 (39.3)	3 (11.1)	18 (32.1)	7 (24.1)	39 (27.8)
More than 10 years	13 (46.4)	22 (81.5)	24 (42.9)	17 (58.6)	76 (54.3)

The survey interviewed respondents to understand the key characteristics related to their cross-border migration and foreign employment. Majority of 54.2% (76) respondents

replied their age was between 16 – 24 years when they first migrated to India for seeking employment while 35% (49) responded they were aged below 16 years. The findings were similar for Adharsha and Punarbas which reported 75% (21) and 62.5% (35) of their respondents were from age (16 -24 years) when migrated for the first time. However, highest proportion of respondents from Krishnapur and Shikhar reported their age was below 16 years while first time migrating to India.

In terms of years of engagement in foreign employment, 54.3% of total respondents reported of spending more than 10 years of their life-span working in India with 27.8% from 5 – 10 years and 17.9% with less than 5 years of employment history. The proportion of respondents with more than 10 years of engagement was highest in all 4 rural/municipalities and Krishnapur had highest number of 22 respondents among all.

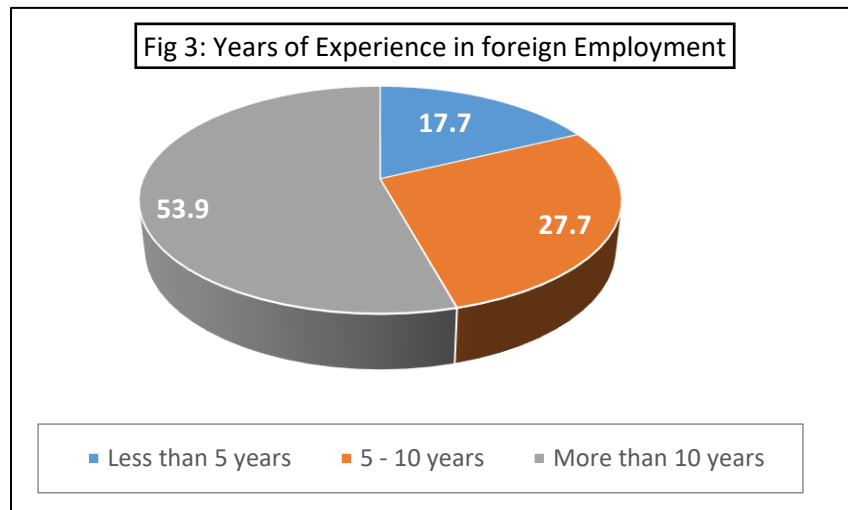
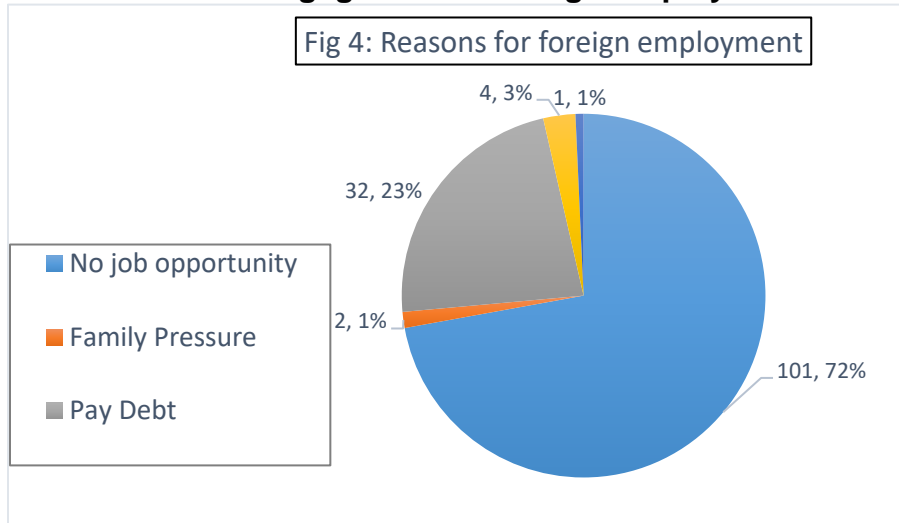


Figure 3: shows the proportion of respondents in terms years of experience in employment in India. Nearly 54% of the total respondents had spent more than 10 years working cross-border followed by 27.7% with 5 – 10 years of engagement

and those with less than 5 years was reported by 17.7% of the respondents.

3.1.3 Reason for engagement in foreign Employment



In terms of reasons/factors put forward by respondents behind their decision to engage in foreign employment. About 72% (101) of the respondents replied that they didn't find opportunities for job at the source/home town and with poor educational/economic background, working in India was only the option for the respondents. Similarly, 23% (32) of the respondents had debt to pay taken by oneself or family due to which they had to earn by working in India. While 3% of respondents especially from young age group was influenced by their friends who drop out from school and migrated to India in sake of finding work and earn for living. (shown in Fig 4)

3.1.4 Type of work respondents engaged

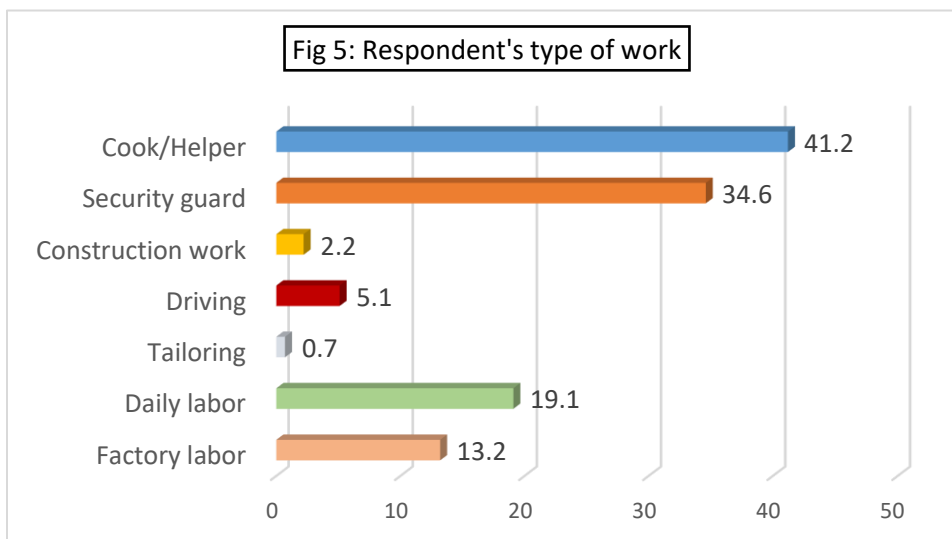
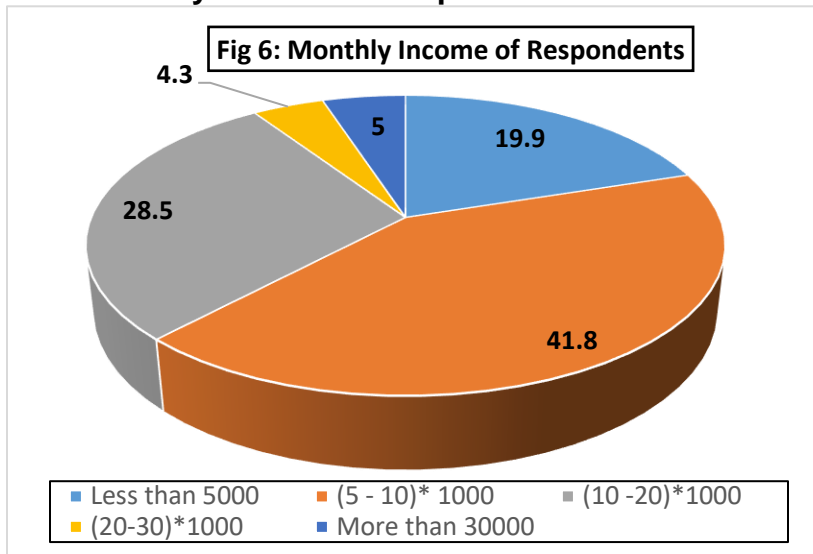


Figure 6 shows the type of work that respondents were engaged while working in India and majority of respondents replied of doing more than one job so there response has been analyzed accordingly. Among the total, Cook/Helper received the highest response of 41.2% from the respondents followed security guard with 34.6% response. Similarly, 19.1% of the respondents replied working as daily wage labor followed by 13.2% worked as labor on small scale factories. Apart from these, very small proportion i.e. 5.1% of the respondents also replied they worked as driver for small and large vehicles.

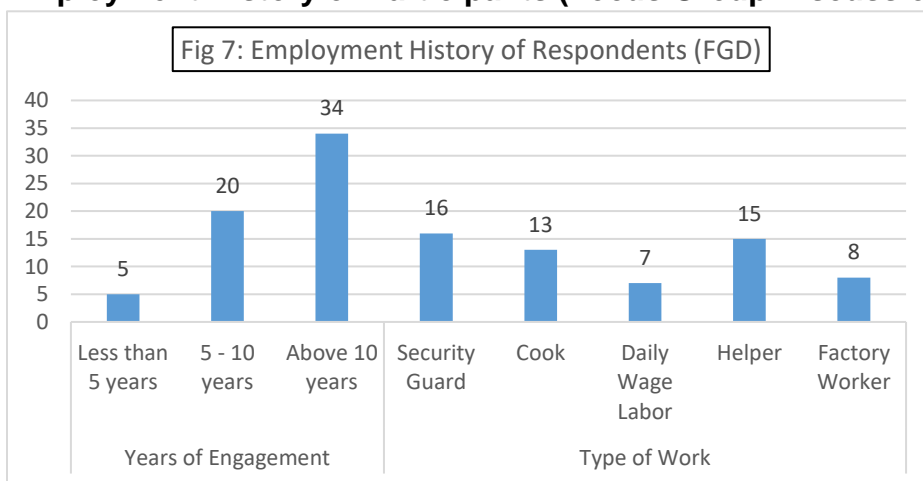
3.1.5 Monthly Income of Respondents



Majority of 41.8% respondents replied they earned 5 – 10 thousand (INRs) monthly followed by 28.5% with income of 10-20 thousand. Among total, only 5% had their monthly income above 30000 while nearly 20% of respondents earned less than 5000 while working in India. (Fig: 6)

Qualitative findings:

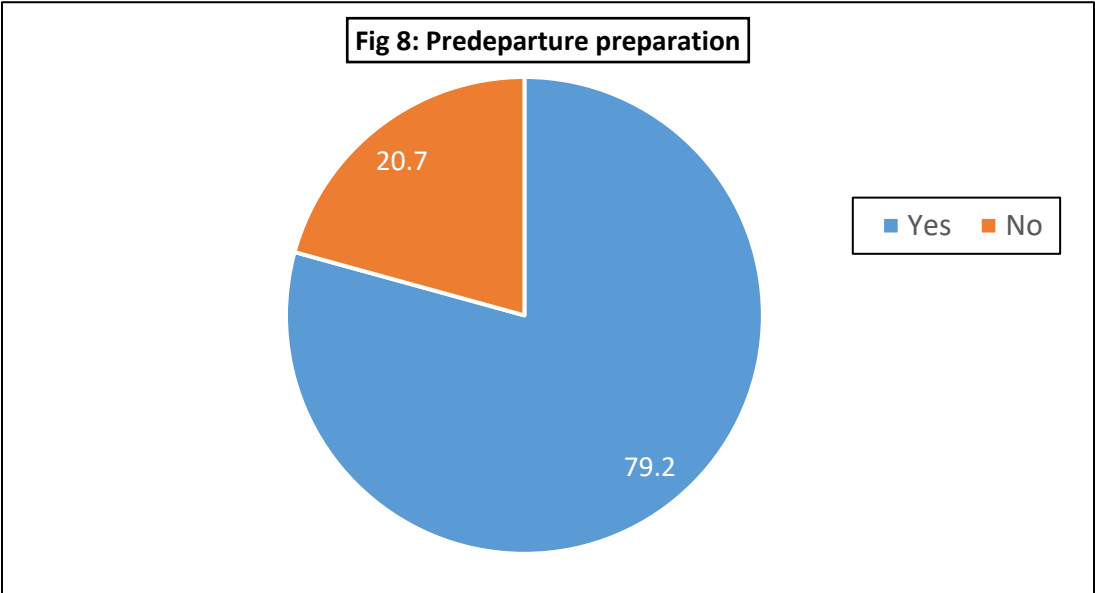
Employment History of Participants (Focus Group Discussion)



Among total participants of Focus Group Discussion, 34 of them had spent more than 10 years in foreign employment while 20 participants had history of 5 – 10 years of engagement. Similarly, 16 participants were security guard by profession, 13 worked as cook and 15 as helper in hotels while 15 of them were engaged in daily wage labor or as factory worker in India

3.2 Key issues and challenges faced by Migrant Workers in course of migration and place of destination

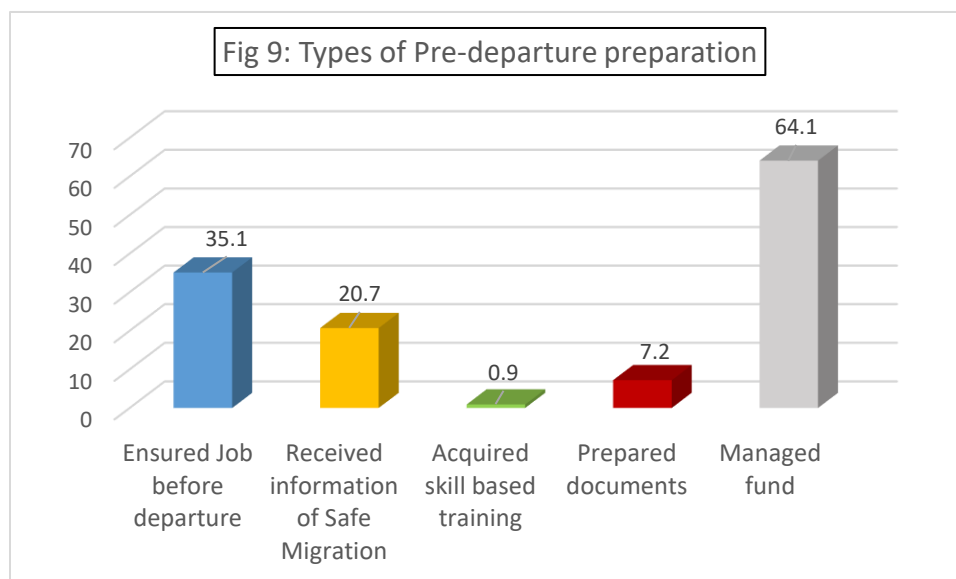
3.2.1 Practice of Pre-departure preparation



The survey interviewed respondents regarding their practice of making any kind of preparation at source before their predeparture to India. Total 111 (79.2%) of the total respondents replied they made some kind preparation like gathering information and getting self-aware on safe migration, managing fund and others. Table 3 illustrates that respondents from Adharsha Rural Municipality were found with highest proportion of 92.8% migrant workers making pre-departure preparation while it was recorded lowest to 59.2% among respondents from Krishnapur.

Table 5: Practice of predeparture among respondents

Variable	ADARSH (28)	KRISHNAPUR (27)	PUNARBAS (56)	SHIKHAR (29)	TOTAL (140)
Pre-departure preparation					
Yes	26 (92.8)	16 (59.2)	44 (78.5)	25 (86.2)	111 (79.2)
No	2 (7.2)	11 (40.8)	12 (21.5)	4 (13.8)	29 (20.8)



Among the respondents who replied of preparing oneself before pre-departure, 64.1% respondents replied management of fund as major part of their preparation. While getting connected with their friends and relatives working in India to explore and ensure job before departure was done by 35.1 respondents. Similarly, 20.7% respondents also replied they received counselling and information regarding safe migration from community workers, migrant help desk regarded important before the pre-departure. Only 1% respondents replied they joined training course to acquire skills that would benefit them to find job and provide them better pay.

Qualitative findings:

Dumbar Budda from Punarbas Municipality quotes “I was in contact with one my friend who had been working in Bangalore for last 5 years. Once he was back home during the holidays, I asked him if he can find any job for me at the place nearby where he was working. After 4 months of returning back, he found a job for me and also shared the possible salary amount the employee was offering. After which I decided to depart and started to work”

Gagan BK from Shikhar Municipality quotes “I watched several of my family relatives and people from my village migrating to India in search of job. But never heard that someone planning to migrate should make any specific preparation before departure. When I decided to migrate for the first time, I desperately for someone who can support some cash required for travel and food. As I was in touch with migrant workers, I had adequate information on how much amount of money would be sufficient enough to reach the destination.

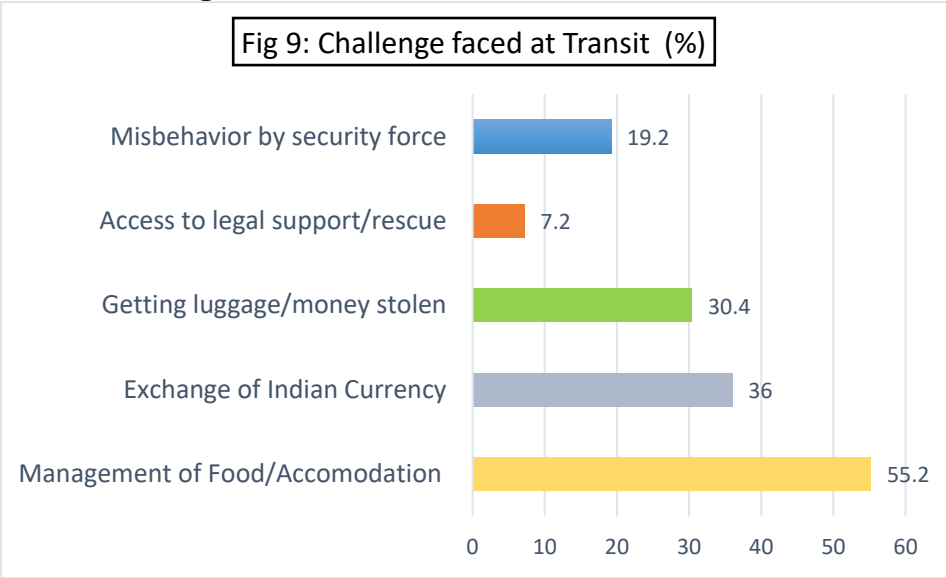
Krishna Dhami aged 40 years from Adharsha Municipality shares” I worked as a small garment factory in Madras which was first job in India. I was assigned as helper with responsibility of carrying materials and loading them in the small trucks and had to travel long distance from place of resident. Due to low pay and extensive hardship I switched by job and started to work as cleaner in a hotel. Gradually, I started to assist cook in the hotel and gained skills for cooking. After 3 years, I started working as cook in other hotel with better salary and less hardship. I always realize that if I had gained some cooking skill here at source before departing to India, I wouldn't have to waste 5 years of life working hard with poor pay

There is risk at all levels of migration process. The migrants themselves are not aware, not prepared but there has been changes in information sharing, precaution has been taken while sending money, banking process is utilized. – Journalists from Kanchanpur and Dhangadhi (KII)

The migration process is not safe as we cannot regulate the open border and the context. We are trying to make it safe by providing information to the migrants such as keep your document while traveling, do not drink during the travel, provide detail information to the families and friend about where you are going and your work. The municipality has been providing awareness information to the migrants with the support from NEEDS Nepal. They are requesting migrants to carry important documents during the travel such as

identity card. Counseling services to the migrants and potential migrants has been done in all wards of the municipality. - Deputy Mayor, Punarbas Municipality, Kanchanpur (KII)

3.2.2 Challenges faced at Transit



The survey interviewed respondents to explore various challenges faced by Nepalese migrant workers during their stay at transit and crossing of border. The major issue raised by the respondents was inadequate management of food and accommodation during their temporary stay at transit, total 55.2% respondents replied they were cheated by the hotels and charged extra for low quality food and mismanaged shelter at transit. Similarly, difficulty in exchanging Indian Currency before departure and after arrival from source was the second key issue faced at transit as replied by 36% of respondents. Total 30.4% respondents mentioned getting their belongings and money stolen by thieves/trickster at both sides of the border as a prevalent issue encountered by migrants at transit. The misbehavior and mistreatment by security force while crossing the border was also replied by 19.2% respondents as an issue which is especially under looked by the administration from both countries. Few of 7.2% respondents shared finding legal support and immediate response/support in case of encountering certain incident is challenging for migrant workers while crossing the border or during stay at transit.

Qualitative findings;

Raju Shilal who is working as construction worker from Adharsha Rural Municipality had to stay a night in at Kanchanpur in his way back to Madras. After inquiring several hotels, he finally found one that was affordable to him and decided to stay. He shares” First I was told that the charge of room would NRs 500 for one night, but very next day the hotel owner charged me NRs 800 adding cost of food which I never took”.

Khemraj Nepali from Shikhar Municipality working as Cook quotes” When I was returning back from Amritsar to celebrate Tihar with my family in Doti, I was carrying some items (school bag, toys others) in separate bag in addition to my luggage. As I was crossing the border, the security personnel at border asked me to open my luggage and told me to show the bill of items I was carrying. I didn’t have it so he suspected me as thief and threatened to put behind the bars. After 3 hours of stay, he asked me to handover some cash after which I was released.”

Khadak Bk from Shikhar Municipality quotes “Usually hoteliers operating at transit says they will provide good food with cheap rates at the beginning and convince you to use their service. But afterwards they put different rate in the bills and forces you to pay it. It is fraud and we are often helpless and don’t have better provision of reporting it”

Surya Budda aged 34 years from Adharsha Rural Municipality shares” Once I was returning back from India, I stayed in hotel before travelling to home next day morning. But, next day my luggage was missing. The hotel owner didn’t help me rather blamed of not being responsible enough. I seek for the support in the police station nearby but they were not so supportive and I had to return empty handed. So, the provision and level of support for migrant workers regarding reporting complains and accessing justice is not good enough”

The transits of both Kanchanpur and the Dhangadhi has under the jurisdiction of federal government. We all are aware about the issues that Nepalese migrants facing every day at the borders such as harassment, unnecessary torcher, unnecessary checking, asking

for money and many more – Section officer, Labor and employment department, Far-western Province (KII)

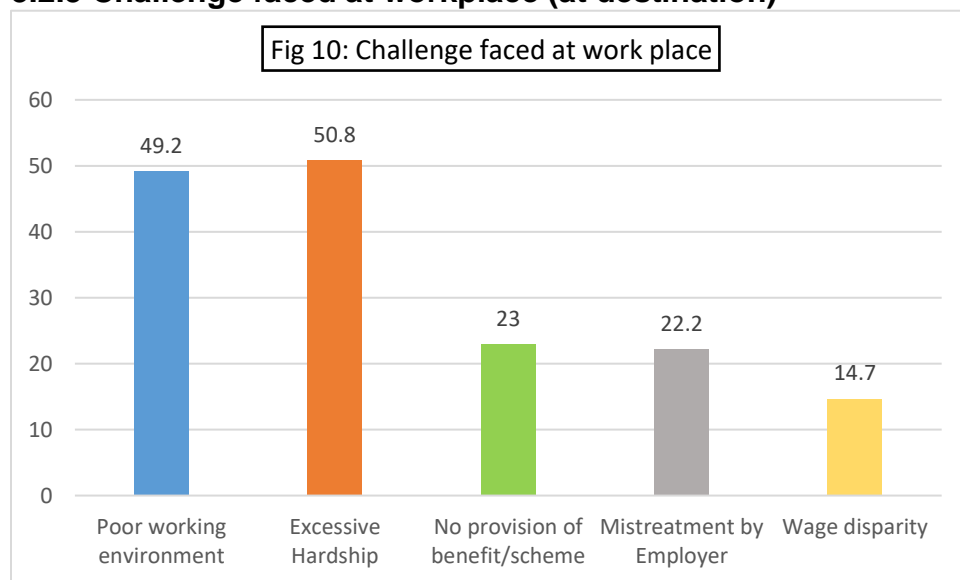
In comparison to the Gulf going migrants, the situation of migrants going to India is poor. Migrants are not regulated by the government but there are cultural relations to regulate. The migration process is self-regulated, and the safety and security issues are not taking care by the authorities. Friends during travels and the informal networks are the mechanism to support which is very weak in my observation. There is no practice of preparing to go to India but some of the agencies providing information in selected communities which is good. The government from ward level need to take lead to provide the information and to regulate the migration process.

- Migration specialist

Still there are areas to improve such as drinking alcohol during travel, unsafe travel, travel without information needed to improve. The information recording system is a must. The government need to keep information of each migrant going to India. Now, there is no record keeping system.

- Journalists from Kanchanpur and Dhangadhi

3.2.3 Challenge faced at workplace (at destination)



Approximately 50.8% respondents replied excessive hardship as a major issue faced by migrant workers at the workplace backed by their opinion which included working many

hours, no holidays, forced to work during sick leave and others. Similarly, 49.2% of respondents mentioned they have to work in poor environment which is concerning in terms of health, safety and security. Considering the fact that many respondents participating in the survey were working as cook, security guards, factories and construction sites, 23% of respondents replied that no provision of benefit/scheme from Employer made them to fully rely on their monthly salary in terms managing their daily living without any kind of extra welfare. One of the concerning issue raised by the 22.2% of respondents was the mistreatment and punishment by Employer which was harsh and affected the dignity of workers. The other common issue that migrant workers had to deal was disparity in wage by Employer among Nepalese and Indian workers, 14.7% of respondents mentioned they were paid less compared to their Indian counterparts who was assigned with same job responsibility and working hours.

Qualitative findings:

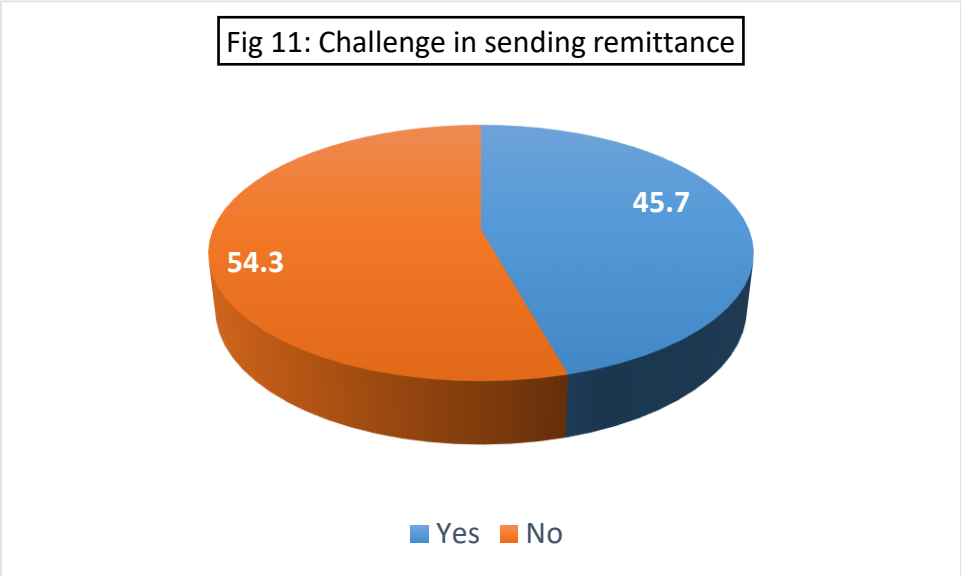
Khadak BK from Krishnapur Municipality quotes “I started suffering from body pain and muscle ache after spending 6 years working as security guard for a residential building in Mumbai. Nearly after 2 week of consistent pain, I decided to visit nearest health facility for checkup. I shared about my health condition to the employer and requested him to grant sick leave and some advance. However, I was denied leave and in response threatened I might lose job if I didn’t present myself at duty. So, I had to quit job and returned back Nepal for treatment. It is bitter experience for me and most of nepali workers who are compelled to work despite you are unwell”

Tek Bista from Adharsha Rural Municipality working shares” After completing my health assistant course in Dhangadhi, I decided to migrate India in search of job. I started working in clinic at kerala. For first one years I was paid less despite working hard, but later they raised my salary and treated well. I was allowed holiday for 1 day every week and provided 14 days of festival leave every year. The employer also granted me festival allowance and also compensate sick leave.

According to Padam Budda from Punarbas Municipality who worked in Rajkot “I worked as a helper in restaurant with other four colleagues. I had to start duty from 6 am at early

morning and stay till 10 pm. I ate at the restaurant and just return back to room to get some sleep. Despite working 16 hours per day with no provision of holiday throughout the week. I had no extra time to get with friends and relatives and totally overloaded with busy working hours”

3.2.4 Challenge in sending remittance



In total, 45.7% (64) of the respondents replied sending remittance from destination to source is challenge for Nepalese migrant workers while 54.3% had no any such challenge. One of the common issue mentioned by the respondents Nepalese with Adhar cards were only allowed of provisioned to open personal bank account.

Qualitative findings:

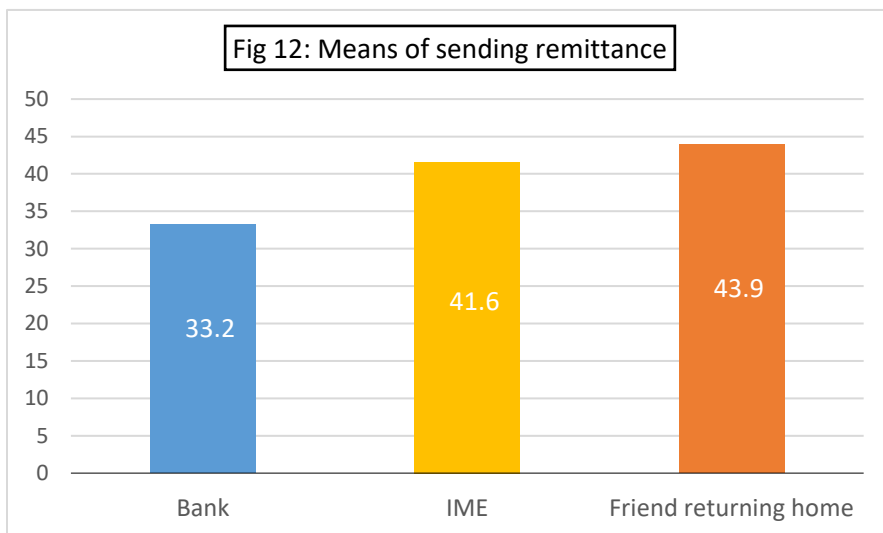
Rudra Budda from Punarbas Municipality who worked for 40 years as security guard quotes “In his earlier days of working in India, he usually saved his salary for 4-5 months and preferred to send it back to his families through his friends or relatives who is planning to return back to Nepal or carry it by oneself while getting back. After IME service outlets opened in his district, he started sending remittance through IME and thought it is secure and the family members are able to receive money in short time period”

Uttam Dhama from Adharsha Rural Municipality shares “I lost my citizenship card when I was travelling from Doti to Madras. As a result, I was challenging for me to send

remittance back home through IME, so I send it through friends and relatives who returned back home in leave or vacation”

Nandaram Joshi from shikhar Municipality quotes” It is challenging for Nepalese workers without vital document to process for Aadhaar card (A verifiable 12-digit identification number issued to the resident of India free of cost. Without the card, it is difficult to open bank accounts or even you have to present it while sending money through IME. However, you are not eligible to receive aadhaar card until you have substantial documents as requested by UIDAI”

According to Ganeshi Dhimi who is working as a cook in Madras “I always use the bank account of my Nepali colleague working with me to send money back home. As I don’t have one of my own and have not been able to open an account because of lack of documents”



Majority i.e. 43.9% of respondents replied sending remittance through friends or relatives when they returned back home. While 41.6% respondents preferred IME and 33.2% send remittance through bank accounts. However, respondents also added those who didn’t have their own bank account relied on others bank account to send the remittance and pay charge for the provision.

3.2.5 Challenge in communicating family from destination

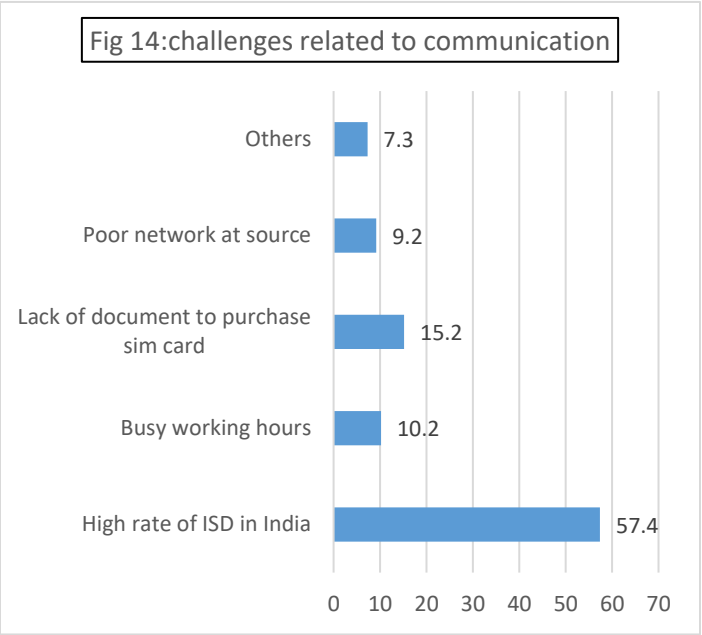
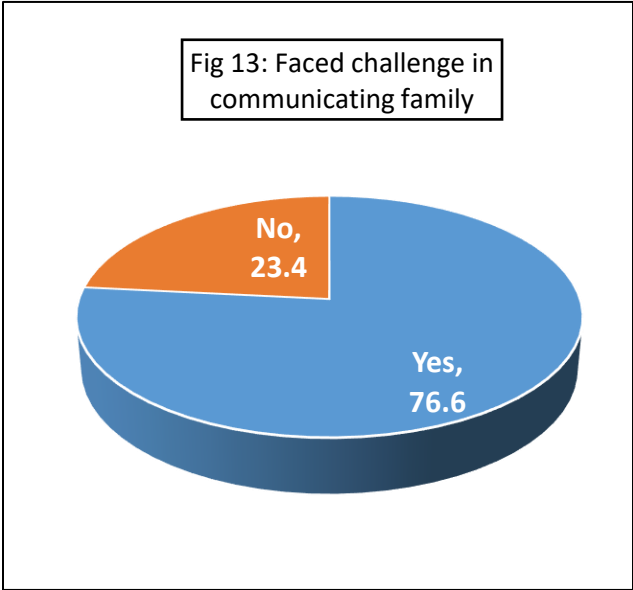


Fig 13: shows Majority (76.6%) of total respondents replied they find it challenging to communicate with their family from destination and they mentioned various challenges related to it. The highest proportion of 57.4% respondents replied that the rate of ISD call in India is high and expensive which adds economic burden especially when you earn less and manage several other basic needs. Similarly, 15.2% of respondents faced challenge in purchasing sim card in India due to lack of certain documents and rely on others for making calls back home. Some 10.2% of respondents also replied that they had long and busy working hours and find limited spare time to communicate with their families. One of the challenge mentioned by 9.2% of respondents was related to poor mobile network at source enabling them to connect only when family members move to locations with good network access.

Qualitative findings:

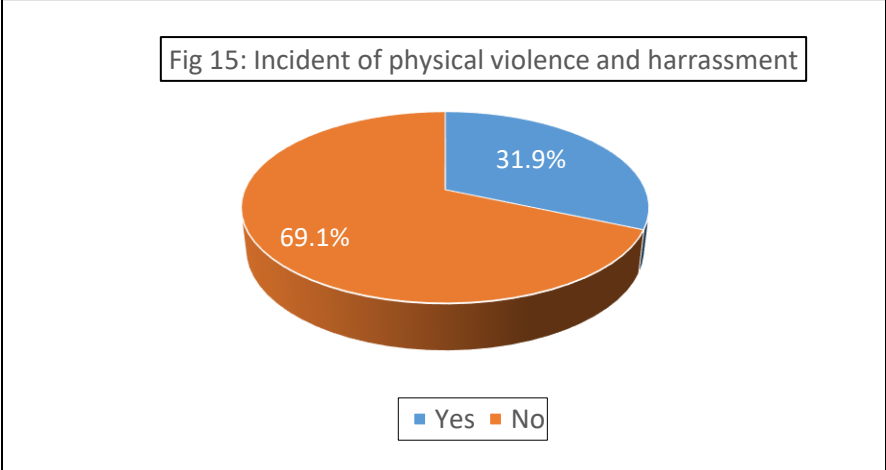
Tularam Bista from Adharsha Rural Municipality shares “I usually communicate once a month with my family back home. I earn around INRs 6000 a month and it is difficult for me to spend much on communication due to high rate of charges in ISD call from India to Nepal”

Surya Budda from Punarbas Municipality quotes “In early days of stay in India, the letter was the only means to communicate with your family back home and then it was costly to make calls through mobiles. But now I purchase internet data package and communicate through Imo (free video and messaging application)

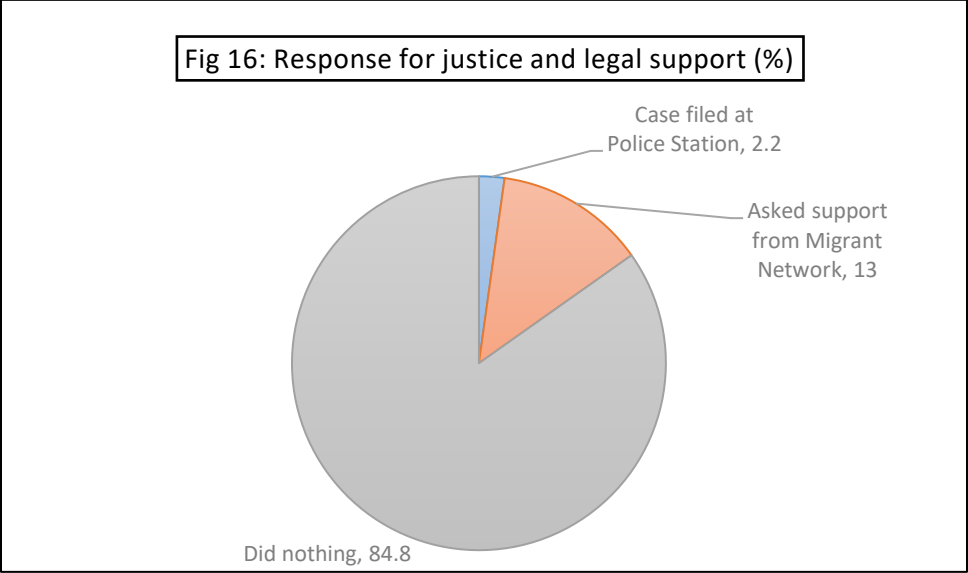
Rishab Khadka from Krishnapur Municipality quotes” I didn’t have sufficient documents required to purchase sim card, so Mahesh (friend) helped me with his document to get the sim card. I get in contact with family once a week and use Viber (free call app) and it has helped me lot”

Mahesh Giri from Shikhar Municipality shares” The mobile networks are not good enough back home in Doti where my family resides which makes it challenging to communicate. When any family member is down to market with some work, they call me via ISD from Nepal which is quite cheaper in comparison to India”

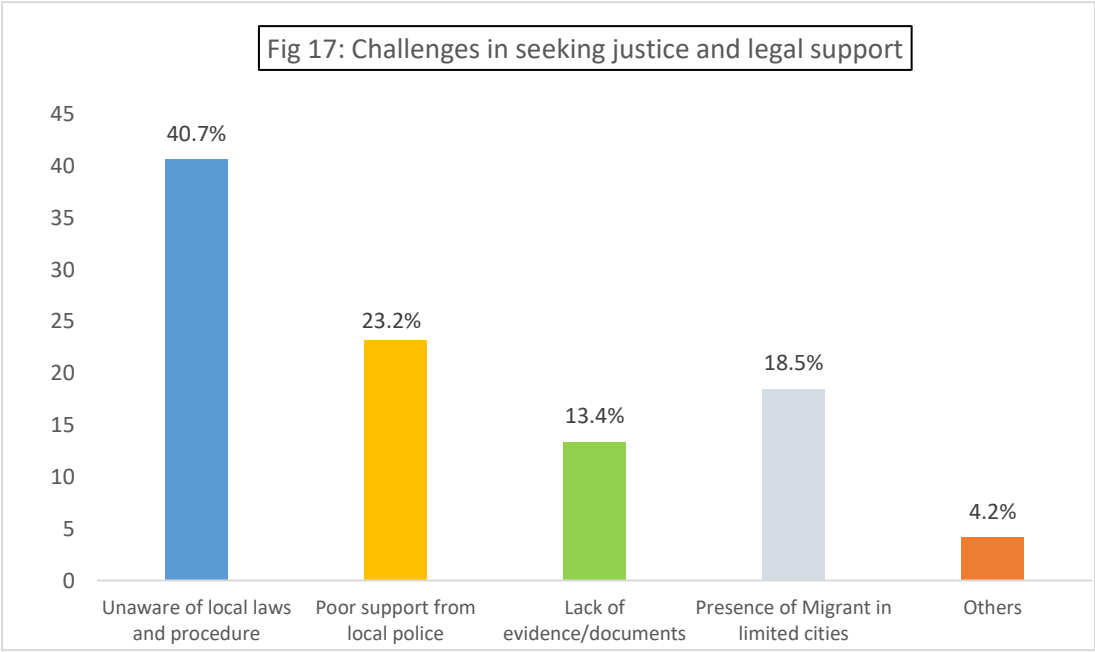
3.2.6 Challenge faced in seeking justice and legal support



The figure 15 shows that around 32% (23) of the total respondents replied that they were victim of physical violence and harassment while working at destination. These incidents were encountered by the respondents at their work place and place of residence.



When asked about the response made by respondents in terms of seeking justice and legal support, 84.8% replied they did nothing, 13% asked support from the Migrant Network and only 2.2 reported and filed case at local police station.



The above figure above shows the various challenges faced by migrant workers in pursue of seeking justice and legal support. Among total, the highest proportion i.e. 40.7% of respondents replied their lack of awareness on local laws and procedures was one the major issue faced in seeking legal support. Similarly, the second major challenge

mentioned by 23.2% of the respondents was poor support from local police. Respondents further added that local police are more in favor of their local employer and suggesting Nepali workers to dismiss any complain made. Migrant Networks has existed in major cities of India to support Nepalese workers and advocating on migrant related issues and their right. So, 18.5% of the respondents replied that presence of Networks on limited cities have made it difficult for Nepalese workers to access the support and services provided by the Networks. Lack of documents/evidence was also referred as a challenge by 13.4% of respondents especially local authorities and administration to denying to file complain questioning the legal base of the incident.

Qualitative findings:

Karna Ayet of Shikhar Municipality quotes “I was returning back to Nepali for my daughter’s marriage from Rajasthan. I was carrying some gold ornaments and clothes which I purchased from my savings. But someone stole my luggage while travelling in train, I had no idea how to response and file complaint about the incident. I reached home empty handed”

Biri Dhami from Punarbas Municipality shares “I with other 5 nepali colleagues use to work in aluminum factory and Ramesh (nepali worker) lost his life after due to short circuit while working in factory. We had already complained employer about repair and maintenance of some machinery equipment earlier but due to the negligence, Ramesh lost his life. Despite sharing the information to police authority, they filed it as an accident and in lack of any job agreement, employer escaped from providing the allowance to the family. Later we communicated with the local migrant network who supported us in taking the case ahead and finally the employer was provided legal notice to compensate Ramesh family”

Yaga Bk from Adharsha Rural Municipality shares “I worked as security guard for a residential building in Bangalore. After 2 years of working in same amount of salary, I requested by employer for increment as it was getting hard to manage with income I

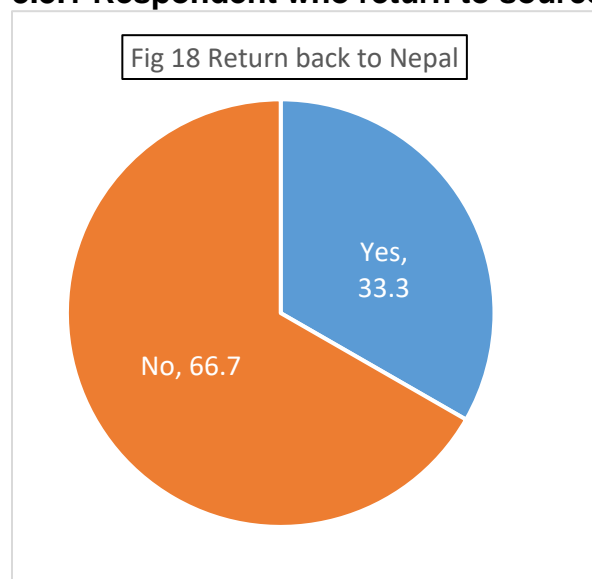
was receiving. But I was beaten and harassed and threaten of losing the job. I couldn't take any step in response to the incident in fear of losing the job”

Bharat Bk from Krishnapur Municipality shares “Working in India has been good experience for me. I have been working as cleaner in hotel and mistreated and physically abused every time by the employer at my workplace. There is no network or support group of migrants working in place where I live so I share my difficult experience with my wife back but unable to take any step for justice”

3.3 Socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on Migrant workers

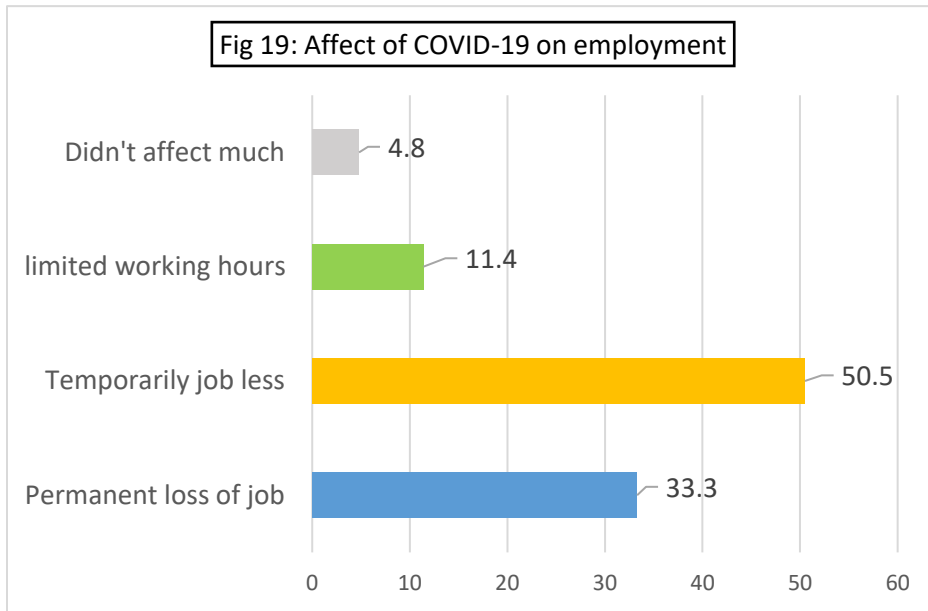
This section of the report will provide the glimpse of experience faced by Migrant workers due to COVID-19 especially focusing to the social and economic impact both at source and destination.

3.3.1 Respondent who return to source during COVID-19

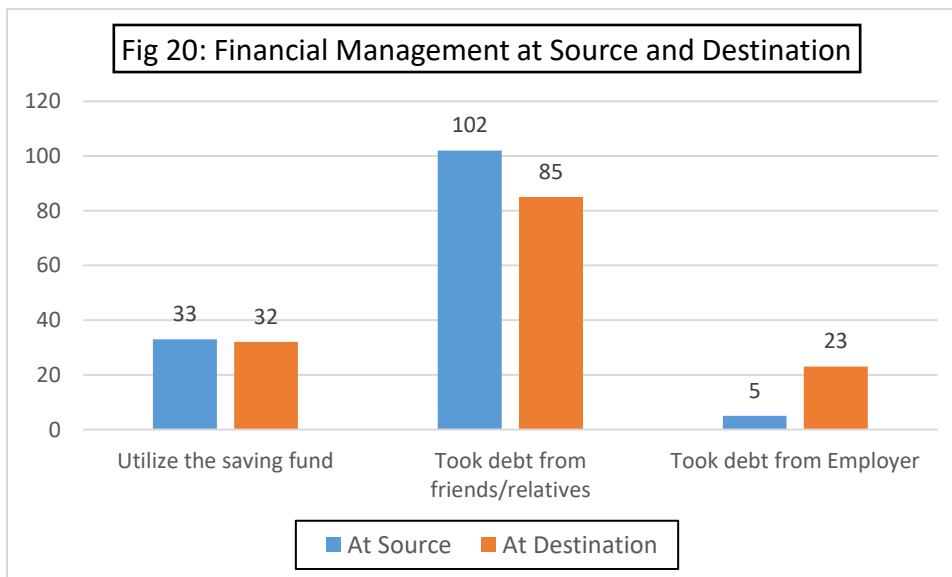


Among total respondents, 33.3% replied they returned back to Nepal before and during lockdown period imposed by government of Indian and Nepal in response to COVID-19 (Fig 18)

3.3.2 Economic impact



The above figure shows that total 50.5% of the respondents were temporarily job less due to closure of manufacturing and service sector jobs posed by the government's lockdown. While the proportion of respondents who lost their job permanently was 33.3%, this included migrant workers pursuing jobs in factories, construction sites, daily wage labor and others. However, 11.4% of respondents were found enduring job with limited working hours provided by the Employers.



As migrant workers and their families back home were pushed hard with inadequate access to basic necessities such as health care and food during the lockdown period. Total 33 respondents replied they utilized the saving fund to manage their basic amenities both at source and destination. However, 102 respondents who were low income earners with no sufficient fund in reserve replied they took debt from friends and relatives to overcome the fund crisis. Similarly, 23 respondents relied on debt made available by their employer for fund management. Debt Remaining to be paid

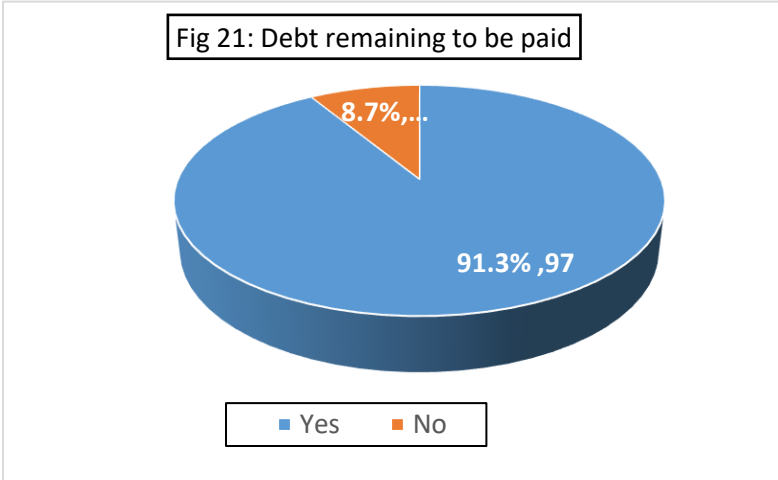
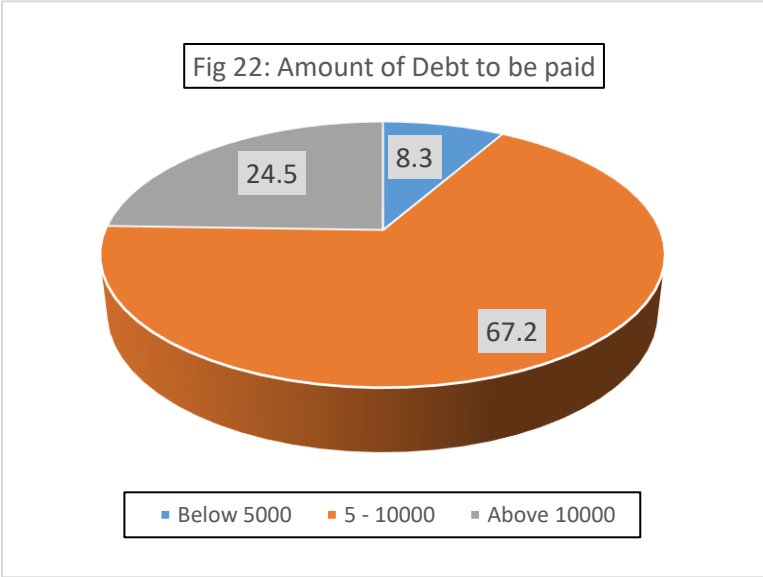
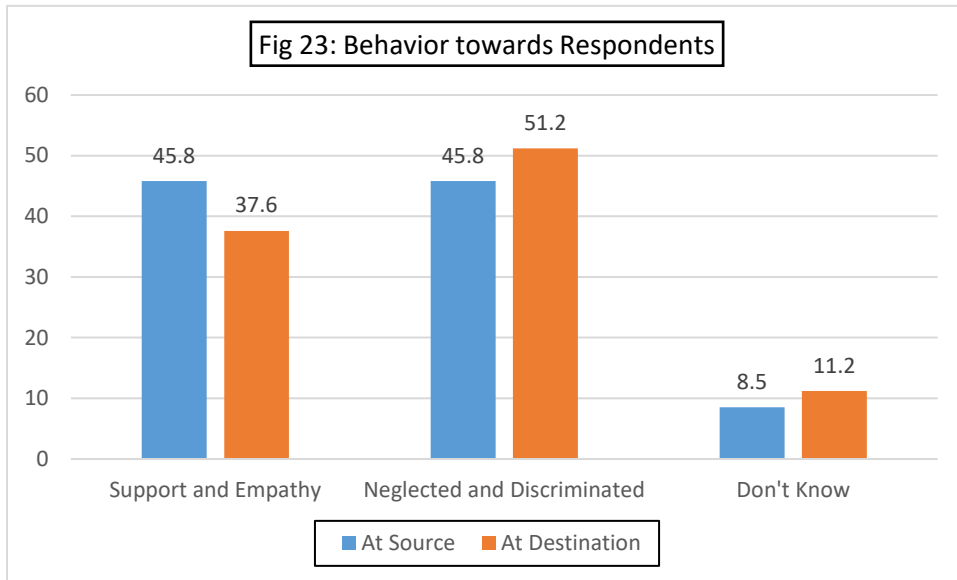


Fig 21 shows that 91.3% (97) of the total respondents mentioned they still have debt to pay which was taken by their family at source from friends and relatives during COVID-19 crisis.

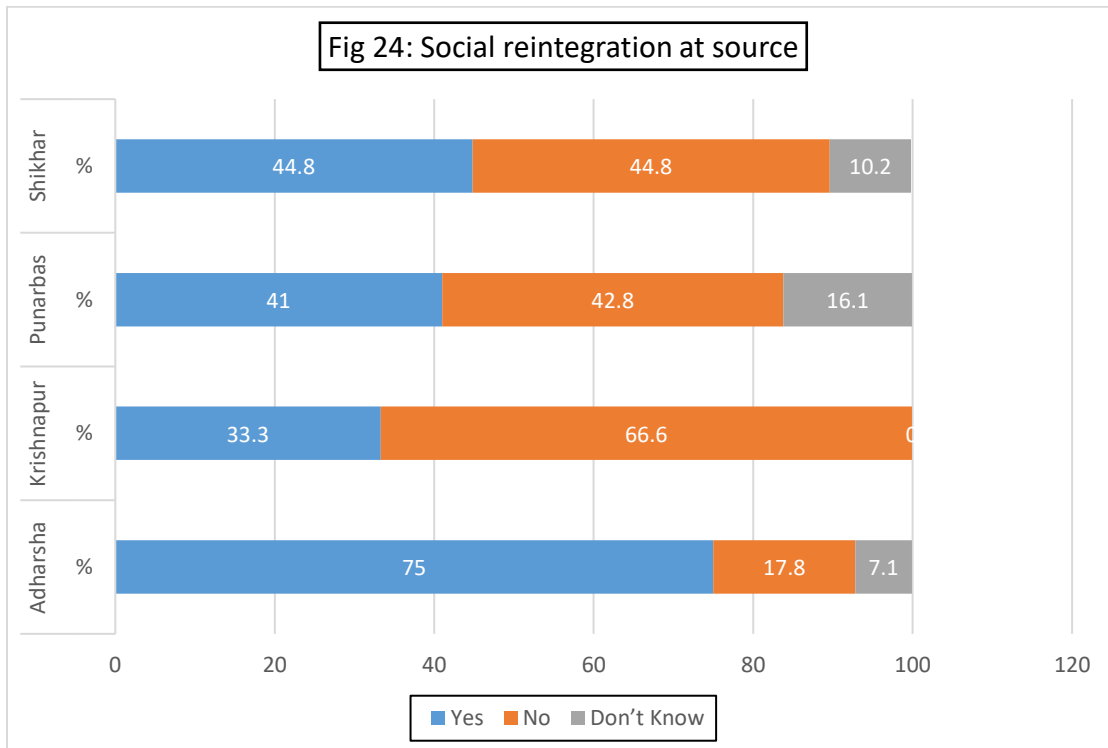


When asked about the amount of debt to paid taken to manage fund crisis during COVID-19, majority (67.2%) of respondents replied their amount of debt is (5 – 10) thousand and total 24.5% respondents has debt of more than 10000 still to be paid.

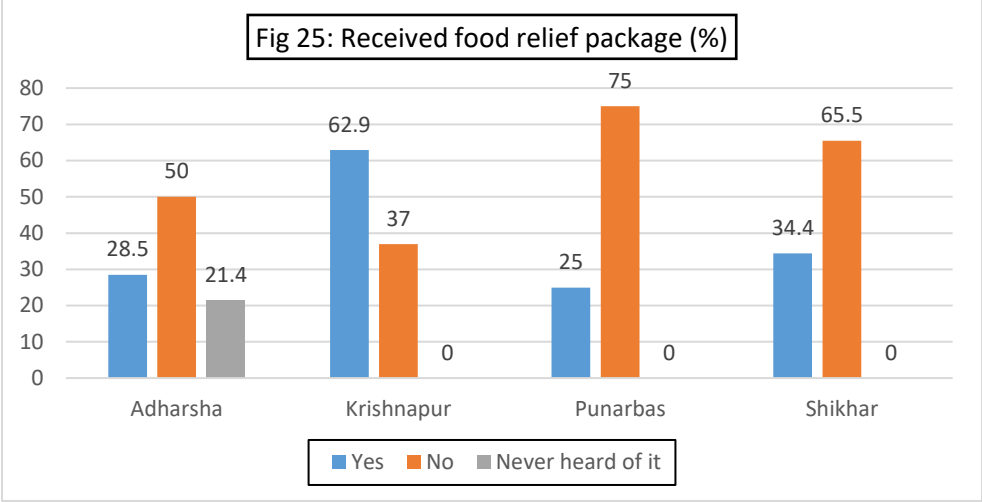
3.3.3 Social Impact



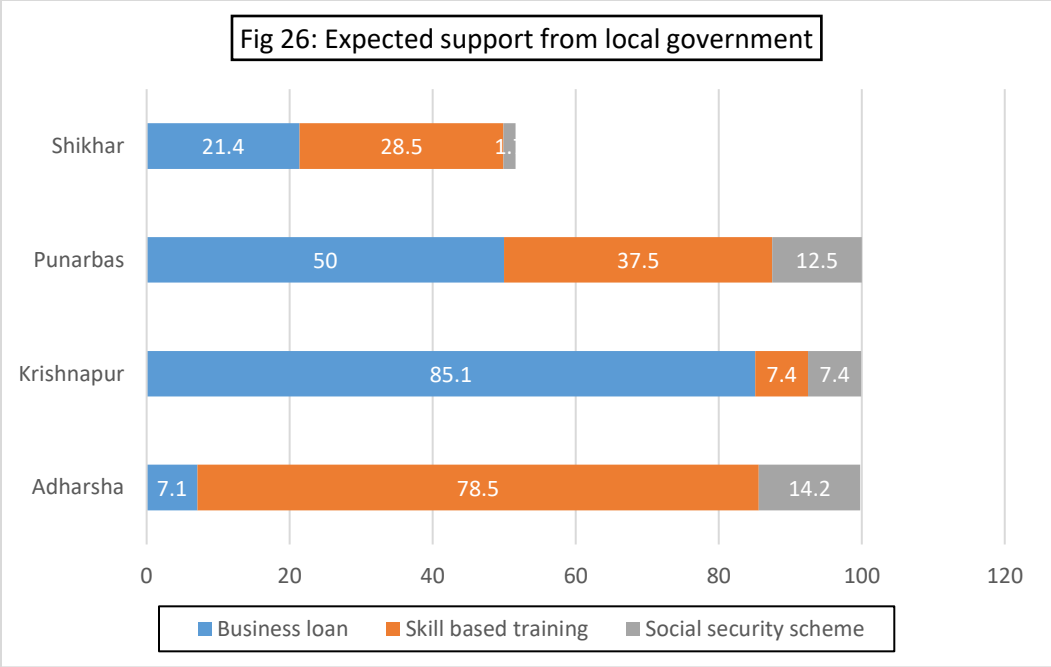
Among total respondents interviewed, 51.2% replied they were subjected neglected and discriminatory behavior at place of destination from community people and their employers during COVID-19 crisis, while 45.8% of respondents experienced similar treatment from community at source after returning back. Around 45.8% of respondents received positive behavior, support & empathy from their family, relatives and community people after returning back at source however only 37.6% respondents replied they received positive support and treatment at destination.



In terms of reintegration of migrant worker at source and resuming their social life, gathering with friends/relatives, attending social function and others. Adharsha Rural Municipality reported highest proportion of 75% respondents who were able to socially reintegrate followed by 44.8% of respondents from Shikhar Municipality. While Krishnapur Municipality reported the highest proportion of 66.6% of their respondents facing challenge for social reintegration.



Among 4 Municipalities, respondents from Krishnapur Municipality replied the highest proportion of 62.9% of their respondents receiving food relief package while more than 65% of respondent from Punarbas and Shikhar reported they have not received any kind of food support

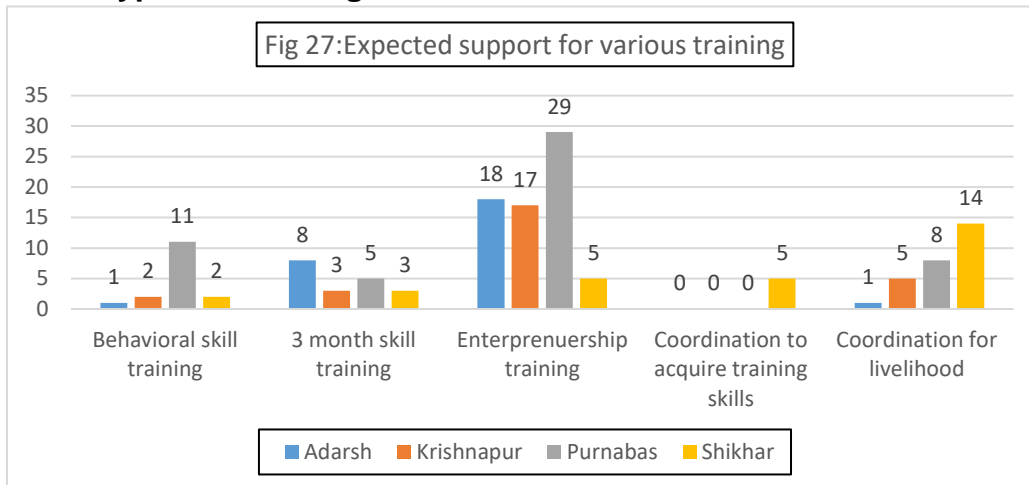


The above figure illustrates the response and support expected by the respondents from local government that would enable them for social and economic reintegration at source. The response of participants was different among the municipalities; however, business loan was preferred by maximum 85% of the respondents from Krishnapur while 78.5% of respondents from Adharsha put preference on support for skill based training from the government. Among respondents from Punarbas, 50% expected support for business loan while 37.5% preferred skill based training. There were very few respondents in all 4 municipalities who expects social security scheme for migrant workers from government, respondents from Adarsha Rural Municipality were highest among other who preferred it is an option for support from government.

3.4 Options for livelihood and income generation

This section will summarize various livelihood and income generation options from perspective of respondents, scope out opportunities available at local market including areas for skill based training

3.4.1: Types of Training



The respondents were interviewed regarding types of training they would prefer to attend for improving their livelihood opportunities. Among total respondents, nearly 50% (69) of them replied to attend training on entrepreneurship while 28 respondents expected to receive coordination support that would enable them to receive livelihood opportunities made available from government and non-government sectors. Similarly, 19 respondents replied they were interested to acquire 3 months' skill based training usually organized by vocational training institutions while training to enhance behavioral skill was preferred by 16 respondents. Majority of Respondents from 3 Municipalities except Shikhar expected to receive support for enterprenueship training while respondents from Shikhar Municipality preferred coordination support/linkage building for livelihood program.

Qualitative findings:

Amar Singh Dhami from Krishnapur Municipality worked as security guard in Jodhpur for more than 15 years and plans to stay in Nepal. He is exploring to start business in his hometown but is not confident how to proceed ahead. He quotes "I am thinking to invest my saving for small business but I have hesitation due to lack of knowledge of skill on how to plan it. It would be good options for me to gain skill on entrepreneurship and gain confident to drive my plan ahead"

Somraj Shahi from Punarbas Municipality who is working as a helper in factory in Gujrat shares "There is lack of sufficient number of electrician in our home town and there is

good opportunity for workers like me who can undertake skill based training in particular sector. One can also have possibility to opening own small electric shop”

Nabin Nepal a youth migrant worker of age 21 from Shikhar Municipality quotes “After getting engaged in waiter job for almost 3 years, I would to build skill on cooking but yet to find such training possibilities on local market. I was offered such training from a hotel but couldn’t afford the training fee”

Krishna Dhami from Adharsha Rural Municipality is aware of some income generation support programs being available by various NGOs and local government. He quotes “I am small land of my own and do something more than traditional farming. But with no able option for any kind support he thinks coordination for livelihood support and gaining skill for modern farming can be of great value of him and his family”

Dil Bahadur Dhami who worked as security guard in Mumbai shares “After returning back home from India, I started a small meat shop but it is not easy to run family with the amount of money I earned. I am interested to start a small poultry farming but still not confident if it works out well with the skills I possess currently”

To integrate migrants in the society its need to create job opportunities in the source communities and the linkage with the urban centers. Skills based training are important so that the migrants can be utilized their skills in the nearest market and can start their own business. Grant to start the enterprises or the soft loan are also key to support migrants. The migrants are also needed to put their fund in the business so that the work can be longer. Market linkages are needed to establish for the rural based activities. – Migration Specialist (KII)

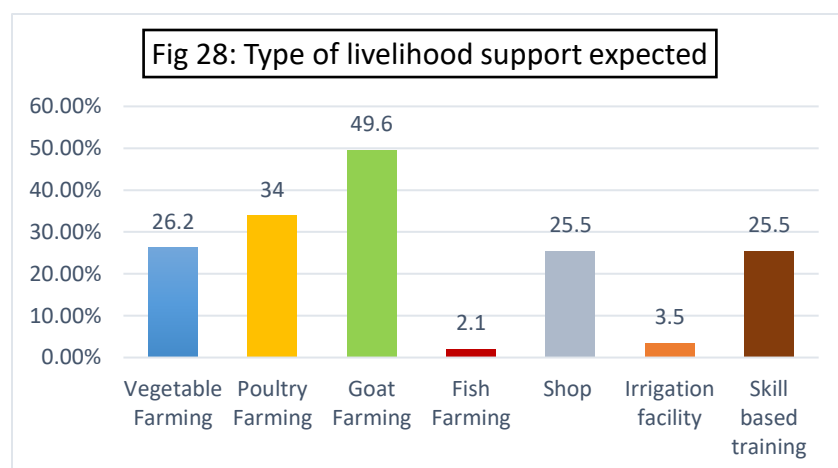
The need identification of all the migrants and families has been conducted and planned to provide the skill-based training, agricultural support, goat raising, poultry farming and other need-based activities. Due to the COVID 19, the training has been paused. The

same activities and budget have been provisioned for coming fiscal year. – Deputy Mayor, Punarbas Municipality (KII)

Providing training to count the heads, and participating in the training to get allowances are not working in the context of far western province. The needy people, who wants skill training cannot come to Dhangadhi with his/her expenses and cannot stay long period. The context has not been understood by the training providers. In the strategic location the provincial government need to establish the training center with the residential facility and need to provide the skill-based training that will support the province to stop people in the country with the jobs. Skill training are required but this should be real training to the real needy people. He shared an example of a person from Doti who wants to get training on house wiring cannot afford the expenses to stay in Dhangadhi or Mahendranagar. The provincial and local government need to work together to establish quality training centers in the strategic locations. He further added an experience of swinging training provided to the migrants' families and also provided the machines that worked. He added that the beautician training is not required in the hills. Limited number of trained persons can provide the services. – Section officer, Labor and Employment department, Far-Western Province

In the village there is no program to stay with activities. Skill based training are required but I see loan and other activities are difficult other than agriculture – Journalist from Dhangadhi & Kanchanpur (KII)

3.4.2: Types of livelihood option



The most preferred livelihood support expected was goat farming replied by 49.6% of the respondents. Poultry Farming and Vegetable Farming were the other two options expected by 34% and 26.2% of the respondents respectively if they are supported for livelihood. Similarly, 25.5% of respondents mentioned they prefer to open shop for income generation. Fish Farming was the lowest preferred option that respondents expected for livelihood support which was replied 2.1% of respondents.

Qualitative findings:

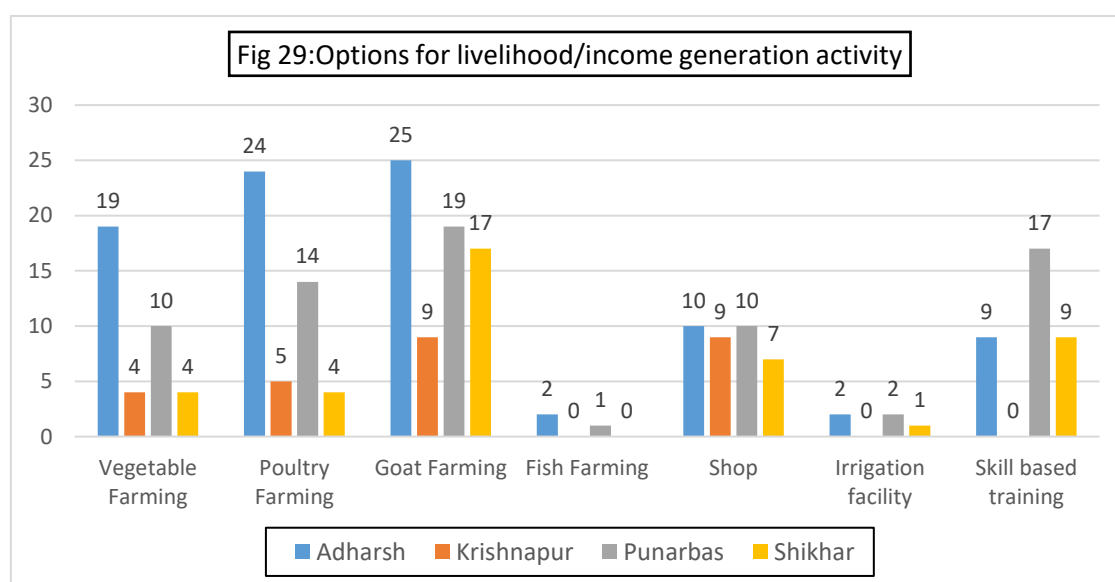
Bal Bahadur Dhadwani from Shikhar Municipality shares “I have heard much of people becoming successful entrepreneur through goat farming. It delights me that they are doing such farming in small area with good level of knowledge and skill. As goat costs high and there is great possibility in our local market”

Rishab Khadka from Punarbas Municipality who worked as helper in clothing store in Bangalore shares “There is good market for clothing store in the near market, I have friend who has started his own small shop and has contact with various retailer and distributor in Kathmandu and cross border in India. For me, it is the best option to start with small clothing shop”

Shidaraj Paneru from Adharsha Rural Municipality shares “My family has been engaged in poultry and goat farming from long time but it was done in small scale mostly for

household consumption. But due to lack of caretaker we stopped it. For me with prior skill and knowledge related to domestic farming, with additional coaching on new techniques and support poultry farming can be source of income generation for future”

Hari Dhami aged 40 years from Krishnapur Municipality shares “I worked as cook in several restaurants in India. Initially I started working as a helper but slowly I got engaged in kitchen work and learnt cooking. Now, I am running a small tea and khaja shop but with my capabilities I am confident that I can run a restaurant of my own if any kind of support”



The three most preferred livelihood options by respondents from Adharsha Municipality were goat farming (25), poultry (24) and vegetable farming (19). While similar response was made by participants from Punarbas who selected goat farming (19), skill based training (17) and Poultry Farming (14) the most among the livelihood options. Total 17 respondents from Shikhar Municipality also selected goat farming while they were less interested in vegetable and poultry farming rather replied to attend skill based training. In case of Krishnapur, respondents were less interested to receive any support for income generation activity and among those who replied 9 respondents preferred opening shop or goat farming.

We have discussed with the migrants if they want to stay in the village, but we need to work to create jobs for them. A single municipality cannot generate jobs in the hills. There are opportunities of skill training, buffalo raising, goat raising and Shikhar municipality lower belt is suitable for the fruits like Litchi and mango. It would be great support to the migrants and their families, if we could provide grant or the soft loan for the economic activities. The support that comes from the provincial government has not been utilized for the migrants but the grant up to 5 million are getting by the political party nearest people. The mayor raised these issues in the meeting but not heard by the authorities. – Mayor- Shikhar Municipality (KII)Local Market availability of various items

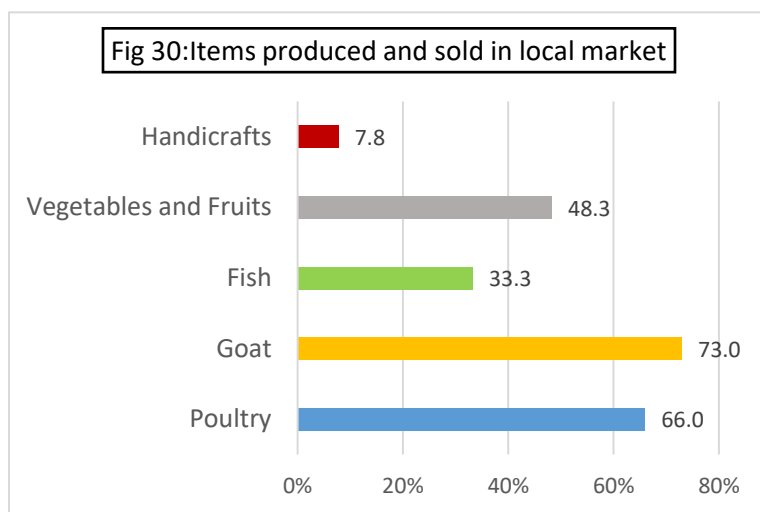
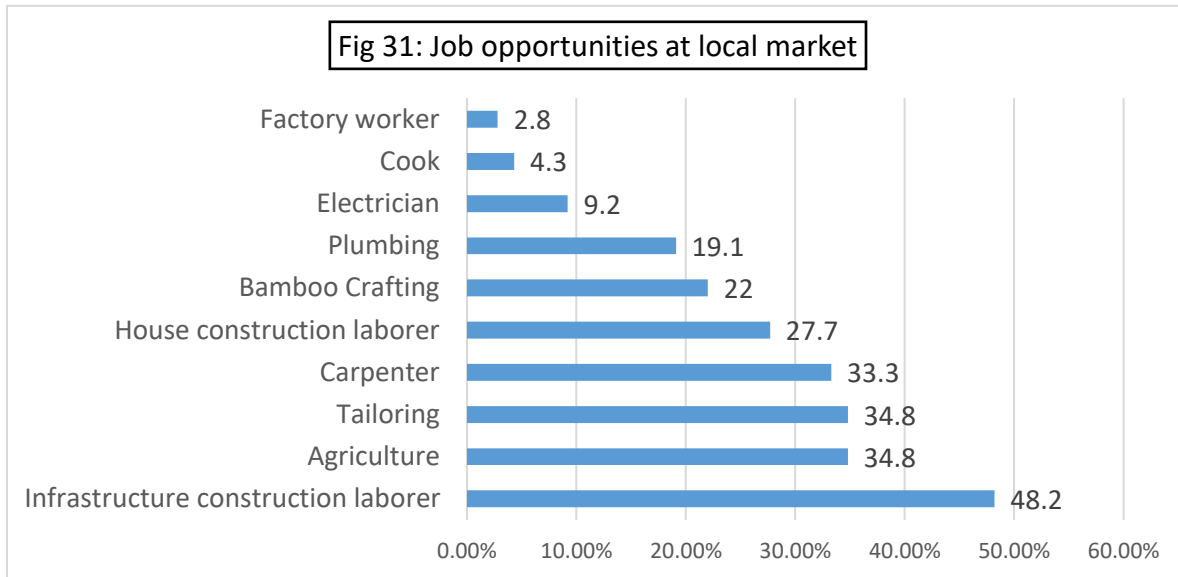
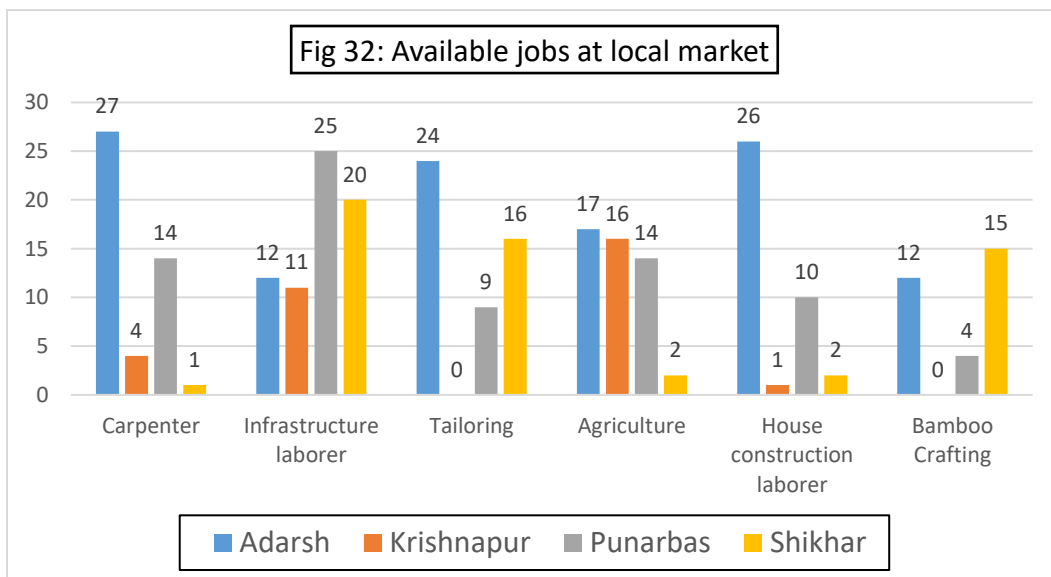


Fig 30 shows that goat and poultry were two major items produced and sold in local market replied by 73% and 66% of the respondents respectively. While 48.3% respondents mentioned vegetable and fruits and 33.3% replied fish as major items feasible for selling at local market.

3.4.3 Type livelihood option available at local market



The figure above shows that 48.2% of the respondents replied laborer job at infrastructure construction site was the most available job opportunity at the local market. Similarly, 34.8% of respondents also mentioned tailoring and work in agriculture sector were also other two major job options one can find in the local market. The availability of job opportunities like plumbing and electrician which require vocational skills were mentioned by 19.1 of the respondents and 9.2% respondents respectively. In absence of large and small factories in the survey sites, working in factory was the least available opportunity in the local market.



3.5 Modality and Approach for Advocacy and legal justice

3.5.1 Activities for Social Integration

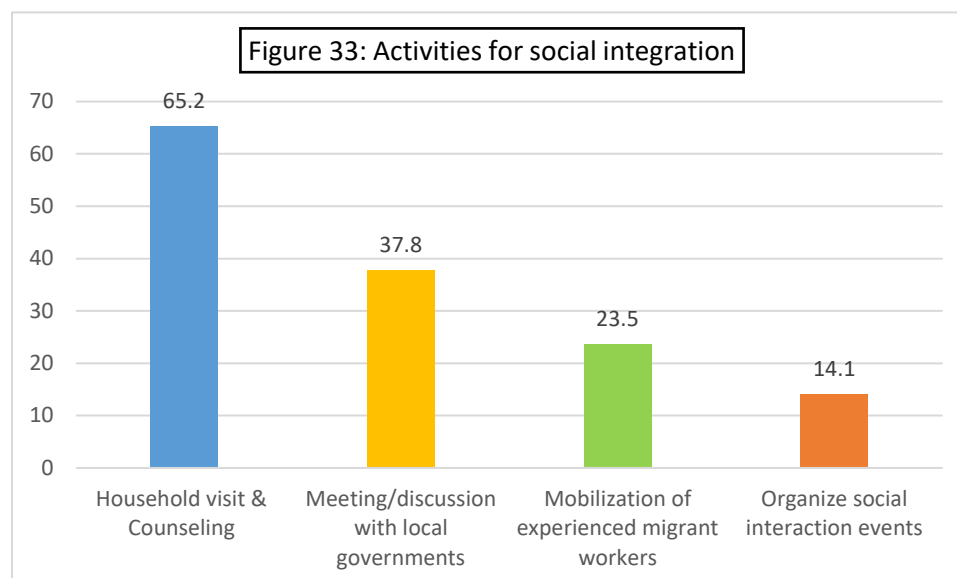


Figure 33 shows that majority (65.2%) of the respondents replied household visit and counseling to migrant workers after they return back to source will be beneficial for social integration. Similarly, organizing interaction meeting with local government on issues of migrant workers and creating supportive environment for integration can be other major activity as mentioned by 37.8% of the respondents. While 23.5% of respondents also agreed that mobilization of experience migrant worker to counsel and support on integration can be effective at community level. Activities and events that can promote social interaction between migrants and their communities was also preferred by 14.1% of respondents that can support social integration.

Qualitative findings:

Bishnu Bhul from Shikhar Municipality shares "When I worked in India, there was limited free time available to get connect with friends and near ones. So, I felt very relief when I use to return back home that provided me time to engage in social life. For me the important way to support migrant workers is to visit and counsel them at home when they are at home during the vacation. This could support in how to manage stress and improve social well-being while they are at destination"

Basanta Shilal from Adharsha Rural Municipality quotes “From my perspective, Nepali workers are in stress and anxiety when they are destination due to excessive workload, mistreatment from employers, poor social life and others. Migrant worker finds it difficult to reintegrate within the family and as well as in the society. There needs to be specific interaction program and social gathering events that could make it easy for the workers”

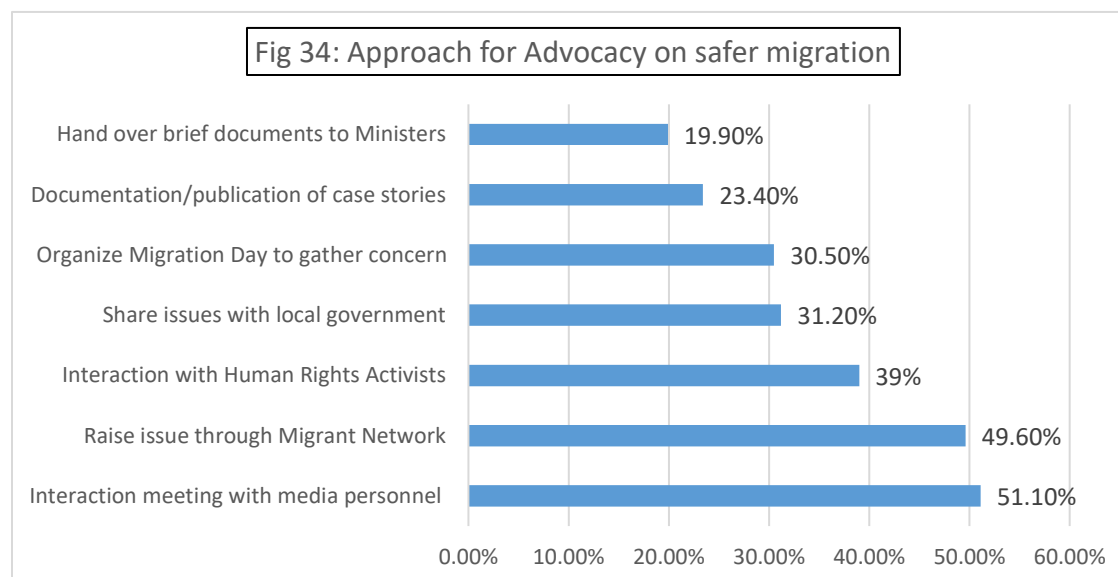
Min Bahadur shahi from Punarbas Municipality shares “The lack of integration programs that benefit social and economic well-being of Nepali migrant workers is limited to small proportion of target group. There should be better initiative and programs from local government in this aspect which often neglected”

Ganesh Dhami from krishnapur Municipality quotes “I use to participate in various events organized by migrant network while working in Mumbai. During such programs, we were able to meet new friends, share our experience, celebrate festivals and others. It was quite engaging and supportive staying far away from family and friends. Similar level of intervention can be practiced here too through groups of experienced migrants or migrant networks”

The status of migrants going to India is poor. They, now, don't want to go to India if we can stop them by providing job opportunities. Mayor Mr. Joshi shared that they have shared the jobs that was available in the municipality. There was job for 20 people and the 50 migrants who were returned to the village shared the same work.

- Mayor, Shikhar Municipality, Doti

3.5.2. Approach for Advocacy at source and transit



The survey interviewed respondents on possible approaches that can support migrant workers for advocacy on safer migration issues. The most preferable approach replied by 51.1% of respondents was to organize interaction meeting with media personnel and share issues through media platform. The second most desirable approach mentioned by 49.6% of the respondents was to raise safer migration issues through Migrant Network operating at local and National level. Similarly, 39% preferred issues related to migration can be advocated through support and interaction with human right activists. Around 31.2% of respondents replied role of local government to be vital in ensuring rights of migrant networks and purposed sharing issues with local government can be options for advocacy. The respondents also mentioned approaches like documentation/publication of case stories (23.4%), organizing migration day to gather concern (30.5%) and hand over of documents and advocacy to Ministers (19.9%) can be also practiced for advocacy.

Advocacy modality to raise issue/challenges of Transit

Nepal need to sign the special agreement with the Indian government as practiced for migrants going for Gulf Countries so that Nepalese labor migrants can have support in India. There is no provision to support to find the missing migrants. The neighbors and relatives are the only support in India. The Embassy in India do not know how many of Nepalese are in India, in which state they are working. It is too difficult to hear the voice

of migrants from both Nepalese and Indian government in the case of labor migrants to India. Nepal government need to sign the labor agreement with India as they are doing with Gulf and other country. The process needs to regulate with the law. The government need to work through the embassy with their support mechanism.

Journalist from Kanchanpur and Dhangadhi

To support the migrants, the three layers' government need to come together he said. The mayor also requested to work together but the provincial government is not clear in these issues. They are confused. The provincial government to make the migration process safer in the transit and the destinations, but we are still waiting the response. Mayor Mr. Joshi asked to formulate the policy and regulations to ensure the support for the migrants at the borders where migrants are facing trouble. A municipality cannot change the situation he further said. At the destination, we cannot support but the provincial and federal government can support if they want. We need to come together but it is not happening.

- Mayor Shikhar Municipality, Doti

The local government has failed to realize the issues of migrants and there is no provision of budget made for the migrants. To regulate the India going migrants, an agreement with the India government is the must. Salary or the wage rate should be confirmed for both formal sector or non-formal sector workers by the government. Dignified working conditions, health facilities, leaves and many more conditions need to finalize by the regulations. Rescue mechanism, emergency support and the expansion of the Embassy in India is required in the major state where Nepalese are working.

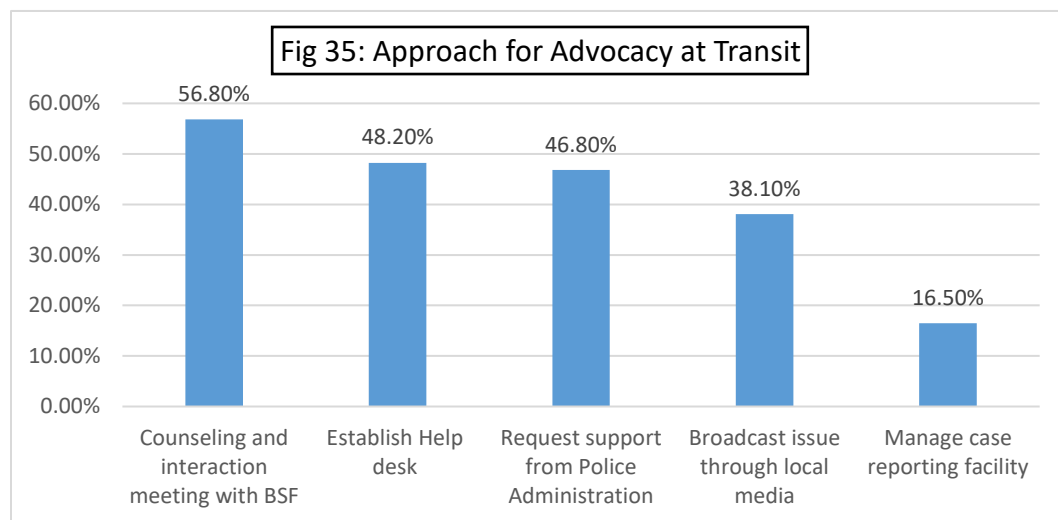
- Migration Specialist

The discussion has been started to keep the record of migrants and their families going to India. The municipality is getting support of NEEDS Nepal to work on this area. The elected body is ready to work on this. They are also discussing to support the families to find out the status of missing migrants in India.

- Deputy Mayor, Punarbas Municipality

To formulate the policy and regulations to manage the migrants going to India, the federal government need to formulate policy guideline and all the provinces as well as local government need to work together. Missing migrants in the destination cities, to increase the access in information as well as in services and, to get the grievances of the migrants are important that need to be addressed by the law.

- Section Officer, Labor and Employment, Far Western Province



Regarding appropriate model for advocacy that can be undertaken at transit, 56.8% of the respondents preferred counselling and interaction meeting with Border Security Force can prove significant in resolving issues faced by migrant workers at border. Similarly, establishing help desk was second most desirable approach replied by 48.2% of the respondent that will support migrants in raising their issues/concerns. Similarly, migrants replied they usually fail to receive legal support and rescue support while encountering with various incidents during their stay at transit so requesting support from police administration can work well for migrants in raising and resolving issues/challenges faced at transit. Nearly 16.5% of respondents replied facility for case reporting at borders can establish a good mechanism for migrant workers to document and register their issues/complains for taking legal action and support.

Qualitative findings:

Shailesh Dhimi from Adharshi Rural Municipality shares “The issue and challenges faced by migrants can be well described by those who has faced it. In this perspective, either migrant or migrant network should play role in advocating issues related to safer migration”

Pratap Nepali from Shikhar Municipality quotes “Migrant related issues are broadcasted and published time to time in newspaper and radio station. Working with media in raising migrant issues, organizing interaction with media personnel, exposure visits can be effective approach to work issues of safer migration”

Surendra Shahi from Punarbas Municipality shares “After federalism, it’s responsibility of local government to develop programs and interventions to promote well-being of migrant workers, various events and meetings should be organized with local government to raise concern and issues of migrant workers”

Hari khadka from Krishnapur Municipality shares “Organizations working for welfare of migrant workers should organize events inviting ministers and human right activities. Migrants should participate in such gathering and share their stories that would support in taking relevant action in addressing the various issues/challenges”

Tularam Bista from Adharsha Rural Municipality shares” Migrant networks need to be established in each local government and such network should receive advocacy related training and support so that they can raise issues of migrants”

Tara Bahadur Nepali quotes “There is no existence of relevant centre or point of authority from government where issues of migrants can be reported and recorded. There should be provision in place for case recording and reporting through which evidence can be collected for advocacy or presented in various forum”

Surya Budda from Punarbas Municipality quotes “We should collect stories from families of migrant workers who lost their life while working India or in course of migration. These stories should be submitted to Media so that they can be shared to wider audience to gather the attention and compel government to take necessary steps”

The transits of both Kanchanpur and the Dhangadhi has under the jurisdiction of federal government. We all are aware about the issues that Nepalese migrants facing every day at the borders such as harassment, unnecessary torcher, unnecessary checking, asking for money and many more. To regulate this issue, the federal government need to make guidelines for all the borders and implement in close coordination with the provincial and local governments. The provincial government has conducted a survey about the record keeping of the migrants going to India. The survey has provided the ideas to move ahead. It is required to start to keep record of Nepalese migrant workers going to India so that government can further support if required.

– Section Officer, Law and Employment Department, Far-Western Province.

Anti-human Trafficking

In both transit in Kailali and Kanchanpur, there are agencies working targeting to stop human trafficking. The staff members of the non-government staff working to stop the suspected trafficking incidents. The project has not kept the anti-trafficking wing at the transits however the project is contributing to stop the human trafficking through its information desk, staff mobilized at the transits. The project also contributed to hold the meeting with local hoteliers, journalists, transport association and raised the issues of safe migration and the human trafficking. It is important to establish the human trafficking wing from the local government or from the provincial government. The provincial government official responded there is lack of transit-based intervention policies. The transits are under the jurisdiction of federal government and they said the communication has been started for this.

The mayor of local government realized that they need to work further to stop the human trafficking and committed to collaborate with the border-based government mechanism. The trafficking issues have been raised by the local as well as National media and the

awareness at local level is required so that trafficking can be stopped at people's level. Trafficking under the umbrella of migration is complex and a cell of expert needed to mobilize at borders through the government. The project can document and share the status to enforce to setup a mechanism at transits.

3.6 Key findings

The below findings have been listed from the analysis that will provide snapshot idea about the findings.

- Most of the respondents were from the returnee migrants and 91% were the male respondents.
- Most of the respondents' educational status was primary level and secondary or higher secondary level was 29%
- Respondent migrants spent more than 10 years of their life span in India.
- Respondents could not find the job opportunities in the source communities/home town and decided to go to find economic opportunities in India. Some migrants decided to go to India to pay the debt.
- Cook, helper, security guard, labor on small scale factories and daily wage labor were the main opportunities in India.
- The income per month found minimum. Almost half of the respondents earned 5000-10000 per month.
- Respondents found prepared to go to India. Getting information, management of travel cost etc. Most of the respondents from Adharsha Rural municipality prepared for the departure.
- Predeparture preparation shared by migrants were management of fund, connection with the friends working in India, ensure job before departure and received counseling.
- Major issues identified during travel in transit was food and accommodation. Exchanging currency, money and belongings stolen, misbehavior and mistreatment by security forces while crossing the border, legal support and immediate response and support are the key issues
- Excessive hardship, long working hours, no holidays, forced to work during leave, poor working condition, safety and security were the key issues in the workplace. Mistreatment and punishment by employer, disparity in wages, harassment and affected the dignity of workers were also the issues found.
- Sending money to home is still an issue and the Adhar Card is the only way to open bank account which Nepalese migrants cannot get easily. Sending money through relatives or friends, IME found popular to send money.
- Respondent said that they returned home During COVID 19 lockdown.
- Half of the respondents were temporarily job less due to the COVID impact; closure of manufacturing and service sectors.

- Respondents utilized their savings to cover the expenses during lockdown in India and In Nepal. Almost half of the respondents took debt from family and friends to survive.
- Almost half of the respondent faced neglected and discriminatory behavior at the workplace during COVID 19 crises. The similar behavior was done by the neighbors in the source communities when they returned home.
- Respondents of Krishnapur received the relief packages but the respondents from Punarbas and Sikhar did not receive it.
- Most of the respondents expected business loan to start economic activities and the skill transfer training was also preferred.
- Respondents preferred livelihood support such as goat farming, poultry farming and vegetable farming. Retail shop and fish farming were also the options explored by the respondents.
- Agricultural products such as goats, poultry products, vegetables can be sold in the local market.
- Construction labor, tailoring, working in agriculture business are seems major areas and the plumbing and electrician are also the interest of respondents.
- A separate anti trafficking cell is required at transits to stop the trafficking and the project can support to generate evidence of trafficking as well as the mode of trafficking in two borders in Kailali and Kanchanpur.
- Utilizing media, mobilizing migrants' networks, interactions with the stakeholders, interaction with the human rights activists, documentation and sharing, collection and sharing the stories were found the approaches for the advocacy. Meeting with border securities, staff members, establish the help desk at transit are also the identified approaches.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Evidence-based study on problems and challenge of migrant workers in India and Socio-economics effects of COVID 19 in their families have been conducted using different tools, observations, field visits, consultations in selected program districts and the local governments.

The data collected, observations, key informant interviews, consultations have been analyzed, presented in graphs, tables and analysis to satisfy the objective of the research.

The research focused to Identify the specific problems and challenges of migrant workers returned from the destination cities of India. The research has identified the problems faced by the migrants at source, transit and destination cities. Work place-based problems, local level support, access of justice status have been identified. The impact of COVID-19, lose of jobs, issues faced at destination and sources during the pandemic have also been identified and discussed in the research. Migrants who lost their jobs during pandemic and their struggle to reintegrate in the communities at sources have also been discussed.

The research has identified the situation of socio-economic status, the reasons why the migrants move to the destination cities in India, pre departure preparation to move to India, their working environment at destination cities and work place, their income levels, how they are sending their earning to the families are discussed in the study. The research also discussed to possible economic activities to engage migrants at source communities, different trainings, loan and grant support, role of local governments, provincial governments have also been discussed.

The migrants also shared what types of economic activities such as agro-based, training, trading and other locally possible ideas are discussed that might be useful for further planning and designing the programs. The local leaders also shared their concern that they want to stop the migration by creating opportunities in their localities. The research has explored the areas of economic opportunities, trainings, vocational activities for the migrants who are aiming settle in the source communities.

The issues faced by migrants in source, transit and destination cities and the advocacy model to minimize the issues that are being faced by the migrants. The record keeping at transit can help to manage the migration process as well as to minimize the human trafficking under the labor migration move.

The issues identified, lobbying and advocacy at different levels to support migrants, to ensure their rights at source, transit and destination can help to develop the program activities, expansion of program in geographic area, engagement with local, provincial and federal governments are the key areas identified by the research. The COVID 19 pandemic and its impact has also been explored to think, plan and prepare for the future. The current pandemic seems to continue its impact for couple years from which the migrants will struggle to earn for their livelihood.

Chapter 5: Recommendations/Next steps

- Establish a reporting system at border to track the movements of migrants at border point of India
- Develop vocational and skill training package in joint collaboration with local and provincial government and initiate skill building activities in partnership with government
- Support returnee migrants to build entrepreneurship skills and support investments by aligning with government and non-government livelihood schemes and programmes
- Develop holding centre and safe place at transit to support migrants for emergency rescue and support
- Strengthen rural economies to provide rural areas with alternatives to migration
- Foster enabling environment and process at local and province level for issuing vital documents for migrants
- Organize local and provincial review and interaction meetings periodically to understand the gaps and challenges of safer migration and develop action programmes
- Cross border study both at source and destination among Nepalese working migrants
- Establish and mobilize migrant network groups/organization at Municipality level to work on rights and issues of migrant workers
- Establish a anti human trafficking cell at transit in close collaboration with local, provincial and federal government.
- Organize meeting between cross border officials and work in collaboration to address the issues faced by migrants in transit

References

1. Department of Foreign Employment: Labour Migration for Employment- A Status Report for Nepal: 2013/2014. Kathmandu: Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of Nepal;2015. <https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/MigrationReportbyGovernmentofNepal.pdf>.
2. Sharma V, Saraswati LR, Rob U, Puri M, Sarna A. Life across the border: Migrants in South Asia. New Delhi: Population Council; 2015.
3. Adhikary P, Aryal N, Dhungana RR, Kc RK, Regmi PR, Wickramage KP, et al. Accessing health services in India: experiences of seasonal migrants returning to Nepal. BMC Health Services Research. 2020;20(1):992.
4. Pyakurel U. Restrictive Labour Migration Policy on Nepalese Women and Consequences. Sociology and Anthropology. 2018;6:650-6.
5. Central Bureau of Statistics: Report on the Nepal Labour Force Survey: 2017/18: National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal;2019.Kathmandu: [NLFS-III_Final-Report.pdf \(cbs.gov.np\)](#)
6. Central Bureau of Statistics: Nepal Living Standard Survey: 2010/11: National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal;2011.Kathmandu: [NLLS- Final-Report.pdf \(cbs.gov.np\)](#)
7. Department of Foreign Employment: Nepal Labour Migration Report:2020, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security;2020, [Migration-Report-2020-English.pdf \(moless.gov.np\)](#)
8. Bashyal K. A Survey on Nepali Migrants in India: An Empirical Study. The Geographic Base. 2020;7:54-64.
9. International Labour Migration; Impact of COVID-19 on Nepali Migrant Workers: Protecting Nepali migrant workers during health and economic crisis;2020. Kathmandu: [wcms_748917.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)
10. International Labour Migration; Status of Nepali Migrant Workers in Relation to COVID-19;2020.Kathmandu: [Status of Nepali Migrant Workers in Relation to Covid-19 | IOM Publications Platform](#)