



Rise of Foreign Employment and Challenges Faced by Nepali Youth in the Domestic Job Market

Nisha Rai¹, Nishan Khadka², Mitma Rai³, Prabin Shrestha⁴, Meena Lekhak⁵,
Menuka Shrestha⁶, Dipak Mahat^{7*}

^{1,2,3,4,5,6}Shanker Dev Campus

⁷Apex Professional University

Corresponding Author: Dipak Mahat dipakmahatdm2047@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Employment, Foreign, Migration, Nepal, Problems, Youth

Received : 29, May

Revised : 25, June

Accepted: 28, July

©2024 Rai, Khadka, Rai, Shrestha, Lekhak, Shrestha, Mahat: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

Noticeable increasing trend of Nepali youth migrating for employment opportunities divert researcher to investigate the increasing prevalence of Nepalese youth seeking employment abroad and the obstacles they face in pursuing careers within Nepal. The research utilized qualitative research methods, gathering data through interviews and analyzing it using thematic analysis techniques. The research in Kathmandu valley found that Nepalese youth are drawn to foreign employment due to factors like economic inequality, political instability, social pressures, and desire for better living conditions, family obligations, and aspirations for personal and professional advancement. However, they face challenges such as limited job opportunities, favoritism, and issues in the education system, lack of financial rewards for education, and instability in private sector jobs. These findings emphasize the need for effective strategies to create more job opportunities in Nepal, address systemic issues, and empower youth for long-term development in the country.

INTRODUCTION

In modern era, securing employment has been the crucial thing for the youth to be independent and for societal contribution (Hollywood, Egdell, & McQuaid, 2012). Latin America faces challenging job markets, especially for youths. Between 1990 and 2003, Latin America faced economic challenge with limited job creation and increased unemployment rates, affecting youths (Weller, 2007). In this generation, top jobs are limited, and lower ones aren't great. Modern technology and people working longer make it hard for young's to get into popular jobs. Young people want interesting, creative jobs with flexible hours (Millward, Houston, Brown, & Barrett, 2006). Sometimes, they struggle to find jobs that match their skills, so they think about working in abroad due to problems like corruption and not enough good jobs in their home country (Matzhanova, 2021). In the absence of strong and sustainable economic foundations, it is usually the youth who suffer first. Countries that struggle to find appropriate domestic work for their youth frequently have higher unemployment rates. Between 1998 and 2008, the youth rate of employment decreased significantly throughout Asia and around the world (Tigno, 2012). Despite making up a quarter of the working-age population, the regional youth unemployment rate was 13.8% in 2019 and the global youth unemployment rate of 13.6%, according to Asian Development Bank and International Labour Organization (ILO) data.

In perspective of Nepalese young generations, the trend of abroad work migration has been seen basically for two reasons, one is fulfilling basic needs and the other is to increase the quality of living standard (Government of Nepal, 2022). Nepal has been placed at 145 in the world youth development indicator. In context of Nepal, the age groups of 16-40 years are considered as youth age (Government of Nepal, 2014). Semi employment, absence of youth friendly environment for entrepreneurship and investment, weak market opportunities, theory based education, low paying jobs seems to be the major factors influencing increment of foreign employment (Adhikari, 2019). Nepal being an underdeveloped country located in between two vast developing countries of Asia i.e. China and India. They are the fast developing countries in the world in terms of economy and technology while Nepal still faces major challenges due to poor infrastructures and geography. In the context of Nepal, youths are moving forward to foreign land for better employment opportunities and for their better future, because the country itself is unable to match the needs of the population (Shrestha & Rana, 2023). Nepal has become the country to provide manpower worldwide in exchange for employment to secure better future for coming generation which has caused many to lean towards foreign source rather than staying in owns country (Pankaj Das, 2020).

Objectives

To explore the cause of increasing foreign employment

To identify problem faced by youth while seeking career in Nepalese market

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many researchers have conducted studies to look at the factors influencing youth's desire to move. The literature currently in publication indicates a variety of factors that influence young people's preferences to move abroad. With the use of migration theories at the macro, meso, and micro levels, (Gyeke, 2015) through qualitative study examined Ghanaian final-year university students' aspirations to migrate abroad. 34 participants in all (16 men and 18 women) were carefully chosen for four focus groups that were digitally recorded as part of the study. The goal of the data analysis was to find new themes that complemented the goals of the study. The participants were graduate and undergraduate students in their last year, ranging in age from 22 to 34. The findings showed that participants had a significant desire to leave Ghana in search of better prospects overseas. Remarkably, when individuals discussed their intents to migrate, considerations including improved living standards, job opportunities, and the possibility of continuing their education were frequently mentioned. The results also highlighted the fact that a comparative analysis of the opportunities and restricts in Ghana compared to other countries had an impact in the choice to relocate. The study highlights how important it is that study and initiatives include the goals, passions, and viewpoints of young people who want to move abroad.

Matzhanova (2021) studied about "The Stratification of Youth Employment and Departure Abroad with the Purpose of Work" with the goal to study and analyse the migration trends in Kazakhstan and neighbouring countries, influence of youth unemployment and the inclement of youth people to migrate abroad for work. The research used a multi-stage methodology. The first stage involved selecting countries, to collect data based on high migration flows for analysis. At second stage, integrated index of migration predisposition (IMP) was developed, the calculation involved using various index such as Gini Index (indicating economic/property inequality), Education Index, Digital Literacy Index, Gender Inequality Index, Migration Index (measuring "net migration" coefficient), Sustainable Development Goals Index, and state labour market share. The fourth stage involved using paired linear regression for regression analysis to identify the interconnection of the Youth Unemployment Rate and Convenience Index with IMP, while model specification employed graphical constructions and paired linear regression with one dependent factor, selecting factors based on their significant impact and avoiding cross-correlation. The findings from the study was that young people of Kazakhstan focus personal growth, that results in a migration towards big and developed countries. Despite low youth unemployment in Kazakhstan, the reason to migrate is mainly shaped by better career prospects abroad, highlighting considerations for handling socio-political and economic aspects.

Adhikari (2019) Explores on the topic of Transnational Work Migration of Nepali Youths: The Changing Phenomena and the Context of Achieving Education. This paper examines to see why young people from Nepal work in other countries, considering factors like poverty and limited opportunities. It also highlights the increasing importance of the money they send back home. The

study uses secondary information to examine work migration among Nepali working-age individuals, specifically in the Gulf Countries and East-Asian countries. Applying a sociological perspective, it connects the push-pull model and network theory to analyze factors influencing work mobility, emphasizing the role of migration networks in the decision-making process for Nepali job seekers seeking opportunities abroad. The study finds that many young people from Nepal go to work in the Middle East and Southeast Asia because of poverty, limited opportunities at home, and the promise of a better life abroad. The increasing trend of youth migration is influenced by networks connecting those who have already migrated. Despite government efforts, challenges persist due to unfair practices by recruitment agencies. The study also highlights a high number of young people leaving each day, raising concerns about its impact on Nepal's development and education. The issues of losing both physical and intellectual resources are significant challenges for the country.

Gurung (2020) studied about the cause of migration of Nepalese. According to this study youths of Nepal are compelled to apply for foreign employment. Inefficient education, lack of social security, salary dissatisfaction, expensive health services, lack of employment opportunities and job insecurity are major factors influencing youths to hop into the trend of foreign employment. Since immigrating to gulf countries has made an impression on the improvement of living standards among gulf working families, it has provoked youngsters to discontinue their studies to earn and provide for the family. Foreign employment is cited as the most suitable remedy forever increasing unemployment problem prevailing in the countries like Nepal in today's context. The solution to the growing unemployment issues in countries like Nepal is often attributed to seeking employment opportunities abroad. The developing countries that have become host to foreign workers, the rising recognition has the right to the migrant workers and their families that need to be protected. In the last thirty years, policies in the youth migration/ labour migration have developed. The Nepalese business market presents the set of challenges for the employment opportunity for the youth. The youth of the countries like Nepal cannot get the opportunities for employment according to their qualifications, skills, and knowledge. Many of the youths are migrating to foreign land for their better future (Basnet, 2014).

Research Gap

Above reviewed literature provide the information and knowledge about youth migration in other country and states. But none of the above takes account about the problem faced by youths and causes of their foreign employment of Kathmandu valley. Therefore, this study is done in Kathmandu valley focusing Putalisadak area. The reason to choose these areas was the majority number of colleges and consultancy exist there. Everyday lots of youth visit this area in search of best opportunity to get employed abroad.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted with qualitative research approach via inductive approach with phenomenology research design to identify the result of the objectives. An interview was conducted to collect the primary data from

respondents. Researcher conduct 32 interviews however, study consists only 16 interviews this is the result behind saturation of data. Some other data were collected from secondary data and those data were analysed. Recorder was used to record the raw data. Respondents for this study are the people who are seeking to go abroad and facing employment obstacles in Nepal. This study used thematic analysis methods to analyse data in order to explore and analyse the cause of foreign employment and problems faced by youths. Prior to data collections, respondents were provided with the detailed purpose and procedures. Respondents are asked with the consent and agreement to maintain privacy if required. The gathered data were further transferred to a computer system for analysis. After that a group gather to interpret the information which improved our analysis and lead to more findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All interviewees are in the process and fully intend to go abroad for work and educational purposes. They come from different backgrounds in terms of their level of completion of their studies. Some have finished their +2, some have finished their bachelor's, and some have completed their master's degrees. Every interviewee has the common objective of going abroad and pursues their desired career. Interview questions were designed to find out the causes and problems of youth migration which are explained below in the form of respondents' viewpoints.

Causes of Foreign Employment

There were altogether five questions set to find out the cause of migration. The causes that are abstracted from the interview are:

Low Income

The main cause of foreign employment has seen the amount of income differences in Nepal and foreign countries. The monetary value of overseas is relatively more than of Nepal and the income is enough for both expenses and saving for future. But in Nepal the earned money is not enough to secure better future. All of the respondents have raised the issue of low income level from the jobs of Nepalese market as one of the prime cause for the youth migration or brain drain. One of the respondents Sangam Pantha of aged 26 has said that **“The minimum wage fixed by the governmental NPR 17,300/ is not that enough to run of daily livelihood properly”**. Another respondent claims, **“My friends working abroad are making more in 1 month than I can make in 5 months. Why should I work more here and also earn so less?”**

Political instability

Nepal has gone through lots of political changes for a long time which has caused economic difficulties as the rulers are concentrated more in power than in development of nation. Here, Government seems to be replaced every 2 or 3 years without the completion of their required tenure. This has caused

market unable to produce opportunity for the citizens and they are obligated to go abroad.

Interview found out that majority of the respondents are frustrated by the current political situation of the country. One of the respondents, Nabin Khadka of age 23 raised his voice **“The corruption rate of the country is high which automatically deprived the youth’s hope”**. There seems to be negligence by the government regarding the issues related to youths. So, they are looking to go abroad. Another added, **“There is dispute in the balance of power so everyone is hoping that it would come to a certain group so that there will be his portion of benefits. This has created economic crisis in the country. The power of government is being misused for a long time.”**

Influence from Others

To be influenced and motivated from other personalities are quite common in human nature. People from underdeveloped countries are often encouraged to seek job overseas when they see someone like them getting better job, higher wages or improved living condition. Social network and family persuasion are the major causes of influence in any individual to work abroad. Many respondents are agreed to the point that majority of the youths planning to go abroad are somehow got influenced by their friends neighbor who are in abroad countries. One of the respondent Krishna Bhandari of age 26 said that **“Looking at the current situation in Nepal that migrating to abroad has become a trend and fashion which is shifted from one person to another.”** and most of the other respondents have also same view point. Another respondent added, **“At first it seemed quite difficult to take this decision but now every one of them are working safely and are sending much more, I believe I can do it too.”**

Quality of Life and Dreamed Lifestyle

Nepalese family are more dependent on 1 or 2 source of income as living independently alone is not in the culture. The monthly wages of single person are unable to support a family and give all of them quality of life. When an individual begins to earn money, they have urge to increase their living standard but Nepal’s economic condition makes it harder as living expenses are higher with everything imported from outside. Interviewer expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of life in Nepal, including concerns about access to basic need, healthcare, and overall standards of living. Many said that a desire for a better lifestyle is difficult to have attained in the home country so which they want to leave the country. A 24 years old said, **“I have stayed here long enough, I have experienced and seen many obstacles, Government cannot fulfill the basic requirement, some free services are of low quality. If I get chance to settle overseas, I don’t think I would come back to stay permanently until there are some changes.”**

Family Problem and Issues

Youths of Nepal are rapidly flying abroad in a very large number every day. One of the major causes seems to be the family problem and compulsion. The youths have the responsibility to fulfil the basic needs of their family and for

that it's seemed to be impossible within the paying scale the provided jobs here in Nepal. Every individual flying abroad are most likely to be influenced by the family issues to make the decision of leaving Nepal with the expectation of favourable situation in foreign land.

Majority respondents believe that the major factor for youths in favoring foreign land is due to family's issues, either financially or emotionally. A 23 year old respondent living here in Kathmandu claims that he made the decision to fly abroad due to his family financial situation. Another respondent of aged 33 named has also claimed and agreed with this mentioning **"I have to repay the pile of debt of my family which they were unable to pay. I want to improve our condition and provide quality life for my family, I've made this decision."** Many youths are going overseas to work for the improvement of family economic conditions and to solve the family problem and be the main pillar for the family. Another respondent feeling sad expressed, **"I didn't want to go but looking back at my family makes me feel bad. My earning was not enough for their changing desires. I want to give the best of everything to them so, I've decided to be far from them but I can fulfil their every needs."**

Personal and Professional Goal

Any individual has a certain goal of their own, if it is hard to achieve them, they change their situation or condition as a whole. Nepal has its own inspiring and ambitious youths but the country is unfavourable to provide its youth with such opportunities and situation. Majority of the respondents have said that it is easier in foreign countries to achieve their goal. They believe that the same amount of time and skill invested in abroad will be more productive than of the Nepal and they also talk about the numbers of opportunities they get in foreign land is higher than in comparison to Nepal so, which they are motivated to go abroad for the fulfilment of their goal. 21 year old Kushal Shrestha believes, **"If I had chance I would have been an excellent entrepreneur and provided back what my government had given me. But current situation of Nepal makes it harder for me to pursue my goal. I wanted to build a business of my own but the economy is descending every now and then. The debt of the nation is too much which is making business unable to sustain and the return cannot cover the expense alone."**

Problems Faced while Seeking Career in Nepal

There were altogether four questions set to find out the problems. The cause that are abstracted from the interview:

Market is Unable to Create Opportunity as per Requirement

Youths between the ages of 15 and 29 have a very high unemployment rate of 19.2%, as Nepalese market is unable to produce adequate job opportunity. The main factors contributing to Nepal's high unemployment rate include the country's poor infrastructure for industrial growth, political instability, and a shortage of skilled workers. In addition, the nation's mostly seasonal reliance on agriculture raises the risk of underemployment and unemployment. Majority

respondents believe that they could not find a proper job here were due to lack of job opportunities as per the proportion of unemployed population. The government is unable to cooperate with private sector to address these issues and promote career growth in Nepal. 26 years old respondent claims, **"If enough job opportunity is provided within our home country, I would not have to go foreign countries forcefully just to earn money"**. Another 24 aged respondent says **"There are lots of unemployed people but very few opportunities; Market is incompetent to produce more"**.

Nepotism

Nepali business networks are often comprised of relatives and peers as nepotism is assumed to guarantee trust and loyalty in business. As the opportunities are very less here, People tend to use every way possible to grab the existing job. So, taking favors and misusing of power for one's benefit has been taken as normal procedures while seeking job. Many people gets job due to their connection with the concerned parties or some benefits in exchange. 21 years old undergraduate respondent says **"It is hard enough to get job here but those jobs are prioritized more towards people with powers"**. Another respondents adds up **"You need to have connection with powerful people to get any work done or to get promoted, If not you will be struggle in same position for years"**. Many interviewees consider nepotism as a problem while seeking career in Nepal.

Poor Education System

Nepal as an underdeveloped country's education system is still based more on theory and books rather than practical skill development. When students complete their degrees they face problems in seeking job as they were never taught to tackle them in real life. The system is too theoretical and unrelated to the needs of the labor market, so student fails to gain real world skills. Several interviewees raised issues regarding the education system in Nepal, including lack of practical skills development and vocational education. They said that the Nepalese education is prior to theoretical education and an unequal match between academic qualifications and business or market requirements. This will led to difficulties in finding suitable job after graduation. 26 years old respondent argues, **"Our education system is unable to provide what we really need. Every one of us is good or average in our studies but when we come into the real world, do we know how to apply in practical life? Or did our teacher teach us how it is applied? Then, how can we implement something that we are never taught of?"**

No Return as per Investment in Studies

Studying up to bachelor's degree costs a lot and after passing the bachelor's degree, there is no suitable job opportunity available. There is lack of job opportunity and even the existing jobs have low salary. The salary provided by the employer is not enough. It requires a lot time to recover the amount invested in studies. Young people are going abroad because the money they spent on education isn't recovered by the jobs in Nepal. A 24 years old

respondent states, **"I invested a large sum of money in my education but the salary I earn right now doesn't cover up even my own expenses. Even if it does, it is time consuming whereas in foreign it is less time consuming to recover all the expenses made."** Supporting this statement a 30 years old respondent has mentioned **"The investment is not worthy."**

Lack of Job Security in Private Sector

Government job provides pensions and many other services to the jobholder but the jobs are limited in number. Majority works in private sectors for the time being but for long term plans they find it difficult to secure their jobs. Private company are unpredictable and dynamic which create lack of security in work. One of the statements by graduate 26 years interviewee was **"I cannot hold one job permanently and stay in Nepal. There is no surety in the job and I earn quite less which might not be enough for coming days"**. Another respondent Isha Gyawali said, **"My parents wants me to pursue either government job in Nepal or any kind of job in overseas which helps to secure my future"**.

Personal and Professional Goal

As Nepal's market does not provide enough opportunities and many struggle to seek jobs, employers who provides the job are quite harsh and behave inappropriately towards the workers. There seems to be favoritism among the staff members which creates inferiority complex towards other people. Nepal even though being a literate country, people tends to treat you as per your level of monetary value and lacks equal treatment to all works. When asked to the respondents about their personal stories regarding the struggles they had to face while trying to get employed here, some of them shared their unforgettable experiences. 24 years aged Sangam Pant said **"Unlike abroad countries, it is hard to find job in Nepal because of undeveloped job finder pages and social network regarding job"**. Another 24 year old Shyam Karki said **"I worked here in a company for quite some time but the monthly salary paid was not enough for my expenses and also salary was delayed than our agreed time. So, now I am trying to go abroad"**. 21 years old respondent shared her story, **"It is hard enough to find part time job for college students when I went for an interview stated for part time, I was insured to get it 100% but they gave the job to someone with connection power and told me actually the interview was for full time"**.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study somehow enlighten the cause of youths migrating to the abroad countries in search of better future and career and also the problem faced by them in Nepal relating different things. The major identified causes are low income as the minimum wage fixed by government is only NPR 17300 which is very low. Youth hardly manages to fulfill their basic need and other need and expectations are difficult to be fulfilled. By the study it is found that youths are influenced by their peer group. Youths of Nepal are frustrated of current political scenario. There is less hope for the change. Poor education system where the

priority is only given to the theoretical course than practical course and the behavior and patterns of the university in countries deprived their hope to stay and do something in home country. Youths are choosing abroad to have better and quality life, achieving goals that they dreamed and for the family support also people are being migrated.

Talking about the problem they faced in the home country are that the Nepalese market can't create enough and suitable jobs, the government and private sector also not interested in this matter. The education is expensive in Nepal and also after the completion of the graduation they don't get the enough return as of investment on his/her education. Even after the completion of higher studies they have to work as associate and low level post which directly create impacts on their professional career development. In Nepal, Nepotism and favoritism is seen on every sector so, the general individual who didn't have any connections get rejected and demotivated. Even if they qualified and competent, it is hard to get suitable and dreamed job and also there is also lack of job security in Nepal. Respondent also provided various sort of improvement to address shift of youths towards foreign lands and how to retain them in home country. Some of their opinions were: Quality of education should be enhanced into more practical into real skills, Politics should be practiced in indiscriminating way with proper use of power, Government should invest on industrialization and production to decrease import and produce more opportunities, and Encourage youth in entrepreneurship and startup business.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

In writing this article the researcher realizes that there are still many shortcomings in terms of language, writing, and form of presentation considering the limited knowledge and abilities of the researchers themselves. Therefore, for the perfection of the article, the researcher expects constructive criticism and suggestions from various parties.

REFERENCES

Government of Nepal. (2014). *Nepal Human Development Report 2014*. National Planning Commission.

https://www.npc.gov.np/images/category/NHDR_Report_2014.pdf

Government of Nepal. (2022). *Nepal Labour Migration Report 2022*. Singhadarbar, Kathmandu: Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security.

https://moless.gov.np/storage/files/post_files/Nepal%20Labour%20Migration%20Report_2022.pdf

- Adhikari, D. S. (2019). Transnational Work Migration of Nepali Youths: The Changing Phenomena and the Context of Achieving Education. *Education and Research*, 74-92. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jer.v9i2.30464>
- Basnet, B. B. (2014). Economic Implications of Foreign Employment and Inward Remittance Business in Nepal. *The Central Department of Economics*, 13-15. <http://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/2082>
- Gurung, D. (2020). Why do Nepalese Emigrate? Role of business related factors: Empirical Analysis. *ASERC Journal of Socio-Economic Studies*, 3, 64-77.
- Gyeke, M. D. (2015). Exploring the Migration Intentions of Ghanaian Youth: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 723-744. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-015-0435-z>
- Hollywood, E., Egdell, V., & McQuaid, R. W. (2012). Addressing the Issue of Disadvantaged Youth Seeking Work. *Social Work & Society*, 10(1). <https://d-nb.info/1024811565/34>
- Ingkar Matzhanova, Z. S. (2021, August). Stratification of Youth Employment and Departure Abroad with the Purpose of Work. *Journal of Ethic and cultural studies*, 8, 95-112. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/792>
- Millward, L., Houston, D., Brown, D., & Barrett, M. (2006). Young People's Job Perceptions and Preferences. *University of Surrey*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/30930079>
- Pankaj Das, P. Y. (2020). Consequences of Nepalese Youth Migration to overseas for foreign employment. *Jurnal Sosiologi Nusantara*, 23-24. <https://doi.org/10.33369/jsn.6.1.23-30>

Shrestha, M., & Rana, A. (2023). Causes of International Migration of Educated Youths from Peri-Urban City of Kathmandu. *Baneshwor Campus Journal of Academia*, 2(1), 25-37. <https://doi.org/10.3126/bcja.v2i1.55758>

Tigno, J. V. (2012). Youth Migration and Development in Asia. (M. S. Dr. Wilhelm Hofmeister, Ed.) *Panorama: Insights into Asian and European Affairs*, 31.

Weller, J. (2007). Youth employment: characteristics, tensions and challenges. *Cepal Review* 92, 62-63. <https://doi.org/10.18356/427e4646-en>