

Nepalese migration to japan



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Nepal is landlocked between India and China, situated between the Himalayas. With no industrialization worth the name, its mainstay is agriculture. Its major export is labor; most of the rural households have one family member abroad and expect the inward remittances from them month after month for their livelihood. The Nepali migration to Japan is governed by the Labor Act of 1985. The armed conflicts between the forces loyal to the King and Government and Nepal and the Maoist People's War groups, have created a fear psychology in the Country and encouraged migration.

Historical & Structural contexts

The majority of the Nepalese workers in Japan hail from ethnic group designated as 'martial races'. They are popularly known as 'Gurkha' soldiers. They were an important segment of the Indian and British Army. In India, even now, they are the prominent part. Nepal has a long history of migration; Nepalese migrated to the city of Lahore and joined as soldiers in the army of Sikh Ruler, Ranjit Singh. The martial aspect has now taken the form of economic criteria with the fast advancement of the modern materialistic civilization consequent to the industrial and internet revolutions.

A new culture of emigration and remittance economy in rural Nepal has taken concrete shape. Migration is, mostly, an economic option now. From the cinders of the II World War, Japan's industrial structure took an unprecedented leap. Manufacturing and construction industries created a vacuum consequent to shunning of the jobs by the Japanese workers. Economically distressed migrants from countries like Nepal, secure elevated wage levels, and that in turn accelerated the process of migration from

Nepal. The subsequent living conditions, isolation, distress and discrimination added to their woes, but the offsetting factor was the financial rewards. As for the women immigrant workers, Japan's share is 9%. Most of them work in the service sectors or as domestic helps.

Push –Pull factors

Economic agents are responsible for the homogenous optimizing behavior as for various theories of migration. In contrast, “Lipton assumes heterogeneity of group behavior - rich persons optimize whereas poor persons are more reactive than proactive. Hence, the migratory decisions of the rural poor are more likely to be influenced by push factors while pull factors more likely apply to the rural rich.” (Asian, 2000...) To some extent the conditions obtaining in the migration scene in Nepal today in relation to Japan, gives credence to Lipton's hypotheses as for migratory and remitting behavior of both poor and rich families. Socio-economic differentials are one of the important factors for migration determinants.

Globalization has worked wonders in all the segments related to human beings. For economies and individuals who possess mobile capital and knowledge, it has proved to be a boon. But the conditions of the less educated workers have remained the same, as their options are limited. The bargaining power of the employers is intact, if anything it has increased because of their capacity to adopt latest technology, with less labor requirements, outsourcing and moving elsewhere. The labor migration, both short term and long term, to countries like Japan from Nepal has adverse effects on account of this development.

Network and social capital

Indian sub-continent was the traditional destination for the migration of the Nepalese labor, but with the passage of Labor Act of 1985, countries like Japan became the much sought after destinations. The trade unions also began to show interest in the welfare and working conditions of the overseas workers. “ Foreign labor migration from Nepal is still largely a privately organized affair in which individuals make use of their own personal networks or make arrangements through a number of private, government-registered manpower or recruitment agencies.”(Seddon, 2005).

As for Southeast Asia, the popular destination at that time was Japan. Immigration then was not legal, the repatriation incidents occurred often, but the reward for the lucky ones who stayed on was high. The wages were 10 times the average wage in Nepal. The remittances from Japan to Nepal recorded a steep increase. This further kindled the curiosity and enthusiasm of the rural folks of Nepal, both men and women to migrate. “ The implications of this situation are far-reaching for Nepal as a whole, for the structure and dynamics of regional and local economy and society, and — perhaps most of all — for households and individuals all over the country, both those directly involved in foreign labor migration and those left behind.”(Seddon, 2005). Labor migration increases unity of the countries of sending and receiving migrants.

Migration serves useful purposes for both the countries. It is the twice-blessed concept. It blesses those who receive, and those who give. The reality behind this poetic comparison is that the two ethnic groups have to come to terms for a happy living. Legal citizenship is one thing. The actual

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assimilation and the willing acceptance from the local society is another thing. The development of commonality is a slow process. To oppress the minority and obliterate the differences is not a welcome procedure and the consequences will be bitter. History has enough examples of such disastrous failures. Historical conditions and the related racial stigma, will not get obliterated easily.

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