



Impact of Foreign Labour Migration on Labour Dynamics in Relation to Agricultural Activities of Migrant Households

Krishna Prasad Thapaliya^{a*}, Kailash Nath Pyakuryal^b, Durga Devkota^c, Dhruba Pant^d, Anita Ghimire^e

^{a,b,c}*Agriculture and Forestry University, Rampur, Chitwan, Nepal*

^d*International Network for Participatory Irrigation Management (INPIM), Nepal*

^e*Nepal Institute of Social and Environmental Research (NISER), Lalitpur, Nepal*

^a*Email: kpthapaliya@afu.edu.np*, ^b*Email: kpyakuryal@gmail.com*, ^c*Email: durga.devkota@gmail.com*,

^d*Email: drpant.pant@gmail.com*, ^e*Email: bhattarainitu@gmail.com*

Abstract

Around 66% of Nepal's population is involved in agricultural activities, contributing one-third of the country's GDP. Given its agricultural nature, a considerable number of young Nepali individuals opt for international labour migration as a means of sustaining their livelihoods. So, this study aimed to examine the impacts of foreign labour migration on the labour dynamics of household agricultural activities in the Sindhuli district of Nepal. A mixed research design was used for this research. Where quantitative interview protocol was designed, pretested, modified, and deployed for quantitative data collection from 350 migrant households. After that checklist for key informants' interview and case studies were developed and used to generate qualitative data. At first, quantitative data were processed, analyzed, and interpreted with the support of qualitative findings. The survey findings revealed that in the research area, a total of 390 individuals migrated from 350 households. Of these migrants, slightly over 90% were male, leaving only 5.13% as females. In terms of household work, the father's workload was found to be negligible, while the mother's workload saw a significant decrease after migration.

Received: 10/28/2024

Accepted: 12/28/2024

Published: 1/6/2025

* Corresponding author.

Concerning agricultural activities, livestock production and management, and social activities the workload of the father, mother, and siblings showed a statistically significant decrease. However, the workload of the spouse and children was found to significantly increase in all spheres after migration. The reduction in workload for migrants' fathers, mothers, and siblings can be attributed to the shift from a joint family structure to a nuclear family setup.

Keywords: Agriculture; Workload; Labour management; Network; Migration.

1. Introduction

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood in Nepal, yet the level of production is barely enough to fulfil domestic consumption requirements. The absence of sufficient expertise, capabilities, technology, and entrepreneurial spirit required to transition from traditional farming to a commercial farming system has not only confined farmers to subsistence farming but has also exposed them to underemployment and concealed unemployment challenges [1]. According to the Economic Survey 2022/23, 15.1 per cent of the population is below the poverty line, and a majority of them live in rural areas of the country [2]. In addition to agriculture serving as the primary pillar of the rural economy, people adopt various livelihood strategies to cope with food insecurity, including livestock rearing, gathering and trading medicinal plants, occupational work, tourism, and notably, labour migration. Labour migration can serve as a pressure relief mechanism for livelihood-vulnerable households in rural communities [3].

Every year, a huge number of international migrants leave Nepal. The lure of an abroad job encourages many Nepalese to leave the country. Nepal's foreign labour migration has become a natural or even essential societal phenomenon, causing relocation to more complex and advanced societies. As a result of the significant influx of Nepalese migrating abroad for employment and education, international migration has become an inherent part of Nepali society, affecting practically every Nepali family [4, 5]. Preliminary findings of [6] stated that more than 2.1 million Nepali citizens live outside the country, comprising 7.4% of the total population. Among them 1.8 million are male. So, not arising out of necessity only; migration here is also arising out of social and peer pressure, such that, if one seeks to stay back in Nepal is questioned for his/her competence to struggle in a foreign land. The families of migrants also have the intention of sending one or more male members of their family overseas to effectively utilize their human resources for improved livelihood opportunities [7]. Furthermore, the migration trend is becoming a prerequisite for a family's social standing. Low individual income was the major driver of international labour migration, followed by a lack of employment prospects, poor economic conditions for migrants, and limited access to social safety [8]. Similarly, the researchers further added that peer pressure, agricultural productivity losses, a lack of education, difficulty in repaying a loan, and food shortages have all been identified as additional causes for overseas labour migration.

Liberalization of migration policies in Nepal plays a vital role in the drastic increment of foreign labour migration Reference [5]. The number of foreign labour migrants was also induced by the decade-long conflict in Nepal spanning from 1996 to 2006 and the labour shortage in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Nepal labour migration report mentioned that since 2008/09, the Department of Foreign Employment [9] has granted more than 4.7 million 'new

entry' labour authorizations to Nepali workers for overseas employment, while over 1.8 million labour approvals have been reissued. Remittances are typically characterized as a portion of a migrant's wages remitted from the place of origin to the migration destination [10, 11]. The variation in the volume of migrants' remittances also increases yearly. The increased number of migrant workers contributes to the national gross domestic product (GDP). In 2021, Globally Nepal ranks tenth-highest position to share 23.8% of its GDP with USD 8.2 billion (NPR 1.06 trillion) in remittances [12]. Nepalese people, being less educated have a lesser capacity to envision the long-term consequences of migration. Labour migration can serve as a viable strategy for adapting one's livelihood. It generates economic resources and human capital that can contribute to sustainable poverty reduction, albeit with potential negative impacts on communities. Due to the immediate benefits of remittances, individuals often overlook the fact that it is only a temporary form of relief and fail to acknowledge that migration serves as a safety valve. Foreign labour migration reduced crop productivity, reduced the usage of farmyard manure, created labour shortages for household agricultural activities, and increased labour wages [13]. However, migration has a detrimental influence on agricultural production, according to the [14], and households receiving remittances in the agricultural sector are not witnessing an increase in productivity. The caste system significantly influences various social aspects in Nepal, including marriage, gender roles, and the allocation of household and societal responsibilities, within its patriarchal society [7]. Labour migration is male-dominated, between the fiscal years 2008/09 and 2021/22, women represented less than 6% of the total new labour approvals issued [15]. Moreover, the labour migration observed in Nepal's agrarian communities exhibits a prominent gendered nature, where predominantly men depart while women, children, and elderly individuals remain left behind. This highlights the significance of comprehending the impacts of this primarily male outmigration on agricultural productivity, the sustainability of remittances, and household labour dynamics in order to establish suitable guidelines for improvement. In this context, this research aims to analyze foreign labour migration's impacts on household agricultural activities' dynamics in the Sindhuli district of Nepal.

2. Methodology

A mixed research design namely the explanatory design was used for this study. Where the researchers used a typical procedure to gather quantitative data in the first phase, analyze the data, and then follow up with key informants' interviews (KII) to explain the quantitative responses. The primary intent of this design was to use a qualitative strand to explain initial quantitative results. For this research, multilevel samples were adopted where both (Quantitative and Qualitative) data were obtained from different respondents of the different populations in the samples. Similarly, individuals selected as respondents differed from the populations in the quantitative and qualitative samples. To get adequate information related to foreign labour migration, the present status of labour dynamics in relation to household agricultural activities, and the impacts of labour migration on agriculture in migrants' households 350 households were selected for quantitative data. Similarly, 21 respondents were selected including agriculture extension workers, and social and political leaders from the research area were selected for qualitative data. The quantitative interview protocol was developed, pretested, modified, and deployed to collect quantitative information. After processing and analyzing quantitative data a checklist (3 categories for each group of interviewees) was developed and used to collect qualitative information. Secondary data were collected from published articles, journals, and publications of various sources. Collected data were processed, managed, and analyzed by using SPSS. At the same time, ethical issues were maintained by procedures such as voluntary

participation, informed consent, absence of risk or harm, confidentiality, and anonymity.

3. Results

3.1. Household Demographics

According to the household demographic survey findings, the mean age of the respondents was 46.48 years with a range of age of 20 to 77 years, and a standard deviation of ± 13.538 years. About two-thirds (64%) of the respondents or household heads were males and the rest (36%) of the household heads were female. Similarly, more than half (51.7%) of the respondents have a joint, while the remaining 48.3% of respondents belong to nuclear families. Concerning the interviewees' religion, 54.3% identified as Hindu, while 47.7% identified as Buddhist. Among the surveyed respondents more than half (55.5%) of them were illiterate, while nearly one-fifths had finished basic education (18.9%), 16.3% had graduated from high school, 5.7% could only read and write, and 2.3% had earned a bachelor's degree. A demographic survey also revealed that the majority of the respondents belonged to Janajati (83.4%) followed by Dalits (7.4), Chhetri (4%), Dashanami (3.4), and Brahmin (1.7%).

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by various socio-demographic characteristics in the study area, 2021

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	224	64
	Female	126	36
Age	Min.: 20 yrs. Max.: 77 yrs.	Avg.: 46.48 yrs.	Std.: 13.538 yrs.
Caste/Ethnicity	Brahmin	6	1.7
	Chhetri	14	4
	Dashanami	12	3.4
	Dalits	26	7.4
	Janajati	292	83.4
Religion	Hindu	190	54.3
	Buddhist	153	47.7
	Christian	5	1.4
	Others	2	0.6
Education	Illiterate	193	55.1
	Non-formal	20	5.7
	Pre-primary	6	1.7
	Grades 1 to 8	66	18.9
	Grades 8 to 12	57	16.3
	Bachelor and above	8	2.3

3.2. Socio-demographic Status of Migrants

Table (2) provides insights into the gender distribution, family size, and relationship of the migrants with

household heads, education attainment of the migrants, landholding status, and the occupation of migrants in the country of origin. According to the survey result 390 individuals were migrated from 350 households in the research area. Among the total migrants little more than ninth-tenths were male, while the remaining 5.13 percent were females. Findings indicate a significant gender imbalance, with the male domination.

Concerning the family size of the migrants, the average was 5.65 with a range of 2 to 16 members, and a standard deviation of ± 2.09 which indicates a significant variation regarding the family size of the migrants. Talking about the migrants' relationship with respondents or household heads, survey results show that the majority of migrants (51.79%) were sons of household heads, followed by two-fifths (40.51%) of migrants were spouses, a smaller percentage (4.36%) were brothers, and 2.31% were daughters. Research findings showed that a little more than half (52.83%) of the migrants were high school graduates followed by approximately one-third (31.29%) of the migrants who had only basic education (Table, 2).

According to the survey results, the occupation of migrants before migration varied. Almost, two-thirds (65.89%) of migrants engaged in the agricultural sector, indicating that agriculture plays a significant role in their livelihood. Similarly, a notable proportion (12.82%) were students followed by wage labourers 12.06 per cent, a smaller percentage (3.59%) were engaged in business, while 2.31% were service holders and 2.05% worked as drivers.

Table 2: Distribution of migrants by different socio-economic characteristics in the study area, 2021

Characteristics			Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male		370	94.87
	Female		20	5.13
Family Size	Min.: 2	Max.: 16	Avg.: 5.69	Std.: 2.094
Relations with the household head	Son		202	51.79
	Spouse		158	40.51
	Brothers		17	4.36
	Daughter		9	2.31
	Daughter-in-law		3	0.77
	Son-in-law		1	0.26
Education level	Illiterate		39	9.99
	Non-formal		7	1.79
	Pre-primary		9	2.31
	Grades 1 to 8		122	31.29
	Grades 8 to 12		206	52.83
	Bachelor		7	1.79
Migrant occupation before migration	Agriculture		257	65.89
	Students		50	12.82
	Wage labour		47	12.06
	Business		14	3.59
	Service		9	2.31
	Drivers		8	2.05
	Foreign labour		5	1.28

3.3. Economic Status of the Respondents

It was found that four-fifths (80.6%) of respondents work in agriculture, 10.3% are out-migrants, 4.3% are in the service as an occupation, and 3.4% are involved in business. In relation to the type of housing, the survey results show that the majority of the respondents reported living in cemented homes, more than two-fifths (42.3%) of the respondents resided in mud and wood houses, and the minority of the respondents (10.3%) reported living in mud houses. These findings outlined the diversity in living conditions among migrant families.

Additionally, the research results showed that one-fourth of the migrant households produce surplus food from their land, while two-fifths had produced enough food for nine to twelve months and 16.8% had enough for less than six months. Using conventional agricultural techniques, approximately three-fourths (74.6%) of the migrant households were unable to produce adequate food on their land (Table 3).

Table 3: Distribution of migrant households by various economic characteristics in the study area, 2021

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage		
Occupation	Agriculture	282	80.6		
	Foreign Labour	36	10.3		
	Service	15	4.3		
	Business	12	3.4		
	Wage Labour	3	0.9		
	Other	2	0.6		
Household Type	Mud	36	10.3		
	Mud and wood	148	42.3		
	Cemented	166	47.4		
Food Sufficiency	Less than 3 months	13	3.7		
	3 - 6 months	46	13.1		
	6 - 9 months	63	18		
	9 - 12 months	139	39.7		
	Surplus	89	25.4		
Attributes		Minimum	Maximum	Average	St. Deviations
<u>Land holdings (in Hecter)</u>					
Khet (Irrigated land)	0	2.046	0.348	0.270	
Bari (Non-irrigated land)	0	0.341	0.095	0.041	
Pakho (Marginal land)	0	0.341	0.095	0.041	

3.4. Network, Motivation, and Support to Migrants

Migrants' social network in the destination countries before their migration plays a crucial role in choosing their destination. Data from the study revealed that 51.36% had a family member at their destination followed by 35.61 had relatives, 33.56% had a friend, and 16.34% had their neighbours before migration.

Motivation is another factor that encouraged migrants to migrate in search of better livelihood opportunities. In this regard, the survey report found that 87.12% of migrants were motivated by themselves, 45.4% by family members, 36.8% by friends, 11.96% by manpower agencies, and 10.43% by their neighbours. Despite the government of Nepal setting up various vocational training centres for conducting training, a mere 14.9% of migrants received training regarding their work in their destination before their migration. Twenty-seven returnees were found during the period of field study in the research area. Among them 81.48% of returnees were engaged in agricultural activities, followed by wage labour (11.11%), business (3.7%), and government jobs (3.7%).

According to the survey findings, a significant proportion of migrants (24.6%) covered their migration costs themselves followed by 36.3% receiving support from their relatives, 5.1% supported friends, 18.9% receiving assistance from financial institutions, and 36.6% relying on local money lenders for funding their migration. On

the other hand, manpower agencies play a crucial role in the processing of foreign labour migration and job placement at the destination. This indicates that migrants relied primarily on these agencies to navigate the process of securing employment and managing their jobs once they reached their destination.

Table 4: Distribution of migrants by various Social Characteristics in the study area, 2021

Characteristics					Frequency	Percentage
Network in Destination Before Migration (n=146)	Family Member				75	51.36
	Relatives				52	35.61
	Friends				49	33.56
	Neighbour				24	16.34
Motivation for Migration (n=350)	Self				284	87.12
	Family members				148	45.4
	Friend				120	36.8
	Manpower Agency				39	11.96
	Neighbour				34	10.43
Migrants receive training (Before migration)					52	14.9
Occupation of Returnee (n=27)	Agriculture				22	81.48
	Wage labour				3	11.11
	Business				1	3.7
	Government Job				1	3.7
Type of Support					Supporter	
	Self	Manpower	Relatives	Friend	Financial institution	Lender
Money	86 (24.6)	0	127(36.3)	18(5.1)	66(18.9)	128(36.6)
Processing	0	350(100)	0	0	0	0
Job (Destination)	0	350(100)	0	0	0	0

3.5. Impacts of Migration on Workload

In Table 5, the workload of migrants' households before and after migration is analyzed based on the nature of work in different categories such as household chores, crop cultivation, livestock rearing, and participation in social activities by the left-behind members of the household. For each category, the table assesses whether migration leads to a decreased workload or an increased workload for the left-behind members of the household due to foreign labour migration.

Table 5: Workload of migrants' household members before and after migration in the study area, 2021

Nature of works (n=350)	Before migration					After migration				
	F	M	Sp	C	Si.	F	M	Sp	C	Si.
Household Chores:										
1, Preparing food	15	246	267	41	140	14	184	278	76	104
2, Washing dishes/clothes	15	244	267	43	141	14	183	278	77	105
3, Dusting/ cleaning the house	15	246	266	42	143	14	184	277	77	107
4, Caring for children/adults	35	244	265	40	140	23	185	275	75	110
t-Test value	1.3	-86.27***	43***	139***	-23***					
Cultivation Activities:										
1, Field preparation	231	242	254	43	159	169	180	264	71	121
2, Sowing/ Transplantation	230	241	254	43	158	166	179	263	71	122
3, Irrigation	231	219	247	40	152	168	162	254	65	116
4, Weeding/Thinning	231	242	254	41	159	168	180	265	70	122
5, Plant protection	231	222	243	38	147	168	163	256	64	111
6, Harvesting	231	241	255	42	156	167	179	263	71	120
7, Marketing	230	208	233	39	144	168	152	246	66	108
t-Test value	-204.14***	-60***	11.47***	48***	-122.5***					
Livestock Activities:										
1, Feeding	220	242	252	40	153	163	180	261	69	116
2, Cleaning/Sanitation	212	242	252	40	152	157	180	261	68	115
3, Grazing	220	228	248	40	150	160	167	256	67	113
4, Treatment	229	212	246	39	148	169	155	256	64	111
5, Marketing	232	210	236	39	143	169	153	249	64	108
t-Test value	-42.89***	-51.66***	11.39***	33.5***	-91.5***					
Social Activities										
1, CBO activities	21	23	41	1	2	21	33	78	2	13
2, Community events	234	203	231	37	143	169	148	245	61	106
3, Religious activities	237	245	259	42	145	171	180	269	67	109
4, Ritual activities	237	244	259	46	149	171	180	270	72	112
t-Test value	-2.3***	-2.42***	2.83***	3.16***	-2.08***					

Where: - F= Father of the migrants, M= Mother of the migrants, Sp= Spouse of the migrants C= Children & Si= Siblings

Household chores were subdivided into four categories: food preparation, dish/clothes washing, house dusting/cleaning, and caring for children/adults. A two-tailed t-test was conducted to compare household chores activities. The father's workload was found to be not significant, while the mother's workload significantly decreased after migration. Moreover, the test revealed that the spouse's workload significantly increased after their

counterpart migrated. Additionally, the study found that both the spouse's and children's workloads significantly increased after migration, except for the siblings whose workload decreased significantly. This decrease in workload for the siblings is likely due to the transition from a joint family to a nuclear family structure.

The study categorized cultivation activities into seven sub-categories: field preparation, seed sowing/transplantation, irrigation, weeding/thinning, plant protection, harvesting, and crop marketing. These subdivisions aimed to examine and assess the workload of the left behind members of the migrants' household members during the cultivation process. Based on the results of the t-test, it was found that the workload of the father, mother, and siblings showed a statistically significant decrease. This implies that after migration, these individuals' workload decreased compared to their workload before migration.

Similarly, concerning livestock-related activities, the research proceeded to classify them into five distinct sub-categories, namely feeding, sanitation/cleaning, grazing, treatment, and marketing of the animals. The t-test results indicated a significant decrease in workload for the fathers, mothers, and siblings of the migrants after migration when compared to their pre-migration workload. On the other hand, the workload of the spouses and children of the migrants showed a significant increase after migration.

The study categorized participation in social activities into four sub-categories: involvement in community-based organizations (CBOs), participation in community events, engagement in religious activities, and participation in ritual activities specific to their community. Just like with agricultural activities such as crop cultivation and livestock rearing, the results of the two-tailed t-test revealed that the participation of the migrants' fathers, mothers, and siblings in social activities significantly decreased after migration, when compared to their participation before migration. On the other hand, the partners of the migrants and their children showed a significant increase in their involvement in these activities after migration. Including all the nature of works mentioned in Table (5) we can conclude that the workload of migrants' spouses and children increased significantly in comparison to pre-migration.

3.6. Labour Management in Major Cereal Crop Production

According to the research results, it was observed that the responsibilities and tasks of the migrants were taken on by the members of the household who did not migrate. When it came to field preparation for major cereal crop cultivation activities, machines were used, with almost 46.8 per cent for rice and only 4.3 per cent for maize. Migrants' households employed hired labour for different tasks in rice cultivation. These tasks included field preparation (32 %), sowing and transplantation (36.9 %), weeding and thinning (4.8 %), and harvesting (3.6 %). Similarly, in maize cultivation, labour was hired for field preparation (5.5 %), sowing and transplantation (3.4 %), weeding and thinning (4 %), and harvesting (2.8 %).

To manage labour shortage in major cereal crop production activities migrant households utilized the Parma system, which is a typical Nepali system of labour exchange, for various cultivation practices. The respondents also employed the Perma system, a common labour exchange system in Nepal, for their cultivation practices. Specifically, in rice cultivation, the households utilized Perma for field preparation (97.6 per cent), sowing and

transplantation (97.6 per cent), weeding and thinning (94.3 per cent), and harvesting (97.3 per cent). Similarly, in maize cultivation practices, households used Perma for field preparation (93.9 per cent) and harvesting (82.3 per cent).

Table 6: Labour management in agricultural activities (Major cereal crops) in the study area, 2021

Crops	Activities	Labour Management			
		HH member	Hire labour	Parma	Mechanical
Rice (n=331)	Field Preparation	331 (100)	106 (32)	323 (97.6)	155 (46.8)
	Sowing/Transplantation	331 (100)	122 (36.9)	323 (97.6)	0
	Irrigation	331 (100)	0	0	0
	Weeding/ Thinning	331 (100)	16 (4.8)	312 (94.3)	0
	Plant Protection	331 (100)	0	0	0
	Harvesting	331 (100)	12 (3.6)	322 (97.3)	0
	Marketing	322 (97.3)	0	0	0
Maize (n=227)	Field Preparation	327 (100)	18 (5.5)	307 (93.9)	14 (4.3)
	Sowing/Transplantation	327 (100)	11 (3.4)	0	0
	Irrigation	325 (99.4)	0	0	0
	Weeding/ Thinning	327 (100)	13 (4)	0	0
	Plant Protection	327 (100)	0	0	0
	Harvesting	327 (100)	9 (2.8)	269 (82.3)	0
	Marketing	327 (100)	0	0	0

3.7. Changes in Agricultural Practices by Using Remittance

According to table (7), the research revealed several changes in agricultural practices due to remittances. The findings indicated that 96.84 per cent of households adopted hybrid seeds, followed by 88.93 per cent who switched to different crop varieties. Additionally, 30.83 per cent of households utilized insecticides and pesticides, and 24.9 per cent had access to irrigation facilities. Furthermore, 14.9 per cent of households purchased hybrid breeds, and 9.09 per cent used veterinary medicine and services. Likewise, two individuals used remittance to obtain livestock training, while 63.64 per cent of households utilized machines for their agricultural activities. The findings revealed that migrant households do not invest their remittance in commercial agriculture which plays a crucial role in minimizing labour migration in the future.

Table 7: Changes in agricultural practices by using remittance (n=253) in the study area, 2021

S.N.	Agriculture Practices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Use hybrid seed	245	96.84
2	Changes in varieties	225	88.93
3	Insecticides/pesticides	78	30.83
4	Facilities of irrigation	63	24.9
5	Use hybrid breed	36	14.23
6	Use of veterinary medicine and services	23	9.09
7	Soil test	3	1.19
8	Advance nutrient management	3	1.19
Skill/Knowledge:			
1	Cultivation training	0	0
2	Livestock training	2	0.79
3	IPM training	0	0
4	Nutrition management training	0	0
Technology:			
1	Use of Machine	161	63.64
2	Use of IT	0	0

4. Discussion

Among the total migrants, 94.87% were male and 5.13% were female, reflecting a pattern of male dominance in migration from the research area. This gender disparity in foreign labour migration reflects the perception of a patriarchal society in which males are perceived as breadwinners whereas females are considered as bread makers and caretakers. Different research findings have concluded that male-dominated foreign labour migration from Nepal. 'Migration and Gender' argued that gendered discourses, practices, and legislation can either restrict or facilitate the crossing of borders by women and men, thereby influencing the level of labour market segregation Reference [16]. Findings of the Nepal Labour Migration Report have also revealed that women accounted for less than 6% of labour permits issued between 2008/09 and 2021/22 [15]. Similarly, the phenomenon of foreign labour migration, particularly by males, has become widespread in Nepal [17].

The research findings revealed that 98.21% of migrants had less than a secondary-level education, indicating that lower educational attainment significantly increases the likelihood of migration. People having less education had greater chances of abroad labour migration. A significant majority of migrants (87.3%) possessed either secondary or secondary-special education [18]. Another research revealed parallel findings, with approximately four-fifths of migrants (79%) possessing a secondary or secondary-specialized education [19]. Similarly, Nepali parents believe their sons can earn more abroad as migrant labourers than through available jobs in Nepal, motivating many youths to choose foreign labour migration over pursuing higher education [20].

Migrants often rely on their social networks—including family members, relatives, friends, and neighbours—

when making decisions about migration and selecting their destinations. These networks provide crucial support and information, guiding individuals through the migration process. Overall, the support and advice from one's social network are vital factors in shaping migration patterns and choices. Researchers have indicated that the social networks of migrants have a significant impact on their decision-making process regarding migration. Both male and female migrants depend on social networks to establish themselves in their destination country, secure employment and accommodation, access financial services such as savings and loans, and facilitate the process of remitting money [21]. Likewise, low literacy rate within the rural Nepali population, the optimistic perceptions of stability and comfort can be attributed to the influence of family members and friends who are also engaged in overseas work, as well as from employment agents [22]. The Foreign Employment Act of Nepal includes a provision for the implementation of pre-departure orientation training (PDOT) for migrants, incorporating a section specifically dedicated to physical and mental health [23]. Nonetheless, the implementation of these new procedures has been delayed as PDOT centres have shown resistance to adopting them [24].

The migration of youth from agrarian communities has significantly increased the workload for the spouses and children left behind. Their workload has increased in household chores, agricultural activities, livestock management, and participation in social activities. Research conducted in the western hills of Nepal stated that as a result of the male migration, women are contending with substantial psychological and physical stress due to the added responsibilities of childcare, agriculture, and household chores [25]. Researchers further reported that females in migrant households depend significantly on their daughters, neighbours, and relatives for assistance in managing both household and agricultural tasks [25]. The workload on females in migrant households has significantly escalated due to the departure of male family members through migration [26]. The adverse effects experienced involve a heightened workload of women of migrant households resulting from the absence of migrants and difficulties in recruiting and overseeing labour [27]. The research conducted in the western part of Nepal has mentioned that when male members migrate, their substantial workload is redistributed among the remaining household members, leading to an overall increase in responsibilities across different age groups and genders [28].

Migrant household faces a labour shortage, especially in agricultural activities, which is managed by hiring, bartering, and increasing workload by left-behind members. To address labour shortages, migrant households utilize the Parma system which is a typical Nepali system of labour exchange for agricultural tasks such as land preparation, seed sowing and transplantation, weeding, and harvesting. Research conducted in the Udaypur and Khotang districts of Nepal reported that women had to bear extra work burdens by providing more inputs for barter labour (Parma) in order to gain access to labour for ploughing and other activities dominated by males [17].

A study conducted in the Surkhet district of Nepal reported that in the absence of men, women adopt four primary and interconnected approaches to handle additional agricultural labour duties: (i) employing paid workers; (ii) reducing the amount of land they cultivate; (iii) engaging their children, primarily their sons; or (iv) personally assuming these new responsibilities [29]. Finally, in line with earlier findings [30], migration seems to have had an adverse impact on the household's investments in modern agricultural technologies that enhance productivity and save time, resulting in a reduction in these investments.

5. Conclusion

The general conclusion of the foregoing data is that foreign labour migration is male-dominated, indicating gender disparity in this phenomenon. Prior to migration, nearly two-thirds of these individuals had experience in the agriculture sector, aligning with the fact that four-fifths of migrant households have agriculture as their primary occupation. Concerning food security, only one-fourth of migrant households were able to produce sufficient food for themselves, highlighting a potential vulnerability among the majority of these households. Additionally, a substantial proportion of migrants have established social networks in their destination countries, which can facilitate their integration and support systems abroad. The impact of migration on workload distribution within migrant households is noteworthy, as the responsibilities of mothers and siblings significantly decreased while those of spouses and children increased, reflecting shifts in family dynamics.

Furthermore, the burden of work due to migration is primarily borne by the left-behind members of the household. Labour exchange practices, particularly 'Parma,' are employed to mitigate the workload associated with major cereal crop production and other manual Labour-intensive agricultural activities, with hiring Labour also being a common practice. Mechanization is apparent, as migrants' households use machines when preparing fields for cultivation. Regarding remittances, the majority of households allocate these funds for purchasing hybrid seeds and making changes in crop varieties, underscoring the significance of agriculture in their lives. However, the limited use of remittances for other agricultural inputs such as insecticides/pesticides, irrigation management, hybrid breeds, and veterinary medicines indicates potential areas for improvement in agricultural practices and investment.

References

- [1] B. D. Deshar. An overview of agricultural degradation in Nepal and its impact on economy and environment. *Global Journal of economic and social development*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp 1-20, 2013
- [2] MoF. Economic Survey 2022/23. *Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu*. 2023.
- [3] G. Narciso. "Labour and migration," in *Growth, Structural Transformation, and Rural Change in Viet Nam: A Rising Dragon on the Move*, F. Tarp, Ed. Oxford University Press, pp. 139-157. 2017.
- [4] IOM. Migration in Nepal: A Country Profile 2019. *International Organization for Migration, Kathmandu*. 2019.
- [5] S. Sharma, S. Pandey, D. Pathak and B. Sijapati-Basnett. State of Migration in Nepal. *Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility, Kathmandu*. 2014.
- [6] CBS. National Population Census 2021. *Central Bureau of Statistics, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu*. 2021.
- [7] M. Wi. "We are no longer dependent on them." The Sociocultural effects of labour migration on caste

relations in rural Nepal. *International Institute of Social Studies, Hague, Netherlands*. 2016.

- [8] K. P. Thapaliya, K. N. Pyakuryal, D. Devkota, D. Panta and A. Ghimire. Migration, Remittance and Its Consequences at the Household Level in Agrarian Nepal. *International Journal of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 30-46. 2023.
- [9] DoFE. Labour Migration for Employment-A Status Report for Nepal. *Department of Foreign Employment, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu*. 2017.
- [10] B. Pant. Remittance inflows to Nepal: Economic impact and policy options. *NRB Economic Review*, pp. 20-36. 2006.
- [11] J. Hagen-Zanker. Effects of remittances and migration on migrant sending countries, communities and households. 2015. [Online]. *EPS-PEAKS*", retrieved from <http://partnerplatform.org/eps-peaks> [access 2024].
- [12] D. Ratha, S. Plaza, E.J. Kim, V. Chandra, N. Kurasha and B. Pradhan. Remittances Remain Resilient but Are Slowing. *Migration and Development Brief 38. June*. KNOMAD–World Bank, Washington, D.C. 2023.
- [13] A. Maharjan, S. Bauer and B. Knerr. International migration, remittances, and subsistence farming: Evidence from Nepal. *International Migration*, vol. 51, pp. e249-e263. 2013.
- [14] ADB. Effects of Migration and Remittance Income on Nepal's Agriculture Yield (South Asia Working Paper Series, 27). *Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines*. 2014.
- [15] MoLESS. Nepal Labour Migration Report 2022. *Ministry of Labour Employment and Social Security, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu*. 2022.
- [16] A. Christou and E. Kofman. *Gender and Migration*. IMISCOE Research Series. Springer Nature. 2022. [Online]. [https:// doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-91971-9_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-91971-9_1). [access 2024].
- [17] J. Adhikari and M. Hobley. "Everyone is leaving. Who Will Sow Our Fields?" The Livelihood Effects on Women of Male Migration from Khotang and Udaypur Districts, Nepal, to the Gulf Countries and Malaysia,," *Himalaya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1. 2015. [Online]. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya/vol35/iss1/7>. [access, 2024].
- [18] A. R. Juraev. Labour Migration from Uzbekistan: Social and Economic Impacts on Local Development. *University of Trento, School of Social Sciences*. 2012.
- [19] M. Ahunov, J. Kakhkharov, Z. Parpiev and I. Wolfson. Socio-economic consequences of labour migration in Uzbekistan. *Discussion Papers in Economics, 2015-07*. 2015.

- [20] S. K. Mahato, D. P. Paudel and O. P. Baral. Motivating Factors of Youth Selecting Labor Migration Rather Than Higher Education: A Systematic Review. *Interdisciplinary Research in Education*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 115-128. 2022.
- [21] S. Thieme. *Social networks & migration: Far West Nepalese labour migrants in Delhi*, Vol. 7. LIT Verlag Münster. 2006.
- [22] B. Malla and M. S. Rosenbaum. Understanding Nepalese Labor Migration to Gulf Countries. *Journal of Poverty*, vol. 21, no. 5, pp. 411–433. 2016. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10875549.2016.1217578>.
- [23] GoN. Foreign Employment Act 2007. *Government of Nepal, Kathmandu*. 2007.
- [24] A. Kharel, S. Shrestha, S. Bhattarai, P. Oosterhoff, and K. Snyder. Assessment of Outreach and Engagement with Prospective Migrants by the Agencies Recruiting Laborers for Foreign Employment. *Institute of Development Studies*. 2022.
- [25] J. J. Kim, E. Stites, P. Webb, M. A. Constanas and D. Maxwell. The effects of male out-migration on household food security in rural Nepal. *Food Security*, vol. 11, pp. 719-732. 2019.
- [26] R. Singh, K. M. Singh and A. Jha. Effect of Migration on Agricultural Productivity and Women Empowerment. [Online]. 2012. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2111155> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2111155>. [access 2024].
- [27] U. M. Jha, and N. Varghese. Social and Welfare Impacts of Male Out-migration on Migrant Families: A Study of Darbhanga District of Bihar. *Journal of Polity & Society*, vol. 13, pp. 113-123. 2021.
- [28] A. Maharjan, S. Bauer, and B. Knerr. Do Rural Women Who Stay Behind Benefit from Male Out-migration? A Case Study in the Hills of Nepal. *Gender, Technology and Development*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 95–123. 2012.
- [29] K. Spangler, and M. E. Christie. Renegotiating gender roles and cultivation practices in the Nepali mid-hills: unpacking the feminization of agriculture. *Agriculture and Human Values*, vol. 37, pp. 415-432. 2020.
- [30] J. Miluka, G. Carletto, B. Davis, and A. Zezza. The vanishing farms? The impact of international migration on Albanian family farming. In *Migration, Transfers and Economic Decision Making among Agricultural Households*, pp. 140-161, Routledge. 2020.