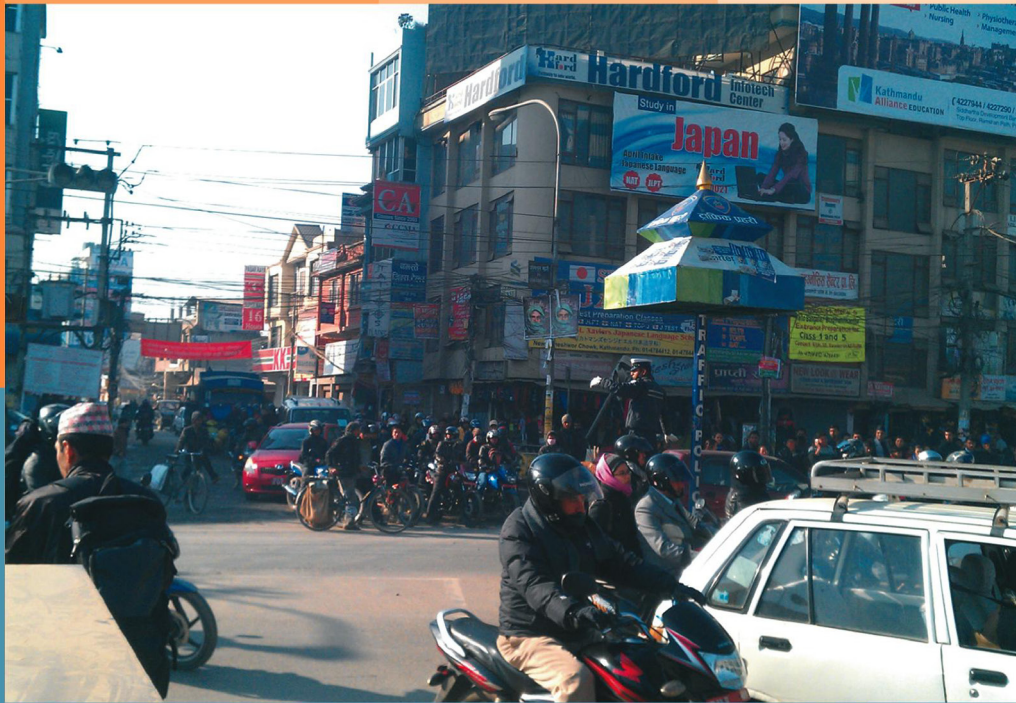


SAs RCO Discussion Paper-6

Migration, Mobility and Development: Enhancing Our Understanding in Nepal

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Anita Ghimire
Bishnu Raj Upreti

Migration, Mobility and Development: Enhancing Our Understanding in Nepal

Discussion Paper

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**South Asia Regional Co-ordination Office of National Centre of
Competence in Research North-South**

and

Nepal Centre for Contemporary Research

Kathmandu, Nepal

2012 December

Citation:

Ghimire A, Upreti BR. 2012. *Migration, Mobility and Development: Enhancing Our Understanding in Nepal, SAs RCO Discussion Paper 6*. Kathmandu: South Asia Regional Co-ordination Office of National Centre of Competence in Research North-South and Nepal Centre for Contemporary Research.

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ISBN: 978-9937-2-6810-3

Published by: South Asia Regional Co-ordination Office of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research North-South and Nepal Centre for Contemporary Research

Cover Photo: Interface of mobility and traffic governance: Early morning traffic rush at New-Baneshwor, Kathmandu by Prajesh Dhungana

Layout & Design: Jyoti Khatiwada

Printed at: Heidel Press Pvt. Ltd.
Kathmandu, Nepal

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Dedicated to those government and non government agencies who are
working on issues of migration in Nepal

The authors of this Discussion Paper *Migration, Mobility and Development: Enhancing Our Understanding in Nepal* acknowledge support from the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, co-funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the participating institutions.

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Management Centre and the SRP Mobility of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North- South and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for accepting our proposal to develop this discussion paper which contributes to ongoing academic discussions about migration and development discussion in Nepal.

We are grateful to the members of special project mobility of the NCCR North-South. We would like to give special thanks to Dr. Katarzyna Grabska, Dr. Susan Thieme, and Dr. Esther Schelling of the Migration and Mobility Project of NCCR North-South for their contributions. We are very much thankful to Dr Susan Thieme for reviewing the paper and for her comments which were very important in improving this paper. Similarly, we extend our deep gratitude to Ms. Pravina Gurung from IOM Nepal for her ideas and support. This project would not have been what it is without the contribution of these persons.

We are indebted to several organizations and government ministries that gave their time and interest. In this regard, we would like to make a special mention of Dr. Barbara Weiyermann (SDC Nepal), Ms. Saru Joshi (UN Women Nepal), Mr. Som Luitel (Peoples Forum), Dr. Meena Paudel (IOM Nepal), Mr. Mahendra Pandey (Prabasi Nepali Co-ordination Committee), Ms. Manju Gurung (Pourakhi), and Dr. Ganesh Gurung (NIDS) for their valuable time and interest in answering our queries. We are also grateful to our colleagues in the Nepal Centre for Contemporary Research family: Suman Babu Paudel, Siddhi Manandhar, Sony KC and Christopher Butler (for language editing and their observation on the paper), Prajesh Dhungana and the Heidel Press for their support.

The authors

December 2012

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Migration, Mobility and Development: Enhancing Our Understanding in Nepal

1. Context

The government of Nepal has only recently turned its attention to issues of labor migration and made significant progress, but much still needs to be done. Nepal's achievement is due chiefly to a proactive engagement of the government as well as international non-government entities like the Swiss Development Co-operation, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the International Organization for Migration, the International Labour Organization, and their partners in Nepal. However, Nepal is actively learning from the best practices of other labour sending countries and its focus is chiefly on labour migrants. This makes sense as a large majority of the migratory population from Nepal goes for labour.

However, migration is not an isolated phenomenon. Our experience shows that it is very much linked to other national and transnational movements, flows and connections that affect the livelihoods of the people and influences their perceptions of future livelihoods. Besides, there are other forms of migration process which are equally important for development outcomes. Drawing on typology given by Urry (2006) as shown in Box 1., the paper takes these different kinds of movements as aspects of "mobility". By definition, Mobility means the study of migrant and mobile people along with corporate movements, infrastructures that enable mobility, spatial restructuring as well as tourism and travel (Sheller & Urry, 2006; Urry 2007; Creswell 2010). This paper takes mobility as different kinds of movement of people as well as capacity and access and infrastructures, rules and regulations that governs this movement.

The opening of the country including its rural areas towards other parts of the world by forces of globalisation, networks, communication, infrastructures and systems inside the country and in the destination also reinforces mobility. These forces relate to migration and reinforce each other. For example, in Nepal, international migration is very much linked to development of road and communication networks and the increased outreach of recruiting agencies that have connected the rural areas of Nepal to the capital city and other urban centres, primarily in India and the Gulf countries.

At the global level, the links between mobility, daily livelihoods, and the state have long been practically evident in the forms of migration, urbanization, terrorism, border securitization and the more general global flows of goods, ideas, and technical knowledge. Mobility is central to the way of people's life (Urry 2007). In the field of development studies, migration has emerged as an important theme for some of the world's most influential NGOs. For example, the United Nation's Human Development Report in 2009 emphasised the important link between human mobility and development (Grabska et al. 2011). Similarly, international donors like Swiss Development Co-operation have created new programs that focus on mobility in countries like Nepal.

As Nepal is attempting to come to terms with the links between migration and development, this paper argues that the present migration-development plans should benefit from the global discussions on the relationship between mobility and development. Further, migration studies should move beyond labour migration-centred development visions to take into account other types of mobility that also influence development and further mobility, including social and economic mobility and the corporeal movement of people.

However, unlike migration, mobility is a vast concept ranging from elements like changes in facial expressions to all kinds of virtual human travel, the movement ideas and knowledge creating an ever more complex web of relations. Moreover, mobility is also linked to social and political processes in the society. So migration and mobility are different and migration can be an aspect of mobility. In this paper, it will be impossible to address this broad range of mobility. Hence, this paper adopts the typology presented by Urry (2007) as a conceptual framework through which to articulate our argument about relation of development to migration and mobility in Nepal. Our paper specifically addresses two aspects of mobility: migration of people and the extension of infrastructure related to mobility.

2. Objective and methodology

This discussion paper aims to initiate a discussion to change the present migration-development focused plans and give it a "mobility turn". It calls for a broadening our present understanding of migration in the development discourse of Nepal to account for other wider mobility issues. For example, the three-year plan of the government of Nepal when it focuses on labour migration should take into account other types of mobility that are related to movement of labour inside and outside the country. The plan should take into account phenomena such as expansion of roads, recruiting agencies and telecommunication networks, as well as the increased movement of people and flow of ideas and goods within and outside Nepal. The paper argues that Nepal needs to develop a vision a for mobility-development nexus rather than migration-development nexus. Though Nepal is in the process of state restructuring and transformation, discussions of mobility have not entered

into this debate. We feel that it is imperative that the role of mobility in development be included in Nepalese state building discussions.

The research is a part of NCCR North-South's special research project on migration and mobility. Our findings are based on 9-months fieldwork with mobile people, key stakeholders working in the area of migration in the central level around the issue of migration and mobility and desk research on policy and programs related to migration in South Asia. Our findings are based on qualitative modes of data collection and interpretation.

3. Conceptual framework: The mobility lens

In recent years, social science has called upon social scientists to view the dynamism in society with a new lens, what Urry (2007) calls the "mobility paradigm." The core idea of the lens itself is not new. For example, in sociology, the changing movements and nature of society have been emphasized in the works of Comte, Durkheim, Simmel and Marx (Portes 2010; Ritzer 2000). As Portes (2010) points out, the division of thinkers and writers on social dynamism originate with ancient social historians like Parmenides and Eleatics who emphasized the relatively stable nature of society while other like Heraclites argued that society flowed like a river and never repeated itself (Portes 2010, p 3). Each social thinker's paradigm throughout history has waxed and waned, both in temporal dimensions (how it gains coinage in one period of the history) as well as in the disciplines that examine the society and social affairs. In modern times, the macro-micro integration approach, in works of Bourdieu (1977), Giddens (1984) and Ritzer (2000) discuss the dialectical relationship between agency and structure in forging social change hence continuing this tradition.

Massey's (Massey et al. 1994) study of migration theories adheres to the idea that social theories follow social facts. This has been true for the emergence of the mobility paradigm. The impacts of globalisation and networks that have diminished distances across physical space and other, formerly uncrossable, borders have resulted in making goods, people, ideas and services more mobile in the present times. The tremendous increase in the connectivity and movement of these entities across different parts of the globe calls for new ways to look at migration: new in the sense that migration is understood not only as the movement of people but also the movement of goods, capital and ideas, as well as physical infrastructures and governance that are linked to these different kinds of movements. This has been termed as the mobility lens (Hannam et al. 2006). This mobility lens expands the discussion on migration to encompass wider issues related to movement of people, ideas, objects and capitals as well as infrastructure related to these movements. Hannam et al. (2006) propose that social science should be approached and conducted via a mobile lens, one that "connects the analysis of different forms of travel, transport, and communications" (Urry 2007, p6). Social scientists

have started to question the more static notions of the present society such as place, boundaries, rootedness and territories (Cresswell 2006). The concept of mobility also includes corporate movement, infrastructure enabling mobility, capitalist spatial restructuring and tourism and travel (Grabska et al., 2011).

This paper employs the concept of mobility as given by Urry (2007) in discussing the mobility development link.

Box 1 Typology of mobility	
-	corporeal travel of people for work, leisure, family life, pleasure, migration and escape
-	physical movement of objects delivered to producers, consumers and retailers
-	imaginative travel elsewhere through images of places and peoples upon TV
-	virtual travel often in real time on the internet so transcending geographical and social distance
-	communicative travel through person-to-person messages via letters, telephone, fax and mobile

Source: Urry (2007)

As can be seen from the above typology, it is important to note that different types of mobility are highly interdependent upon each other (Urry 2007). They are also very much linked to development. In the coming section we show how mobility has been taken up in development agenda in Nepal.

4. Mobility and the national development agenda in Nepal

Despite short time, the government of Nepal has made remarkable progress in addressing the issues of migration and mobility. More can be achieved if it makes use of the linkages between different types of mobility. For example, we argue that there is a link between the corporeal mobility of people, communicative travel, and the infrastructure that enhances movement and connection of people in Nepal. So development plans that address migration and wants to cash upon the benefits of migration needs to take into account the inter-linkages as well. In order to illustrate our point, we take two aspects of mobility given by Urry (2007) described in the conceptual framework above: infrastructure related to mobility and different kinds of corporeal movement of people in and out of the country. We take this issue as an example, because among other types of mobility these two have particular salience in the development discussion plans and the general public.

4.1 Transport system: Its status in recent development programmes

Though much remains to be done, the upgrading of transport, quality control in emission and vehicles, and development of Nepal's road infrastructure are central aspects of Nepal's development plan and steps have been taken by the government as shown in Box 2. Transport management is the most common concern of the national politics as well as everyday life of people. One of

the visible changes brought by the new government is the development of infrastructure and governance in transport system. As such, infrastructure linked to mobility is very much a part of government's development plan.

Box 2 Transport management: Initiation and Implementation status in 2012

- Initiation in better maintenance of vehicles
- Systematic Air Quality Monitoring System
- Vehicle Emission Standards –New Standards established in 2012, equivalent Euro 3rd. Work towards promotion of Electronics vehicles(initial works like preparation of policy and guidelines)
- Promotion and Upgrading of Public Transport
- Quality control in Fuel.
- Massive Road Widening, almost more than 100 km in Kathmandu valley only.
- Law Enforcement activities
- Strengthening Transport Management Activities: Traffic Management and Organizing Public Transport
- Pedestrianisation: Historical Areas planned
- Study for Re-introduction and Extension of Electric Trolley in Kathmandu Valley done
- Feasibility Study of East West and Kathmandu–Pokhara Electric Railway completed
- Study for Metro/Elevated transport system in Kathmandu Completed
- Reintroduction of Mass Transport in the form of Sajha Transport
- Regular testing of vehicular emissions done regularly
- DPR completed for 100 km of electric railway under Indian Assistance
- Vehicle fitness Test Center constructed/ about to operate
- Maintaining Sustainable Urban Transport in Kathmandu: Experimentation with 2 Pilot Routes – for Public Transport to be done ;Route selected so far, Upgrading Public Transport Fleet , Traffic Management Support started, Improvement of footpath in core city will start soon

Source: MoEST (2013)

Work on transport management has been significantly taken up and the general public has also felt the effects. As shown in the plan (Box 2) roads have been widened massively in Kathmandu and elsewhere. Annual reports from the local development office show that almost every year, the highest demand is for construction of roads in the VDCs and a significant amount of budget goes to it each year. The road extension plan, initially envisioned in 1976 under the Urban Development Implementation Act 1977, has emerged as a popular initiative by the government. This is a huge project so-far where a total of around Rs 450 million has been allocated to reconstruct roads so far. The first phase is to widen around 180 km of roads in the valley of which some 100 Kilometers has been widened so far. The target is to broaden roads in all five municipalities of the Kathmandu Valley and 37 VDCs aspiring to be municipalities in the near future. This work under the Ministry of Physical Planning and Transport Management has been managed by the national road department, Kathmandu Valley road expansion project and road divisions of Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur. In addition to widening the current road system around Kathmandu, six projects underway are focusing on repair and improvement of existing roadways.

In addition to the current road projects, the government has also committed to building a second international airport, while constructing railways and roads in remote areas (Box 2). As for the institutional aspects of transport management, new rules for curbing road accidents such as breathalyser checkpoints (“*Ma Pa Se*” short for *Madak Padhartha Sewon* = driving under influence of alcohol), the administration of close circuit televisions for monitoring driver’s license tests have been introduced. Besides infrastructure, means of transportation is also an important aspect of transport system. As shown in Box (2), the government is taking initiatives to maintain quality of transport system.

Additionally, census data suggests that in addition to the improvement of vehicular infrastructure other services related to mobility, such as e-communication have improved. The expansion of telecommunication technology in Nepal has been dramatic and pervasive: 64.63 percent of the population now have mobile phones (CBS 2012). Progress for this type of contact combined with improved access to physical transportation makes people, goods and services more mobile and interconnects them more easily with other areas. These aspects are making an impact on the daily lives of people, and pushing the issue of mobility into discussions of development in Nepal.

4.2 Corporeal travel in Nepal

Corporeal travel as given in the conceptual framework (Box 1) refers to travel of people for work, leisure, family life, pleasure, migration and escape. In this section we discuss about international migration. The links of development to the international migration of labourer and their economic contribution to the country’s economy have been greatly discussed since the conclusion of the civil war in 2006. As aforementioned in the background, the government as well as the international donors and I/NGOS in Nepal have regarded that there is an important link between labour migration and development. Thus, they have taken up the issue of migration in different ways. As just one example, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) has been promoting suitable employment for labor migrants when they return so that Nepal might benefit from the skills and knowledge these workers acquired while abroad.

In the global scene, Nepal, like other countries of south Asia, is largely known as a labour force exporting country. Though this has been true for generalizations, this obscures different kinds of movement that happens into and out of Nepal as well as in South Asia. The regional and national policies on migration are chiefly guided by these generalizations. Despite being known as a labour exporting country, less attention has been paid to the in-migration and durations of movements. In reality, Nepal has become a place of origin and a destination for people on the move for long and short term visits and regular seasonal migration. Besides labour migration, these movements are

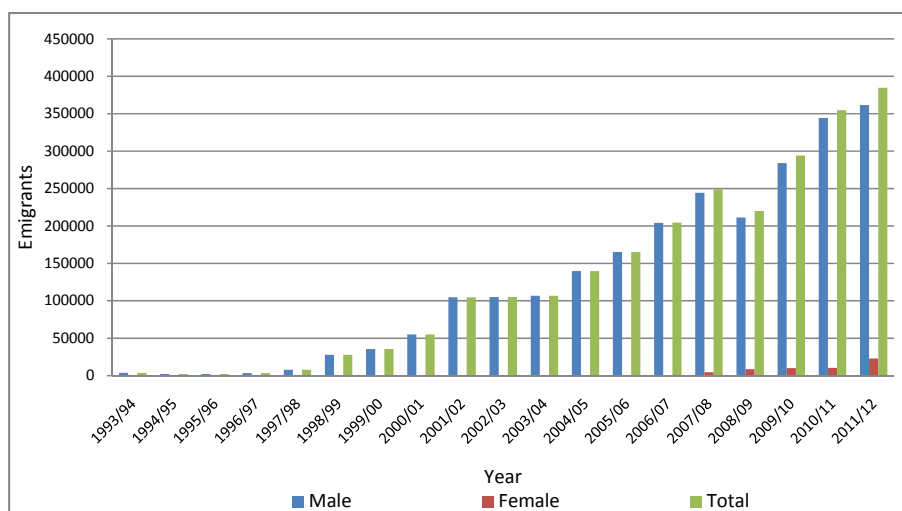
usually ignored by development agencies, government and social scientists in Nepal.

Nepal as a place of origin: Labour, student, diversity visas and trafficking from Nepal

The ten year armed conflict from 1996-2006 in Nepal intensified both internal and international migration. According to the latest census 2.1 million Nepalis (7.2 percent of the population) are absent from Nepal for a period of more than six months compared to 761,000 in 2001 (CBS 2011). Thirteen percent of these migrants are women (ibid). This figure also includes trafficked persons, expatriates and students along with those going for foreign employment, but does not account for many migrants in mid and far west Nepal who seasonally migrate for less than six months or who have relocated outside the country on a more permanent basis.

Among those absentees, the largest portions of migrants are labour migrants. The data on numbers of Nepali labour migrants going abroad vary widely, but the most frequently used source of information is Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE), which records the number of labour migrants who have taken final approval for foreign employment. At present, DoFE's data shows that the number of migrants stands at 2.08 million of which three-fourths are women¹ (NIDS and NCCR North-South, 2012).

Figure 1 Number of foreign labor migrants as registered in the DoFE



Source: NIDS and NCCR North South (2012)

¹ The figure below only shows documented migrants. A majority of women go for foreign employment through undocumented channels and hence do not get covered in such figures.

Regarding destinations, the government of Nepal has granted permission for foreign employment in 109 destinations around the world. However, most Nepalis travel to a group of 24 destinations for foreign employment. Among those 24 destinations, the most common destinations are India, the Gulf countries, and Malaysia, with an increasing number heading to "other developed countries" such as Japan, Korea, and Hong Kong. According to the World Bank (2009), India is estimated to have 867,000 Nepali migrant workers, 41 per cent of the total Nepalese migrants working overseas. Surveys shows that the Gulf countries host another 810,000 (38%) of migrants while Malaysia is said to have 245,000 (12%) migrants. Around 186,000 (8.7%) migrants work in the other developed countries like Japan, Korea and other European countries. Though there are no data, experts interviewed believe a significant increase in women migrating to Gulf countries like Kuwait, Saudi Arab and Israel.

Demographics reflect a youth bias in migration. A majority of Nepalese migrants are aged 20-44, in spite of a recent government policy that prohibits women below the age of 30 to migrate for foreign employment. Experts suggest that migratory patterns also reflect a hierarchy based on class, wealth status and education levels. Migrants with the least wealth and least education level go to India. Although the relationship (wealth vs. education level) is non-linear, relatively better-off and better-educated migrants are more likely to work in Malaysia and the Gulf countries. Those of higher status and wealth than gulf migrants are more likely to work in "other developed countries". One of our expert respondents echoed this idea:

"For instance, people from Nepal society belonging to "A" class economically prefer going to America, Japan, or England, category "B" types go to Canada and Europe. "C" types go to Korea, Taiwan and similar countries, "D" types go to Gulf and Malaysia. "E" class go to India which is based on network and the poorest section "F" types work for the landlords as tillers, ploughers and foreman. Majority of the categories belonging to D are labour migrants where as categories A and B also includes students".
- Interview with Ms. K. Rai (name changed), Kathmandu, 02 July, 2011.

This intersection of economic and social class with migration indicates this hierarchy has social and economic implications for the migrants and the households they represent.

In spite of cultural and legal barriers to female migration, the rate of corporeal movement of women, both internal and international, is increasing. On one hand such migration has opened up more spaces for women to participate in economic and socio-political aspects of Nepali society. This increases their mobility as a whole. On the other hand there are concerns about physical and mental abuses these women face while working abroad and after they return. Because of this, academics and stakeholders are divided about whether or not to promote female migration.

Apart from labor migrants, a significant number of Nepalis migrate for educational purposes. According to the Ministry of Education, 62,391 students took the 'no objection letter' to migrate as students by January, 2011. It has been found that Nepali study in 70 destinations around the world, most commonly in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, The United States, and other European countries.

The Diversity Visa (DV) programs sponsored by the U.S., Canada and Australia are another important component. Moreover, many people are also trafficked to India and abroad. Though these are important aspect of mobility that needs to be discussed, due to lack of data we did not delve into these topic.

Nepal as destination

As for migration to Nepal, a large majority are Indian labourers followed by Bangladeshi and Chinese. For illustration purposes, we provide an example of Indian labour migration in Nepal.

Indian labours in Nepal

Though there are no estimates about Indian labourers in Nepal, our study shows that migrant workers from India's Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and other states live and work in Nepal. The Census 2001 (CBS 2001) showed that there are 8.3 thousand Indiaborn people in Nepal which comprises 96 per cent of the foreign born population in Nepal. Because of the porous Nepal-India border, there is a continuous flow of Indian and Bangladeshi migrant workers in Nepal, populations which remain highly neglected in most migration policy discourses in Nepal and India.

Since the government of Nepal does not track migration into the country, the actual number of foreign-born migrants remains a guess estimate. Upreti (1999) conducted a survey of Indian migrants in Kathmandu that provided some interesting detail for this much-neglected population. A majority of migrants aged between 20-40 and lived apart from family. Upreti also found that 30-90 per cent of agricultural labor in peak seasons in Terai of Nepal is undertaken by Indian migrants. However, estimates of the total number of Indian migrant workers in Nepal is difficult due to porous border and their physical, linguistic and cultural similarities with the people of Nepal. Apart from construction and agriculture, many Indians in Nepal are engaged in large and small scale business. Results from our qualitative study among Indian migrants community living in Sinamangal and Chabahil (Grabska. et.al, 2010) in Kathmandu suggests that the trend of labour migration to Nepal from India seems to be increasing and diversifying. It was found that many Indian labour migrants were engaged in semi-skilled work such as barbering, plumbing, and faith reading. For our data, we interviewed faith readers and Kabads (people who collect waste materials for recycling) who had been living in Nepal for

more than two decades to explore their livelihoods in Nepal. These people travelled to Nepal mostly through previous networks. They were invited by their relatives and friends. Some came to Nepal for the first time as pilgrims and/or faith readers and elected to stay for reasons of cooler weather and better opportunities to work in Nepal. The duration in residence ranged from 25 years to 3 years, and most lived with family in groups of 25 or more households. Most Indians travelled back to their homelands every 1-2 years, usually for elections and/or census surveys. Others travelled for major festivals. During focus group discussions, respondents said they travelled en masses for Indian elections: *"We reserved three buses to go back to our home town to give photo for the voter list for the upcoming election in India"*. The primary travel route runs from Sunauli of India to the Southern border of Nepal at Birgunj via train and then from Birgunj to Kathmandu by bus.

Though highly understudied, our findings reflect that Nepal-India's relation in terms of labour markets is fulfilling the demand and supply of labours in both countries, not only India. Apart from Indian workers, our study found an increasing trend of Bangladeshi workers employed in road construction in the eastern part of the country.

Besides this, Nepal also hosts significant number of refugees. There are 105,000 Bhutanese refugees who are now in process of being resettled to the other countries. Besides this there are 20,000 Tibetan refugees (Joshi 2010) and 72 Somali refugees (NIDS and NCCR, 2010).

Nepal as a transition hub for tourism, conference and business

Many foreigners also travel to Nepal in short term movements not for labour but for tourism, Hindu and Buddhist pilgrimages, Christian missionary trips, conferences attendees, and business people. Figures released by Immigration Office at Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) revealed that visitor arrivals in the month of March 2012, compared to the same month last year, have increased by 37.2 per cent. In 2011/12, tourists coming from south Asian region increased by 21.5 per cent in aggregate. Similarly, inflow from Europe has also increased by 42 per cent. Tourists primarily arrived from the UK, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, Poland, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Russia. The above numbers, however, only account for tourists coming via Tribhuvan International Airport. Many tourists also enter Nepal via India using land routes the numbers for which go largely unrecorded.

Apart from tourism, Nepal has also come to be a popular locale for conferences and other legal (and illegal) business and social meetings. Our study finds that due to strict immigration rules for entry for Pakistanis, Indians and Sri-Lankans to enter each other's country, regional conferences by multinational offices are often preferred to be held in Nepal as the country's easy visa process facilitates travel for these nationals. Similarly, the land of Nepal has also been increasingly used as a transit point for illegal trade of money, narcotics trafficking, money

laundering and fake currency dealings (Ghimire 2013). Box 3 illustrates an example case of illegal activities in Nepal, entangled with different countries.

Box 3 Nepal in the drug dealing trajectory

On 2012-01-04, The Narcotic Drug Control Law Enforcement Unit (NDCLEU) of the Nepal Police arrested Thai woman, Supararat McIntosh, (36) with one kg of a banned drug at the Tribhuvan International Airport. The Nepal Police said the Thai woman was arrested with the consignment when she was about to board a Nepal Airlines flight bound for Kuala Lumpur. The banned drug could fetch at least \$2 million on the international black market in Europe and America. The drug was stuffed into a tin can equipped with a factory-made metallic seal. Details of McIntosh's passport show that the Thai woman had travelled through seven countries undetected, including Indonesia, Peru, Argentina and Qatar, to push the cocaine into a final destination Malaysia.

Source: THT (2012)

The fact that a woman took the drug to seven different countries shows that the transaction reached far beyond South Asian region to different continents. This demonstrates one example of how Nepal is increasingly pulled into a mobility hub, and therefore, opening to larger global networks. The case presented in Box 3 is one of several cases in the recent past where Nepal is being used as a transit point for international crimes.

While labour and student migration to and from Nepal primarily link two geographical places, these kinds of movement are often linked to multiple countries. Labour and student movements also create mobility of other materials such as money, information and other communication that are related to such trades.

Internal Migration

Aside from cross border movements, internal migration chiefly from rural to urban areas and from the hills to the plains is also an important type of corporeal mobility that is linked to development of Nepal. Data from the census suggests that people have become increasingly mobile in Nepal. The 2011 national census shows an increase in the population of Terai region and a significant decrease in the population of the hills and mountains (CBS 2012). Similarly, urbanization is taking place at a significant rate in cities like Kathmandu and Pokhara. Kathmandu's population increased by 61.23 percent from 2001 to 2012 (ibid). Urbanization rate in Nepal was only 3.2 percent in 2002, but increased to 13 percent in 2011 and 16 percent in 2012. Besides this, there is a lot of other regular commutation. Around 1.37 million vehicles have been registered in Nepal till 2012 and the number is increasing by 20 per cent every year.²

From these data, it can be safely assumed that internal migration has played a major role in redistributing population along the Terai, and the Hills and between rural and urban areas. Further, the population of youth, who are comparatively mobile in nature, has increased in urban areas compared to the

² Available at: <http://www.cen.org.np>; retrieved at 8 January 2013.

past. This is shown by the overwhelming increase in the migration of youth for foreign employment as shown by Figure 1 above.

All the above mentioned movements are important aspects of the movement of people which reinforce other kinds of movements such as creation of networks, ideas, and information. However, there are no adequate records of these kinds of movements. Also, except for tourism, there has been no discussion about these kinds of mobility as they relate to migration policy of Nepal.

5. Mobility in development plans of Nepal

Grabska et al. (2011) find that the boundaries between and conceptions of migration, movement, and mobility are often blurred in public and private discourses and documents.. They point an interesting example of this confusion evident in the translation of UNDP Human Development Report of 2009 which contained a section entitled: "Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development". In this report, mobility translated differently depending on the language. In Russian, it read *chelovecheskaja mobilnost* which literally refers to human ability to move fast while the German version used the word *Migrazion* as there is no equivalent word for mobility in that country(Grabska et al. 2011). Our analysis of data shows that same holds true for Nepal. The coming section is based on our interviews with stakeholders working on development and migration in Nepal. It looks at the collective understanding about the migration, mobility, and development discussions in Nepal.

Like those working for the UN, experts working on migration issues in Nepal agreed that there was no clear conception of mobility among the different organizations. Hence, mobility was not a concern in the migration and development discourse in Nepal. Though aspects of mobility make significant headlines in Nepal, it is not understood holistically as mobility, but rather as different specific events. For example, the open border system between Nepal and India implies corporeal mobility, the mobility of goods, and communicative travel, but our research found that this phenomenon was never regarded as 'mobility'. An expert working on migration policy issue in Nepal and Sri-Lanka observed: *"I have not found any understanding of mobility in the government and other actors that make policies and programmes for migration in these two countries"* (Interview notes 12.09. 2011).

In Nepali, the term mobility is not linked to migration. In general society and in mobility is rather used in the context of class and caste related hierarchal movement. Another respondent from an international organization working on migration in Nepal shared her observation: *"I do not think there is a clear perspective on mobility. I think people often relate, mobility, migration, and movement together. Mobility is most commonly used to refer to caste and class-based vertical movement."* (Interview notes 12.09.2011)

Our study finds that major discussion of the migration-development link relates primarily to economic remittance from labour migrants, possibility of contribution of Nepali Diaspora to Nepal, and their human rights and security of labour migrants. Nepal's national debate is largely influenced by globally-oriented forums, such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and the findings of the Colombo Process. When reflecting on migration, most respondents spoke about foreign employment but did not refer to the other forms of in and out migration as mentioned above. Migrant workers in Nepal are referred to in government policy as *Aaprawashi Kamdar* which means workers going out of country. The fact that migration is governed by the Ministry of Labour and Transport Management in Nepal (MoLTM), under its ancillary branch—the Foreign Employment Promotion Board—demonstrates that international labour migration is the main focus of migration governance in Nepal. However, the same ministry also is responsible for another important aspect of mobility: infrastructure and transport management. However, the board does not link these two forms of mobility together when considering policy.

Similarly, other kinds of corporeal movement such as the movement of students is governed by the Ministry of Education, and again, there is no linkage with of student migration data with foreign migration. For example, though many civil servants leave the country for training and study on government scholarships (and sometimes on their own efforts), the government neither records the movement of such employees nor takes a formal initiative to use knowledge gained by them while abroad. The same situation was found to exist in other development agencies except for a growing few as mentioned in section 1. In both cases, any knowledge shared resulted from personal initiative or through networks in alumni associations.

Apart from the national census, which calculates absentee population, the government has broadly taken data of labour migrants as the data of international migration from Nepal. Similarly, the only policy on migration is called Foreign Employment Policy which relates to the safety and welfare of the labour migrants. In more recent policy discussions Non Residential Nepalese (NRNs) – the Nepali Diaspora – have been invoked but only as they relate to development and economic contribution.

The government's focus on labour migration highlights remittances. Remittances are linked to development in Nepal because they have made visible impacts on the lives of people. Box 4 shows some of the facts about remittance in Nepal.

Box 4 Migration and remittances in Nepal, some fast facts

- Almost half of Nepali households have at least one migrant abroad or as a returnee.
- Remittances constitute one-quarter of the income of all Nepali households, and two-thirds of income of households actually receiving remittances.
- A third of working male population may be abroad remitting 25 per cent of GDP or more.
- Nepal is the largest remittances recipient among countries with at least US \$10 million.
- Foreign remittances were 23.4 per cent of GDP in 2011. NRB estimates US\$2.7 billion excluding India. The underestimate is due to typical underreporting of income in household surveys.

Source: Adapted from Shishido (2009)

Our study finds that the debate about migration in Nepal is dominated by foreign employment in Gulf countries and Malaysia. Other kinds of immigrants and out migrants are largely ignored. There is no specific body in the government that regards the various kinds of movements of Nepali people in a holistic way. So far, protection of Nepali labour migrants, safe migration, and regulation of corruption in international labour migration are the priorities of the Government of Nepal and other development stakeholders. On one hand, this is necessary as a large volume of migration is for labour. But, on the other hand, the international movement of Nepali people affects other aspects of mobility such as transport management, networks and communication. A holistic understanding of the linkages between these kinds of mobility could contribute positively to achieve development goals. For example, even when labour migration is taken into account, related issues are never approached in holistic manner. There is a flow of knowledge and skills that become mobile through migrants' physical and virtual contact with the home country. There are various networks that these movements initiate. There is a regular flow of services and goods (example in the form of nostalgic trade). All these have implications of development of the country.

As migration very recently has caught the attention of those concerned with development in Nepal, the discussion is still limited to the positive and negative impacts of migration rather than how the government might manage migration to benefit the country more broadly. Findings from our study suggests that among other stakeholders in Nepal, there are mixed perceptions about sending people for foreign employment and development; some believe migration brings development back to Nepal while others believe it deprives the country of valuable talent and skills. The opinions on migration and development among the civil societies were found to be reflected through regional networks such as CARAM-Asia and Migrant Forum Asia (MFA), both of which maintain chapters in Nepal.

Similarly, our respondents hold the opinion that discussion on the association between female migration and development has not yet started in Nepal in earnest. While the development-outcome of migration regards men primarily as labour migrants, the issue of women has become visible only and exclusively

as related to protection and safety issues in migration. Protective prohibition in Nepal is largely envisioned for women migrants. According to studies conducted by Pourakhi (an NGO created by returnee women migrants), women use remittance payments for nutrition and education which are investments for longer term human capital that contribute to the development vision of Nepal. But women are not a part of the migration development discussions. Apart from this oversight, migration initiates economic and social mobility of women and opens their socio-political space at home and in the wider community (Ghimire 2010). This could further contribute to gender empowerment. As an acting household head in place of the absent male, women become more mobile not only in their physical being but also in their social and political spheres. These changes in women's lives caused by labour migration or forced migration has been documented in academia (for example Kasper 2005, Ghimire 2011, Shrestha and Conway 2001) but the impact of other forms of corporeal mobility such as migration for study or diversity visas as well as the gendered impact of other types of mobility on women still remains to be analysed. This has not been addressed by the development policies of Nepal.

Thus, in context of Nepal, there is a very narrow understanding of migration itself which largely ignores all other forms of movement from and into the country. Secondly, though these movements initiate other kinds of movement of people, goods, services, knowledge, and money, the migration management system in the country does not take into account these phenomena as types of mobility. Moreover, it is a fact that these alternative forms of mobility are highly interdependent upon each other and create diverse networks. Furthermore, mobility has been largely ignored in development plans. One of the reasons for this is because the I/NGOs and government's understanding of migration is rather narrow and static for example, it has not been able to make policy and programs to benefit from other kinds of flow of people (such as students who go abroad or returnees). Besides this, the present migration policy and the country's interim plan is largely unable to grasp the broader dynamics of mobility and benefits that are acquired from it.

6. Why migration? Development debates must incorporate other kinds of mobility

With the gradual decrease in poverty and gradual development of infrastructure in Nepal, corporeal travel, imaginative travel, and communicative travel have gradually increased in Nepal. There are inter-linkages between different aspects of mobility. For example, the migration of people including labour force outside the country is very much linked to other factors such as improvement in physical infrastructure related to mobility, extension and wider use of telecommunication networks and cell phones, increasing use of internet for banking, sale and purchase, delivery and transfer of goods and services and networks and flows of ideas that such activities generate. Similarly, social

and economic mobility among people are also linked to the above types of movement (Adhikari and Hobley 2011).

The positive change in one typology of mobility reinforces mobility of other types. The above mentioned developments in infrastructures induce virtual and physical mobility of people. When people move physically from one place to another, they also reinforce mobility of other types such as of those related to communication. Livelihoods often become multi-local which induce communicative travel such as text messages, e-mail, news, and information. Similarly, the easy access of telecommunication networks via mobile phones all over Nepal has made knowledge and information mobile and improved the transfer of goods and services. The mushrooming of services such as department stores and food courts (as just two examples) increase the flow of imported goods to the capital and deepened the gradual penetration of ideas, goods and services to other urban centres of the country.

Communicative travel has played a significant role for inducing corporeal mobility of people. Migrant networks and exchanges of information about supply and demand of labour have fomented the growth in organizations such as recruiting agencies that send people abroad for foreign employment. Thus, new organizations and institutions that are related to movement have emerged. For example, foreign employment contractors—known locally as "manpower agencies"—have opened up in Nepal. There are 767 registered manpower agencies which operate on the basis of their outreach in remote villages. Similarly, there are also many educational consultancies which support students to study abroad. These organizations extend from urban centres to the rural areas of the country and often operate in transnational space. Like Thieme (2006), our data suggests that the high increase in foreign employment trends in Nepal is an outcome of this mobility of social networks, and information. The information and ideas that flow with the operation of these organizations to the rural periphery link local people to different spaces inside and outside the country and brings about changes in their daily livelihoods.

In the longer term, such inter-linkages can bring changes in the society and become important aspects of development. These linkages create a basis for change not only at the institutional level, but also in the general orientation of society and the aspirations of people. As actors, when people interact with these institutions, their interaction brings changes in the existing socio-economic and political hierarchical order of the society. For example, Adhikari and Hobley (2011) have shown that due to outmigration there has been a transformation of social structures caused by changes in land ownership patterns and landlord tenant relationships. They show that existing hierarchy of class and caste relationship has transformed to such a degree that there now exists a more even space for negotiation among different groups, who traditionally have been vertically stratified in power relations in Nepalese

society. Such transformations help creating a change in boundaries of social, political, and economic spaces. Thus, the interrelationship between different types of mobility helps in narrowing the distance between people and places, between the rural and urban, between national and international borders, and among socio-economic borders around class, caste and ethnicity. One only needs observe the changes in consumption patterns around Nepal to see how borders around caste and ethnicity have shifted.

The history of mobility shows that mobile Nepali people returning from abroad have brought many commodities such as cardamom and tea. Many improved varieties of crops and vegetables were also introduced from abroad due to human mobility. Now, these products—once considered exotic and foreign—are becoming integral components of economic development of Nepal. Nepali people working abroad developed their skills and knowledge and returned home to start successful businesses. Examples like this show that different kinds of mobility are linked together and can have positive outcomes for development.

Governance is related to the responsibility of making the lives of the governed people better. When mobility significantly touches the everyday lives of people, it should become a governance issue. Therefore, it is important that the government incorporates an enhanced view of mobility in its development visions, policies, and plans.

7. Conclusion: A call for expanding the migration-development discourse in Nepal

Due to the fact that migration has become an important driver of development in government plans, we propose that discussion of migration and development adopt a more holistic view that includes the various forms of mobility previously discussed. The present understanding of migration and efforts geared towards management of migration is largely dominated by concerns about labour migration. However, other types of mobility have significant impact on development issues such as the links between migration and flows of ideas and knowledge. For example, corporeal movement influences the flow of ideas and goods while development in infrastructure such as roads and manpower agencies enhances movement of people. For development, the different kinds of mobility and their inter linkages are very important. Practically speaking, it is not possible for a single ministry to take into account all kinds of mobility as shown in our conceptual framework. However, mobility could be viewed holistically in the development plans of the country such as the three year plan. Different ministries could work in co-ordination to include these inter linkages in their action plan. So, we propose that the present development plan and visions should take into account the different types of mobility and their impact on the daily lives of people. A better development

plan requires an understanding of the social facts that are taking place at present but also considers the rapidly-changing dynamics at work in society today. In the migration development discussion, the stakeholders who deal with the issues of migration should anticipate the wider aspect of mobility that comes with the movement of people and networks along with changes that these movements create across time. Similarly, those dealing with other kinds of mobility like infrastructure and systems should anticipate its link with corporate mobility of people.

The policies and programs that we envision today should be able to address the consequences of such broader mobility. For instance, the large number of students going abroad coupled with the tightening of borders for workers and a sagging global economy means that more people will be forced to come back to the country. For Nepal, this return-movement of people would mean an inflow of ideas and knowledge but also a change in pool of human resources in the labour market. It could lesser inflow of remittance but widen the networks that their mobility creates. Consequently, these return-movements could create other kinds of mobility such as virtual movements, the transcending of social distance, socio-economic and political mobility. The present policy has not been able to see migration-development nexus from this broader lens. Through this discussion paper we aim to call upon the concerned stakeholders to scale up the migration development discourse to include this broader aspect of mobility that the movement of people from and into the land of Nepal bring about.

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