

Nepalese Migrants in Delhi

By Govinda Neupane

Center for Development Studies, Nepal

Kathmandu

January 2005

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General Note: In Nepal, the Bikram calendar is in use instead of Gregorian calendar. Therefore, in this book, particularly in the publication date of the references, the Bikram Sambat (B.S.) is quoted. The difference between B.S. and A.D. is 56 year 7 month and 17 days in ordinary year and 56 year 7 month and 18 days in leap year. Therefore, the calculation is – A.D. + 56 year 7 month and 17 days = B.S. in ordinary A.D. and + 1 day in leap year. All dates used in this book without mentioning B.S. are in A.D.

Nepalese Migrants in Delhi

Chapter One

Nepalese politico- economic milieu

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has placed Nepal at 140th position in the world development ranking (UNDP, 2004). This is painful state of a country, which has its foundation in one of the ancient civilizations. The birthplace of Gautam Buddha and the land famous for its natural panorama and majestic mountain peaks including the tallest Mt. Everest should have a better place. Furthermore, it is unpleasant to swallow the truth that Nepal, the land of great artisans and architects like Arniko and the land of brave, hospitable and industrious people has such a lower standing.

The mainstream politicians, high-flying intellectuals, bureaucrats, non-governmental organization technocrats and the commission agents of the development agencies talk about national development continuously. The irony is that such talks about the concepts, goals, priorities and practices have contributed neither to lessening the difficulties of the people nor to improving their living standard nor to empowering them in any meaningful way. Politics together with advances in science and technology, progressive cultural traits and engagement of the masses in the production processes in a more energetic and emancipated way provides foundation for development, change and prosperity. In this process, the structural factors play vital roles in all areas of change – social, economic, political and physical. The process of change passes through a complex path. The understanding of the complex path insures realization the goals. The rulers and their intellectual collaborators in Nepal have failed to understand the complexes. The galaxy of elites mentioned above has not examined the possibilities and potentials objectively. Furthermore, the formal leadership of different governmental and non-governmental organizations has not won the confidence of the lower middle class people in general, and the marginalized section of the society in particular.

It is strange that the Nepalese communists borrowed the class analysis of the Chinese society made by Mao Zedong to stay out of risks. They took the conventional path rather than attempting to analyze the society objectively. The composition of the Nepalese society is a mix of semi-feudal, feudal, national bourgeoisies and dependent as well as comprador bourgeoisies' economic communities. The production relationship has been changing rapidly and capitalist production relations have emerged even in the agriculture sector in rural areas.

This kind of capitalist production relation is prevalent both, in the cities and the villages. The land tenure system and ownership patterns have been passing through several interventions since the *Birta* (grant-land) abolition of 1959 followed by the land reform of 1964. However, the provisions of “land to the tillers” has not been implemented yet fully as there are a few large estates still exist in the southern plains. There were no big landlords in the peasant society in the hill regions even in the past. Furthermore, the psychology created by the land reform undertaking promoted the actions helping for the fast transfer of land ownership to the tillers.

The lower rung of the peasant society has been deprived of basic needs for living. They have no foundation and scope within the given social framework to sustain their individual and family livelihood decently. They lack critical intellectual capabilities and physical facilities. They are suffering from different types of injustices resulted from the hierarchy of class structure. There are different ethnic as well as nationality origins of these peasants. The Hindu-Khasa domination has created a situation where indigenous people and oppressed nationalities continuously have been getting unequal treatment. Accordingly, these peasants in their traditional social practices are guided by the roles specified by the gender discriminatory social norms that limit the creation and independence of women. The female peasants are suppressed by the patriarchal structure, values and practices. The feudal stereotypes have limited prospects for their bright future. The peasants live in utterly underdeveloped regions and backward rural settlements. These factors reflect the hardships of the peasantry. They are continuously subjected to exploitation. They are also suffering from caste-based discriminations. The Dalits have been surviving under a criminally designed caste system that considers them as untouchables. The Hindu-Khasa (particularly Bahun) social anarchy has made their life extremely miserable. The life of the peasants in the remote regions (e.g. Karnali) is more painful than their cousins, who reside in other parts of the country. Some populist efforts have brought a little difference in their plight. However, these measures have failed in bringing fundamental changes in the political, economic, cultural and social life of the rural people.

Exactly in the same way as that is in the rural areas, the large number of workers, small businesspersons, youths and students, low ranking government and private sector employees, teachers etc, who live in the urban centers face problems that include but not limited to dearness and unemployment. Continuous decline in the quality of consumer goods and services have terribly affected the educational, academic, public health and consumer sectors. All the agencies of the state machinery are full of anarchy. Injustice has become a normal phenomenon. Good governance and public services to the low-income group people are unimaginable. The words like social justice, peace, economic development, just distribution etc. have become the attractive means for collecting more and more wealth for the ruling political leaders, bureaucrats and other upper class social forces such as non-government organization (NGO) technocrats including the merchants of human rights.

On the other side, a great change has come to the life of high class Nepalese. Huge buildings have mushroomed in the cities. Their living standard and consumption capacity have reached the high level of luxury. The upper classes-Hindu-male- Khasa have control over the positions of power and the opportunities in the administrative, economic, cultural, educational and civic sectors. They have been the monopoly consumers of every fruit of the limited development and the facilities generated by the expansion of services.

In fact, poverty, deprivation, marginalization of the largest section of population has been a general issue of talks. It has attracted the attention of the donors. Lots of foreign aid has been brought to the country in the name of the people. Not only the government but also all the so-called NGOs have been frantically racing to get such alms. The main problems of the Nepalese society are the absence of social justice, lack of farsightedness, lack of self-confidence, lack of competence and lack of aptitude in capacity building, resource-base identification and utilization. The lack of means and resources is not the main cause of poverty and underdevelopment. Nepal's natural, economic and cultural resources have remained as basic assets that could be extraordinarily fruitful. The horticulture friendly topography as well as the diversity of climatic zones and the quality of soil, all are the blessings. Similarly, the beautiful natural panorama, the towering peaks of the Himalayas, abundance of cultural heritages and many other important resources for tourism industry offer the sound base for progress. Hydro-electricity, the important raw material for development infrastructure is the other wealth-base. If a proper environment has been created to utilize the hard work, industriousness, creation, motivation and productivity of the Nepalese people, there is a great possibility of transforming Nepalese society into a prosperous one. (Neupane, 2057 V.S.)

The present Nepalese socio-political environment is full of internal conflicts, confrontations and contradictions among economically, politically and culturally conservative and progressive forces. The short period of parliamentary system has been occupied with the activities of propagation of abstract idealization of democracy and concrete realization of wealth for the rulers. Exploitation in the society, misuse of state machinery, treachery in the character of rulers against the future of the nation and all round anarchy of the high classes have become the present day realities. The hope that was kindled after 1990 among the toiling workers, peasants and oppressed people has now totally faded away. The leaders who were supposed to be heroes of democracy in the past have now degenerated to the meanest villains. The parliamentary system has become incorrigibly infamous. This situation of the country has made a part of the people as hopeless spectators whereas the other part is active against the system.

Now there is a movement at the grassroots level of the people. There is a momentum. There seem different separate processes in the development of cultural, economic and political transformation going on. In this extraordinary situation, polarization is taking place in the population based on class, nationalities, oppressed castes and neglected geographical regions. The people are becoming loyal to the power centers according to their belief. In the present situation, only the total change in economic, social and political sectors on the best interest of the people can bring peace in the country. To think otherwise will be to be a victim of a mirage. Ironically, the government has remained busy in reciting eulogy of 'democracy' and fulfilling the interests and desires of its party cadres and followers (Neupane, 2057A).

Although, the over all picture of the Nepalese state and the society is not bright, at the same time there have been some major changes taking place. The emergence and expansion of the critical mass at every level is a significant achievement. Similarly, quantitative increase in the number of facilities also may force to insert quality on the long run. The pessimists, hypercritics of the regime or the intellectuals as well as political opponents of the Maoists paint a gloomy picture and declare that the doomsday is just around. Irrespective of the failures, misdeeds and free play of anarchy, Nepal is not a failed state yet. The macro-level picture might be dark, but the micro-level processes are different. The micro level attempts made at the community and family levels do not justify the emergence of the state of hopelessness.

In summary, the socio-political and economic situation in Nepal could be best described as transitional. The society as a whole is in transition from feudal mindset, socio-cultural codes and ownership pattern of resources as well as 'upper caste'-Hindu-Khasa-male dominated socio-political structure and upper class designed labor relations. It has been moving towards the newly emerging trends of inclusive pluralist democracy, economic justice as well as equity and multiculturalism. The upheavals, unrest, violence and intellectual, political and social divisions, all are part of this historic transitional process. The transition has its own forward and backward movements, strengths and weaknesses and bright and dark factors contributing in the process.

Fundamentally, there are three major trends among the people, more particularly in the villages. The first is, participate in the process of socio-economic and political change. Secondly, participate in the production activities, continue the family social traditions and maintain political neutrality, at least overtly. Thirdly, find out opportunities outside the village boundary, go to cities and urban centers and even go to find out work outside the country. The first category is composed of the change agents, the activists. The second category is that of large number of working masses. The third category is that of migrants. Every village might have migrants going outside. These migrants go to work in cities, towns, urban centers and large construction sites inside the country and others go outside Nepal. Among the migrants, a large number crosses the border and migrates to India to work. This is one area a comprehensive study could highlight some micro-level processes contributing to the political economy of the country. Therefore, against the socio-economic and political context briefly examined above, it would be appropriate to analyze critically the complex processes, reasons, facts and characters of migration. The analysis would help to dig out the reality and assess the impact of migration in the Nepalese society and state.

Chapter Two

Migration: An overview

Introduction

The mobility of people started from time immemorial and it has been continuing for centuries. The Aryans moved to the east and the west of their place of origin in want of better survival opportunities. This pre-historic trend of migration was not limited to Aryans. The Mongols did the same. The American whites or the European immigrants forced the indigenous African people to move out of their African home environment and throw them in slavery. People ventured to new locations, areas or countries, because they wanted to discover new opportunities or governments and the influential persons as well as organizations compelled them to go outside somewhere. The colonial rulers forced several workers to move to new areas to work as laborers. The Indians in Fiji and other pacific islands, in the east as well as in southern Africa, and in Caribbean are the examples of such practices.

W. M. Spellman (2002: 221) says, "Individual calculations about a better lifestyle, household decisions to allow certain members to migrate with a goal of assisting those back home (a form of insurance in countries where there are no state-backed unemployment and insurance schemes), fear or direct experience of persecution at the hands of intolerant regimes, response to famine, and capitalist market penetration into previously stable agricultural societies – all undoubtedly play some role in the current complicated migration phenomenon."

Visram (2002: 44 -104) has candidly narrated the story of Asian migrants in Britain. The British colonized India and forced several Indians to work for them in Britain and elsewhere in their colonies as housemaids (Ayahs), servants, seamen (Lascars) and mercenaries. The practice in its second phase gave rise to a new colored population in Britain, which included the Indian wives and their children of the white British officials assigned to work in India. The Indian middle class collaborators, mostly the Indian royals moved to Britain and some of them settled down there. The students and intellectuals from India traveled to and studied in Britain. They entered in business activities, professional arenas and participated in politics too. In this way, a strong Asian community emerged and integrated with the multicultural British society maintaining its identity as a distinct cultural community. Talking about United States, Tariq Ali (2003: 281-315) counts three types of immigrants who contributed to build present-day self-sufficient America. These immigrants included "religious fundamentalists in the first phase, political refugees fleeing persecution in Europe in the second, and later, those whose only drive was gold." Thus, he highlights three major factors contributing to migration – religion, politics and economics. Also, Milton Esman (1996: 316 – 320) has indicated the same factors. He says, "Migration has been a continuous phenomenon throughout history, induced by political or religious oppression and, more frequently, by the search for improved economic opportunities. Migration may be voluntary or compelled.

Indeed, migration is the result of the complex socio-economic and political processes where the individuals and families have to make decisions examining the choices available against the background of the socio-political structures and the compulsions therein. On the other hand, also the political masters of the day might decide for them. Introducing the book "Migration, Mobility and Modernization" that he edited, Siddle (2000:8) says, "People take or make opportunities, make mistakes, react either to private whims or to growing desperation. They strike out alone or using an unseen network of kin and acquaintances to make what otherwise appear to be random shifts." Tulsi Patel (2001:148) argues, "There is the need and scope to understand the constitution of migration as a social process."

Glimpses of global migration

In the ancient and the medieval times before 1450 AD, the people have been largely segregated in particular geographical-racial zones. Caucasoids inhabited in Europe, North Africa, South-west Asia and Northern India. Negroids dominated in sub-Saharan Africa whereas Mongoloids had the same status in Asia and the Americas. Australoid had been residing in Australia and Southern India. The European Caucasoids started the movement of people to a region dominated by other races. In the age of European exploration, they spread into central Asia, the Americas and Oceania, and finally into Southern Africa. The movement of people in the colonial era was from the seat of imperial power to colonies and from colony to colony. Only a few moved from colony to the seat of imperial power. During a period covering 1800 to 1925 between 50 and 60 million Europeans from the advanced industrial states migrated to other continents, more particularly in five countries

– Argentina, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA. (Spellman, 2002: 6, 11) The primary factors that contributed for the migration were the conquest of a colony and to administering it to subjugate local population, exploit natural as well as human resources and live life as in heaven full of power, comfort and luxury. The colonial masters, who included their army, white businesspersons, Christian priests and the civilian officials and their dependant, were the first beneficiary of such luxury after the explorers and the invading army insured victory. They moved to new territory, killed or enslaved indigenous tribes grabbed all available resources and created favorable situation to help migrate their fellow Europeans to settle down there. The story that had unfolded in Hispaniola, where Columbus reached in 1493 continued to Mexico and North America.

Similarly, slave trade was another major contributor for the movement of people from sub-Saharan Africa to other continents. The practice of slavery in Islamic region was widespread as early as the medieval ages. There was the practice of conquering tribes, enslaving them and bartering them against horses from Northern Africa and west Asia. The practice in Islam to prohibit enslaving fellow Muslim encouraged the slave trade in the form of procuring an infidel from sub-Saharan Africa. The new European masters also saw the practice useful for them. The Portuguese had initiated the slave trade in the post-medieval age. The Africans had to suffer for centuries in not only Europe, Middle East and America, but also as far east as Kolkota in India. In the seventeenth century, two million Africans were transferred to America alone. Another 3.3 million were captured and sent to America in the following century. (Spellman, 2002: 60). There were large number of African slaves involved in the sugarcane plantation in Caribbean and agriculture in Brazil. The number of slaves transported to America, which has been estimated at 2 million as mentioned above sounds alarming but according to Philip Curtin's estimate, that is just 5% of the African slaves. Forty-two percent of all slaves landed in Caribbean sugarcane plantations and another 38% in agriculture in Brazil. (In Spellman, 2002: 58).

Labor requirement in new areas of agriculture and industrial activities also enhanced population movement. Although, this form of movement was not a direct slavery but the living condition of such migrants was sub-human. Many laborers from India were taken to Caribbean and pacific islands such as Fiji. Between 1838 and 1917, half a million Indians had left to work in the sugarcane plantations in Mauritania, Fiji and Caribbean. They were either forced to go there, or attracted by the need of better livelihood in new areas. Besides, there was voluntary movement also due to population pressure in their native villages. Between 1850 and 1875, about 250,000 Chinese were contracted by the foreign agents and shipping companies to work primarily in Malaya and Cuba.

War and political unrest were other factors. Over 7 million people crossed the international borders in Europe during the First World War. Similarly, about 25 million did the same during the Second Great War (1939-45). Approximately 15 million people fled from their home to resettle in a new place during partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. About 2 million people left mainland China to settle down in Taiwan and Hong Kong after the revolution in 1949. In 1990, the estimated number of total migrants worldwide was 80 million. Among them 20 million were refugees. The saga of Jews is no less pathetic. After suppression and humiliation of several centuries, between 1880 and 1995, about 8 million Jews migrated to Unites States, Western Europe, and to Palestine from Christian and Muslim dominated countries. (Spellman, 2002: 180 – 193). Several local conflicts, external invasions and political persecution have been continuously fueling the exodus.

In the modern times, more particularly, after the emergence of nation-states, migration has been curtailed with restrictive practices of the states. Even the genuine refugees face humiliating responses from state actors of the Northern regimes. On the eyes of the officials of these countries everybody, who comes to these countries, is an immigrant unless he or she proves otherwise. More recently, on the name of suppression of global terrorism and homeland security, they have stolen all privacy, dignity and honor of the visitors. They do not spare even high government officials of less powerful countries. The example includes the stripe check of an Indian defense minister who transited United States in 2003. Due to intolerance, ill treatment and rough behavior on the part of the officials of Northern countries on one side and on the other creation and expansion of opportunities in their own region or countries, more particularly in China and India, the migrants primarily motivated by economic reason have started to step back.

Migration and Nepal

The General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) has estimated that there are 5000 Nepalese migrant workers in Japan, more than 2500 in South Korea, more than 10000 in Hong Kong and more than 2

million in India (in Rimal: 1997). Similarly, a large number of Nepalese workers (about 0.4 million) are in Gulf countries and the more recent trend is that many more aspire to go there. The trend has been more visible recently (See Annex – 2.E). Besides, there are Nepalese workers in Malaysia, Europe and USA. In this way, there is large spread of Nepalese migrants. However, the largest number of Nepalese migrants is in India. Therefore, to understand the background of Nepalese migration to India is important.

The ground realities should be analyzed objectively to arrive at some sort of conclusions relating to migration in a certain politico-economic and social environment. Hence, to assess briefly, the present situation in Nepal with an overview on its migratory behaviors in history could be an important task to understand the complex migration phenomenon. In Nepal, migration has not only been accelerated due to push factors which make people moving outside of Nepal but also there are historical processes related to pull factors from outside. Nepal-India border relation pertaining to people's movement was unrestricted since they form certain demarcated boarder. The Rana rulers had introduced some type of VISA system to enter into and travel out of Kathmandu valley but that was equally applicable to Nepalese nationals too.

The Treaty of Sugauli signed in 1816 between Nepal and British-India was the first official document, which specified the boarder between the two countries. Through this treaty, the British annexed a large part of Nepalese territory to British-India. The territories included Dehradun, Mussorie, Darjeeling, etc. At the same time, the British acknowledged the sovereign right of Nepalese state over the territory of Nepal as it stands today. Some territories had been returned back to Nepal in 1860. The territories called "*Naya Muluk*" included Banke, Bardia, Kailali and Kanchanpur districts. During the British rule in India, they continued the recruitment of Nepalese youth in their army. The practice was initiated at the time of Sikh ruler, Ranjit Singh. The Nepalese youth had been going to Lahore, the then capital of Punjab to join the Sikh army. Thus, they were called Lahures^[1]. However, their number was not that great. The British formed entire brigade and used the Gurkha solders in several parts of the world, more particularly, to fight against German-led coalitions during World War I, and II, to crush communist guerrillas in Malaya, to fight against Argentina at Falkland etc. After the departure of the British colonialists from India, a tripartite agreement was signed among British, Indian and Nepalese governments in 1947. As per the agreement, the Gurkha Brigade was split, and half of the army stayed in India. The Indian state also used to fight in the war against China and Pakistan and the Gurkhas were used to quell the militancy in northeast India and Kashmir. The merits and demerits of this recruitment are not the subjects of discussion here. However, this act accelerated the movement of Nepalese people and created favorable situation for migration.

Similarly, a large number of Nepalese workers migrated to India to work in the tea-estates of Darjeeling and forest clearing activities as well as timber works in Assam. The most important factor for the Nepalese migration to India was the Treaty of 1950 (See Annex – 3 for the full text) between Nepal and India, which formalized the passport-VISA free movement of people of both the countries. The treaty, though heavily criticized by Nepalese left and ultra-nationalists, has been the foundation of the legal framework for the cross-border movement. According to the treaty, Nepalese and Indian nationals enjoy equal rights in both the countries in several areas such as employment, business, unrestricted movement and owning property. Due to these arrangements and culturally closer historical linkages, the free movement of people has been in practice since the human settlement appeared in areas of present day Nepal and India and that practice has been continuing unhindered until now.

Migration from Nepal to India

The brief overview presented above provides a platform to understand and analyze the reasons of migration from Nepal to India. In the context of Nepal-India migration behaviors, socio-economic factors have played a major role. Due to such processes activated, several Nepalese have opted to migrate to India.

Every Nepali village has its own problems and opportunities. Primarily, the villagers face the challenges to increase the production and expanding the market for their produces. Nepali highlands are rich in herbs, fruits, pastures and minerals. Exploration, development and establishing marketing mechanism are the problem areas. At present, in absence of a mechanism to link with the larger markets, the produces could not contribute for a higher income. It limits the ability of the families to spend on developmental needs such as education of their children. Furthermore, injustice, exploitation and extremely unequal wealth ownership and distribution systems have complicated the village life, giving rise to hostile relations among classes due to enhanced level

of contradictions. As a result, the fighting is going on between the government forces and the Maoists, who claim themselves as the champion of the working people and downtrodden masses. The conflict also has added to already existing contradictions and created some more grounds for migration within or outside the country.

For a more general review of the causes of migration to India, the family background of the migrants could give some ideas to start with. The story of hopelessness leading to migration does not reflect the reality. In addition, the conflict might have contributed only marginally. The family backgrounds of the migrants are astonishingly diverse. Not all of them are from low-income families or those who are from the traditional families who used to come to India to work. It is primarily correct to conclude that majority of the migrants are from low income families with qualified remark that there are many others too. Quite a good number comes from lower middle class families and have relatively good educational background. The thesis that migrants are 'manual laborers and the origin is low-income family' is not correct. About 40% migrants in Delhi have their lower middle class origin (see Table- 6).

Reasons for migration to Delhi

The study reveals that the major reasons, which influence Nepalese to migrate to Delhi, include structural factors, family tradition, youthful romanticism, deception or luring, social attitudes and security concerns (Please see Table – 5 for statistics).

Socio-economic structural factor is the single major cause. Partly, it has been influenced by the redistribution factor as stated by L. Potts (in Patel, 2001: 134) that migration is an outcome of reorganization of production over regions. Redistribution of production and mechanization of agricultural tasks or crafts are examples that force people to migrate. In addition, partly this has happened due to the push factors, which include extremely exploitative socio-economic structure that exists in their respective rural societies, hostile social circumstances such as untouchability and absence of any futuristic mechanism that generates hope and motivates people to stay in their villages. The large majority among migrants has come to Delhi due to structural causes covered under the phrase – 'economic reason'. The people involved in the process of analyzing the condition interpret the phenomenon as 'unemployment' or 'economic reason'. This is over simplification, which negates the search for finding out the fundamental factors. The so-called economic reason encompasses the unemployment myth and brings into picture the structural issues such as control over means of production and political as well as cultural power factors. Those who do not have anything other than labor and that too under exploitation of its extreme nature and debt burden tend to migrate. Hence, the socio-political dynamics and economic compulsions together form the major structural reason for migration in Nepal.

According to Brusle (2004), people from Bajura come to Delhi as their forefathers were also doing the same. They are temporary migrants who have maintained close contacts with their home. They come here due to lack of opportunity in agriculture and other income earning activities at home. Delhi is a large metropolis, which offers opportunities and as the migrants' familiarization with the job market and acquaintance with several coworkers encourages them to invite family members. Particularly, wife or children of the male migrants come here to join him. Thus, the family tradition continues. In some cases, this has been due to continuation of the practice and tradition of families for centuries. Some of the migrants have already spent three to four generations here (See Annex 1.E).

The fantasy or thrills felt seeing Lahures, who go home back with new dresses, several aluminum trunks full of dresses and other materials, and the money they take home etc, attract others. In this way, the returnees work as magnets. Youthful romantic feelings and attraction of Delhi life motivates the teenagers to leave their villages. A few runaways – children, paramours, undergrounds (criminal elements) are also get shelter in already overcrowded Delhi.

In addition, there are deceived persons. Particularly, children and women, who were lured, trafficked or kidnapped, are also in significant number. They were and are being deceived by intermediaries who throw them into prostitution, child labor etc. Human trafficking – one of the worst causes of migration has been seen since 1980s. They are forced in sex trade for several years. When these women get older, they are thrown out of brothels. Most of them do not have the courage to go back home and end up in the labor markets. Hassan (2001) states, "every year thousands of Nepalese women and young girls are trafficked into India and sold into

prostitution. Reports reveal that over 150,000 Nepalese women and 19,000 children have already been kidnapped, lured, trafficked and sold into different cities of India." Primarily, they came here deceived expecting getting a decent job for what they were promised.

It was interesting that a few migrants, primarily secondary school graduates, came here thinking that social attitudes towards manual work at home prevent them taking such jobs there but in absence of such attitudinal barriers in a distant place like Delhi, they can work without any negative feeling. Here, they can do any manual work as they are away from their society and home environment. Feudal social attitudes create pretensions that manual jobs are inferior for educated persons irrespective of their attainment of the level of formal education. This factor created situation driving them away from home (See Table –17 and Annex – 1.D).

Class contradictions, armed conflicts and deteriorating security situation at home have further added to the number of migrants. Security concern has been one among the new causes. In the first place, it becomes pertinent to understand the security perception. In a society, which has been in transition, socio-economic contradictions certainly rise to a higher level. This could go beyond debates and discussions. It even reaches to a level of violent confrontation between antagonistic classes. This confrontation breaks the status quo and brings several forces into play to a different dynamism and power relationship. In the process, diehard enemies fight against each other and neutral individuals and sections try to find out shelters inside or outside the area of fierce confrontation. Among the neutral persons, majority makes adjustments and continues to be there and a small section tries to escape the situation and moves out. A boy from a village in Bajura, who had just arrived in Delhi in July 2004, narrated his story. He said, "In our village, Maoists and the army often come one after another. Some times, even they fire gunshots to signal their presence. The one, which is not in a position to confront, disappears from the scene. We are accustomed to live with this situation. However, one day, my mother thought that either Maoist or the army might force me to join their ranks. She found out a way and she proposed to send me to Delhi. My father was also convinced. Although, I was not interested to come but my parents compelled." In this case, the parents are in the village but they send the boy to Delhi thinking that he might be in difficulty if stayed in the village. He was studying at 5th grade. Now, the boy is working as a daily laborer. What type of future he may create for himself is not clear, but the parents are, at least satisfied that their son is safe.

International Aid Agencies such as International Crisis Group, Global IDP are projecting the picture of migration to India because of rebellion in Nepal as alarming. International Crisis Group (ICG) reports, "Indian embassy officials indicate that roughly 120,000 displaced Nepalese crossed into India during January 2003 alone – fleeing both forced recruitment by the Maoists and RNA (Royal Nepal Army – author) attacks. The outflow of villagers from insurgency-hit mid-western districts has now reached a peak. Officials at the border police post at Nepalganj told us they counted more than 8,000 people passed through during the week 4-11 December (2002 – author), the highest weekly figure that they have ever recorded." (In Global IDP – April 2003).

Similarly, the UN program personnel also have opined alarmingly. According to Douglas Coutts of World Food Program (WFP), "The unrest in Nepal has affected the traditional coping mechanisms of communities. Men used to leave to work and come back with cash or food. Much of that traditional migration has been affected". (In Global IDP, March 2003)

The Times of India (2004) in its editorial "Nepal under siege: Maoist rebels bring Himalayan kingdom to a standstill" has warned, "The prospect of India being saddled with another refugee problem is not exactly remote." The widely circulating newspaper has been cautioning the Indian government to take preventive measure to check the refugee influx.

Another interesting comment is that "The question is: can the Nepali hills sustain losing 16,000 mostly-able bodied men every month? Who will plant crops, maintain terraces, take care of the families who remain behind? This humanitarian crisis also highlights the trans-boundary nature of the conflict in Nepal. So far, there have not been any reports of Nepalese being prevented from entering India, but officials here say that with the tight job market in India which is already full of its own internally displaced people and the possibility of more Nepali migrants moving down, the situation needs to be carefully monitored by both governments." (The Nepali Times 19 December 2002 in Global IDP- April 2003)

Thus, the picture shared by some of the professional organizations and part of the media is terrible. It sounds, as if; everybody is running out of the Nepali hills. The hills will have nothing other than natural reforestation contributed by the absence of its enemies – the men and women. Nepali hills could be converted into green heavens if the Maoists and the army do not explode bombs everywhere. Is it the case? Probably not. At least, the Delhi migrant scenario does not subscribe the horrible pictures presented above. Only 7% migrants stated security concerns contributed for their migration (table – 5). Similarly, a large percentage of the respondents (85%, Table –18) among the migrants had gone home and came back to Delhi in one-year period between April 2003 and March 2004. The dark pictures, sometimes, are the products of politics such as anti-Maoist hysteria, anti-government hydrophobia, imagination of the boarder regulation advocates etc. They may include but not limited to former royalists called *Panchas* and the Nepalese “middle-of-the-road communists” called Communist party of Nepal (Unity Center-Masal) or some political and intellectual mandarins in Delhi who see Pakistani intelligence agency – ISI agents entering into India from every centimeter of the boarder and want to regulate the movement of people. Moreover, sometimes the aid agencies’ marketing drive gives birth to such stories. The United Nations or the large Non Government Organizations (NGOs) could manufacture facts to meet the need of fund or materials or a role. Several NGOs, often, invent patches of ‘dark cloud’ and milk them as wonderful milking cows. Similarly, the media enters into the domain of super sensitivity, sometimes simply to sensationalize and some other times by being hand in glove with the national or international vested-interest groups including the intelligence agencies. They may put fictions as facts and spread rumors as truth. Sometimes, that could be just an innocent exaggeration. Therefore, what the merchants of information generation, processing and dissemination say may not reflect the reality. Often, the artistically presented pictures engulfed with special effect outputs also befool professional journalists and reputed scholars. This could be done exactly the same way as it happens in cinematography. They package their value judgments as facts so neatly that that looks real. Therefore, one should be cautious not to be carried away by any fictions and has to use better means and judgment to understand the reality. In brief, certainly the underdevelopment and socio-economic structures are the major factors leading to migration for a large majority of people in Nepal followed by the individual and family desires and decisions. In addition, security concerns and other social factors also have played their role.

Chapter Three

Statistical profile of Nepalese Migrants

Delhi, the capital city of the second most populace country in the world, is a large metropolis, where about 12 million people reside. Delhi has a long history of its existence going back to pre-historical days. It is an ancient city, which emerged to prominence in modern times not only as a political center but also as an economic hub. In Delhi, hundreds of manufacturing and service enterprises have been producing goods and supplying services. However, it has its problems too. One among the mandarins of the capitalist think tank, Robert McNamara once rightly warned, “If cities do not begin to deal more constructively with poverty, poverty may begin to deal more destructively with cities” (in Drakakis-Smith, 2000: 70). McNamara was one of the highest corporate executives who served as the President of the World Bank. He is also a notoriously famous former American defense secretary, who served during the time of Vietnam War. Interestingly, Delhi also has begun to translate McNamara’s prophecy into reality. The ever increasing crime-graph, mal-functioning public service utilities, corruption, absence of or non-functioning social safety net for a large majority of low-income families, poor state of physical and social infrastructure etc, together, are pointing to the ‘deal more destructively’ factor. Irrespective of such limitations, it has the capacity not only in absorbing additional workers from all parts of India, more particularly from poverty stricken states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh, but also it extends the work opportunities to a large number of Nepalese people.

It is difficult to talk about the exact number of Nepalese migrant workers in Delhi in absence of any reliable data. The estimated numbers vary. One Nepalese embassy official shared his estimate, which was between 100 and 110 thousand. Quoting the estimate by some Nepalese migrant associations in Delhi, Thieme (2003) has stated that there could be up to 200,000 migrants.

Experiences and feelings – 1

Getting information from some Brahmins and many politicians was a nightmare

One Brahmin priest in North-west Delhi was highly suspicious and talked in a very cunning way giving no specific information. Another Brahmin migrant at Karolbagh was initially friendly, offered tea and was willing to help, if I would need his assistance in future. Strangely, the same person sent message that he no more likes to involve himself without assigning any reason whatsoever. Except, Chintamani Bhattarai, central committee member of “Mulprabah All India Nepalese Migrants’ Unity Society”, nearly all ‘over ground’ politicians and their affiliates were masters in interrogation. They had questions, sided questions, corner questions, arrogant questions, offensive questions and, above all, they guarded against leaking anything including the color of their t-shirt, which they were wearing at that particular time they talked with me. They were very defensive, secretive and fearful. Moreover, among the migrants associated with “Mulprabah”, this was some sort of communicable disease at epidemic level. Strange that, Chintamani Bhattarai was an exception who just asked the essentials to assure himself and answered every question with delight and precision. One of his comrades in Harakeshnagar was very apprehensive and poured questions that I was tired answering and disappeared without asking any substantial question. This was the first time I met a person of MangolKirat origin so much similar to other Brahmins mentioned above in all respects including suspicion and skin-saving tactics.

I went to meet the interviewees with a person whom they know already or with his or her reference. Therefore, nearly all common people cooperated, answered and were even hospitable. However, some Brahmins and nearly all ‘over ground’ politicians and the affiliates having their ancestors in Pyuthan or in Jhapa neither believed their own relatives nor friends nor practiced minimum of human courtesy, forget about the Nepalese’s warmth, hospitality and simplicity. Obtaining even simple information from some of Brahmin migrants and the affiliates of the political parties was not less than a nightmare. They feel, perhaps, they are at the most vulnerable position and hide everything within their control. However, they were exceptions and never played as obstacles except giving some irritating moments to feel about and some frustrations to overcome.

For finding out the closest possible estimated number of Nepalese migrants in Delhi, participatory appraisal sessions had been organized. Ten major clusters were identified including one as ‘others’. The figure arrived through such sessions had been validated from more than 27 participatory cluster meetings. In this way, the estimated figure on migrant population was finalized. (Neupane, 2004). Then the process of selection, meeting and interviewing individual migrant was initiated. The selection of the interviewee has been based on the first contact, first interviewee basis. There were two criteria followed: a) a minimum of three different contacts were used in each clusters, and b) not less than 0.2% and not more than of 0.5% of total migrants from each clusters were interviewed keeping the overall percentage of interviewees around 0.3%. In actual term, 402 migrants had been interviewed during an twelve months period starting from January 2004. (Please see Annex – 2.A). The findings of the field research have been presented in the tables in this chapter or in Annexes and the data have been analyzed to reach to certain conclusions.

A. Number of migrants

Table – 01

Area	No of Migrants
DELHI	
Okhla/Greater Kailash/Andrewgunj	10000
Karolbagh/Paharjung	11000
Kotla/South Ext/Safdarjung	3000
Laxminagar/Sahdara/Mayur Vihar	5000
Pitampura/Rohini	10000
Other Areas	20000

Satellite cities within National Capital Region

NOIDA	50000
Gaziabad	12000
Faridabad	10000
Gurgaon	5000
Total	136000

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

Beside Delhi, the migrants' concentration is in its satellite cities – NOIDA, Gaziabad, Faridabad and Gurgaon. NOIDA (New Okhla Industrial Development Area/Authority) has the largest migrant concentration as there are several factories shifted from Okhla. NOIDA is in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh but is very close to and has a good transport link with all parts of Delhi. Gaziabad also is in Uttar Pradesh and like NOIDA has been close and well connected to Delhi. There too, a large number of Nepalese migrants are working. Faridabad and Gurgaon are in the Indian state of Haryana. There too several Nepalese work. These satellite cities do not form part of Delhi as per administrative division but they are grouped together with Delhi as National Capital Region (NCR). Therefore, in this study they are included.

The number of total Nepalese migrants in India is highly debatable. GEFONT (1998) has estimated that there are 2.8 million. Kaushik (2004) has estimated that the number of is 2.5 million. Another estimate is 1.3 million (Seddon et al, 2002) and the lowest is that of the Nepalese government which is 589050 as stated in the census report of 2001 (CBS, 2002: 54. See Annex – 2.H for details). Navaraj Subedi (2000: 464), a former member of Nepalese parliament has estimated the number of migrants who have been in India in search of employment to manage their livelihood could be more than 6 million. Keshav Poudel (2003) has estimated that there are 2.4 million Nepalese migrant workers. Now, the dilemma looms large. The Nepalese government says 589050 and Navaraj Subedi, who is linked with one of the largest Nepalese migrant organization in India, says the number is more than 6 million. After several discussions with the people who are in a better position to make realistic estimates in those areas where Nepalese migrants are working in fairly a large number and for rest of India, the figure (please see Annex -2.G) was very close to the estimated figure what David Seddon and his team of scholars had arrived at. Therefore, for the purpose of assessment of the remittances, the number of migrants (1.3 million) estimated by Professor Seddon and his team of scholars has been accepted as realistic.

B. Number and nationality of the migrants interviewed

There are five nationalities^[2] in Nepal. They are Khasa, MangolKirat, Madheshi, Dalit and Newar. Therefore, the number of migrants would give better picture by differentiating the statistics and presenting the same based on nationality.

Table – 02

Area	Khasa	Mangol- Kirat	Madheshi	Dalit	Newar	Total	No of Migrants	% Covered
Delhi								
Okhla/Greater								
Kailash/Andrewgunj	17	11	4	13		45	10000	0.5
Karolbagh/Paharjung	13	22	6	5		46	11000	0.4

Kotla/South Ext/Safdarjung	6	4		4	1	15	3000	0.5
Laxminagar/Sahdara/ Mayur Vihar	7	5	9	3	1	25	5000	0.5
Pitampura/Rohini	14	12	6	5		37	10000	0.4
Other Areas	19	13	8	7		47	20000	0.2

NCR

NOIDA	46	43	4	8	3	104	50000	0.2
Ghaziabad	11	12	6	3		32	12000	0.3
Faridabad	13	9	3	5		30	10000	0.3
Gurgaon	8	7	2	4		21	5000	0.4
Total	154	138	48	57	5	402	136000	0.3
Percentage	38.3	34.3	11.9	14.1	1.2	100	100	0.3
Nationalities in Nepal^[3] (%)	31.6	22.2	30.9	8.7	5.6			
Difference	+ 6.7	+12.1	- 19	+ 5.4	- 4.4			

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004, Neupane, 2000: 146., Neupane (2000).

The higher presence of MangolKirats, Khasa and Dalit to the percentage of their presence in the population of Nepal raises several questions. What could be the reasons? They may be attributed in history, as the hill population was highly mobile in the past too. Another factor could be the shrinking job opportunities in the hills. The less percentage of Madhesi people has been a puzzle to solve easily. They are closer culturally and linguistically with Delhi but their presence is very low. Some of the Madhesi interviewees (See Annex – 1.F) told that many of their relatives and neighbors work in Punjab as agriculture laborer. May be, their traditional occupation attracted them to go to Punjab to work in the agriculture fields and farms. Near absence of Newars is understandable as they are happy to stay in and around Kathmandu or trading centers inside the country. The higher percentage of Dalits further proved their marginalization in Nepalese job market as their traditional occupations based on artisanship no longer provide them any good incentive and income to ensure their survival (See – Annex – 1.E).

C. Female workers

Table – 03

Area	Khasa	MangolKirat	Mahdesi	Dalit	Newar	Total	%
Kotla/South Ext/Safdarjung	2	3		1		6	
Karolbagh/Paharjung	4	3				7	
NOIDA	6	3				9	
Okhla/Greater Kailash/Andrewgunj	3	2		2		7	
Other Areas	5	6		3		14	

Faridabad	1	1		2	
Ghaziabad	1	1		2	
Gurgaon		1	1	2	
Total	22	20	7	49	11.7
Percentage	44.9	40.8	14.2	100	

Note: The number of female workers mentioned in this table has already been included in Table – 2 above.

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

Nearly all women workers came to stay with their husbands or parents and started to work. There was not a single woman, who came here on her own independently and, who has been working. Most of them work as house cleaners and a few are working as office attendants (See Annex – 1.A). Except a few, they work as part-timers. Due to exposure to urban culture and confidence generated through the earnings what they make from their work, women are no different from men in dealing with employers, co-workers, family members and the visitors. There is confidence and there is strength. They are generally worried about their safety more than men are as they have to survive in a hostile environment based on gender stereotypes and lust for indecent behaviors and crimes ranging from eve teasing to rape and murder. Examples include rape of two migrant women and murder of one of them, and killing of another woman in Delhi (see Annex – 2.B).

D. Professions

Table – 04

Professions	Khasa	MangolKirat	Madhesi	Dalit	Newar	Total	%
Factory workers (including cottage industries)	26	33	14	18	2	93	23
Guards	17	19	3	12		51	13
Dishwashers (Restaurant)	18	16	2	8	1	45	11
Daily labor	11	9	9	5		34	8
Domestic Help	17	11		1		29	7
Driver	11	13	4			28	7
Workshop help/Cleaners	11	10	2	2		25	6
Office/shop attendants	10	7	1	3	2	23	6
Skilled Workers ¹			11	2		13	3
Cook/Attendants (Restaurant)	7	5				12	3
Skilled jobs holders ²	7	2		1		10	3
Unemployed at the time of interview	5	4		2		11	3
Others ³	14	9	2	3		28	7
Total	154	138	48	57	5	402	100

1. These workers include plumbers, house wiring technicians and house wall painters

2. These jobs include Computer Operators, Office/Marketing Assistants and Accountants
3. 'Others' includes but not limited to seven priests (all Khasa) and nine small entrepreneurs/traders (6 khasas and 3 MangolKirats).

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

Some of the researchers have concluded that most of the Nepalese migrant workers are “young boys in restaurants and dhabas, illiterate factory workers domestic help, drivers, guards and nurse maids.” (Seddon et al, in Gorkhapatra, 2004). The basic conclusion may be closer to reality, but the overall picture is somewhat different. Although the majority works as manual laborers, there are skilled workers too. Literacy among the migrants is also very high (above 71%, see Table – 17) and that is equally applicable to factory workers.

Although, highest number of migrants works in the factories, but many among them are not permanent workers. Those who work in small-scale industries have no coverage of social security benefits. The term 'factory work' includes the jobs performed in a factory related to lifting weight, arranging the raw materials for manufacturing finished goods, operating machines, assembling parts, packing, keeping equipment and machineries clean and ready, transporting finished goods. Therefore, the workers, who are employed by any organized enterprise and involved in such jobs are grouped as factory workers.

The security guards follow the factory workers in percentage regarding their presence. About the guards from Bajura who work, mostly in and around Nandanagari in Delhi, Brusle (2004: 80-81) has stated that majority of them are between 20 and 50 years of age. Many among them work as guards. They work in the night and wash cars in the morning to supplement their income. The same is true for the guards working all over Delhi except for them who work in organized sector enterprises such as industries, hospitals, educational institutions and government agencies. The guards working in organized sectors mentioned above are in a better position as they have the social security coverage.

Contrary to popular belief that every migrant is a manual labor, there are skilled workers too. The skilled workers and the auxiliary professionals mostly work in the organized sectors. The plumbers, painters, electricians and even computer operators and accountants are available. The drivers are another comparatively high earning lot and are many in numbers too.

Besides, a small number works as temple priests. The best estimate about the number of such priests in Delhi is 150. In the above table, seven priests are included as “Others”. They get accommodation inside the temple premises and earn handsomely in the form of “*daksina*” and “*dan*” (donations in the form of cash and kind). One priest has migrated to America and another travels to several places in India including Mumbai and Kanpur and has been satisfied with his profession, standing, earning and savings. The third priest has purchased land, house and a tractor in Rupandehi. A fourth one has the saving enough to buy a house. These are not isolated and exceptional cases, but just the average ones. Therefore, becoming priest in Delhi has been a rewarding profession.

There are a few Nepalese migrant owned and run small business activities. Some of the small business entrepreneurs such as petty traders, restaurant owners, taxi owners-operators and shopkeepers are present. Their enterprises include security agencies, noodle making cottage industry, some restaurants or dhawas^[4], provisional stores, self-operated taxis and hawking. Some of the stories are highly encouraging. The owners of a security agency and a cottage industry are quite successful. There are others too. Out of nine persons interviewed who are in business activities, three are MangolKirats and six Khasas. The information is interesting that no Dalit or Madhesi run any independent business activity. The priests who have better reputation as holy-men and earn better, traditionally, are all Brahmins (Khasas). Similarly, nearly all skilled jobholders such as Accountants, Computer Operators and Marketing Assistants are Khasas. Hence, the nationality stereotypes seen in the form of inequalities in access to opportunities in Nepal have its presence here too.

E. Origin: Regions in Nepal

Table – 05

Region	Khasa	MangolKirat	Madhesi	Dalit	Newar	Total	%
Eastern	7	10	7	6		30	7
Central	13	11	15	5	3	47	12
Western	48	79	9	13	2	151	38
Midwestern	39	31	10	14		94	23
Far western	47	7	7	19		80	20
Total	154	138	48	57	5	402	100

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

The statistics above contradicts the popular belief that the rebellion in the country has created a situation where every village in mid west and far west regions has no men and women of working age. The highest percentage of migrants comes from comparatively less affected western region. The interviews of the new migrants from mid and far western regions revealed that the outflow to other neighboring areas in Uttaranchal, Himachal and border districts of Uttar Pradesh has a similar picture. There is increase but not as reported as alarming by the media and officials. Similarly, the fact that 53% of all migrants are staying in Delhi for more than 5 years also challenges the myth of “120,000 displaced Nepalese crossed into India during January 2003 alone” or “16,000 able bodied men and women are deserting their home every month due to the effect of fighting”. Districts like Syanja and Palpa in the western development region are better developed and comparatively less affected by the rebellion but ironically, these districts top the list followed by the least developed ones such as Bajhang, Achham and Bajura. As per the census figure, the relatively better developed Western development region comes first with 7.26% absentee population followed by Far-west with 4.84% (See Annex 2.H). Therefore, just passing casual comments as research findings and saying that the security scenario is the culprit for migratory labor does not reflect the reality. Certainly, these are some of the reasons, but there are other major reasons instead.

F. Family occupational backgrounds and income level at home

Table – 06

Description	Backgrounds of migrants	%	Subsistence level	Above Substance level
Agriculture – labor	47	36	47	
Agriculture – middle peasants	29	22		29
Skills related occupations	14	11	11	3
Service (govt /non-govt jobs, hospitality)	13	10	5	8
Non–Agriculture wage earners/laborers	11	9	11	
Trading	6	5	1	5
Other	9	7	2	7
Total	129	100	77 (60%)	52 (40%)

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

It is strange to see people coming from different family backgrounds. Mostly, Dalits are the artisans and most of them do not have any agriculture base. Similarly, a few Madhesis have a family background as tailors (particularly Muslims from Kapilvastu). Even some other people told that their main occupation at home was working as dishwasher in a restaurant at the rural center or towns. Some of them came from the family of government officials and service persons who work in Nepalese or Indian army. A few of them were laborers in the construction activities such as roads and buildings. Here, while stating agriculture as their family occupation, 29% said they have enough to meet their minimum family needs from agriculture. Another 47% can just meet about one third of their needs from agriculture resource base. To meet the rest they have to sale their labor in the village labor market. Therefore, the first category is that of middle peasants or above and the second category is that of primarily agriculture laborers. A few are from the trading background. The term 'trading' includes vending, hawking, petty shops, bangle sellers (Churoute), and milk, vegetables, fruits sellers along the highways, roads and in towns. The term 'Others' used here includes priests, potters, porters, traditional musicians and dancers (Gaines and Badis), shamans etc.

G. Causes of migration

Table – 07

Description	Number	%
Socio-economic structural factors	280	70
Family tradition/family member in Delhi	34	8
Security concern	27	7
Runaways, romanticized	15	4
Deceived	14	3
Social attitudes at home ¹	7	2
Others	25	6
Total	402	100

1. Manual jobs at home are considered inferior.

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

The major causes are the socio-economic structural factors inside the country. These factors include unequal resource distribution resulting to no control over resources for a large majority of people, exploitative socio-economic practices leading to desperation and indebtedness. In addition, unemployment and lack of skill development and alternative income earning opportunities also contributed to this factor. Furthermore, several migrants stated that the Delhi life has lots of attraction in their villages. The family members at home are not that aware about the hardships the migrants face here. Simply, they are happy that their jobs in Delhi insert hope and the new hope creates a phenomenon of psychological security among them. The hope and the psychological security factors, beyond reasons, work as magnets. The untold understanding among the family members revolves around some vague concept of safety net, something that of an insurance coverage. Some migrants told, "The general feeling among youths in the villages is that if everything goes wrong, still I have a chance to go and work in India." Therefore, coming to Delhi is not only an economic decision or has its relation with just security at home; this act is the result of complex socio-economic structural factors, individual initiatives or family arrangements that include economic as well as physical and psychological security concerns and tradition as well as amusement. (Please see Chapter 2 for analysis.)

H. Duration of stay in Delhi

Table – 08

Duration	Khasa	MangolKirat	Madhesi	Dalit	Newar	Total	%
Less than 5 years	49	44	21	12	2	128	47
Five to 10 Years	28	24	12	9		73	27
Ten to 15 years	15	13	5	3		36	13
Fifteen to 20 years	10	8	3		1	22	8
Above 20 years	6	5		2	1	14	5
Total	108	94	41	26	4	273	100

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

Datta (2002) has classified Nepalese migration in three categories – seasonal, semi-permanent (migrants staying 5 years and more) and permanent (ten years or more). However, the interviewees and their resource base did not support the conclusion that those who are staying here for more than 10 years are permanent migrants in the sense that they may settle down here. Out of the above-mentioned 72 interviewees who have been in Delhi for 10 or more years, only four among them expressed that they may settle down. Three persons own a plot of land or a flat in Delhi. This fact reveals that only a few persons may settle down. The total number of Nepalese families who have already settled down permanently is about 300. This could be the result of hundreds of years of migration.

I. Types of migrants

Table – 09

Description	Number	%
Seasonal	24	9
Round the year	249	91
Total	273	100

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

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Experiences and feelings – 2

The Jumli hawkers

At the Connaught place area, I met two fellows wearing Nepalese cap on their head. I asked them from which part of Nepal they are. Just hearing Nepali words at the middle of the Delhi crowd, they were surprised, astonished and a bit frightened. After a few persuasive exchanges, they believed that I am also a Nepalese. We sat together on the ground above Palika Bazaar and talked for a while. Although, I mentioned my work, I believe, they did not understand. Anyway, they were willing to answer my questions. For the last 15 years, they have been coming to Delhi regularly to sale herbs. They collect herbs in and around Jumla and sell here. Now, many of their regular customers wait them. This time, they have nearly finished their stock and are planning to go back home. In six months (two months in Jumla, four months in Delhi including the travel time), they earn around Indian Rs. 15000 each. This is after taking out all expenses. Regarding the security situation at home, they expressed helplessness. The elder one was Man Bahadur Mahat and the younger one was Hasta Bahadur Bohara. One year ago, Man Bahadur lost his brother. He was killed in the crossfire between the army and the Maoists. They concluded that from both sides only the poor people are loosing their lives. When we were just at the stage of saying “good bye” to each other, Hasta Bahadur asked a question. He enquired, “You stay in Kathmandu, you are educated and you know many things. Please tell us, who killed our king and his family?” When he pronounced “our king”, there was a deep sense of personal involvement, affection and respect. I told them what I believed in. We departed fully knowing that we may not meet again. After reaching to a certain distance, these innocent Jumli hawkers just moved their heads towards me as if they are saying “good bye” once more to somebody they love. This is, perhaps, the Nepalese sentiment, deep and emotional, which differs from many others.

The table above presents the picture on seasonal migrants or the migrants who work and stay here round the year. The seasonal workers come during off-agriculture season. They work mostly as daily labor and go back home after a few months. Their stay is for about 3 months at a time.

J. Number of families staying in Delhi and schooling of their children

Table – 10

Area	No of Families	Number of Children		Attending School/college	
		boys	girls	boys	girls
Kotla/South Ext/Safdarjung	4	4	5	3	3
NOIDA	6	2	3	1	1
Karolbagh/Pahargunj	2	2	1	2	1
Laxminagar/Sahdara/ Mayur Vihar	3	3	1	2	2
Okhla/Greater Kaolash/Andrewsgunj	4	2	2	1	1
Gaziabad	2				
Pitampura/Rohini	1				
Faridabad	2	3	2	1	2
Other Areas	3	2	2	2	
Total	27	18	16	12	10

Note: 4 boys and 5 girls are under 5 years of age. Except one 9 years old girl, all school age children attend schools.

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

One good impact of the stay in Delhi is that each family is aware of the importance of education and has been trying their level best to educate children. As a result, nearly all children of school age of the families staying in Delhi have been enrolled. This type of attitude has influenced to send children to schools also at home. Many migrants told that their children are attending schools. The migrants have developed this realization, most probably, due to the exposure.

K. Child labor (Under 16 years of age)

Table –11

AgeGroup	Number	%
9 – 12 years	3	
above 12 – under 16 years	26	
Total and % of 402 workers interviewed	29	7

Note: The number of child workers mentioned in this table has already been included in Table – 2 & 4.

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

The under age workers who are called “*Chhotu*” or “child worker” are very much present. Mostly, they are here due to their parent’s inability to feed and educate them at home. Two of them are runaways, who just accompanied the Lahures in their neighborhood, reached Delhi with all sorts of dreams, and ended up as dishwashers in the restaurants. All told that their parents know they are in Delhi. Among the 29 interviewed, 12 work as domestic help and 17 as dishwashers in dhawas. Three of them were willing to go home back as soon as possible as they were tired of the hard work, which they have to continue for about 16 hours everyday. One child from Baglung was just fired from his job. He was in search of a new job and had been in a Nepalese restaurant. The owner of the restaurant already knew him. The owner said to the boy that the boy has no good conduct. The boy replied, “That is right. However, God (read ‘nature’ – author) made me like that. What I can do?” He added, “After the death of my mother, I became like that. Who knows, this has been happening due to the ill treatment I have been receiving from everybody. And, if I got a new employer who cares, I may develop good conduct.” This was highly philosophical. The boy of about 11 years of age sounded as grown up. Although he was illiterate, but certainly he was educated. The hardships he is facing and the reasons he is trying to find out might have added to his ability to analyze the happenings in his life. When the boy left, the owner told that the boy is talkative and ill tempered and gets in debates with the customers. This way, an intelligent Nepalese boy has been roaming on the streets of Harola in NOIDA in search of survival. Another boy who worked as domestic help for about two years showed the scares of physical abuse, ill treatment and cruelty at several places on his body. He was beaten by a grown up son of the family where he was employed. When he complained to the parents of that boy, his parents scolded and warned him. To his surprise, the near 70-kilo notorious young fellow of about 20 years of age even did not spare his parents and hit them with a kitchen utensil. Seeing this, the small Nepalese boy of about 12 years of age left the house immediately fearing the goon. After several days, fully assuring that the goon is not at home, he went to see the employers, who were helpless but kind enough. They paid his wage of the last nine months. He took the money, which the couple gave him without any negative comments for his disappearance; thanked them and is working now in a

Dhawa. He swore not to work as domestic help any more at any cost. He rather prefers dying hungry than to go back to work as domestic help. He shared several stories of many of his friends who are tortured, mostly by the grown up sons of the employers and even did not receive payment for the hard work. They were accused of theft and thrown out, when the money becomes a bit too much to pay. In this case, he felt himself fortunate that he got the money, though he ran away.

L. Average earning and expenditure

Table – 12

Monthly Earning	Per person	No of Respondents	Total annual for all respondents ^[5]		
			Earning	Expenses	Savings
Professions					
Dishwashers ¹	900	12	129600	36000	93600
Cook/Attendant ²	2000	7	168000	84000	84000
Skilled Workers	3500	5	210000	105000	105000
Factory workers	2500	25	750000	350000	400000
Driver	4800	9	518400	221400	297000
Domestic Help ³	700	7	58800	16800	42000
Daily labor	3000	4	144000	84000	60000
Skilled job holders	5300	4	254400	120000	134400
Office/shop attendant	3000	2	72000	35200	36800
Guard/Guards	2500	12	360000	187200	172800
Total	-	87	2665200	1239600	1525600
Per person average	-	87	30634	14248	17536

Foot notes:

1. The employers of the dhawas/restaurants provide food and accommodation.
2. The employers provide food to these cooks/attendants in their dhawas/restaurant
3. The employers provided food and accommodation.

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

The highest earning groups among the migrants are the auxiliary professionals such as computer operators, accountants and marketing assistants. They are followed by the drivers. Their number is quite significant. Junior technicians and skilled workers like electrician, plumber and house wall painters are other better earning groups. Although, the temple priests are a high earning group, their number is limited and they are reluctant to talk about their earnings. In terms of cash in hand, the factory workers sound earning not that great, but who are permanent workers get social security benefits such as provident fund, gratuity, insurance etc. Therefore, they also are not that bad. In addition, they get subsidized lunch in most of the factories. The guards enjoy some sort of respect when they work as security guard in a neighborhood. If they work in organized sectors, they also get social security benefits. Their average earning too is comparatively on better side. The most oppressed groups, both, in terms of work conditions and earnings are the domestic help and dishwashers.

These two groups work for long hours (about 16 hours everyday) without any weekend break and earn on an average not more than Indian Rs 1.70 per hour of work excluding the food and accommodation. They, more particularly, the domestic helps also face physical violence and abuse. Therefore, the migrants who are in these two professions have no pleasure and happiness in life, no time to develop their human potentialities and no opportunity to develop their independent human personality. The migrants in these professions make their survival only to continue further to work in the same hostile environment. Therefore, nearly all of them continuously try to find out other employment avenues.

The migrants' expenditure items include room rent, food, clothing, medicine, travel and entertainment. They spend about 20% on room rent, 35% on food, 20% on clothing, medicals and other small expenses if they stay alone. A small room of 10x12 feet costs Rs 600 to 1200 depending on the area the room is located. One person has to spend about Rs 1000 per month for food. (Please see- Annex – 2.D). In this way, they can just save on average Rs 7500 per annum (25% of the income). However, most of the time three to four persons stay together and minimize the cost. In such situation, the saving might go up by more than double. The average saving has been found Rs 17536 (57% of the income). Experiences and common sense have taught them to share rooms and to cook together. Therefore, nearly all migrants have been found staying together as a group of three or four. There are demerits too. These demerits include loss of privacy, peace, silence and good rest. Moreover, they also fell pray to the temptation to agreeing with one or the other roommate's desire and succumb to pressure or persuasion to go for enjoying liquor (in some cases every evening and in most of the cases at least once or twice a week), play cards or watch movies for long hours irrespective of them being tired. There is a big gap between saving and remittance, and partly that has been spent on such expenses, which they do not like to talk. Anyway, seeing their large number, of course, the Nepalese workers remit considerable amount back home.

M. Remittance during one-year period covering April-March 2004

Table – 13

Type of profession of respondent	Number of Respondents	Amount Remitted home	Per Head average
Dishwasher – Restaurant	10	44000	4400
Cook/Attendant – Restaurant	5	35000	7000
Skilled Workers	3	46000	15333
Factory worker	15	87750	5850
Driver	7	175000	25000
Domestic Help	3	11250	3750
Daily labor	6	34500	5750
Skilled job holders	2	70000	35000
Office/shop attendant	2	26000	13000
Security Guard/Guards	8	80000	10000
Total	61	609500	9992

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

The difference seen between the amount saved annually and remitted home is significant. That is Rs 7544 (17536-9992) per person/per annum. This is a big amount. The probing revealed that the migrants take home several consumer items with them. These items include clothes, dresses, spices, sugar, vegetable oil, radios

and cassette players, gift items and sometimes-even jewelries. Indeed, a large part of that difference goes for the purchase of goods that they send home through their friends or they take home when they go themselves. Therefore, the cash remitted and the value of these goods, if put together, the movement of resources from India to Nepal could be much higher than the amount mentioned in Table – 13 above. In addition, there are other areas where the difference amount goes. The areas may vary from illegitimate expenses on gambling and commercial sex to legitimate but unnecessary expenses on unaffordable drinking.

Seddon et al (2004 in Gorkhapatra) have estimated that in 1997, the migrants to European countries sent back home around Nepali Rs. 4.4 billion. Of this amount, Rs. 4.1 billion came from Britain, most of it by those serving in the British army. The estimated total amount was Rs 50 million from North America, Rs.1.5 billion from the Gulf countries and Rs. 720 million from Saudi Arabia. Similarly, Rs. 360 million each came from Qatar and the United Arab Emirates and Rs.18 million each from Kuwait and Oman. East and South East Asia accounted for Rs. 23 billion and India Rs. 6 billion. That year, the estimated total remittance was Nepali Rs. 35 billion from 350,000 Nepalese. In addition, they say the number of Nepalese working abroad could be as high as 1.1 million and the estimated remittance could be as much as Rs. 69 billion.

According to the data furnished by Nepal Rastra Bank, the central bank of Nepal, five non-banking units, meaning the money transfers such as Western Union, remitted US\$ 21.26 million in 2002. In 2003, it was US\$ 56.23 million through nine non-banking agencies. However, these figures are low. In 2003, it was estimated that US\$ 1 billion was remitted into the country. (Gorkhapatra, 2004)

Therefore, talking about remittance in absence of any reliable data has given rise to guesstimates. The scholars and researchers also have no other options available. There have not been any comprehensive studies and the studies with limited scope may not be reflecting the actual situation. Obtaining information on remittance is again a very difficult and painful exercise. There are not or insignificant transitions through formal banking system. The people carry money home in cash by themselves, particularly in case of India. Although, Hundi is in existence, but that is also not so widely practiced. When, the question reaches the mind of the interviewee regarding money, he or she develops suspicion instantly. As a result, out of 273 interviewees, only 87 persons had been willing to answer the question regarding their income and among them 61 persons had remitted money in that specified period. Although, this is a tiny number to generalize, still it would give a better picture than the foolhardy guesstimates. The calculation puts the remittance amount from India about Nepalese Rs 14 billion annually. Out of this amount, the migrants in Delhi remitted about Nepalese Rs 1.5 billion.^[6]

N. Involvement in crime

Table – 14

Nepalese nationals accused in criminal charges since January 01, 2003

Cases	Number
Murder	4
Robbery	1
Rape	1
Looting	1
Excise related case	1
Explosive Related	1
Narcotic drugs related	1
Thefts and other	340
Total	350

(TOI and NBT have quoted Delhi police as their source)

Sources: *Times of India*, June 24, 2004, *Navabharat Times* June 23, 2004, and *Field Research*, January – December 2004

More recently, the image of Nepalese migrants in Delhi has been changed. The employers sounded astonished knowing the change in the image of their ever 'honest and loyal' *Bahadurs* [7]. The same astonishment could be seen among the Nepalese migrant community. They are surprised. They also have felt total helplessness. One or two individuals' involvement in a few high profile crimes have been tarnishing the image of so many Nepalese who created and nurtured the image of the honest persons for such a long time. The crime graph has been going up as there are several cases coming up more recently (See Annex -2.C)

O. Small businesses run by Nepalese (Not a comprehensive list but only those verified physically)

Table – 15

Area	Dhawa/Restaurant	Stores	Tea Stalls	Cottage Industry	Taxis	Total
NOIDA	2	3	4			9
Gurgaon	2	2	2			6
Mayur Vihar				1		1
Pahargunj					5	5
Faridabad	3	1				4
Okhla	1	2	1			4
Total	8	8	7	1	5	29

Source: *Field Research*, January – December 2004

Mostly, the migrants sell labor. However, a few persons have been running their own small business activities and are employing workers. One good thing about them is that their earning is higher and they have the power for making the decisions freely for investment of time, energy and resources. Nearly all of them who have such activities stay with their families. They are fortunate that way. They had made some savings in their previous jobs and invested the money in these activities. Hence, they had a resource base already and, in that sense, they are the richer and comfortably placed group among the migrants.

P. Getting jobs

Methods adopted to get a job first time

Table – 16

Description	number	%
Friends and family friends	39	61
Roam, ask, get	13	20
Family member	7	11
Looking at advertisement on notice boards/papers	3	5
Job purchased from predecessors	2	3
Total	64	100

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

Getting job is a tough task. Family friends are the sources of information and introduction to the probable employer. The job choice for the new comer is the availability factor and the type of job where their friends or family members are familiar. Slowly, after a few years of work, they could find out what they like and work for a longer time. (See Annex – 1.C) The job of a security guard (Chaukidar) has also been passed from one generation to another. Sometimes, they sell their job to another person or lease out for a specific period. The job of a guard (Chaukidar) could fetch from Indian Rs. 5000 to 20000, if they sale that job. (Brusle, 2004: 80-81)

Q. Educational attainment/literacy

Table – 17

Level	No	%
College graduation and above ^[8]	2	1
Intermediate/+2	12	8
SLC/Grade 10	18	11
Primary schooling completed	38	24
Functionally literate	42	27
Illiterate	46	29
Total	158	100

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

Contrary to popular belief that the migrant workers are “illiterate factory workers”, the literacy among the migrants is quite high (71%), compared to the national literacy average of Nepal that was 44% in 2002 (UNDP, 2004). There are some factory workers, who have completed the higher secondary education. Their level of understanding is good and many of them blame ‘social attitudes at home that consider manual job as inferior’ for their migration to Delhi.

R. Persons to home and back in a year covering April 2003-March 2004

Table – 18

Description	number	%
Have not gone home	16	15
Have been to home and back	91	85
No of respondents	107	100

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

The movement to and from home is going on as in the past. Some journalists and aid agencies (see chapter -2) clamor and tell the stories that in-bound movement to Nepal has been nearly stopped. The above table illustrates that their conclusion is not based on facts. Those subjective assessments should not replace reality. Everything is going on with the travelers or the returnees as usual, though with additional difficulties such as searches by the army or police or the rebels at several checkpoints. None of the 91 interviewees had been robbed, beaten or threatened by police or army, or rebels inside Nepal. Notwithstanding harassments of checking and counter-checking, they felt safe. As they told, the villages are as they were in the past. One migrant, owner of a restaurant, who had just returned back from home in second week of August 2004 told, "There are people enough to meet the need of economic activities, there are cultivation activities taking place and there is life as usual." He met Maoist guerrillas and the army personnel on his way back. He even was envious of them and shared his feeling, "They are at least in their environment. Being good or bad is different, but they sounded quite comfortable with their state of being." His overall conclusion was also interesting. He said, "The only difference is that some apprehensions and uncertainties have become part of the fundamentals of rural life."

S. Information and knowledge about the Indo- Nepal treaty of 1950

Who have heard about 1950 Treaty?

Table – 19

Description	number	%
Persons know	7	9
Persons don't know	74	91
Total no of respondent	81	100

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

The political cadres, though talk loudly about the treaty, the common migrants have neither information nor any definite idea about the basis of Nepal-India relation. A large majority of them consider coming to, and working in India as normal and natural as they do in Nepal. (See also Chapter – Seven)

T. Cases of common illness (January – December, 2004)

Table – 20

Diarrhea	11
Tuberculosis	3
Typhoid	2
Work related accident	1
Total	17

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

The living conditions of the migrants expose them to several diseases. Water is one of the sources of their health problem, as they have no other option than to use the contaminated water for drinking, cooking and cleaning. Diarrhea, thus, has been on the top of the illnesses they suffer. Lack of infrastructural base and knowledge on general health and personal hygiene compound the problem.

U. Information and communication

At least once in three months the migrants call home or receive call from home. It was interesting that the participatory appraisals in several places revealed a high percentage (25%) of the migrants have mobile phones. Some informed people estimated even more (30%). Some of the migrants told that the discontinuation of telephone system in several Nepalese villages due to the arm confrontation between the army and Maoists has affected negatively for their contact with the family. Now, letter from the post is nearly non-existent. They send letters if some friends or relatives are going home. There is some one going home every two to three months. This is not that frequent in case of eastern and central Nepal as their number is not that high.

The migrants are fed up with all sorts of rumors and hearsays. Still, they try to verify from somebody whom they believe if they hear something. The news of the fight between the army and Maoists reaches Delhi after hundreds of willful or innocents distortions. The Nepalese Restaurants are the places where one can expect news about Nepal. Primarily, there are five sources of information. They include:

- friends and relatives coming back from home,
- telephone conversation,
- Nepal One TV channel (though it has not been available in most parts of Delhi but friends can watch and inform others if there is any significant development). Sometimes they get information from other TV channels too.
- News bulletins circulated by *Pravashi* organizations (most of the time they are overloaded with sectarian political junks),
- Radio Nepal (they get Radio Nepal mostly in the evening and in some areas even during morning and day where the interference from electrical appliances and equipments is less).

The most important factor is that they are surprisingly well informed about the events in their villages and the districts and have information of major events all over Nepal. Many of them cross verify from several sources to settle down finally about the information. If they are associated with the migrants' organization, they check once with them too as additional checkpoint. They may or may not believe what the organization will tell them but they have at least another source to check with. One of the best attitudes they have developed is to examine, verify and derive conclusions. They have known the importance of information.

Chapter Four

Problems the migrants face

Officially, there is nobody who takes care of the interests of the migrants. The Nepalese embassy is non-existent for them. There is no system of registration of its nationals in the embassy and it neither helps nor shows real concerns. The migrants' safety, security and interests, all are their own responsibilities. Indeed, they are a worried lot. They survive and work in an environment full of constant fear and face several problems. A few among them have been discussed below.

Experiences and feelings – 3

What Nepalese embassy does in Delhi?

I went to the embassy at Barakhamba road and met an official. I explained him about my objectives being there. After listening, he told the following:

- The number of Nepalese in Delhi could be between 100,000 and 110,000. This was his estimate. The embassy has no records or official estimates.
- About 100 families are wealthy and highly educated (primarily they are the families who have settled down in Delhi.) and the rest are common workers.
- Some of the people are also bringing bad name to the community by being involved in petty crimes. Prostitution, drugs and stealing are the areas, which contribute largely for a bad name.
- There are many temples constructed by Nepalese people in Delhi. The most prominent ones include Pashupati temple, Bela Road, near Lalqila, Pashupati temple, Sector 21, Highway Road, Faridabad, Pashupati Temple, Sahadara, etc.

After a few days, thinking that there should be provisions for registration of the Nepalese nationals residing in Delhi, once again, I went to the embassy aiming to enlist myself and to get information about other Nepalese professionals who are staying in Delhi. Although, the staff members were very cooperative, there was no such system and no such information was available. The embassy sounded busy in petty administrative acts and has no business in taking into account the needs and welfare of its citizens here. I was very much frustrated. I just got the telephone number of the embassy and went to the British Council at Kasturba Gandhi Marg to spend my time in the meaningful business of reading.

The change of attitude of the employers as an impact of some of the high profile murder cases together with the political factors have created more complications for the migrants. Jaishi (2003) rightly mentions that the 1989 blockade^[9], hijacking of Indian Airlines plane from Kathmandu in 1999^[10], and the Hrithik Roshan episode^[11] have changed the attitudes of Delhi elites and the middle class people. That has been further compounded by thefts and murders allegedly committed by Nepalese nationals working as domestic helps. They even have developed prejudices and misconceptions towards the migrant workers. The high profile murders including that of a retired Lt. General and his wife by a Nepalese youth have added to the already existing distrust and suspicions (See Annex – 2.C). As a result, the humiliating comments by the employers, suspicious behaviors of the co-workers and negative publicity have contributed to hardships, uncertainties and miseries for the migrants. Many people around them express suspicion verbally or non-verbally. They ask humiliating questions. The old loyal workers' image is no more there. Even renting a room in many localities has been difficult if the migrants have no identity cards or documents to prove that he or she works

somewhere. For the daily wageworkers, particularly, who work inside the house, like the plumbers, house-wiring technicians etc, the identification has become necessary. Some of them have brought some sort of identification letter from their village development committees. A Madheshi youth from Dhanusha, who works as a plumber, showed a letter from his "village development committee" that provides his identification details. This type of letter, at least, gives some comfort to the employers. The negative image has affected badly in getting employment as well as retaining the one that they have. The employers are reluctant to take Nepalese boys on the job, particularly as domestic help. Several employers threw many domestic helps out of job, as they did not see the reason to take any risk. Ganesh Dulal from Jhapa told that a Sardarji, who was his former employer, once asked him to find out a domestic help excluding a Nepalese, as he was afraid of them due to the killing of an employer by a Nepalese boy. Ganesh politely asked him if he has also to exclude Sikhs as one among them had killed Indira Gandhi. The wily Sardarji not only realized his mistake but also gave liberty to bring a good boy including a Nepalese, if available. Ganesh brought a Nepalese boy who worked there for a year and left for another job obtaining a good conduct certificate from the Sardarji. However, other employers may not be courageous enough like that daring Sardarji.

The city offers a unique blend of opportunities and competition. Everything is changing very fast including the number of job seekers and the quality of skills. Therefore, everybody is worried about the security of his or her job. That has several reasons. The most important is the tarnished image of the community because of some migrants' involvement in the high profile murder cases as stated above. Another factor to worry is the large number of competitors from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, competing in the job market (See also Annex – 2.F). They are even willing to work at lower wages. The jobs what the Nepalese migrants are holding with them now have a higher chance of passing to these workers from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The third factor is related to organized sector emerging as the major player. The youths from the agricultural societies in the villages have been adopting with the informal sector arrangements such as security guards as an individual. The organized sector penetration in the security market has created new arrangements. After the emergence of transnational or at least organized national security agencies, they are replacing the 'individual *Bahadurs*'. These agencies are recruiting ex-army men or police personnel. In the course, several migrants would be displaced.

Non-payment of wages is another feature. When they ask for money, the employers postponed in one or another pretext. When they continue asking for payment of their wages, usually they are accused of theft and are thrown out without making any payment. Many among the richest are the greediest too. They, practically, do not observe any kind of minimum moral or ethical codes. Many daily laborers also complain for the non-payment of their wages. The labor contractors give them part of their wage but never clear the amount they should be getting. On the long run, the contractors start behaving in a hostile manner and for them who repeatedly ask for their money, the contractors start threatening. In a few cases, they are accused for theft or simply they are beaten up. In some cases, the dishwashers also face the same situation. Accusation of theft and beating are part of the process for non-payment of the wages by the employers. The organized sector establishments are the safest employers who pay the wages regularly. They are the most reliable employer concerning payment of wages. Some of the migrants among the factory workers are working on temporary basis. A few of them are treated inhumanly; have faced either physical violence or non-payment of wages or sometimes both. Such cases could be seen as exceptions.

Similarly, getting employment is difficult. Therefore, when they get a job, there are compulsions to agree with the conditions put forward by the employers irrespective of their nature and anti-labor provisions. The domestic helps have to work long hours due to such provisions. Usually, they work more than 16 hours everyday. During the initial days, they even could not satisfy their hunger. The food what the family gives to the domestic help, though plenty from the perspective of the family, may not be enough for him or her. "*Chhotu*", the child worker has been under tremendous pressure of work whether he works in a restaurant or in a *Kothi*(bungalow or apartment). There is no weekend for the workers who are employed in informal sectors and those who work with the individual families. Therefore, most of the workers who have such type of employment feel all the time tired and seem very weak. This is more applicable to restaurant workers. Long hours of work for restaurant workers are quite normal. Furthermore, the migrants face difficulties in finding out places for residence, particularly, in posh locations. They either stay in far away places or rent small garages that have been made for scooter or in some cases for cars (See Annex – 1. D). The one-room residence without ventilation and other basic facilities adds further difficulties.

Besides, they also become the victim of many other crimes including murder. Most of them have faced physical violence more than once by either the employer or fellow worker. Beating by the employers and their grown up children has been seen as a regular feature in case of domestic help. The data shows that at least six Nepalese migrants were killed, one woman was raped and killed and another one was kidnapped and raped in Delhi since 1981 (See Annex – 2.B). There are several cases of violence. Particularly, the child laborer and young women workers are vulnerable. Risk of accident at work in factories is another factor adding to their vulnerability. In absence of information and knowledge, several migrants suffer from minor injuries to fatal accidents. In August 2004, a running train in NOIDA crushed a worker from western Dang, who was new to Delhi, as he was relieving at the railway track being unaware that the train would come so fast.

The migrants suffer from frequent illness due to lack of health awareness and unavailability of basic facilities. They have to eat unhygienic food and many among them stay in dirty squatters. The major health problem they suffer from is diarrhea. Tuberculosis is also another common disease.

They also suffer from nostalgia as they are away from their family for a long time. Many migrants, particularly, the young and new comers had been in tears while talking about their family and community. They dream home, feel home and want to be there at home. One child laborer working in a restaurant was just waiting the day when some one will go home and he will accompany him. Another child was telling that he was not afraid of either Maoists or the government army but his parents forced him to flee to India. He was cursing his parents and was waiting to run back home. The village life, simple and transparent, had been replaced by complicated urban conditions where they were not familiar. The other factor contributing to the nostalgia was the insecurity prevailing in the metropolis. The language was another factor. During the initial days, they faced limitation in communication. Some of them feel isolation. Once, when two workers got invitation by other fellow workers to go together in the Pahadi mandir (temple) at Nehru place to celebrate Teej (a religious day, when Hindu women fast) the workers had been experiencing thrill knowing that there would be around 10,000 Nepalese people there. Those who work in isolation and could rarely meet another Nepalese are more nostalgic. Some of them travel to distant places to work while they stay in far away places due to the desire of staying friends together combined with the motivating factor of the low rent for accommodation.

One former under graduate student narrated his story that when he goes home, his value goes up as he is seen as a good *Lahure* who brings cash and goods together with smile on his face. Everybody is either impressed or envied by the new aluminium trunks, new dresses, a few roadside electronic items and his smile. He added that most importantly, his prestige climbs up when he offers several cups of tea during morning and day time to his friends, relatives and neighbors at a village teashop or invites his friends for a glass of local wine, *Chhang* (local beer) or liquor during the evening. He generally invites them in a house of some villager who brews or distills and serves the liquor. Inside the family, it is money, material and his physical presence, which brings glitters of happiness. Nobody will be that interested to ask the difficulties he faced and if someone asks, he too would not share hardships of his life in Delhi. That is too hard to revisit at that time of eternal happiness. Everything is forgotten. Emotionally, he concluded, "Home is home." Moreover, his face was pervaded with tranquility and the body responded motionlessly. Furthermore, answering the question that what they missed most, many migrants said 'my home', 'my family' and 'my village'.

Alcoholism, gambling (particularly playing cards), prostitution (to a smaller extent) and love to watch films more frequently are some of the holes in the pockets of the migrants which not only drain resources but also harm to their image and waste their time. These problems have been seen everywhere. Particularly, alcoholism has been the culprit, which is responsible in draining resources, loss of prestige and reason for a fight. The problem with alcoholism is not that of money only, it has contributed negatively for down grading the image of the persons and have created several problems for others too. (Please also see Annex 2. i)

Commercial sex is another culprit. Prostitution follows alcoholism and is responsible for tarnishing the community image. On the night of 31 March 2004, one Nepalese migrant of about 55 years of age was caught red hand in the residence of a Nepalese woman at Andrewsganj squatters. They were involved in the act of buying and selling sex. She is the mother of two sons, one daughter and a grand child. The man works as a driver. He has three sons and a daughter. The woman is a widow and gets pension from the government as her husband died on duty. When, the neighbors caught them red hand, they were bitten mercilessly. Both of

them got multiple injuries. The Nepalese migrants around assembled, brought the man and woman there, and warned him and her sternly. Collectively, they felt immensely sad, as the image of their community had been tarnished.

Many migrants save money fully knowing that that is the fruit of their hard work. Some migrants work hard, play cards even harder, and gamble in a hardest way. Some of them love to show artificial prestige seen in the mobile phone hanging around their neck. A few of them have not gone home for the last 10 years, have not send money home and possess no savings or even personal belongings for daily use. Just they are surviving to work, gamble and visit brothels. The sad side of the story is that they have developed this as a habit and do not feel sorry for such behavior. Although, the number of such persons is small, but that is infectious and may take into its grip the new comers, particularly, the youths. A few of the migrant women work as prostitutes, and some men work as male prostitutes selling sex to rich male clients. In a high profile murder case at Anand Lok, a Nepalese migrant has been arrested by the Delhi police for his association with the murder or as one of the murder himself. Although, he was presented as a gay, it seems that he was a kind of a male prostitute (See Annex – 2.C).

Although, the general trend promotes savings, but there are many who throw money as pennies from heaven to spend without any personal sense of responsibility. One migrant worker from Sindhupalchowk works in a cottage industry where packets of noodle are produced. He gets Rs 1200 a month plus food and accommodation. A few months ago, he had purchased a second-hand Motorola mobile at Rs 1000. It was too expensive, as he had to recharge at least investing Rs 324 for a month. However, after some months he purchased a 3310 model new Nokia mobile set. He told that the old set was not working properly and he sold at Rs 400 and purchased a new one at Rs 3875. It was surprising. Perhaps, he gets satisfaction with this mobile set though he does not use that frequently because there is no telephone in his village and he has not many friends here. That was his money and his decision anyway. Nevertheless, certainly, it may be an act of extravagance, at least in its traditional interpretation.

Theft of money by fellow migrants or other colleagues is also another problem. They suffer due to stealing and pick pocketing too. Although, cheating by fellow migrants, employers and colleagues is not that common, this has made life miserable of some migrants. Non-payment of credit to the entrepreneur who owns any small business activity is another area where some businesses by migrants have destined to fail. They also face problems while taking money and goods home safely. This is another challenge. Some of them have lost everything in the boarder areas. Bus staff, rickshaw-pullers, coolies, touts and government officials at either side of the boarder are the terror for them.

Ganesh Bahadur Nepali was asking for some information standing outside the window at the outer inquiry post of the Nepalese embassy at Barakhamba road. He was from Ghorahi, Dang and works in a restaurant, which is in an old yellow van somewhere near to the compound wall of the Safdarjung hospital. He was there to find out a person who gave the embassy address and borrowed Rs 200 from Ganesh. After the verification by an embassy official, it was discovered that, there was nobody by that name. The official of the embassy tried to console him. That was a case of cheating. His salary was Rs 900 per month after food and accommodation. For a laborer who gets Rs 900 as monthly salary, Rs 200 is quite a large amount of money. He was deeply hurt and sad. He departed from the embassy gate disheartened.

Experiences and feelings – 4

Preying on the Innocents

Ram Prasad Ghimire of Gulmi has been trying to understand what happened to him recently. In December 2003, he met a Nepalese woman through a common friend who was working as a security guard in the same

neighborhood where Ram was working. The woman introduced herself as an intermediary of an employment agency, which was sending people to the Gulf countries. Her name was Tara. Believing her, Ram made a plan to go to Gulf countries and enquired further. He decided to go through her help and requested her assistance. After a few days, the woman told that fortunately Ram got a job in an airport. Now, he should give her the passport and Rs 10000 for VISA fee. Ram gave that money and he was waiting. After five months of saying 'today and tomorrow', the woman took him to Pratap, another agent. That man behaved in a very polite, civilized and businesslike manner and asked Ram to wait for another 15 days. Ram continued to follow up the matter. Finally, Pratap told that his VISA has been ready and he can fly any day. Ram went home, came back in hurry and deposited the money for the ticket and medical check up as asked by Pratap. Pratap gave him the receipt for Rs 33,000, which he and Tara got from Ram. He did not give any receipt for another Rs 2,000 that he took from Ram as the cost for medical clearance. In this way, Ram paid Rs 35,000 and he was just anxiously waiting to fly any time, any day. However, the very day did not come for weeks. He continuously followed up. Finally, he found out that Pratap had already closed his office and had disappeared. Now, it is the third month running in September 2004. Tara is a Nepalese woman. She is unapproachable now. Her mobile has also been discontinued. Pratap is also a Nepalese. His office has been closed. The mobile has also been switched off. Moreover, he himself disappeared.

The good news for Ram was that six persons, whom he knew had gone to Gulf countries just returned from there cheated mercilessly by the intermediaries – Pratap and Tara. At least Ram lost his hard-earned money and sleep, but the cheats spared him from the hardships, agony and loss of face as his other friends had to go through. I met one of the persons who came back. He was devastated. Ram's condition is far better.

While I was surfing on the internet at Pahargunj cyber café, a woman, with cleanly shaved head wearing Buddhist nun's uniform, was making a call to Nepal. She was telling the person on the other end of the line that the VISA is ready. Now, that person has to give the remaining amount to somebody (she gave his name) to carry the money to Bangkok. As the most interesting part of the phone call, she told that she was calling from Bangkok and she will stay there for a few days. Alongside her, there was a Nepalese man with dark, thick moustache looking at her smiling. I thought that the woman and her partner (I did not know their grade!) are isolated creatures. I know now, there are many such cheats around.

It is only natural to lose the emotional stability and cry out. Really, we have been living in a very difficult world. What a messy world are we in? It is disturbing. It is immoral. The rackets of the thugs, cheats and daylight robbers are preying on innocent Nepalese, some of them are here in India, and some others are in Nepal – simple and believing. Preying on them is a shame and a crime of the meanest kind.

Chapter Five

Political participation and economic practices

Rimal (1997) states, "Evidences show that Nepalese working as domestic help abroad have been the victims of under-payment. Even if we overlook the cases in East Asia and Middle East, the large numbers of domestic helps in India are under extremely exploitative conditions. There is a 'treaty of peace and friendship, 1950' between Nepal and India, which the nationalists of Nepal have always opposed as 'unequal treaty.' This treaty has given the right to work without intervention to the citizens of both the countries. However, Nepalese are not equally treated and their rights are always suppressed in India, whereas Indians in Nepal have always been in convenient position in accordance with the treaty." The problem starts from interpreting the conditions of migrants using politically colored lenses. The so-called Nepalese leftists' view is exactly that what Rimal has told here. They do not need any research to prove before making statements. They do not have class perspective while analyzing the situation. They do not have accountability at all. In reality, Nepalese workers in India and Indian workers in Nepal face the same type of difficulties, hardships and humiliations. Everybody could notice the ill treatment what the vegetable vendors and scrap collectors from India receive in the streets of Kathmandu. Even, the 'nationalist' Kathmandu residents of hill and valley origin do not spare the workers from the southern plains. Both the societies are influenced, basically, by ultras. Many Nepalese who reside in a

comfort zone of Kathmandu valley are ultra-nationalists. Therefore, they misbehave with powerless Indian migrant workers and get satisfaction. Similarly, there are a large number of Indians suffering from big-brother attitude. Therefore, they humiliate Nepalese migrant workers in India and misbehave with them. However, the Nepalese comrades including Rimal say the Indian workers in Nepal are sleeping on the bed of roses. This type of interpretation is anti-worker, ultra-nationalistic and has no relation with reality. They preach the same in Delhi through their handful of children called “Pravashi Sanghs” or “Pravashi Ekta Samajs” [12]. Due to such analysis, many migrants have developed very negative thinking that these organizations play politics. Therefore, many among them prefer to stay away from Pravashi organizations. Hence, the organizations are neither effective nor they command respect. For instance, the participation of the migrants was dismal in an anti-regression rally on May 25, 2004 at Jantar-mantar in Delhi. The Pravashi associations, associated with the major mainstream political parties in Nepal that included Congress, CPN (UML) and CPN (Ekta Kendra-Masal), organized the rally collectively. The observations as stated in the following passages depict the reality.

“The leaders of “Pravshi politics” do not make the migrants aware rather they treat them as parrots who can repeat what they tell them. In general, the leaders themselves are not critically aware. They are not well informed themselves. Once, I participated in a demonstration in Jantar-Mantar. The demonstration was organized by several Nepalese groups to show solidarity with the ongoing anti-regression movement in Nepal. There were many banners of several organizations. It sounded to me that the banners were raising the voice effectively but the number of participants was not that great. Anyway, that was my first encounter with any demonstration that was organized by Nepalese people in India for a Nepali cause.

I met a member of a Pravashi organization. He criticized very strongly the policy of the Nepalese and Indian governments regarding their attitudes towards Nepalese migrant workers in India. In addition, he criticized strongly the policy and actions of the political parties other than his own. He believes they have been responsible for the deteriorating security situation in Nepal. He does not consider other parties have been contributing. The feeling of intolerance and aggressive opposition of anybody they are not in agreement with are the strange Nepalese leftists’ characters for which he was offering further evidences.” (Neupane, 2004).

A. Migrants’ organizations: Background and contributions

The first organization in India established by the Nepalese migrants is Gorkha League. The League was a social organization established in 1921 A.D. under the leadership of Thakur Chandan Singh. The League was based in Dehradun and its objective was to organize Nepalese people. The League published a magazine called “Gorkha Sansar” (Nepal Academy, 1960: 14). After some years, the League became inactive. For a long time, there were just a few local committees established with a purpose of continuing the religious services in temples. Furthermore, their actions had a limited scope of construction or management of a temple. They were called “Mandir Samiti” (Temple Construction or management Committees). Some other committees with limited purposes also had emerged such as “Progressive Study Circle”. During the inception phase of communist ideology in Nepal, the migrant youths, more particularly in Kolkota, had such committees. A major organizational breakthrough came in the mid 60’s when Nepalese Migrants’ Welfare Association (*Pravashi Nepali Kalyankari Sangh*) was established on 5 May 1966. Communist leaders like Pushpalal and Ekdev Ale invested their time and energy to establish this organization (Giri, 2004: 4). The organization played a major role, particularly in areas of raising awareness on the migrants’ problems and the need to unite. However, this organization also could not survive long. Another attempt was made during 1970’s. A booklet called “*Delhima Nepali*” (Nepalese in Delhi) published in 1977, played an important role. As consolidation of that attempt, “All India Nepalese Migrants’ Unity Society” was established on 7 November 1979. The communist leaders like Nirmal Lama, Mohan Bikram Singh and Chitra Bahadur K.C played vital role in establishing this organization.

Now, there are five migrants’ organizations in Delhi. Although, some are active and large, the others are small or inactive. They are as mentioned below.

1. All India Nepalese Migrants Unity Society (*Akhil Bharat Nepali Ekta Samaj*). Now, the organization has been banned in India and the cadres and supporters associated with this organization have formed a new group called “Nepalese People’s Rights Protection Committee” (*Nepali Jana Adhikar Suraksha Samiti*). The popular belief is that the banned association was close to or associated with the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist).

2. Mainstream All India Nepalese Migrants Unity Society (*Mulprabah Akhil Bharat Nepali Ekta Samaj*) came into existence after the split of the united "Unity Society". Previously, both of them were in one *Ekta Samaj*, but after the split in their fostering party – the Communist Party of Nepal (Fourth Congress), *Ekta Samaj* followed the pattern and split into two separate organizational streams.
3. Nepalese Migrant's Association, India (*Pravashi Nepali Sangh, Bharat*). The *Sangh* has its political, ideological and organizational affinity with the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist Leninist).
4. Nepalese's Public Relations Committee (*Nepali Jana Sampark Samiti*). The *Samiti* is closely associated with the Nepali Congress Party and is as lethargic and inactive as its fostering organization is.
5. Nepalese's Welfare Committee (*Nepali Seva Samiti*). *Seva Samiti* was the brainchild of the former rulers – the *Panchas*[13]. Many migrants believe that these *Seva Samiti* fellows are still getting support from the embassy and that is their lifeline.

Besides the above-mentioned organizations, which are primarily the sister or daughter organizations of the political forces in Nepal, there are a few common organizations also. One of such organizations is "All India Nepalese Student Association".

Experiences and feelings – 5

Replacing the God and his arrangements

A pamphlet was circulated as an appeal to celebrate the *Teej* festival. It had mentioned that *Teej* should be celebrated as a cultural event as there is some aspect of women's freedom related to the day, irrespective of its religious fervor. This is a fine twist of an orthodox Hindu day of celebrations, where women starve praying 'God Shiva' for good health, long life, happiness and prosperity of their good, bad or notorious husbands. Furthermore, the pamphlet is full of politics such as regression in Nepal, anti-Maoist rhetoric, the Communist Party of Nepal (UML)'s betrayal, threats from expansionist (read 'India' – author) and imperialist (read 'USA' – author) etc. It has made a general call to convert *Teej* as some sort of the day not only for women's freedom but also to enhance the cause of people's rights, interest, peace and human rights. The pamphlet has been published and distributed by "All Nepal Women's Association (India branch)", a sister organization of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Center-Masal) to invite Nepalese migrants on 17 September 2004 at T-Block park, Okhla – II, in Delhi, to celebrate the *Teej* in a grand manner. This is the distortion of a socio-religious occasion to meet political objectives and hijacking the term from the Hindu orthodoxy. Why to worry? In ancient times, the Brahmins replaced the Vedic Gods such as Indra, Agni and Barun of the *Rishis* ('learned persons' of their times) by their own warriors as Gods such as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Now, if the comrades like to replace them and many others by politics of their choice and interpretations that is not a bad idea. This is in some way good that they are replacing the moribund God and his arrangements and are offering new opportunities to chant new hymns of their school of politics. It would be some sort of duty, perhaps, to offer an advice to the comrades, if they like to listen. There are hundreds of such days of celebrations in Hindu mythology and they may fit to meet the need of the comrades. These festivals include *Ram Navami* (because *Ram bhaktas* paint red line on their forehead that could be a symbol of revolution) and *Shiva Ratri* (*Shiva is with the weapon Trishul, that could be the justification for arm struggle*). Similarly, *Swasthani Brata Katha* (several illuminating women's stories could promote freedom not only for women but also for all), *Krishna Janmasthanmi* (a rebellious young chap may encourage revolt to change society) and *Kojagrat Purnima* (the gamblers may symbolize risk taking and sacrifices). *Charaibati! Charaibati!* (Keep going! Keep going!)

The organizations, mentioned above are not that strong concerning their membership. Also in identifying, planning and implementing actions, both in terms of agitation or creative activities, they are weak. In comparison to others, 'All India Nepalese Migrants' Unity Society' (presently working as "Nepalese People's Rights Protection Committee"), which was considered close to the Maoists had been active and strong prior to the ban imposed by the government of India. 'Mulprabah All India Nepalese Unity Society' has also all India spread, is functional and commands support among a sizable number of migrants. The *Mulprabah* is open for membership for both type of Nepalese – Nepalese migrants and Indian Nepalese. This type of membership is beneficial to bring all Nepalese together. However, it has also some constraints. The problems migrants face

are qualitatively different from the challenges Indian Nepalese face. Still, examining the social cost-benefits, the open membership has more merit as it offers opportunities for interactions between these two communities, helps to understand each other and provides platform for collective actions. From this perspective, *Mulprabah* sounds pragmatic. However, it has been aligned with “middle-of-the-road communists” in Nepal and is deeply ritualistic about the strengths, positions and actions of other groups, particularly that of the “All India Nepalese Migrants’ Unity Society”. “Nepalese migrant’s Association, India” is close to the center left forces in Nepal. It has been functioning as a socio-cultural wing of the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) in India. The party is socialist in character, nature and program but carries ‘communist’ terminologies, symbols and camouflaging emblems as if it has the right over its registered trademark. Although the ‘Migrants’ Association’ had made meaningful contributions in the past, now it has been surviving not by what it does today but because of what it did in the past. Sometimes, history provides breather for the present and helps to purchase a sarcophagus for future. Besides, Nepalese’s Public Relations Committee and Nepalese’s Service Committee also represent themselves in the functions organized by somebody else. The first is primarily confined to the Nepalese students. The migrants have branded the other one ‘Service Committee’ as Nepalese embassy’s illegitimate child. It appears when the embassy bureaucrats wish and disappears when the migrants may need.

B. Political orientation and participation in actions

May 12, 1986 has its special place in the history of political participation of Nepalese migrants. On that day, a large number of people had gathered at Firoz Shah Kotla ground in Delhi. They had gathered to express solidarity with the mass movement in Nepal. However, Delhi police did not allow them to take out the procession and hit with baton to chase them away. Several demonstrators were injured. Including 10 women, altogether 95 demonstrators were arrested and charged under different clauses of the penal code. They were sent to Tihar jail. Although, after a protracted legal and political battle they got bail, the cases have still been going on.

One of the major problems of a migrant is taking money and the materials home safely. They are harassed or robbed by corrupt government officials, goons and anti-social elements, who use to manhandle, beat, cheat and rob them. After the situation worsened, “*Mulprabah*” organized a demonstration against such behaviors and acts on October 19, 2001 at Sunauli – Bhairhawa, Panitanki – Kakarvitta and Banbasha -Mahendranagar areas. The demonstrators had to face violent suppression on the hands of the authorities. However, the anti-migrant incidences increased rather than to decrease. Hence, the same organization had organized another demonstration in Indian town of Gorakhpur, the main transit town to Nepal on September 29, 2003. (Smarika, 2004: 122, 126).

“*Mulprabah*” also had filed a writ petition in Delhi High Court against non-compliance of the provisions of the Treaty of 1950 regarding the treatment to the Nepalese migrants, particularly in Indian states of Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Meghalaya.

Sumitra Magar, a Nepalese young girl of 20, was raped and murdered at Basant Kunj in Delhi. The protest and the demonstration by the migrants highlighted the severity of the case. First time, in the history of the migrants, a ‘CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation – an investigation agency of the Indian government) enquiry’ was ordered in this case. (Smarika, 2004: 116).

C. Saving and credit associations – “The Cumety”

Susan Thieme (2003) has stated that Nepalese migrants in Delhi do not have access to commercial banking. They have established two kinds of savings and credit associations – chits and societies. These two types of informal cooperatives or savings credit schemes are basically designed for safe-keeping of money, saving and getting credit when there is any emergency or they go home. Only a tiny number of migrants (3 out of 87 respondents) have bank accounts in Delhi. This is also a recent development as the companies have moved to depositing their salary to bank account and are helping the workers to open one. Therefore, the informal cooperatives – the chits or the societies are instrumental in providing safety coverage.

There are some basic differences in these two systems mentioned above. The first system follows the method of some kind of auction that they call “*Boli*” (*chit fund*). The lowest bidder collects the fund. One can collect the

amount only once during the period of the scheme. He or she who waits for the last bid last bid gets more money. The operator is responsible for the collection and handing the money over to the successful bidder. He or she is responsible if somebody disappears after collecting money. As the operator or the manager takes full risk, manages the scheme and commands all members, he or she has one benefit too. The operator gets the entire amount one time (mostly second bid of the scheme initiated) without any bid or competition. On the other system or the society system, all members decide in advance for everybody's term for getting the collected amount. Those who take the money early continue to pay the interest also regularly until the scheme gets over. The person who gets at the end gets more due to the addition of the interest amount.

More than 75% of the migrants have been participating in one or the other scheme. (Field research January-December, 2004). Women have their own societies. The travel plans of the migrants depend mostly on the time for bidding or the turn for getting the fund from the schemes. The migrants call both the systems together as "Cumety", which is the distorted form of committee.

D. Nepalese owned small business activities

The Nepalese restaurants function as community clubs – sit, eat, talk and feel at home. Some of the Nepalese restaurants such as a small "Bishnu Nepali restaurant" at Harola in NOIDA play the role of such community clubs. The migrants enjoy not necessarily only eating, more importantly they love the homely environment there. In such restaurants, many people could be seen hanging around, particularly, on Sundays. Instant noodles and Nepali dumplings called *momos* have become some sort of special Nepalese dishes in these restaurants. Several types of Nepalese migrants could be seen in such restaurants. For instance, there could be a Muslim boy from Kapilvastu feeling proud to be there in a Nepalese restaurant which gives him some sense of his Nepal or a Brahmin youth from Syanja with dark face something like that of the people of Madheshi nationality having a long holy hair tail (*Tuppi*) on his head. Among the other customers, there could be a young MangolKirat woman from Morang buying 10 packets of Nepali instant noodles for her small child, who is happy with this amazing food item or another person from Gulmi sharing his experiences regarding expanding the work of Reyukai Nepal in NOIDA.

One of the largest Nepalese owned enterprises is a security company. The "Shield Securities" is one of the largest business activities run by a Nepalese entrepreneur. A former captain of the Royal Nepal army has established the company in partnership with other ex-army officers where about 1400 security personnel are working. Nearly half of them are the Nepalese migrants.

In addition, there is a cottage industry, which produces noodles. In Mayaur Vihar phase III, the cottage industry has been in operation for the last 10 years. The owner of the enterprise had started as a dishwasher as his first job in Delhi. He attained this level in 30 years passing through several jobs in-between, including that of an attendant, hawker, *dhawawala* and sales person. Now, he has a new house near Melamchi in Sidhupalchok, a plot of land at Jorpati in kathmandu and 2 small flats at Mayur Vihar in Delhi. His elder daughter has been graduated and is employed in a decent job and second daughter is studying in a good school. His wife is also working. This is amazing! A Tamang boy from a remote Nepali village has achieved such level.

Chapter Six

Values, human potentialities and behavioral responses

Most of the migrants answer with a blank and astonished looking face without uttering any word when the question reaches to their sense of judgment or reasoning at the cerebrum if the question is related to the more subjective issues such as meaning of life, freedom, emancipation, choices etc. They, perhaps, have not thought about such issues in the past or they have the difficulty in comprehending the thinking even at its crude form. Eventually, they just smile. The limitation has its tremendous effect on the research process and its findings. For the researchers, this is the most difficult part to get rid of. Only a small advance minority answers

in words. Again, there is another complex task for the researchers as most of the time interpreters appear volunteering. They interpret partially spoken or even unspoken responses, to communicate the message to the researchers. The researchers, furthermore, have to face the challenges to differentiate between the truth and the inputs of the volunteering interpreters politically or otherwise colored. Most of the time, they simply answer on behalf of the interviewees. The husbands, parents, siblings and neighbors or social workers defeat the purpose by extending their 'helping hand' to the researcher. There could be plenty of stupid interpretations even from Nepali to Nepali, unspoken to spoken and body language of the interviewee to words of the interpreter. They simply try to impose their own judgments as facts told by the interviewees. Therefore, making assessment on the more subjective aspects of migrants' life is a challenging act. Here, being fully aware on the limitations, an attempt will be made on attitudinal, behavioral and value aspects including the human potentialities and cultural practices.

The intellectual inputs that for meeting subjective human needs such as freedom, spirituality, love, leisure etc are missing in case of a large majority of the migrants. The communists are closer to the migrants in comparison to others, but they distribute jargons and packets of dream, that too just from their own brand of 'red travel bags'. Karl Marx spent his whole life in thinking and finding out ways for "development of the rich individuality which is all-sided in its production as in its consumption" and "the absolute working-out of the creative potentialities" with a goal of "development of all human powers as such the end in itself." (In Lebowitz, 2002: 17). However, those who claim them as Marxists are busy in making the workers some sorts of parrots of their slogans and ask them to say "*Gopi-Krishna Kaho* (just repeat, what I say)". Therefore, freedom and other subjective factors are not the territories familiar with the migrants. Most of them live life as it comes. Some of them put the entire life broadly in two baskets – when they can work, they will work and when they will not be able to work then they will retire and rest. In this way, living to work and living to rest on retirement are the spectrums from which they see the life. In absence of the understanding and infrastructure for living a wholesome and complete life full of work, intellectual development, entertainment, participation in socials, spend time with family and friends, rest and many more; many of the migrants live life just as compulsion to survive. Therefore, the choices, if any, are limited to expand the hardware side in terms of adding a few material comfort items, but not to make the life joyous even within a smaller amphitheater. Perhaps, this is most unfortunate state, though most of the migrants do not have its realization.

Occasionally, some of them suffer from illusion as why they are working so hard. Do they have life? Why are they working all alone, all the time? One migrant shared his story. A few years ago, he decided that he could go home back as he had already worked for more than 20 years, had already constructed a house, and had purchased a plot of land. He went back home in Kathmandu and told his grown up children that he has left the job and will stay at home. Hearing this, they not only were unhappy but also treated him badly. His wife had already died and the sons and daughter-in-laws were treating him as a foreign intruder. Finally, he decided to come back to Delhi and has been working at a *dhawa* for the last 8 years. Telling this story, he was in tears. His conclusion was that as he stayed away from his family for so long, they do not have that inner feeling as they could have if he would have stayed with them. He has no plan to return home rather he is thinking to go to Nepalgunj, sometimes this year to start a tea stall of his own at the age of 64. His story may not represent the condition of many migrants, but he sounded depicting the reality that staying away for a long time creates gaps in degree and intensity in the harmony as a knit family unit. This is more applicable to children. Several other migrants who are staying alone have not gone home for several years. Some of them say there is not enough saving, some say their parents are angry with and others say there is no peace at home and express the desire to go to Kathmandu or other urban centers in Nepal. Some of them simply want to go back to Nepal but not to their home. The rational behind is not the same for all, but isolation for a long period has its role. Certainly, disintegration of joint family system in the Nepalese society, particularly in cities and towns also has been contributing.

Everybody is busy, tired or moving fast to reach somewhere. If a few of them are resting, they also may be playing cards or enjoying alcoholic drinks. For the migrants, work is their first commitment and they follow this

commitment religiously. One person, who was working in a brick-making kiln, had been injured in an accident at the work place and the humerus of his right arm had multiple fractures. When, he was already in plaster and was taking rest at a room of his relative, he was so worried for the work that he was missing. Work is their religion. Only because of this attitude, they are surviving in the highly competitive labor market. However, on the other side, this workaholic character has degenerated most of the migrants to machines, lifeless.

The migrants have been living in an environment hostile to their needs and desires. Their needs and desires may include but not limited to physical, biological or social. Many of them have to spend most of the time to ensure survival. They do not have free time as such when they can relax and make their body refreshed and overhauled. They are full in several areas of concern, which include the stress of work and concerns of safety and security of their personnel belongings and the resources they might have saved. Many of them stay away of their family. Affection, love and sympathy are what usually they do not get. They suppress their sexual desires and seldom thought about it in a very normal way. As this has been a taboo in the society, they travel sometimes, the wrong way and visit brothels. Sometimes, they get involved in selling and buying sex too. A few instances are there when relatives are also approached for participating in the act of sex. There are cases of running women away with their paramours leaving their husband and children behind. In brief, their sex and family life has been understandably diminished to a level beyond imagination. Similarly, they do not have time to meet their social needs. They compensate it by taking part in the evening sessions among friends in a get-together primarily organized for drinking low quality liquor. This way, they drain their resources. One senior migrant told that as all three of the roommates were a bit older fellows and every morning collectively they use to promise not to drink. But, most often, every evening they drank around 8 O'clock. He gave the logic that they were older and their work was too hard. As a result, their saving was too small.

There are a few seeds of transformation giving rise to hope. The migrant community in Delhi is more or less, free from several types of social stereotypes, more importantly, the Hindu caste hierarchy. Still it does exist but the community has basically discarded the criminal system of untouchability. No such discrimination of that extent has been in practice. Similarly, the women are quite vocal, earning and influencing the family decisions effectively (please see Annex – 1.A). Most of the female migrant workers are capable to take decisions pertaining to their work independently. They are hard working, courageous, relatively open minded and confident in their appearance and expression. Exposure, work, income and information have created a sound and sustainable foundation for their progressive outlook, ability and independence. This is some sort of wonderful transformation. Their number is certainly too small. Even some of the priests of the temple are away with rituals set forth by the Brahmins. Some priests do not believe in rituals but perform the same as their profession. They do not practice the regular rituals prescribed for them, such as offering the entire meal first to the God by putting some food on the floor (called *Apsani*). Although, this is not a significant step but certainly it heralds the beginning. The so-called sacred thread (*Janai*) and the Brahmin 'holy' hair-tail at the top of their head (*Tuppi*) have been running away fast. The migrants still may perform rituals, but they have no sense of orthodoxy. (On the negative side, the Hindu-Khasa hegemony is bulldozing the culture of indigenous Nepalese people by encouraging them to practice Hindu rituals). They do it primarily either as a cultural function or something to show their status to fellow migrants and the neighbors as well. In this way, the individual behaviors are going through a great transformation. Similarly, they have started to understand the need of education for their children and have made great efforts to send them to schools. Nearly all school age children in Delhi are enrolled in schools. This is a great change. Many among the migrants acquired functional literacy after coming to Delhi.

Experiences and feelings – 6

Politics has replaced God – Strange but true!

There is an interesting story. The Nepali Pashupati temple in Faridabad at Sector 21, Highway Road has been converted into the temple of one sect of the Pravashi politics. *The Pravashi Nepali Sangh (Bharat)* has its head office inside the premises. There are three rooms occupied by the people who also take care of the temple. A nice ground is there inside the compound wall. There stays a MangolKirat gentleman from Baglung in one of the rooms and a Khasa lady from Palpa who stays in another room with her husband and two children. The lady should be a very good leader. People say that she motivates people within minutes to enroll them in the organization that she belongs to. There are no priests and no rituals as such. No priest and no rituals in a temple? That is true. The temple is presided over by an organization that too associated with a mainstream Nepalese political party, which is the offshoot of the left. Perhaps, the 'leftists' have replaced the God of a Hindu temple. This is innovation! This is amazing! Now, nobody can blame the Nepalese people including the migrants that they lack innovation and creativity.

Another major transformation could be seen in egalitarianism among all types of migrants irrespective of their status, caste, creed, background, income, work nature or profession. Nearly all of them address others respectfully and treat mostly as equals. This is very strange, but it is happening here.

Because of the change fast taking place in their villages and difficulty in catching up with the developments there, many of them felt confused in the beginning. Slowly, a few among them have internalized the basic thrust and direction of the process of change at home and they developed optimism. The skill and opportunity to analyze staying outside of the conflict zones have helped them to examine the events critically and derive conclusions. The pragmatism seen in their behavior, optimism in their assessment of their future and objectivity in their planning approach have made tremendous impact in their thought processes, outlooks and ability to march through complex analytical exercises. Although, they use simple phrases and ordinary looking assessment, but this has been done by a different person – some one who has attained basic transformation of his or her intellectual capacity. Now, their critical intellectual mind, including the sense of reasoning and judgment has been at full play. Although, this is not happening to a large number of migrants, at least a few among them have passed through the course to attain higher level of awareness and enlightenment.

Three types of group behaviors could be seen among the migrants. Firstly, some of them assemble and play cards or drink as groups in the evening together. Secondly, they may attend a monthly "*Cumety*" meeting to bid for the chit fund. Thirdly, they could be affiliated with a migrant organization. Strong organizational affiliations (except the affiliation with the Maoists, as their affiliation has been clandestine and could not be possible to assess) and community behaviors are missing. Of course, a migrant depends on himself or herself. At least on their thinking and perceptions, they make themselves ready to deal with any situation on their own. A leader of a *Pravashi* organization commented on the behavior of the migrants regarding organization and affiliation with it. He said, "When they already are in trouble, only then they remember the organization." This comment further proves the widespread individualism among the migrants. As a result, the social productivity aspect has been weak. In some cases, when it comes into play, even then the impact becomes limited.

Time plays vital role together with attitude, inclination and intellectual ability in the process of social convergence and socialization of a greater meaning. According to Karl Marx, workers need "time for education, for intellectual development, for the fulfillment of social functions, for social intercourse, for the free play of the vital forces of his body and his mind." (In Lebowitz, 2002: 23-4). However, the migrants primarily are in short of the most important requisite factor – the time. Therefore, socialization of any meaning and depth does not start and if the seeds are somewhere there, they simply disappear. The relationship moves around the casual "Hello", "Namaste" and at best "how are you?" When there is no socialization of any meaningful nature, social convergence remains remote. The migrants, hence, do not enjoy life in a broader sense as a community. The socialization process has its enemies on all fronts – the individualism, all pervading suspicion, work pressure and politicization of every social function. When the trust is missing, in the same proportion, the suspicion grows. This phenomenon not only prevents the course of interdependence but also acts against synergetic community behavior. Similarly, the omnipresent threat of political interference has created a situation when social functions are dying and political forces are enslaving such occasions. Thus, they are killing the socio-cultural milieu and are giving rise, at the best, to the political sectarianism.

The people either consciously or otherwise are contributing for a better tomorrow. Ensuring education to their children is one way among many, which has its direct relation with the process of emancipation. The educated ones could see life in a realistic term as they are better exposed to social complexes and contradictions. In addition, they can see the availability of alternate choices and they can design strategies to best suit to the individual's environment and personality. The second important contribution of the community in the process of human emancipation could be seen in the challenges they undertook by venturing into an area which is not their own, thereby inviting lots of risks, both, calculated and unforeseen. They not only ventured into but also tested failures as well as successes. This participation in the risk taking business of travel to Delhi emancipated themselves from several types of ignorance. Although, they are doing something not by being enlightened, the practices itself served as reference base for knowledge and guided them. The third is their collective mobilization, though not that often, in the form of processions in support of the movements launched for political rights and social justice at home. Although, they are heavily preoccupied with the needs of their own survival and, if any, development, the migrants participated in actions that help the welfare of the larger community or relate them with the concerns of a fellow migrant. The pressure created by them to bring to CBI enquiry of the rape and murder case of Sumitra Magar (Annex – 2.B) is one example. Another instance could be the procession of May 12, 1986.

The resource base what they have created at home certainly has helped them to think a bit independently. This also is a positive factor. The exposure has provided the platform to enhance their understanding and expand their scope to contribute better in the process of human emancipation.

There are at least three Nepali temples – Nepali Kalika Mandir at Janakpuri, Nepali Pashupati Mandir at Sahadara, Nepali Pashupati Mandir at Bela Road, Lalqila. Besides, there are at least 150 Nepalese priests, who are working in many temples in Delhi. This number alone suggests a good number of people visit temples or invite priests to perform some rituals at their residence. "Teej" is the most important festival celebrated by the migrants. Unfortunately, the rituals performed by the priests do not contribute to enhance the spirituality, but provides some psychological relief to the worshiper. As far as self-help and mutual help is the issue of any concern, there are not any such groups in existence other than the temple construction or management committees.

Anyway, the God has already booked the ticket to travel somewhere outside, but the rituals are very much continuing. This is strange. God is absent, but rituals are present. This is the irony of the society. The individual as well as social psychology have been corrupted. "Commit crime and purify yourself by bribing the God!" In that situation, everybody can escape punishment, as God also has been a party to that crime. This is what everywhere could be seen. That is applicable in the behaviors and practices of the migrants too. If you believe in God genuinely, you restrain. If you do not believe in God, morality and ethics restrain you. In a situation when a person is neither God fearing nor morally binding, no moral law of ethics and decency prevails. Ultimately, the God may disappear from people's mind and that is natural too. What is surprising is that the God has not been replaced by logically scientific moral and ethical codes of conduct.

Experiences and feelings – 6

Mismatch: is it absolute?

For several years during my youthful days, I stood for worker's cause as a communist, that too a radical type. Some people called to my type of communists as "*Naxalites*", others said "*Japalis*", the opponents labeled as "extremists" and the famous adjective was awarded to us by non-other than our own revisionist cousins – the moderate 'communists'. That adjective was in Nepali language. They branded us as "*Mudhkatta*" (those who behead). Anyway, they were also not that wrong as we were propagating for and organizing the guerrilla squads to eliminate class enemies. I spent several years organizing people from low-income families in rural and urban areas. Recently, I discovered that I was with them not because of their miserable condition, rather it was the ideology, which I was committed to. I spent years in prison feeling that I was fighting for their cause, whereas in retrospect, I was really doing so as my ideological orientation and personal conviction asked me to do so. After a careful review of my thinking and deeds of the past, what I am continuously revisiting that many among us were primarily driven by youthful inquisitiveness to a new ideological orientation and that influenced

us to work for a cause. We were there due to this factor and we made the villages and towns some sort of a laboratory to experiment the philosophy that we believe in profoundly. Therefore, when that experiment gave us some concrete results, which was not fitting with our romanticized dreams and middle class background, nearly all of us with such background crumbled. Many still believe to continue pretensions saying themselves as communists whereas neither their principle nor their practice remained leftists, forget about communism. A large majority among us is still fooling people in the name of '*Male*' (the Communist Party of Nepal, Marxist-Leninist) or '*Amale*' (the Communist Party of Nepal – Unified Marxist-Leninist) but some of us came out from the fold and admitted that neither at that time we were communists in a genuine sense nor we are now.

While continuing my study of the migrant workers, I saw working class people, their living conditions and their struggle for survival and their dreams for betterment as well. Now, I realized that the people, whom we thought we were leading during my days in active politics, are different. They are more sober, more courageous, hard working, more affectionate and braver than what I thought. They are complex human being as any others from the higher classes or the educated elites. They have both, their heart and mind ready to function. The workers are wonderful to work with, accompany, hear and share. They are sensitive, joyful and motivated to the cause they believe in. They work hard and spend their earning primarily on the business or the act of their choosing. They are perfect human being with all values, belief systems and understanding of the surrounding realities. Rather than teaching political theology, they need expert support in refining and streamlining their knowledge base and scientific philosophical orientation and political coaching for enlightenment and emancipation. This could be best done through the process of mutual learning. I realized now, I could perform better as a political commissar than during the days of my active political life. It is strange that when I thought I was full of ideology from foot to head, I really did not know people. Now, when I knew people, I do not belong to any specific philosophical school at functional level. This mismatch, I think, all the time presents in everybody with varied degrees in extent and scope.

The migrants try all the time to gain some technical skills, which may avail them better employment. Driving is one among the most sought after skills. Some of them have learnt skills on house wiring and repair of electronic appliances. A few are involved in motor vehicle repair works. Some others even are learning computer operations. This suggests that as projected by many researchers they are not the "all innocent sheep". They use their common sense, take advice from friends and relatives, and try their level best to equip with some vocational skills. The stories of their untiring efforts are remarkable and rejection to be cowed down by failures is wonderful. The risks they take are exemplary and their commitment to find out a better alternative deserves appreciations. (Please also see Annex – 1.B and 1.C). Once again, it should be mentioned that the number of such migrants is too small.

The family members and relatives come together when there is any emergency or need of greater support. If no immediate family members or a close relative is in Delhi, the migrants expect assistance from their neighbors. Thus, the traditional support mechanism has been in practice. This is the mechanism, primarily, they rely for finding out a job, asking for credit, meeting information need in case of medical emergencies, asking for advice and listening them carefully for change of a job, etc.

Although, there is a cultural fusion largely with a strong influence of vibrant localism, the migrants maintain cultural exclusivity in their core cultural behaviors and practices. In this way, the 'rainbow of cultures' is very much present. However, limiting to the Nepalese migrants, their cultural practices are heavily dictated by Hindu-Brahminical ethos, rituals and codes. A Tamang entrepreneur has hanged a poster of a Durga (a Hindu Goddess) and offers prayers and worships to another Goddess (Laxmi), framed in a glass at his Mayur Vihar noodle-making factory. Indeed, he is a practicing Buddhist. Another Buddhist was busy performing "*Satya Narayan Puja*" (ritual performed to please Hindu God Vishnu for good fortune). Answering a question, he said that everyone around him once performs the *Puja* and he is doing the same. There are many non-Hindus attending Teej together in one of the Nepalese temples. The women in red Saris and blouses virtually use to take control of the surrounding. The functions are well attended by men. In some places, MangolKirat men and women outnumber Khasas. Answering a question about Buddha Purnima, many Buddhist Tamangs shared their ignorance of the day, though they were celebrating every year while they were at home. The same is true in case of celebration of Dashain. In Delhi, the locals do not celebrate Dusserra (Dashin) in a big way. They just worship and distribute some vegetarian food items on the 8th day of Dashain. The Nepalese migrants, on the other hand, slaughter goats and spend money as that is done in Nepal. They purchase new dresses and spend money on other luxuries. Diwali, once again, is celebrated in a big way due to the influence of the locals. The question here is not that who celebrates what, but the near absence of community, ethnic and nationality

practices of the MangolKirats or the indigenous people of Nepal is alarming and surprising. Hindu-Khasa cultural hegemony has been established primarily through migrants' organizations, which are dominated by Khasa leaders. It has been followed by local influence and the role of Brahmin priests. This phenomenon suggests that the migrants who will go back will be the newborn cultural ambassadors of Brahmanism in their villages. That will help to erode fast the cultural traits of indigenous people. This is not a good sign, but this is what Delhi migrants are destined to. In Delhi, the rainbow of cultures is totally missing among the Nepalese migrants.

Chapter Seven

Observations and Conclusions

A. Strategies adopted by the migrants

Primarily, the strategy adopted by the migrants is to ensure survival by being involved in one or another type of jobs. Most of them have started with very low paying jobs that included domestic help, vehicle washer, daily labor, street cleaner, dishwasher in the restaurants or dhawas, etc. Their next target is a bit better job that brings them in some sort of structured work format, provides job security and offers better pay. These jobs include *Chaukidari* (security guard), factory worker, restaurant attendant etc. The third stage, when opportunity favors, they like to go for permanent jobs as factory worker, salesman, office attendant, cook, etc. The fourth stage is to acquire technical skill and develop as drivers, computer operators, plumbers, electricians, house-wall painters, mechanics etc. Therefore, they start with unskilled low paying jobs and gradually move to higher stages of work provided they get the opportunities.

They have their developmental goals too. All the migrants know the importance of education. This is the most valuable attitude they build through the exposure of metropolis Delhi. Nearly, all of them have been sending their children to schools. This includes both types of children, those who are in Delhi or at home. Nearly all have set educating their children as their foremost developmental goal. They want to give a better future for their children that they had missed for themselves. Some of them see the future of their children in acquiring skills than obtaining general school education. Therefore, some grown up children work in the workshops to learn skills such as motor mechanics, house wiring, plumbing, painting, etc. The awareness and positive attitude towards their children's education is their most laudable achievement. Another goal is to create a resource base in the form of new house, a plot of land, and savings to start some income earning activities when they go home back.

B. Nationalism: origin vs. choice

In the process of finding out alternate choices by selecting the best course for them, some of the migrants thought to stay in Delhi permanently. Through the discussions with some informed persons and information obtained through participatory appraisals, it was found that about 300 families have settled down here. Is it an act of loss of love for Nepal among them? According to Brusle, (2004) a large majority of Bajureli migrants do not consider India as a foreign country. Brusle has quoted one respondent who shared with tears that "There is nothing in Nepal other than water." She has started to feel India as her home as she has been able to feed and take care of her children here. Brusle thinks that this could be harmful for Nepalese nationalism. He has made valuable observation. There could be many migrants thinking on the similar lines. However, his conclusion that this phenomenon could be harmful for Nepalese nationalism should be critically examined. How nationalism could be best understood? Is it somebody's origin or is it his or her informed choice? Now, everything is changing and so is the notion of nationalism. It has been losing its meaning attached just to origin and has been evolving as a matter of choice. Nationalism by choice is an informed decision of a person based on his or her preferences linked with opportunities, prospects and feeling. Certainly, informed choice of a person is much better than the origin. Now, respecting their choice is the best way to accept the new emerging reality. Therefore, if she decides to stay here, that should not be taken as a negative factor for both, herself and Nepal. She deserves to find out ways and means for better livelihood. She has every right for free choice if legal provisions and the restrictive policies of the host state do not limit the right to exercise. Therefore, she should be empowered to exercise her rights, when other factors allow. This is equally true for the Nepalese migrants who

have migrated to graze on the greener pastures of the west. It is strange that even the scholars do not do justice for the less privileged ones. Those who have migrated to the west are from relatively better off families, most of them may be having Khasa origin and they are better educated. Therefore, nobody smells rat when they disappear there. Why a Bajureli Dalit woman could not exercise the same right? Similarly, Nepal will not lose anything on the bargain. Nepal has been nurtured and shall be affectionately taken care of by its many sons and daughters, wherever they stay. Therefore, one should not blame the Dalit woman or anybody who is in her position. In addition, one should not cry for Nepal and any other nation, which might have been in the same condition.

C. Nepal-India Treaty of 1950

Cross-boarder labor movement is not a new phenomenon. Certainly, it has been increased many folds in recent years. The jute cultivation in Nepal Tarai had been attracting a good number of Indian agriculture workers until early 1980s. In addition, the laborers from India had been working in large infrastructural projects, such as the construction of the highways and hydro-electricity projects. Still, there is a strong presence of such laborers, particularly skilled and semiskilled ones, in industries in several Nepalese cities. The green revolution in Punjab attracted many laborers including from Nepal. Similarly, the increase in manufacturing industries in the mega cities in India offered employment to several workers. The workers tried to reach there, where the work was available. Therefore, the opportunities play as magnets for the movement of the people. The economy at household level has its tremendous value related to the opportunities available on the other side of the boarder. Some of the political outfits and a few intellectuals are raising voice against such movements for a long time. Is it ethical to deny work for a worker, whichever country he or she belongs provided legally that has been allowed? This is more appropriate to ask in the context of Nepal and India.

GEFONT (1998) has reported quoting the study on 'Labor Market Information Collection' done by Department of Labor, Government of Nepal in 1993/94 that covered 474 industrial units of 8 districts. According to the study, there were 4052 foreign migrant workers out of 26,351. Hence, the percentage of the foreign migrant workers was 15.37. GEFONT also has mentioned in the same report that according to the 'famous Indian foreign ministry quote' (does it really exist?) that there were 3.8 million Indians two decades ago in Nepal. Why Indians migrate in a large number to Nepal when all opportunities are shrinking and in India, they are expanding? If somebody agrees with the ultra-nationalists that those who do not have citizenship certificate and are residing in Tarai region, all of them are Indians, then there could be more than 3.8 million Indians in Nepal. However, leveling those who simply have no citizenship certificate as Indian is a criminal act. This propaganda certainly promotes the feeling of insecurity and exclusion as well as isolation among the people of Madhishi nationality. This notion, further bows the seeds for national disintegration. Therefore, this type of fascist interpretation propagates falsehood and shall harm Nepal. Bringing emotional issues to divert the attention from real one has been the practice of ultra-nationalist political forces and their 'left' cousins. The issue of the treaty of 1950 also has been taken in the same spirit by them.

The GEFONT (1998) report once again says, "It is clear that almost 80% of the Indian migrants are from working class whatever the actual number is." It is strange that the "middle-of-the-road communists" and their socialist cousins carrying a communist nameplate are extremely intolerant towards these Indian workers. These acts compel to believe that they have been carrying the brand of communism not due to their conviction but because of convenience.

"All Patriots Unite: Revoke the 1950 Treaty", (NCP – Unity Center, 2000) is the headline of a statement of one of the Nepalese "middle-of-the-road communists" called the Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Center). Now, it has merged itself with another faction under a common banner of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Center-Masal). The "middle-of-the-road communists" most often raise slogans without applying their mind. One of the major reasons of setbacks of the communist movement is that it lost its class stand and replaced it by nationalism, that too most of the time ultra-nationalism. On the long run, proletarian internationalism was thrown into back burner and bourgeois nationalism became their battle cry. The rightists and the centrist schools of communism in Nepal have forgotten long ago, the fundamental task of objective analysis and making decisions based on scientifically derived conclusions. They simply raise the stale slogans. These slogans include the catch phrases "semi-feudal", "nationalism", "stop recruitment of Gurkhas", "treaty of 1950", etc. In the new information age, serving an uncooked or contaminated meal would distribute illness, and might backfire and could even bring retaliation.

The leftists, particularly, “middle-of-the-road communists” might have personal integrity and individual honesty but they have not shown profound intellectual capacity, correct ideological orientation, empathy towards the working class and objectivity in political assessments. Therefore, they have become the champions of criticism that could be targeted against the government or the Maoists or any other players. Most often, the Maoists have also shown similar characters as that of these leftists in parroting the ‘revoking of the 1950 treaty’ slogan without proposing any constructive alternative.

Furthermore, cross-boarder marriages and social relations, particularly seen in the form of common languages such as Maithili, Bhojpuri and Avadhi and common cultural traits have provided further justification for unrestricted movements on either side of the boarder. Therefore, the cross-boarder movement has not been limited to economic sphere. Hence, one has to see the social, economic and political implications related to the treaty of 1950.

Certainly, some other people and organizations also talk about the abrogation of the treaty. How this will affect the lives of the people? Is it a responsible act to overlook people’s survival to grab a political office or purchase a seat of intellectual prominence? Therefore, the political parties and the self-appointed guardians of nationalism should do their homework properly, find out alternatives and should behave in a responsible way. (Neupane, 1999: 132) The treaty certainly needs revision and contextualization, or even replacement but just revoking the treaty could bring problems for millions of workers.

D. Formation of South Asian Union and Asian Free Trade Association

The issues and priorities of politics, economy and culture have been constantly changing. So are the organizations, states and super-states. The new phenomenon in the form of regional grouping is becoming essential in the age of World Trade Organization, further compounded by the new regional arrangements in Europe, South East Asia and North America. One has to remember that the new governing mechanisms of a new regional order are very different and challenging.

A former Trotskyite and one of the scholars on South Asia, Tariq Ali (2003: 252) says, “Economic and political logic dictates the formation of a South Asian Union, a voluntary confederation of republics. It would make much more sense for the South Asian states and China to forgo the mediation of the empire (Ali has used the term ‘empire’ for USA – author) and speak with each other directly.” After the emergence of European Union, ASIAN and North American Free Trade Association, others are also trying to develop some kind of mechanism, particularly in South America, Africa and Asia. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has no teeth now, but it may emerge as a major economic block in future, particularly, after the restoration of full Indo-Pak state-to-state relation. The group would add more strength when China joins. China has already expressed its interest. These are not imaginations. After a few years, the compulsions of collective survival and development of interdependent culture of the states shall translate the proposal into reality. Therefore, rather than going backward, the Nepal-India relation should be redesigned as a test case to govern the relations among members of the expanded and functional SAARC. In that situation, free movement of labor and capital within the expanded region certainly enhances building environment for the regions’ collective economic development. When Pakistan and India stop behaving as fools and China and India will stop harming each other, certainly the security concerns within the region will disappear or at least go down to a non alarming level. Nepal has to open up dialogue to design relationships for a new regional framework. In addition, Nepal also could encourage neighbors to resolve their disputes by offering its good office. Now, no inferiority will pay to Nepal and similarly no superiority will pay to India, China or Pakistan. The same applies to other countries of the region. Nepal should understand this and should go ahead to make relation reciprocal, mutually beneficial, respectful for both sides in a non-restrictive manner. Slogan mongering is different which could be used to fool the people who may not have information and critical awareness on the specific issues, but one has to be very clear that we are living in the world where World Trade Organization and other international instruments are there to guide, help or hinder international trade practices. Considering all these factors, the treaty of 1950 should be revised keeping the interests of both Nepalese and Indian people, particularly the workers and the Nepalese and Indian states.

If somebody starts dreaming the formation of an Asian Free Trade Association (AFTA), which may include South East Asia, South Asia, China, Korean peninsula and Japan, he or she may not be daydreaming. On the

long run, West Asia and Central Asia also could join the regional grouping. This is what the people and states of this region should start debating on.

E. Future of migrants

Peace, prosperity and freedom are some of the most important hopes, dreams and aspirations of the migrants. They like to go back home in an environment of peace. How that could be restored? In the past, there were civil conflicts, rebellions of limited nature and armed confrontations in specific region. They include the struggle of Bara and Parsa between agriculture workers as well as small peasants and the landlords in 1950, the small peasant's armed resistance at Ratmata in Pyuthan in 1953, Nepali Congress-led armed insurrections from 1961 to 1963, Jhapa rebellion in 1971, Solukhubbu fight between government and Congress' armed fighters in 1975, etc. However, they had limitation in terms of geographical area, nature, scope, strengths and intensity. Now, the situation in Nepal is not like that as in the past when the above-mentioned battles or fights were continuing. This time it is different, both, in qualitative and quantitative terms. The whole society has been experiencing the effects and the impacts. The government and Maoist forces have been in the battlefield all over the country. The legally functioning parliamentary political forces also have split. The government and the mainstream political parties also have no common strategy to deal with the situation. Therefore, the divisions are complex and contradictions among them are fierce. As a result, the peace that could last long has been placed somewhere far away, perhaps, beyond the reach of the mainstream political players.

The migrants' another expressed aspiration is that of prosperity. When full scale war is going on, and as a result colossal loss of human life and property have become a general pattern, prosperity is just nowhere in the picture. May be, at grassroots level, people are managing their life and taking part in the process of production, at the macro level Nepal has been experiencing serious difficulties. In quantitative term, it is still possible to take the society marginally forward in economic terms and make some progress, but cultivation of prosperity is beyond the capacity of the discredited leaders who are at the helm of governance today.

The third factor, the freedom is also difficult to exercise. This is linked with the political economy of the country. In the situation as mentioned above, it would be highly unlikely to enjoy freedom of either political or economic nature. Freedom has a necessary prerequisite and that is democracy. Monbiot (2003:117) says, "If democracy is not self-establishing, it is not democracy". The problem what Nepalese society and the state are facing today is due to the absence of such type of self-established democracy. Therefore, the migrants who aspire for freedom should either go home and participate in the movement to establish it or have to wait staying away and working here until that has been established there. After soliciting their opinion (precisely, the opinion represent 36 migrants who are relatively better informed), it would be a realistic conclusion that they would select the course of staying away and waiting.

As far as the migrant's future is concerned, that could follow one of the following courses.

- If government of Nepal or India revokes the Treaty of 1950, there is no option left for the migrants other than to go home back. This could create pressure with the addition of the massive presence of work force without change in the society and addition in opportunities. For some time, this may create chaotic conditions.
- Another option could be that the treaty will stay as it is but the Indian government will create situation when the Nepalese migrants may no longer can stay and work with peace of mind in India. This could be through the introduction of work permits as the self-appointed guardians of Nepalese nationalism advocate for Indians in Nepal.
- The third could be some thing creating terror among the migrants as advised by Kanak Dixit (2004). He says, "India could try to get the Maoists to vacate Indian territory, which they use as refuge. As insurgents who loudly proclaim their brand of ultra-nationalism (largely defined by anti-Indianism), one could demand that the Maoists fight from within their own country. Such action would give political pause to the rebels and provide a proper reading of their power on the ground." Kanak Dixit, one among the senior Nepalese journalists and an intellectual of high repute believes that India should chase away the Maoists, as if their nerve center is in India. The Maoists are underground anyway and there is no possibility of barbed wire fencing all over the demarcation line with electric current running twenty-four hours. Out-laws are out-laws and crossing boarder and staying underground in India may not be a problem for them, even India tries its best to control their movements. The common Nepalese

workers would have to face innumerable difficulties, harassments and insecurity as every Nepalese could be branded as a suspected Maoist. They would have the only option to go back home due to the pressure created by security agencies.

- Alternatively, if South Asia would convert itself into a free economic zone where labor and capital can move without restrictions except the legitimate ones allowed by the international instruments, in that situation, the migrants no longer have to feel second-class workers and can claim all rights and privileges as provided by the new instrument. Until that time, revised, improved and refined treaty of 1950 could be the best arrangement. The treaty should continue with the same provisions regarding movement of people, their work as well as property rights while revising the provisions on security.

The migrants have been coming to Delhi for centuries. They may continue doing so in future too. There is nothing wrong in exporting labor – skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled. This is primarily an individual or family decision and the state should facilitate rather than creating obstacles. On the other hand, change in internal structural factors would influence migration and develop internal solutions. Therefore, the solution should be found by going beyond the range of options offered by the *Panchas*, or Nepalese “middle-of-the-road communists” or boarder regulation advocates. The solution should be radical, long-term and sustainable. What could be such solution? The remedy is the transformation of the society in all fronts that include political, economic, social and structural domains. The opposite classes, oppressors and oppressed communities and the opposite forces vying for political power are standing face to face against each other. There could be diehard pessimists, but they do not reflect the objectivity of the situation, whereas many optimists too do not see the picture in its actual shape and size. This is normal and natural as the entire society is passing through several phases of transition. The analysis of this transitional situation suggests that the momentum already is on the rise for the fundamental transformation of the society. It may take a long time, and heroes may change their hearts. Certainly, there would be many vicissitudes, but the movement evolved around social transformation is irreversible. (Neupane, 2057A). The new conditions are evolving giving birth to entirely new situation. In that situation, the creation of opportunities at home could best absorb the productive energy of the workforce in an environment friendly to workers and create situation that makes redundant the necessity of crossing the boarder.

F. Migrants deserve appreciation

The migrant workers face problems in several fronts that include economic, cultural, social, emotional and physical aspects. They have to create balancing between social as well as emotional (self, family, cultural ethos community, society) aspects and meeting survival needs (physical, professional, competitive positioning). Hardships and uncertainties accompany them most of the time. They do not succumb to difficulties rather face the challenges boldly. They feel happiness knowing that their sons and daughters are attending school or a new plot of land has been purchased or a new house is being constructed and so on. Perhaps, their developmental needs are also taken care of. Answering the question that why they do not plan to settle down in Delhi permanently, many of them replied that they will go back home because they love their family, community and nation. In general, the migrants are patriotic, much better than the political leaders who think that they have the dealership of patriotism. The nation should be proud of such sons and daughters who work hard, who love their motherland and above all who are the most loyal citizens, the common men and women who neither claim nor receive any privileges from the Nepalese state.

Annex – one, Miscellaneous information

Annex- 1.A

Methodology and process adopted to obtain information on migrants

The following methodology and process had been employed to conduct the study on the socio-economic situation of Nepalese migrants in Delhi and NCR.

I prepared database on contacts in Delhi. The information available on websites was useful in getting email addresses. I sent emails to several persons. Similarly, I contacted my Nepalese friends in Delhi. They helped me. Based on the information obtained from these contacts, I prepared a list of clusters where many Nepalese work. I had conducted several participatory appraisals in those areas. Through this process, I figured out the approximate number of Nepalese migrants in those clusters. The participatory appraisal meetings were quite valuable not only to obtain information but also to befriending with the people. Building on the information, I visited the areas and people several times to obtain more information. Finally, I came to conclude that there are about 136000 Nepalese migrants in Delhi through several participatory appraisal sessions conducted in several clusters. After that three criteria had been developed to go for interviewing individual migrant – 1) interview at least 400 persons (which is about 0.3% of the total number of the workers), 2) cover all major cluster and interview at least 0.25% of the workers from each clusters, and 3) obtain information from all on a) In which area they work. b) In which profession they are. c) From which region in Nepal they come. Obtain information at least from 25% of the interviewees on their income, expenditure, saving and remittances. b) Collect information on their length of stay Delhi. In addition, obtain data on – a) number of women workers, b) child labor, c) number of migrants staying with families and schooling of their children, c) common illness, and d) involvement in crime.

Finally, I completed the following tasks:

- Interviewed 402 migrants using unstructured discussion method insuring obtaining the answer at least on the minimum on their sub-nationality, profession, area of origin, length of stay in Delhi, stay alone or with family. Furthermore, the other information such as their education, information about 1950 treaty, income/expenditure, remittance, major illnesses, region of migrations, problems they face etc were collected from the ones who had time and were willing to share the information. A very small number (8) were unwilling to share any information with unstated real reasons, which may include lack of trust, fear etc.
- Organized 87 participatory appraisal discussions attended by 3 to 26 persons in one session.
- Visited all major clusters where Nepalese reside or work in significant numbers.
- Interviewed some of the migrants extensively to write their stories. Six stories including that of three Khasa, one MangolKirat, one Madhesi and one Dalit have been written.

Annex – 1.B

Nepalese migrants killed or raped in Delhi

The following list gives some information on murder or rape since 1981.

- 1 *Dhaniram sharma, (Gulmi), murdered at Mayapuri on January 18, 1981(Smarika, 2004: 112)*
- 2 *Ram bahadur (Arghakhachi), murdered in Gujuranwala town, Delhi on March 5, 1981(Smarika, 2004: 112).*
- 3 *Savitri Neupane (Morang), kidnapped and raped in Delhi on April, 1981 (Smarika, 2004: 112)*
- 4 *Prakash Singh, murdered in Delhi in 1982 (Nepali Ekta, 2000: 37)*
- 5 *Taradevi, murdered at Mayapuri, Delhi on 26 June 1983. (Smarika, 2004: 112)*

- 6 *Raju Tamang, murdered in NOIDA on 2 January 1989 (Nepali Ekta, 2000: 97)*
- 7 *Sumitra Magar (Tanahun) murdered and killed in Basantkunja, deli on June 1997. (Smarika, 2004: 116)*
- 8 *Farshabahadur, murdered in Vashant Vihar, Delhi on 4 March 1998 (Nepali Ekta, 2000:138)*
- 9 *Mina Tamang, murdered at Panchasheel Park in Delhi in 1998 (Nepali Ekta, 2000: 145)*

Annex – 1.C

Nepalese migrants involved in criminal activities

a) Vasant Enclave double murder case (June 20, 2004) got all sorts of media attention, as the victims were elderly couple. Retired Lt. Gen Harnam Seth and his wife Roop Seth were murdered. Bharat Bhandari, a Nepali citizen, has been arrested by the police as prime suspect for the double murder case. He was arrested at Maharajgunj, near Nepali-India boarder in Sunauli.

Quoting police source, The Times of India (June 24, 2004: pp 3) has published the following:

- Every week 200 Nepalese citizens arrive in Delhi.
- There are 8000 Nepalese working as servants in Delhi.
- Since January 01, 2003, the police have said there are cases of 350 thefts, robberies and murder where Nepali servants are involved in.
- It is difficult to bring them to justice when they cross the boarder as in that situation only Nepalese authority can bring them to justice. There is no such thing happening for the last 10 – 15 years.
- The headline in the TOI says “what happened to trusty old Bahadur?” The sub-headline states, “Nepali help now suspect no. 1”.

b) The co-publication of “The Times of India”, “The Navabharat Times” (Hindi) has published a news item on Nepalese domestic help on 23 June 2003. Beside the above mentioned points, it has stated the following:

- A Nepalese domestic help has been arrested on the murder charge of retd. Govt. officer Dharmajeet Singh Monga (70) and his wife Shantosh (65) in March 2004 in Janakpuri.
- Two Nepalese domestic helps were arrested on the murder charge of Vijay Gupta (50) in Jangapura Ext. on February 4, 2004.
- Delhi police had arrested five Nepalese criminals in western Bihar on 6 February who was reportedly involved in heinous crimes in several states including Delhi.
- Two years ago, one Nepali Kamal Singh looted a trader at Adarshanagar by presenting him his wife as a call girl.
- One Bahari Lal from Dolpa district in Nepal has been facing charges on narcotic. Similarly, the other Nepalese who are facing charges are – Surya Bahadur from Pasari (Parasi?) district on charges related to explosive, Bir Bahadur and Raju Thapa on robbery, Mehar Chand and Jeet Bahadur from Kapara (?) district on excise related cases, Rajesh from Jhanapa (Jhapa?) district on murder. In addition, Mahendra, Surendra and Dhaniram have been absconding from Keshavpuram police Thana. They are charged for rape.

c) There is a Nepali boy who is facing four criminal cases that included theft of a motorbike, illegal supply of young Nepali girls to dance clubs, absconding with a Punjabi girl and being involved in a fight with others. He is facing court cases and now is on bail.

d) One Moti alias Mohit, a Nepalese migrant worker has been arrested by Delhi police for his possible role in murdering an USAID official Mr. Pushkin Chandra at Anand Lok in Delhi in August 2004. The high profile case has been suspected as related to 'the act of homosexuality'.

Annex – 1.D

Some basic information

1. The rent for a small 8' x 10' room at Harola in NOIDA is 600 whereas the same size of room at Safdarjung Enclave costs 1500. The 10' X12' room in Sector 22 in NOIDA costs 1200 a month and in Kotla Mubarkpur, the rent is the same for that size of room. Most of the Nepalese migrants share the room. A group of three to four persons in one room is normal.
2. I saw television sets with 7 migrant groups who share room or families, fridges with 5 and still/wooden cabinet with 11 out of 47 rooms/groups or families I visited. Only, 10 have separate kitchen and a water tap inside the room or at the kitchen.
3. The cost of meal mostly 4 Chapattis (Tawa or Tanduri) and half Dal or vegetable costs Rs 12 to 15 in a dhawa. The Thali, which includes rice, chapati, dal and vegetable, costs Rs 20 at a dhawa and Rs 30 to 60 in restaurants.
4. Monthly cost on food, if stayed alone could be about Rs 1000. However, if three to four persons stay together that comes down to Rs 700 or less.
5. There is daily bus service connecting Delhi to Kathmandu. The buses leave from Majnuka Tila, New Tibetan Camp area. These all are Nepali buses. The fare is Indian Rs 1000 from Delhi and Nepalese Rs 1800 from Kathmandu. Normally it takes 30 hours to reach Kathmandu from Delhi. In some days when they will have more passengers, more than one bus departs. In any case at least one bus from either side departs.
6. In addition, several Indian buses leave Ananda Vihar terminal for several destinations close to Nepal boarder including Sunauli, Rupedia and Banbasa. The trains leave Delhi to Gorakhpur, Gonda, Siliguri and other destinations. The migrants prefer buses, as they are easier to book a seat. Although there are several flights everyday connecting Kathmandu with Delhi, but that is a luxury the migrants cannot afford. I have not met a single migrant who has taken air rout to go home.
7. Nepali films in Delhi cinema halls (examples):

Paras – Malai Maf Gari Deu, (morning show, 14 June onward for one week)

Rachana – Aama (morning show, 18 June onward for one week)

Paras – Maiti (morning show, 1st July onward for one week)

Bhainei Sakina – Paras – (morning show, 6th August onward for one week)

Ashirwad – Rachana (morning show, 10 September onward for one week)

Annex – 1.E

Migration continues, destinations diversify

The migration situation in the selected villages states that the trend has been changing. Now, they are moving to more greener pastures such as Arab states, Malaysia, Korea etc. The following facts reveal the new trends.

1. Bharaha village, Badagaon VDC, Gulmi:

Household – 27 (Khasa 23, Mangolkirat – 4)

Number of migrants in 1998: 33 (all in Delhi)

Number of migrants in 2004 – 23 (5 in Delhi, 18 in Arab and other countries)

Ten migrant workers returned to their home in five-year period covering between 1998 and 2003. Similarly, a large number of migrants (18) moved to more greener pastures such as Arab countries, Malaysia, South Korea, Nigeria etc.

The other villages are also changing but not that fast as Bharaha. The villages below tell the story.

2. Bartung, Archale, Deupuje Dada and Dodkatta villages, Tansen municipality ward no – nine, Palpa

Households – 55 (Khasa 30, Mangolkirat – 17, Dalit – 8)

Number of migrants in 1998: 48 (20 in Delhi, 27 in rest of India, 1 in Arab country)

Number of migrants in 2004 – 45 (16 in Delhi, 26 in rest of India and 3 in Arab countries)

Nationalities of migrants in India 42 (Khasa – 26, MangolKirat – 12, Dalits – 4)

The number of migrants has come down but more are going to Arab countries. This trend is the same but not as fast as it has been seen in Bharaha.

Annex – 1.F

Some observations on migrants' situation.

The situation of the migrant workers could be summarized in the following points. This is the outcome of a series of discussions.

1. Mutual help among Nepalese in Delhi is minimal.
2. Bihari work force is replacing Nepalese workers, as they are ready to work at a lower wage. Nepalese are a bit extravagant in comparison to Bihari. Therefore, they are losing in the competition.
3. Some of them are acquiring new skills through experience. They go home back and start utilizing that skill by opening a small income earning activity. Most of them know many Nepalese associations associated with politics. However, many of the workers see them not so credible. They have no idea if there is any cultural association, which is functioning well among the Nepalese community.
4. Most of them do not know if there is any business enterprise run by a Nepalese professional or a businessman though there are a few.
5. Most of them do not know about the availability of a Nepali newspaper in Delhi.
6. Most of them have no idea about any Nepali TV channel in Delhi though Nepal One is there and is quite a good channel.

7. The image of the Nepali community is badly affected more recently. This is partly a few people have done wrong. The other is that the Indian Nepalese from Assam, Darjeeling and Uttaranchal do something bad and the Nepalese from Nepal has to face the consequences.

8. The embassy is not refuting the general allegation that keeping Nepalese workers, as domestic help is full of risk. More recently, Delhi police circulated such information in the newspapers but the embassy had not put forward its views. The Nepalese workers expect more proactive role and support from the embassy. (Neupane, 2004)

Annex – 1.G

Estimated number of Nepalese migrant workers in India

State	Number
Kerala	13000
Tamilnadu	55000
Andhra	36000
West Bengal	57000
Delhi and NCR	136000
Madhaya Pradesh	43000
Maharashtra	145000
Gujrat	57000
Punjab	240000
Haryana(exc Faridabad & Gurgaon)	44000
Rajasthan	40000
Uttaranchal	75000
Himachal	158000
Jammu and Kashmir	12000
Karnataka	63000
Uttar Pradesh (excl NOIDA and Gaziabad)	60000
Rest of India	150000
Total	1384000

Source: Field Research, January – December 2004

Annex – 1.H

Nepal: Some facts as told by the government through census

Population (2001)

Total:	23,151,423	
Female:	11,587,502	(50.05%)

Urban: 3,227,879 (14.2%)

Population absent from households

Total: 762181 (3.29% of total population)

Male: 679469 (89.15% of total absentee population)

Female 82712 (10.85% of total absentee population)

Development regions having absentee population

Region	Population	Absentee population	Percentage of absentees
Western region	4571013	331880	7.26
Eastern	5344476	121911	2.28
Central	8031629	107631	1.34
Far west	2191330	106035	4.84
Mid west	3012975	94724	3.14

Ten districts with largest absentees

District	Absentee Population	Female Absentees	Destination India
Syanja	40195	4150	33346
Baglung	30292	2809	24895
Arghakachi	27413	2939	26381
Kaski	26852	3083	11024
Nawalparasi	26501	2425	22304
Palpa	25196	2425	22851
Tanahu	25174	1821	18183
Pyuthan	23510	2329	23066
Achham	21707	3043	21615
Morang	20934	1961	12044

Ten major destinations

Countries	Total migrants	Female only
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India	589050	68550
Saudi Arabia	67460	831
Qatar	24397	189
United Arab Emirates	12544	246
Hong Kong	12001	3858
Malaysia	6813	71
Japan	3726	639
Kuwait	3688	644
Singapore	3363	684
Bahrain	2737	121

Source: CBS (2002):1, 19-20, 54-65

Reasons for going abroad (in percentage)

Reason	Total	Male	Female
Work	79.3	84.7	34.6
Study	2.5	2.2	5
Marriage	1.6	0.3	12.8
Other	16.6	12.8	47.6
Total %	100	100	100

Source: CBS (2003): 65-68.

Annex – 1.i

Lecture of a Frustrated Migrant

The ill effects of alcoholism could be best depicted in the lecture of a frustrated migrant. He told, “Nothing will happen in Nepal because we are not abiding by religious codes. Look here. Forget about Brahmins, the Gurjjars do not eat meat. However, in Nepal, nearly all Brahmins eat meat. We do not go to temples, do not worship and do not perform rituals. Look here. Everybody has been in Krishna temples today. Women are fasting.” It was the *Krishna Janmashthmi* (Krishna’s Birthday), when he was making this lecture. “Here, more particularly in Okhla area, Nepalese themselves deceive, cheat and rob other Nepalese. They do not have good character. The guardian of the family simply drinks alcohol and plays cards, whereas children and women are busy working. This is what the Nepalese do here.” He continued his lecture. “In the restaurants owned by Nepalese, not the Indians but the Nepalese themselves are the problems. First, they do not pay the bill.

Afterward, do not pay the credited amount against their name. Second, they come drunk and start debating, quarreling and even sometimes fighting inside the restaurant. Some days ago, two drunkards came and started to show their true character. I had to request the other customers to leave the restaurant. If the quarrel would continue, there would be a large crowd outside watching at the cost of the image of the restaurant. These two drunkards finished their show by vomiting every vulgar words and sentences and hitting the table a few times by their mighty fists and left to some where else.” This is what the owner of a restaurant had to share. We, the patient listeners, also feel the depth of his frustration and decipher the meaning of the moral teaching on religious practices he offered us at the beginning.

Annex – 2

Treaty of Peace and Friendship Between the Government of Nepal and the Government of India

Signed at Kathmandu and Brought into Effect, 31 July 1950.

The Government of Nepal and the Government of India, recognizing the cordial relations that have persisted between the countries for centuries;

Desiring yet further to strengthen and develop these relations and to perpetuate the unbroken peace between the two countries;

Have resolved to enter into a treaty of peace and friendship with each other, and have for this purpose appointed the following persons:

For the Government of Nepal, Sri 3 Maharaj Mohan Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana, Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief, Nepal

For the Government of India, Indian Ambassador to Nepal, His Excellency Sri Chandresvar Prasad Narayan Singh

Who, having inspected one another’s credentials and found them to be correct and in order, agree to the following articles:

Article 1: There shall be everlasting peace and friendship between the Government of Nepal and the Government of India. Both governments agree mutually to acknowledge and respect the complete sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the other.

Article 2: Both governments undertake to inform each other should any major rift or friction with any neighbouring nation appear likely to cause a breach in the friendly relations subsisting between the two governments.

Article 3: To establish and perpetuate the relation referred to in Article 1, the two governments agree to maintain diplomatic relations with each other by means of representatives along with such staff as necessary for proper performance of their duties.

Those representatives and their agreed upon staff will be mutually granted all those diplomatic privileges and immunities customarily accorded by international law. Under no circumstances will the privileges accorded on this basis be less, in the case of either government, than the rights accorded to persons of equal status of any other nation with whom the government has diplomatic relations.

Article 4: The two governments mutually agree to appoint Consul-Generals, Consuls, Vice-Consuls and other consular representatives who will reside in agreed upon cities, ports and other places. Consul-Generals, Consuls, Vice-Consuls and other consular representatives will be given executors or other valid authorization papers of their appointment. Such exequaturs or authorization papers can be withdrawn by the issuing country if it deems it necessary. In such cases, as far as possible the reasons for withdrawal will be indicated. The

persons mentioned above will enjoy on a reciprocal basis all the rights, privileges, exemptions and immunities accorded to persons of equal status of any other country.

Article 5: The Government of Nepal has the right to import from the territory of India or through its territory those arms, ammunition and materials needed for its security. The procedure for putting this arrangement into effect will be decided upon by the two governments through mutual consultation.

Article 6: As a symbol of Nepal and India's friendly, neighbourly feelings, both governments agree to accord national treatment to subjects of the other government who are within their territories with regard to participation in industrial and economic development, and in concessions and contracts related to such development.

Article 7: The Government of Nepal and the Government of India agree reciprocally to accord to subjects of the other government who are within their territory equal privileges in matters of residence, ownership of property, participation in business and commerce, movement, and other such privileges.

Article 8: Insofar as matters dealt with here are concerned, this treaty cancels all treaties, agreements and engagements entered into on behalf of India by the British Government and Nepal.

Article 9: This treaty will come into effect from the date on which it is signed by both governments.

Article 10: This treaty will remain in effect so long as neither country seeks to end it by giving one year's notice.

Signed by both parties in Kathmandu on the 16th day of Srawan in the year Bikram Samvat 2007, or the 31st day of July in the year 1950 A.D.

Appendix II:

Letter of Exchange Relating to the Treaty of Peace and Friendship Between the Government of Nepal and the Government of India.

Kathmandu,
31 July, 1950

Excellency,

Having concluded the Peace and Friendship Treaty and the Business and Commerce Treaty between Nepal and India, by means of this letter we now express our agreement on certain other subjects to regulate the treaties.

1. Neither country will tolerate danger to the security of either country due to foreign aggression. In order to resolve any such danger, through mutual consultations, the two countries will determine effective counter-measures.
2. With the assistance and approval of India, Nepal will import from Indian territory arms, ammunition or war materials and essential goods necessary for the security of Nepal. The Indian government will provide easy transport arrangements for such arms and ammunition.
3. In relation to the provision of Article 6 of the treaty to provide national treatment, for some time India will give protection to Nepalis from unlimited competition within Nepal. The two governments will determine the nature and conditions of such protection.
4. If Nepal wishes to take foreign assistance in the development of natural resources or any industrial project, should another foreign and the Government of India or an Indian citizen make equal bids, the Nepali government must give priority to the Government of India and Indian citizen. This will not affect assistance from the United Nations or special agencies.

5. Neither country will employ any foreigner who might affect the security of the other. In times of necessity either country will represent the other.

Excellency, with the utmost respect I request your approval.

Mohan Shamsheer Jang Bahadur Rana
Maharaj, Prime Minister
Supreme Commander, Nepal.

N.B. An identical letter addressed to Mohan Shamsheer J.B.R. as the representative of the Government of Nepal and signed by Chandreswar Prasad Narayan Singh on behalf of the Government of India was written and presented at the same time.

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[1] The famous Sikh ruler Ranjeet Singh started to recruit Nepalese youths in his army. Lahore was the capital city of his Sikh kingdom of Punjab. The Nepalese youth who traveled to Lahore to join the army were popularly

known as Lahure. After Ranjeet's defeat at the hands of British colonial invaders, the colonialists retained the system of recruiting Nepalese youths even in bigger number. The term, now a day, includes the Nepalese working with British army and Indian army and, in an expanded sense the Nepalese migrant workers, particularly who are in India.

[2] Khasa or Khas is the ruling nationality in Nepal. The Khasa nationality is composed of the sub-cultural groups called Bahun, Chhetri, Thakuri and Sanyashi. Alternatively, some scholars prefer to use the term Bahun-Chhetri instead of Khasa or Khas.

MagolKirat is a nationality primarily originated by the process of centuries-long assimilation of indigenous Kirats and immigrant Mangols. The major sub-cultural groups of this nationality include but not limited to Magar, Tamang, Gurung, Rai and Limbu.

Madheshi is another major nationality in Nepal. They are the people from the southern plains.

Dalit is a nationality that originated from the Khasa. As the Khasa kept them as untouchables, they had to fight against them. After a long struggle against the Khasa atrocities, they developed as a nationality.

Newar is the numerically smaller nationality but its primary homeland is Kathmandu valley and has been highly developed. Therefore, it is visible very much.

[3] The remaining 1.1% of the population has been grouped as 'Others'.

[4] A dhawa is a roadside restaurant, primarily serving chapattis (Indian bread), Dal (lintel) and vegetable. These dhawas are inexpensive and mainly cater to working class people.

[5] Annual expenses include on food, accommodation, clothing, medicinal and other. The final saving is calculated after deducting the annual expenses.

[6] The statistical picture develops as presented below:

Persons willing to reveal their income – 87

Number of migrants who sent money home in a year (April 2003 – March – 2004) – 61

Percentage of migrants send money home $(61/87 \times 100)$ – 70

Seventy percent of active workers (also minus 2.7% unemployed) in Delhi – 92630

Remittance from Delhi in one year (92630×9992) – IRS 925558960

Nepalese Rs (925558960×1.6) = 1480894336 (Say 1.5 billion)

Remittance from India with the same calculation accepting the number of migrant workers (1.3 million) as estimated by Prof. David Seddon his team of scholars, the amount could be

$(1.3m - 2.7\% \text{ unemployed} = 1264900 \times 70\% - 885430 \times 9992 = \text{IRS } 8847216560)$ (say 9 billion).

Nepalese Rs = 14155546496 (say 14 billion) in one year.

[7] Bahadur means "the brave", literally. However, it has been used by the Indian employers to address the Nepalese domestic helps or security guards. Sometimes, it has been used as a derogatory term for all the Nepalese community to define them as an inferior lot.

[8] No students who are pursuing their studies have been included in the study as the study focuses on the migrant workers, employees or entrepreneurs. There are hundreds of students studying in undergraduates and professional courses. I personally know at least 25 post graduate and doctoral students who are studying in Jawaharlal Nehru University or Delhi University. They are kept out of the scope of the study.

[9] Due to a clash of interests and personality, and big-brother attitude of India, Nepal had faced economic blockade for several months when the trade and transit treaty expired and India refused to renew.

[10] The Indian airlines plane taking off Kathmandu for Delhi was hijacked by Kashmiri militants. They took the plane to Kandahar in Afghanistan. One passenger was killed and the Indian government had to release some of the imprisoned Kashmiri ultras to free the passengers.

[11] Rumor that Hrithik Roshan had made some derogatory remarks about Nepalese people generated anti Roshan and anti-India passion in several parts of Nepal. Riot broke out. Five people lost their life.

[12] The Nepalese term "*Pravashi*" includes both Nepalese migrants and immigrants of Nepalese origin to other countries, particularly to India.

[13] The term 'Pancha' literally was used to an assembly of five elders in the Nepalese villages to settle disputes between and among fellow villagers. This traditional system was hijacked by a king to serve his political ambitions. He introduced the Panchayat system (previously a rural conflict resolution mechanism) as a polity. The workers and leaders of this polity were called Panchas and they were notorious for all sorts of wrongdoings. Thus, they have a bad name in Nepal. Now, in the multi-part system they have organized themselves as a political party called "Rastriya Prajatantra Party".