

Impact of Foreign Employment on the Economy and Socio-Economy Development of Nepal

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Abstract:

The main objective of this seminar paper is to analyze the situation of foreign employment and its impact on the micro and macro levels of Nepal. This study is based on the secondary data which were collected from different sources like an economic survey and report published by the Ministry of Finance (MoF), Central Beuro of Statics (CBS), Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE). The data presented here is up to the fiscal year 2021/22 till mid-March. Various research documents have been reviewed for analyzing the status of foreign employment and remittance in the context of Nepal. A pie chart and line graph are used in this paper based on the data presented here to give clear knowledge about the status of foreign employment in Nepal. The economic impact of foreign employment has been analyzed on remittance, contribution to GDP, share of remittance to current account, and current transfer income. There is leakage in actual remittance inflow because many workers prefer informal ways to send their remittance income. So the government should make plans and encourage laborers to send their income in a formal way. The number of Nepalese workers going abroad to work has increased rapidly. Most of the workers went to Gulf countries. Qatar is the first destination of many followed by Malaysia. We can find out the class division among workers to select destinations i.e. poor people to Gulf countries like Qatar, and Malaysia and better people towards Japan, and South Korea.

Keywords: Remmittance, GDP

Introduction

Foreign employment refers to moving to a different nation in search of employment and financial gain. People being employed abroad has been a common occurrence since the dawn of civilization. Foreign employment evolved over time into many different forms, becoming increasingly important and widespread throughout the whole world. Millions of individuals worldwide are moving away from their normal domicile in search of better career possibilities and ways to raise the standard of life for their dependents. The increased transnational mobility of employees has gained momentum as a result of globalization and regional economic integration. The movement is mostly motivated by poverty and the inability to produce enough food or earn enough money to maintain oneself or a family. These are not only characteristics of foreign employment from poor to rich states, poverty also fuels movement from one developing country to others where work prospects seem at a distance, at least to be better. Foreign employment has

remained the backbone of the Nepalese economy for many years. Foreign employment has played a vital role in different areas of our country. There is no exact definition of foreign employment. Different economists and philosophers have described foreign employment in different ways. Here are some definitions by different famous economists,

Adam Smith, the father of modern economics, described foreign employment as, "the movement of labor from one country to another in the search of better employment opportunities".

Amartya Sen, an Indian economist and Nobel laureate, views foreign employment as, "a means of poverty reduction and economic development, as it provides opportunities for people to improve their standard of living and access better education and healthcare".

Paul Krugman, an American economist, and Nobel laureate, defines foreign employment as, "the migration of labor from low-wage countries to high-wage countries, which leads to a reallocation of resources and higher productivity".

Nepal has a long history of labor migration, with Nepalese labor seeking employment opportunities in various countries. The history of formal foreign labor migration begins around 1816, after the Anglo-Nepal War. A total of 4,650 Nepalese youngsters were recruited to the British armed forces in the British-Gurkha regiment. In 1950, the signing of the Peace and Friendship Treaty between India and Nepal formalized the free movement of people between the two countries without requirements of any formalities like passport and visa. There are three labor migration patterns in Nepal, they are domestic migration, migration to India, and migration to other parts of the country other than India. Due to the open border of India and Nepal, thousands of people go to India for labor employment. Nepali laborers began traveling to India in the 1950s and 1960s, mostly to work on building sites, road projects, and as domestic assistance. The Gulf nations, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait, started hiring Nepali laborers in the 1970s for their burgeoning construction industries. In the 1980s and 1990s, this pattern persisted, with Nepali people finding work in a variety of industries, including hospitality, healthcare, and physical labor. In Malaysia, South Korea, and other East Asian nations, the number of Nepali migrant laborers increased dramatically in the 1990s. Through a number of bilateral agreements, the Nepali government has started transferring talented employees to Israel, Japan, and other wealthy nations. According to the government of Nepal, 110 countries are opened on an institutional basis and 178 countries in personal initiatives for foreign employment.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Foreign Employment

Foreign employment is good as well as bad for the national economy and individuals. Here are some of the advantages and disadvantages of Foreign employment mentioned below,

Benefits / Advantages of Foreign Employment

The benefits of foreign employment are as follows:

- **Remittance inflow:** The main benefit of foreign employment is it helps to increase remittance income in the country. Foreign employment is the main source of remittance inflow to the country. The amount of remittance depends on the number of workers going abroad for foreign employment. The amount of money sent to their families back to their country is known as remittance.
- **Poverty reduction:** Remittance income received by the household from foreign employment increases the income, which helps them to fulfill their basic needs and helps to increase the consumption of poor families. It also helps to uplift the living standard of poor people and reduce the poverty level in Nepal. Due to the remittance of income from foreign employment, there is a decrease in poverty in Nepal.
- To solve the unemployment problem in a country: Unemployment is a serious issue in many developing countries like Nepal. Foreign employment helps to provide employment opportunities as well as helps to solve unemployment problems in the country.
- Skilled and trained manpower: The workers who get involved in foreign employment are trained and they learn new skills. The workers who return from foreign employment back to their home country, their skills and knowledge help them to create new opportunities in their country.
- Increases the living standard of people: The remittance from foreign employment helps to increase the living standard of the family members of people working abroad. The income of a man in a family member helps to increase the living standard of whole family members.
- Development of human resources: The remittance income received from foreign employment plays a very important role in the development of human resources in Nepal. A huge amount of remittance sent back to their country is spent on education, health, and nutrition. Which helps in the development of human resources in Nepal.
- Develop mutual relationships among countries: Foreign employment also helps to develop mutual relationships among two countries.

Defects / Disadvantages of Foreign Employment

The defects of foreign employment are as follows:

- Shortage of manpower in the country: The increasing number of foreign employment causes a shortage of manpower in the country. In Nepal, many people are leaving for foreign employment which causes a lack of manpower in the agriculture and industrial sector.
- **Brain drain:** Brain drain is a situation in which a skilled, trained, and educated manpower moves to another country seeking better opportunities and income. In Nepal, the main cause of brain drain is a lack of proper

working environment, poor quality education, corruption, nepotism, and favoritism in the job-recruiting process.

- Mismanaged families: If a parent moves to another country for foreign employment, it leads to mismanagement of the family. As there will be a lack of proper guidance for younger family members. An additional burden of household responsibility is added on younger members which may lead to the absence of higher-level education, school dropouts poor nutrition, and health care of children.
- Increase in trade deficit: In Nepal, imports are much higher than exports. This is resulting in a large trade deficit in Nepal. Remittance income received from foreign employment is one of the major causes of the trade deficit in Nepal because it is causing an increase in demand for consumer goods which is fulfilled by bringing goods (things) from other countries. Which generates a trade deficit.
- Human cost: Migrants have to remain separated from their families, and they have to face risks in their jobs. They may have to work extremely hard to save enough to send remittances to their families. Many Nepalese are facing and suffering hardship in gulf countries.
- Create dependency and hurt economic growth: Remittance receipt from foreign employment can also create dependency. It may reduce the motivation for recipients to engage in work, consequently, impending or slowing economic growth. A shortage of manpower in the country may hurt the economic growth in the long term.

Statements of Problems

However, there are various problems related to foreign employment in Nepal. Emigration from Nepal has a lengthy history and is still on the rise nowadays. The percentage of remittances in the GDP has increased, the rate of poverty has dropped, and the health and education sectors have steadily improved. However, the rate of development is slow, and the trade imbalance has grown dramatically at the same time. The status and social development of households are boosted by remittances. Nepal can guarantee long-term revenue for the entire country by effectively utilizing remittances in economic development efforts. However, the remittances have not yet been effectively utilized in the income-generating and productive sector yet. There are no effective emigration policies due to the lack of proper research and less government interest in this field. Currently, around 5 million Nepalese people are working abroad which is around 17% of the total population in Nepal(excluding India). The main causes of the increasing numbers of Nepalese people in foreign employment are a higher rate of unemployment in Nepal, poverty, lower wage rates and salaries, the willingness of youth to work in foreign countries, and so on. The foreign employment rate has been increasing for many years and most of the unskilled labor has gone abroad to work. Due to the lack of technical education and formal training, Nepalese laborers are compelled to take risky, difficult, and hard work in foreign countries. With the increasing number of foreign employment, fraud activities in manpower agencies are also increasing. They seem to be charging huge amounts of money to send people abroad to different jobs. Manpower

agencies give hope of better jobs to Nepalese labor but most of them find themselves in different and hard jobs in the destination of work. The rights of migrant workers cannot be insured inside Nepal and also in the labor importing countries. The per capita income of the impoverished is very poor.

Objectives

The main objective of this seminar paper is to analyze the situation of foreign employment and its impact on the micro and macro levels of Nepal. Besides this, the specific objectives of this study are as follows,

- Remittance inflow from Foreign employment and its contribution to GDP.
- Current status of foreign employment in Nepal.

Methodology

This study is based on the secondary data which were collected from different sources like an economic survey and report published by the Ministry of Finance (MoF), Central Beuro of Statics (CBS), Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE). The data presented here is up to the fiscal year 2021/22 till mid-March. Various research documents have been reviewed for analyzing the status of foreign employment and remittance in the context of Nepal. A pie chart and line graph are used in this paper based on the data presented here to give clear knowledge about the status of foreign employment in Nepal. The economic impact of foreign employment has been analyzed on remittance, contribution to GDP, share of remittance to current account, and current transfer income.

Description and Analysis

Foreign employment is one of the main sectors for the basis of its contribution to employment, economic opportunity, poverty reduction, remittances, and national economic development. The Nepalese Foreign Employment Act of 1985 included measures for foreign employment issues such as counseling, complaints, and compensation. The Labor and Employment Policy 2005 addressed current difficulties by researching and using new prospects and potentials in the labor and employment sectors. The strategy aims to foster production-oriented employment by eliminating forced labor practices and achieving just, healthy, and cardinal labor-related development. The Labour Act, of 2017, is a comprehensive piece of legislation that addresses a wide range of labor relations and employment issues in Nepal, including international employment. It specifies minimum pay, working hours, leave rights, and social security benefits for Nepali employees.

Review of Literatures

Pant (2005), in his report titled "Remittances and Development in Developing Countries," has stated that remittances are important financial resources to the receiving countries at the micro and macro level. They contribute to both the recipient's income and the foreign exchange reserves of the recipient's countries. Mostly remittances sent from

foreign employment are used to fulfill basic needs and for daily needs such as food, clothing, and housing. At an individual level remittance increases the income and reduces the poverty of the recipients. Generally in developing countries, only a small percentage of remittances are used for saving and used as productive investments such as income and employment-generating activities such as buying land or tools, starting a business, and other activities. However, investing in improved education of the children and healthcare is considered to positively impact growth, ultimately aiding in increased output production. At the macroeconomic level, remittances serve as significant sources of foreign currency, contributing to the balance of payments. Additionally, remittances play a role in the growth of communication services, courier companies, and money exchange services, fostering the expansion of economic activities and creating more employment opportunities.

Pokharel (2004), identifies Nepali overseas workers sending remittance to Nepal as the backbone of the Nepalese economy. They bring with them not only money but also special skills, knowledge and exposure. With appropriate strategies and programs, this resource plays an important role in the transformation of rural areas of Nepal.

Kshetry (2004), in his article "Emigrating Workers in National Perspectives," identified the causes of Nepalese labor migration as limited employment opportunities in the government and private sector. The underdevelopment of industries and the rudimentary services sector provides a limited number of jobs to an ever-increasing labor force. In the farm sector which conventionally used to absorb almost all the workforce failed to do so because of low motivation for farm sector work. The entrepreneurs in this sector are not enthused to invest more either due to low returns or the risk involved in this sector. Such events and the lure of making quick money at least from legal means by going overseas for menial work prompted the exit of a large number of workers from rural Nepal.

Kafle (2018) analyzed the relationship between remittances received and economic growth in Nepal. A lasting connection existed among remittance, trade, and economic growth over the long term. Moreover, the finding indicates that the relation between remittance and economic growth is not significant in the short run. As results suggest an absence of short-run causation from remittances to GDP, but there exists a long-run relationship between economic growth and remittance earnings.

Sharma and Dahal's "Impact of Labour Migration on Rural Households of Nepal" (2019) According to this report, foreign work has helped Nepal's rural districts become less impoverished. The survey also discovered that remittances from overseas jobs have been utilized to invest in enterprises and agriculture as well as to pay for healthcare and education costs.

Sharma and Niraula's "Remittances and Economic Development: Evidence from Nepal" (2017) - Remittances from overseas work, according to this study, have a favorable effect on Nepal's economic development and progress. The

study also discovered that remittances have helped to lower poverty, boost access to credit, and enhance access to healthcare and education.

Current Status of Foreign Employment in Nepal

We can see a huge number of Nepalese laborers entering foreign employment every year. Thus the number of Nepalese workers in foreign employment working abroad has been increasing. The total number of workers who went for foreign employment in fiscal year 2003/4 was 1,05,703. In fiscal year 2011/12 it was 3,84,665. In fiscal year 2013/14 it was 5,27,814, which is the highest number in a fiscal year recorded. In the fiscal year 2019/20, and 2020/21 there was a decrease in the total number of workers working abroad due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Again in fiscal year 2021/22 we can see an increase in the number of people working abroad. Till fiscal year 2021/22, the total number of Nepalese workers going abroad for employment was more than 4.7 million. Table no 1 shows the number of employees in each fiscal year,

Table 1

Year	Number of Employees
2003/04	1,05,703
2011/12	3,84,665
2012/13	4,53,543
2013/14	5,27,814
2014/15	5,12,887
2015/16	4,18,713
2016/17	3,83,493
2017/18	3,61,941
2018/19	2,36,293
2019/20	1,94,045
2020/21	1,31,038
2021/22	2,27,102

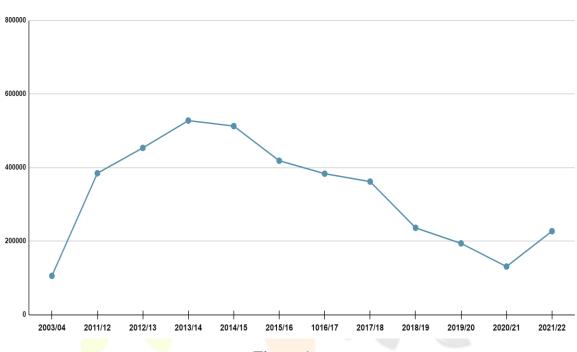
Status of Foreign Employment in Nepal

The above information is taken from the economic survey, 2021/2022 which shows the number of employees working abroad in each fiscal year. In the fiscal year 2003/2004, 1,05,703 employees were working abroad. In fiscal year

Source: Economic Survey, 2021/22

2011/12, 3,84,665 employees were working abroad. The highest number of employees working abroad was recorded in the fiscal year 2013/14, which was 5,27,814 followed by 5,12,887 employees in the fiscal year 2014/15.

The above information is presented through a line graph,



Number of Nepalese labor working abroad in each fiscal year



In the above figure, we can see the continuous rise in the number of Nepalese laborers working abroad from fiscal year 2003/04 up to fiscal year 2013/14. After that, there is a fall in the number of Nepalese working abroad till 2020/21. There were various reasons for the decrease in numbers. COVID-19 was the main reason for the massive decrease in numbers. There has been an increase in several people working abroad from the fiscal year 2020/21 till now. And they are still estimated to increase in the coming days.

Country-wise Migration Situation

If we see the country-wise migration of Nepalese workers, Qatar is in the first position followed by Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Kuwait Qatar is the first destination for Nepalese workers.

Table 2

Country	Up to FY 2021/22
Qatar	12,78,007
Malaysia	12,58,888
Saudi Arabia	10,48,987
UAE	6,75,573
Kuwait	1,57,192
Bahrain	63,181
Oman	40,942
South Korea	59,559
Lebanon	12,762
Israel	7,013
Afghanistan	14,534
Japan	20,186
others	9,89,547

Details of Labors in Foreign Employment with Work Permit

In table no.2, we can see the migration of Nepalese labor to different countries of the world. Most of the Nepalese workers are working in the Gulf countries. Qatar is the first destination of Nepalese labor followed by Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. Qatar, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia are the top three destinations for foreign employment of Nepalese labor. More than 60% of Nepalese workers are working in these top three places. But nowadays the destination of Nepalese labor seems to be changing and diverging towards other countries like Japan, South Korea, etc.

Remittance Inflow and its Contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Remittances are a substantial source of foreign exchange income and a major factor in Nepal's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). One of the countries that receives the most remittances worldwide is Nepal, where remittances make up a sizable component of the GDP.

Source: Economic Survey, 2021/22

The large number of Nepalese migrants working abroad, mainly in the Middle East and East Asia, as well as the country's supporting policies and infrastructure that promote remittance flows, are some of the reasons for the enormous contribution of remittances to Nepal's economy.

The economy of Nepal has benefited from remittances, which have also helped to lower poverty and raise living standards. Additionally, they have assisted in funding expenditures for infrastructure, healthcare, and education.

With the increasing numbers of foreign employment for many years remittance has also increased. And it is increasing rapidly year by year. Many youths of Nepal believe that to have a better life and to live a quality of life, one should go abroad for foreign employment. Which causes a rise in the number of foreign employment. In fiscal year 2002/03, remittance sent from foreign employment was 47.54 billion. From then till now we can see that the percentage of remittance has increased every year till now. In the fiscal year 2005/06, remittance was 65.54 billion and in the next fiscal year, it increased to 100.14 billion. There was a change of 52.8, which is the highest margin of percentage change till now. In fiscal year 2006/07, remittance was 100.14 billion and in the next fiscal year, it increased to 142.68 billion. There was a 42.5 percent change. Again there was a change of 47.0 and reached 209.70 billion in fiscal year 2008/09. There was a fall in remittance inflow in the fiscal year 2019/20, it was because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Table 3

Fiscal Year	Remittance (in Billion Rs.)	(% change)	(% of GDP) 11.0	
2002/03	47.54	••••		
2003/04	54.20	14.0	10.9	
2004/05	58.59	8.1	11.1	
2005/06	65.54	11.9	14.9	
2006/07	100.14	52.8	13.8	
2007/08	142.68	42.5	17.5	
2008/09	209.70	47.0	21.2	
2009/10	231.73	10.5	19.4	
201 <mark>0/1</mark> 1	253.55	9.4	18.5	
2011/12	<mark>3</mark> 59.55	41.8	23.5	
2012/13	434.6	20.87	25.6	
2013/14	<mark>5</mark> 43.3	25.01	27.7	
2014/15	617.3	13.62	29.1	
2015/16	665.1	7.77	29.6	
2016/17	659.5	4.57	26.3	
2 <mark>017/18</mark>	755.1	8.6	24.9	
2 <mark>018</mark> /19	879.3	16.5	25.4	
2 <mark>019/</mark> 20	875.0	-0.5	22.4	
2 <mark>020/</mark> 21	961.1	9.83	22.47	
20 <mark>21/</mark> 22*	631.2	-1.7	/	

Details of Remittance

*Till Mid-March

Source: Economic Survey, 2021/22

The contribution of remittance to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has also increased every year. Remittance has played a very vital role in economic growth in Nepal. In the fiscal year 2003/04, there was an 11.0 percent remittance of GDP and it decreased to 10.9 percent in the next fiscal year 2004/05. In the fiscal year 2005/06, there was a growth from 11.1 percent to 14.9 percent. Similarly in fiscal year 2010/11, there was 19.4 percent of remittance of GDP. In 2019/20 and 2020/21 there was 22.4 and 22.47 percent of remittance of GDP. Over the years remittance has made a

great contribution to the GDP. Remittances also have a great percentage of share to current account and current transfer income. The below table gives us detailed information.

Table 4

Fiscal Year	Share of Remittance to Current Account (in %)	Share of Remittance to Current Transfer Income (in %)
2016/17	60.6	81.3
2017/18	62.4	86.7
2018/19	63.7	87.4
2019/20	66.3	88.6
2020/21	70.6	89.2
2021/22*	65.6	89.0

Share of Remittance to Current Account and Current Transfer Income

*Till Mid-March

Source: Economic Survey, 2021/22

The above table shows us that, in the fiscal year 2016/17, there was 60.6% of remittance share to the current account and 81.3% of the share of remittance to current transfer income. Likewise, there was 62.4%, 63.7%, 66.3%, and 70.6% of remittance share to the current account and 86.7%, 87.4%, 88.6%, 89.2% of remittance share to current transfer income in fiscal year 20117/18, 2018/19, 2019/2 and 2020/21 respectively. There was 65.6% of remittance share to current account and 89.0% of remittance share to current transfer income in fiscal year 2021/22 (till mid-March). Many workers from Nepal have gone to foreign employment in different places of the world. Where many of them are in gulf countries and most of them are unskilled. Due to a lack of skill and knowledge, they have to risk their lives to earn. Therefore many Nepalese laborers die in foreign countries due to riskiness in work and due to other problems as well. There is detailed information about the number of deaths in foreign employment.

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Table 5

Fiscal year		Number of labor Deaths	Financial Support (Rs In millions)
2	013/14	877	12.06
2	2014/15	1006	21.74
2	015/16	816	22.16
2	016/17	756	22.63
2	017/18	821	45.65
2	018/19	754	50.02
2	019/20	611	41.54
2	020/21	1242	73.77
2	021/22*	1171	57.96

Number of Deaths in Foreign Employment and Details of Financial Supports

The above table represents the number of deaths of Nepalese laborers in foreign employment and the financial support provided to their families. In every fiscal year, a number of Nepalese laborers have lost their lives due to various reasons and the government provided some financial support to the families who died in foreign employment. In the fiscal year 2013/14, a total of 877 Nepalese lost their families and a total of Rs.12.06 million was provided to their families. Similarly a total of 1006, 816, 756, 821, 754, 611, and 1242 Nepalese laborers have lost their lives in each fiscal year from 2014/15 to 2020/21 respectively. Till mid-March of Fiscal year 2021/22, the death count of Nepalese laborers who lost their lives was 1171, and Rs.57.96 million was provided to their families who lost their lives in foreign employment.

Foreign Employment for Socio-economic Development

There is a significant contribution of foreign employment to social changes and development in Nepal. Foreign employment is not only the source of remittance but also the transformation of skill and knowledge. Foreign

employment can considerably change a household's income and living standard of the people. Remittances play a vital role in maintaining national financial stability and contribute significantly to household finances, particularly as more households receive remittance income. The substantial impact of remittances is evident in their contribution to poverty reduction and promotion of economic development. There is a significant contribution of remittances inflow from foreign employment in poverty reduction of the related families.

The condition of poverty reduction since the 8th Plan of 1992 appears to be good. Foreign employment and the consequent stream of remittances can be linked to poverty alleviation successes in different plan eras. Households/Families that receive international remittances use them to better their living conditions and acquire assets and capital. This has resulted in increased financial capital, child education, social capital, and migrationspecific expertise. Prior to the Eighth Plan, the amount of poverty was not routinely assessed. The strategies for poverty alleviation lacked precise targets. Without any particular goals, resources were dispersed to various areas. After the success of the democratic movement in the 1990s, Nepal entered into a systematic process of developing a poverty reduction plan, as a result of which the aim of poverty reduction in the Eighth Plan was virtually realized. The aim for poverty reduction in the Ninth Plan was to reduce it from 42 percent to 32 percent, however, only 38 percent was achieved. We can say that there is a significant contribution of foreign employment to poverty alleviation in Nepal. The reduction of poverty in different plan periods is one of the impacts of remittance coming from foreign employment. Consequently, there has been a significant contribution of foreign employment and incoming remittances to Nepali society; households getting remittances have a propensity to transfer from rural to metropolitan regions where they spend money on luxurious living. Expanding towns and cities across the country are indicators of money spent on improving living conditions, but only a small portion of the remittance has been channeled towards nationwide infrastructure development.

Conclusion

Foreign employment is a source of remittance that has played a vital role at the micro and macro levels in Nepal. It helps in poverty reduction and growth in economic activities. Though increasing remittance has its own advantages, it would eventually lead to economic failure if the flow of remittance is disturbed. There is leakage in actual remittance inflow because many workers prefer informal ways to send their remittance income. So the government should make plans and encourage laborers to send their income in a formal way. The number of Nepalese workers going abroad to work has increased rapidly. Most of the workers went to Gulf countries. Qatar is the first destination of many followed by Malaysia. We can find out the class division among workers to select destinations i.e. poor people to Gulf countries like Qatar, and Malaysia and better people towards Japan, and South Korea.

There are various problems faced by migrant laborers both in their home country and abroad. The government is not been able to solve these problems that are related to the process of going to foreign employment. Fraud activities in agencies are increasing. These activities should be stopped by the government and create a better environment for foreign employment. Most workers are forced to do hard work, risky work, and low-level work due to a lack of technical skills and education. Government should make plans and policies and provide training to those who are willing to go abroad to work. Training centers should be open in different parts of the country. This will help to increase the remittance inflow in Nepal and the living standards of citizens of poor and economically backward people. Better income from foreign employment also helps in the education of their children and creates skilled manpower in the country.

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