Research Paper XV

STATE OF MIGRATION IN NEPAL

Sadikshya Bhattarai, Bipin Upadhyaya & Sanjay Sharma

Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility

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This research paper is an update to *State of Migration in Nepal* by Sanjay Sharma, Shibani Pandey, Dinesh Pathak and Bimbika Sijapati-Basnett (Kathmandu: Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility, 2014).

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Migration is a common phenomenon in Nepal in both its domestic and international dimensions. Traditionally, most of the migration used to take place within the country's borders as well as parts of the Indian subcontinent and Tibet. Nepal's entry into the global economy, primarily during 1990s, has since re-defined these historical trends, and, now, Nepalis can be found spread across the globe. Labour migration to the Gulf states and Malaysia has seen significant growth over the years and now accounts for an increasingly larger share of Nepal's international migration. Cross-border migration between Nepal and India continues to be a major phenomenon, facilitated as it is by the open border between the two countries. Furthermore, due to the in-country unequal resource distribution and the decade-long Maoist conflict between 1996 and 2006, internal migration still remains an indispensable aspect of the migratory behaviour of Nepalis, with migration from the Hills to Tarai and from rural to urban areas forming a major part of this mobility (KC 2014). Apart from the migration within the country and to international destinations, people have also immigrated from other countries into Nepal for work or other reasons, and this in-migration of foreigners is largely dominated by those coming from India (Khatiwada 2014).[1]

The impact of these movements is evident in the country's shifting demographics as well as in changes taking place in the socio-economic arena. But despite the long history of active migration in Nepal, systematic studies of the phenomenon are quite recent, and, as yet continue to remain somewhat scarce. However, as will be elaborated upon in the next section, with recent national surveys, namely, the Nepal Labour Force Survey 2008 and 2017/2018, the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2011 and 2016, the National Population Census 2011 and 2021, the Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11 and the Nepal Migration Survey 2009,[2] along with *Migration in Nepal (A Country Profile 2019)*, covering substantial grounds on migration, unavailability of data is no longer a significant barrier to understanding migration trends in the country. However, there is still a lack of large-scale and nationwide quantitative studies focused solely on migration.

This paper is an update of *State of Migration in Nepal* (Sharma et al 2014). As in the previous version, it uses publicly accessible information to provide an overview of the current state of migration in the country. Drawing mainly on surveys conducted over the last decade or so, it seeks to examine patterns of migration within Nepal,

from Nepal to international destinations, and immigration into Nepal. It also analyses the socio-economic profile of migrants and their households, including indicators such as reasons for migration, areas of employment, literacy levels, economic status, and caste/ethnic identity. It aims to provide a broad understanding of migration trends in Nepal and identify gaps in information and highlight areas that require further investigation.

1.2 Methodology

The data used here have been taken from the 2008 and 2017/18 Nepal Labour Force Survey (NLFS), the 2011 and 2016 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), the National Population Census 2011 and 2021, and the Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS) 2010/11. Where required, records maintained by the Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE) and Foreign Employment Board (FEB) have also been considered. The paper also goes beyond the published reports on the NLFS, NDHS and analyses the raw data from these survey datasets provided by the National Statistics Office (NSO) [previously known as Central Bureau of Statistics(CBS)] and the DHS programme.

   The chapter divisions of this paper follow the different ways in which the condition of migration has been captured in these surveys: migrants in general, international migrants, international labour migrants, internal migrants, lifetime migrants, immigrants, and returnees. Given its overall importance to the country, the issue of remittances has been dealt with in a separate section. Table 1.1 provides a list of the different indicators analysed in each chapter.

   A major limitation of the paper is that it is constrained by the data in the aforementioned surveys, which in general deal with subjects beyond migration as well. For instance, the purpose of the NLSS is to measure socio-economic status and overall living standards while the NLFS provides statistics related to labour and employment. As such the indicators in Table 1.1 have been considered only insofar as they deal with migration in its various manifestations.

1.2.1 Understanding the Concepts
One of the drawbacks with using information from so many different sources lies in making comparisons across the surveys because of how each has conceptualised terms like 'migrant', 'absentee' and 'migration' as well as how the indicators mentioned in Table 1.1 have been defined. Despite this difficulty and recognising the limitations this imposes, this paper attempts to provide a complete overview of the current state of migration as can be derived from these national surveys, and, to

Table 1.1: Indicators Used

1. Migrants	2. International Migrants	3. Labour Migrants	4. Internal Migrants
i. household ii. sex iii. age iv. marital status v. place of origin vi. destination vii. level of education viii. wealth quintile* ix. reason for absence	i. household ii. sex iii. age iv. marital status v. place of origin vi. destination vii. level of education viii. wealth quintile ix. reason for migration x. ethnic background xi. occupation	i. sex ii. age iii. marital status iv. place of origin v. destination vi. level of education vii. wealth quintile viii. ethnic background ix. occupation x. death and injury	i. household ii. sex iii. age iv. marital status v. place of origin vi. destination vii. level of education viii. wealth quintile ix. reason for migration x. ethnic background xi. occupational status
5. Immigrants	**6. Remittances**	**7. Returnee and Short-term Migrants**	
i. sex ii. country of origin iii. place of settlement in Nepal	i. sex ii. age iii. source iv. receiving area v. wealth quintile vi. ethnic background vii. use	i. sex ii. origin iii. medium of migration iv. last destination v. reason for migration vi. reason for return vii. monthly income viii. occupation	

* This should be understood as consumption quintile in the case of NLSS.

the extent possible, by deploying cross-survey analyses. The following sub-sections consist of brief introductions to all the surveys and the national census with a focus on the migration-related indicators used in this paper. (See also Table 1.2 for a comparison across surveys.)

1.2.2.1 Nepal Living Standards Survey, 2003/04 and 2010/11

The Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS) collects household-level information across Nepal on a number of indicators aimed at understanding people's socio-

economic status and overall living standards through indicators such as household demographics, income, remittances, consumption, expenses, health, employment, education, credit and savings. Of the three living standard surveys conducted in Nepal to date, only the latter two, NLSS 2003/04 and 2010/11, collected information related to migration. NLSS 2003/04 had a sample size of 5072 households and NLSS 2010/11 7020.[3] For this paper, in addition to making use of the NLSS reports, a separate analysis of the raw data from the survey was undertaken for a more in-depth understanding of the migration dynamics.

1.2.1.2 National Population Census 2011 & 2021
The National Population Census is a decennial undertaking that collects information on the population and socio-economic characteristics of the country.

1.2.1.3 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey, 2006, 2011 & 2016
The Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) examines issues of health and population using nationally representative household-level data. This paper draws on the last three NDHSs, 2006 (sample of 8707 households), 2011 (10,826) and 2016 (11,040).[4]

1.2.1.4 Nepal Labour Force Survey, 2008 and 2017/18
The Nepal Labour Force Survey (NLFS) is designed to collect information on the status of the labour market by producing vital statistics on the conditions of employment, unemployment, under-employment and other information relevant to labour. Three NLFSs have been administered in Nepal thus far: in 1998/99, 2008 and 2017/18. This paper considers the 2008 survey (with a sample size of 15,976 households) and the 2017/18 one (sample of 18,000 households). NLFS 1998/99 did not collect information on migration in Nepal, and hence is not included in the analysis here.

1.2.2 Additional Issues for Consideration
Since migration has become such a major societal phenomenon in Nepal over the last couple of decades, all national surveys have perforce recognised both its impact and importance by now. As a result, the more recent ones have all dealt with it at some length. To take one example, while NLFS 1998/99 did not feature any question on migration, NLFS 2008 devoted a whole chapter to it. It would, however, be naïve to expect every large-scale survey to give equal weight to migration because each has been conducted with its own particular focus.

However, the overlaps in and analyses of common indicators in the surveys greatly serve the purpose of producing comparative data, cross-checking trends,

and fostering a better understanding of issues related to migration. But since the surveys do not examine the same indicators, direct comparisons are difficult and could potentially be misleading. This is true not only in the case of different surveys but also for different iterations of the same survey. For instance, NDHS 2006 collected information on the educational and marital status of migrants, while NDHS 2011 and 2016 did not. Similarly, unlike NDHS 2011 and 2016, NDHS 2006 did not look at some key indicators relevant to the background characteristics of migrants, such as economic status (as inferred from wealth quintiles) and reasons for migration, although their inclusion in the latter ones is further evidence of the rising importance of migration as a social and economic phenomenon that needs critical understanding and examination.

There are also differences in the way different surveys define and categorise migration as alluded to in the previous section. One reason for such differences is how the international organisations funding these surveys choose to do so. While the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the primary funding agency for the Demographic and Health Survey which carries out similar surveys over 90 countries under the Demographic and Health Survey Program, the International Labour Organization (ILO) funds the Nepal Labour Force Survey, the National Population and Housing Census is conducted by the National Statistics Office with support and inputs from United Nations Population Fund Agency and other donor agencies, and the National Living Standard Survey is supported by the World Bank. The distinctions between an absentee and a migrant and between internal and international migrants are not clear in all the surveys. Had a somewhat common definition been employed and the same set of indicators studied across time, a comparative analysis of migratory behaviour may have been more straightforward and meaningful. The fact remains that since the majority of the surveys analysed in this paper—the national census, NLFS and NLSS— were administered by the same body, the National Statistics Office, and since both NSO and the Ministry of Health and Population (which conducts NDHS) are government agencies adopting such an approach would perhaps not have been altogether impossible.

1.2.3 Survey Weights

It should be noted that in this paper weights have been assigned while analysing the raw data from various datasets. Weighting is a major component in survey sampling whereby each unit of the selected sample is assigned a weight used to obtain estimates of the required population parameters. The weight of a given unit may be interpreted as the number of units of the population represented by the sample unit.

1.2.4 Key Definitions

The following are the definitions adopted by this paper.

Current migrants: Current migrants are, therefore, household members temporarily away from the household for more than six months at the time of enumeration or those not expected to return for at least six months regardless of destination, adapting the definition of 'absentees' used by NLSS 2010/11 and NLFS 2017/18.

International migrants: International migrants are those individuals who have migrated to international destinations, following the definition for such 'absentees' in NLFS 2008 and 2017/18, NLSS 2010/11, and the National Population Census 2011 and such 'migrants' in NDHS 2016.

Internal migrants: Internal migrants are those individuals who have migrated within Nepal, following the definition of such 'absentees' by NLFS 2008 and 2017/18 and NLSS 2010/11, and such 'migrants' by NDHS 2016.

Labour migrants: Labour migrants are individual who migrate abroad for work-related reasons.

Lifetime migrants: Lifetime migrants are those individuals who were not born in their current place of residence but have moved to the place of enumeration either from another VDC/municipality or another country, following the definition used by NLFS 2017/18.

Immigrants: Immigrants are foreign citizens who migrated to Nepal as well as foreign-born Nepali citizens.

Returnees: Returnees are household members who have returned after spending more than three months in a foreign country at any point during the previous five years, following the definition used by NLFS 2017/18.

For more information on definitions, see Table 1.2.

Indicator	Census 2001	Census 2011	Census 2021
Variable	i. sex ii. origin iii. destination iv. reason for migration v. place of residence (in Nepal) vi. country of origin (for immigrants) vii. place of birth vii. age (of immigrants)	i. sex ii. age (at migration) iii. origin iv. destination v. reason for migration vi. duration of migration vii. level of education viii. place of residence (in Nepal) ix. country of origin (for immigrants) x. place of birth xi. duration of migration	i. sex ii. age (at migration) iii. origin iv. destination v. reason for migration vi. returnee (sex, reason for migration) vii. country of origin (for immigrants) vii. place of birth
Migrant	A person who moves from his or her place of birth to another area or keeps on moving stepwise* or circular† by changing his/her residence more or less frequently as a seasonal, temporary, semi-permanent or permanent migrant, depending on the duration of migration and reason for migration within Nepal (i.e., internal migrants only).		
Absentee	Any member of a household who has been abroad for six or more months prior to the time of enumeration (i.e., external migrants only).		Any member of a household who has been abroad at the time of enumeration (i.e., external migrants).
Comment	Since migrants are counted at the destination, this group also consists of internal migrants whereas absentees, although enumerated at the place of origin, denote only external migrants. The census deals with immigrants as a separate category.		

* Stepwise migration has been described as 'a pattern, pathway, or strategy in which migrants move from one transit [destination] (the stepping stone) to the next until they reach the most preferred/desired destination' (Carlos 2013).

† Circular migration 'takes a social unit to a destination through a set of arrangements which returns it to the origin after a well-defined interval' (Tilly 2006).

Indicator	NDHS 2006	NDHS 2011 and 2016	NLSS 2003/04 and 2010/11	NLFS 2008 and 2017/18
Variable	i. sex ii. age iii. marital status iv. origin v. level of education vi. destination vii. duration of migration	i. sex ii. age (at migration) iii. origin iv. destination v. reason for migration vi. duration of migration vii. wealth quintile	i. sex ii. age iii. marital status iv. origin v. destination vi. level of education vii. consumption quintile viii. reason for migration ix. occupational status x. remittance (size and distribution) (in a separate chapter)	i. sex ii. age iii. origin iv. destination v. level of education vi. reason for migration vii. economic status viii. last place of esidence ix. remittance (only for NLFS 2008 and discussed in a separate chapter)
Migrant	A household member who has moved away in the 12-month period prior to the survey.	Household members away from home (within or outside Nepal) at the time of the survey and whose last migration stint had taken place within the last 10 years.	Any household member not born in the current place of residence but having moved there from another VDC, municipality or country (i.e., internal migrants and im-migrants).	
Absentee			An individual considered by the household to be a member but excluded from the survey's definition of household membership because of his/her absence (more than six months out of the last 12 months, or expected to be away for more than six months before returning to the same household) (i.e., both internal and external migrants).	
Comment	All three NDHSs considered both internal and interna-tional migrants, with the last also distinguishing between those who had gone to India and to other countries.		Migrants are counted at the destination, by definition, including immigrants, all migrants were living in the country at the time of the survey. Absentees, on the other hand, are enumerated at the place of origin, and can consist of both internal and external migrants.	

2. CURRENT MIGRANTS

The discussion in this chapter does not distinguish between migrants based on their destination but presents data on the 'migrant population' as documented by the National Living Standard Survey (NLSS) 2010/11 and the Nepal Labour Force Survey (NLFS) 2017/18. Both these surveys consider anyone temporarily away from the household for more than six months at the time of enumeration or not expected to return for at least six months to be an 'absentee', a definition that applies regardless of the person's destination, hence covering both internal and international migrants.[5] For the purpose of this discussion, it is this group of people who are considered migrants.

2.1 Migrant Households

NLFS 2017/18 showed that more than two-fifths (41%) of households nationwide had one or more migrants. The proportions of the migrant and non-migrant households in the seven provinces are presented in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Migrant and Non-migrant Households

Province	Non-migrant Households	Migrant Households
Koshi	60.0	40.0
Madhesh	59.5	40.5
Bagmati	71.3	28.7
Gandaki	49.2	50.8
Lumbini	53.5	46.5
Karnali	56.7	43.3
Sudurpashchim	45.6	54.4
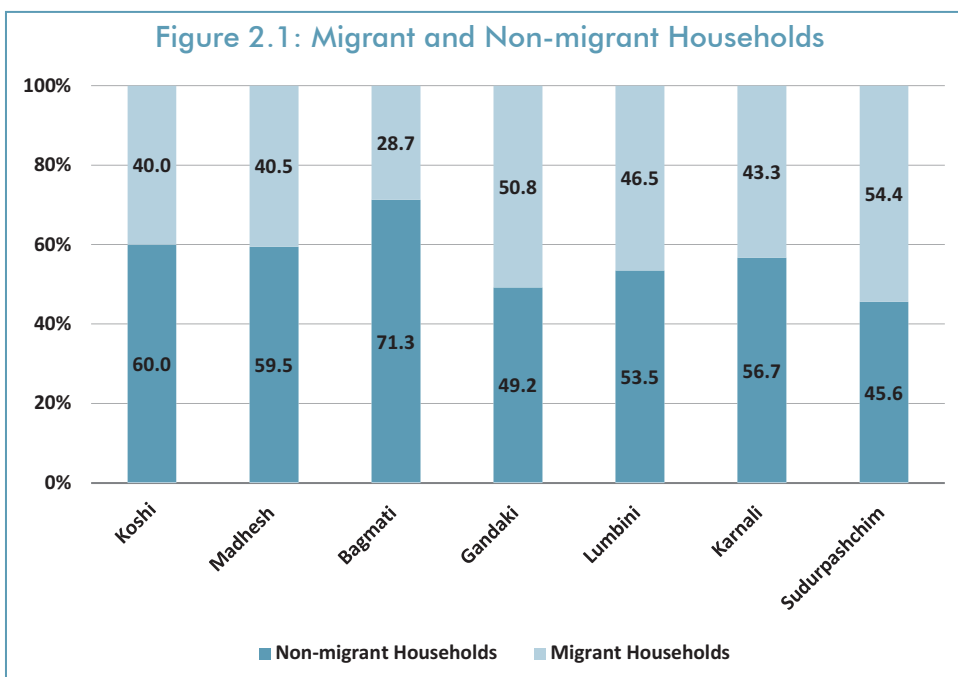
Source: Calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

2.2 Sex of Migrants

According to both surveys, migrants were overwhelmingly male (Figure 2.2). Similarly, as Figure 2.3 suggests, there was a higher likelihood for men to migrate compared to women although the trend seemed to be going down for both groups between NLSS 2010/11 and NLFS 2017/18.
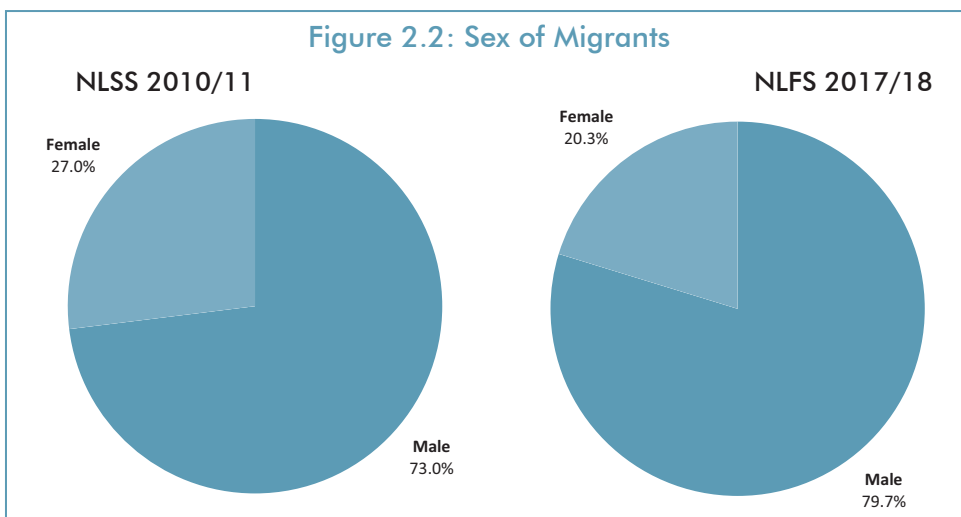
Figure 2.2: Sex of Migrants

NLSS 2010/11

Female
27.0%

Male
73.0%

NLFS 2017/18

Female
20.3%

Male
79.7%

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 and NLFS 2017/18 datasets

Figure 2.3: Migrants and Non-Migrants (by sex)

	NLSS 2010/11	NLFS 2017/18	NLSS 2010/11	NLFS 2017/18
Present in Household	70.2	74.3	89.1	92.8
Absent from Household	29.8	25.7	10.9	7.2
	Male		Female	

■ Absent from Household   ■ Present in Household
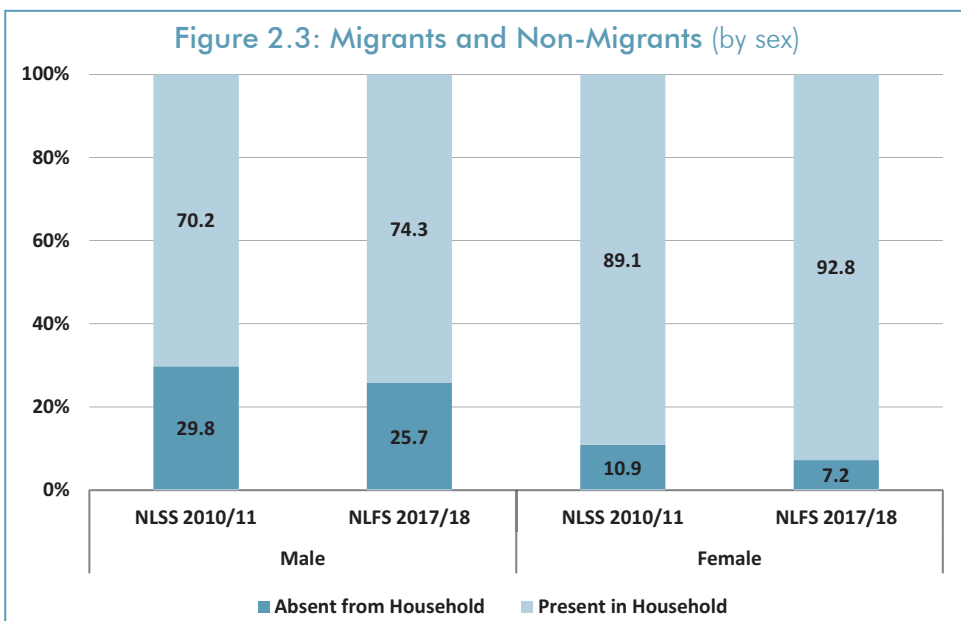
Source: Nepal Living Standard Survey 2010/11 and calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Figure 2.4: Age Distribution of Migrants

NLSS 2010/11

- 60 Years & Above 1.4%
- 45-59 Years 5.6%
- 0-4 Years 5.5%
- 5-14 Years 13.2%
- 30-44 Years 24.9%
- 15-29 Years 49.4%

NLFS 2017/18

- 60 Years & Above 1.0%
- 45-59 Years 5.7%
- 0-4 Years 3.8%
- 5-14 Years 8.9%
- 30-44 Years 24.4%
- 15-29 Years 56.1%
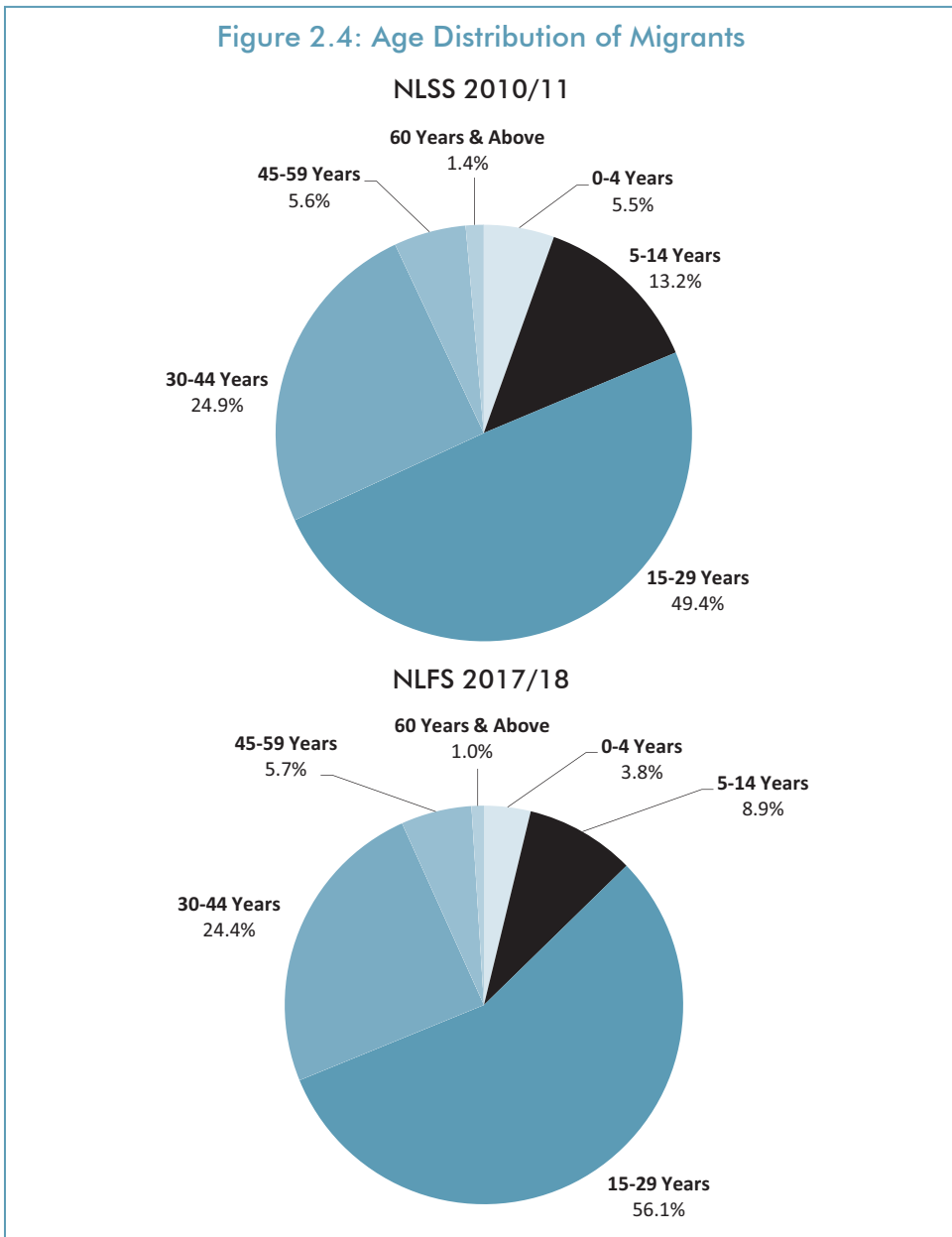
Source: Calculations based of NLSS 2010/11 and NLFS 2017/18 datasets

2.3 Age of Migrants

In terms of age distribution, nearly half of the migrants in 2010/11 were from the age group 15-29 (49%), followed by those aged 30-44 (25%) (Figure 2.4). The 15-

29 group, consisting largely of recent entrants into the workforce, can be considered to be the most active and most mobile category of individuals. NLFS 2017/18 found that the share of migrants from this age group to have increased further, accounting for more than half the total migrant population (56%).
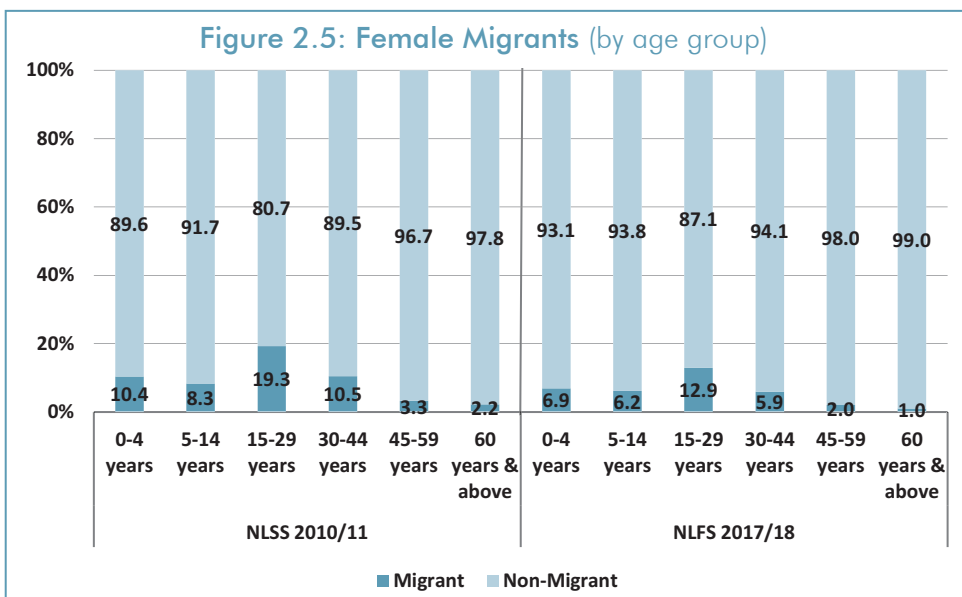
Figure 2.5: Female Migrants (by age group)

Source: Nepal Living Standard Survey 2010/11; Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Figure 2.6: Male Migrants (by age group)
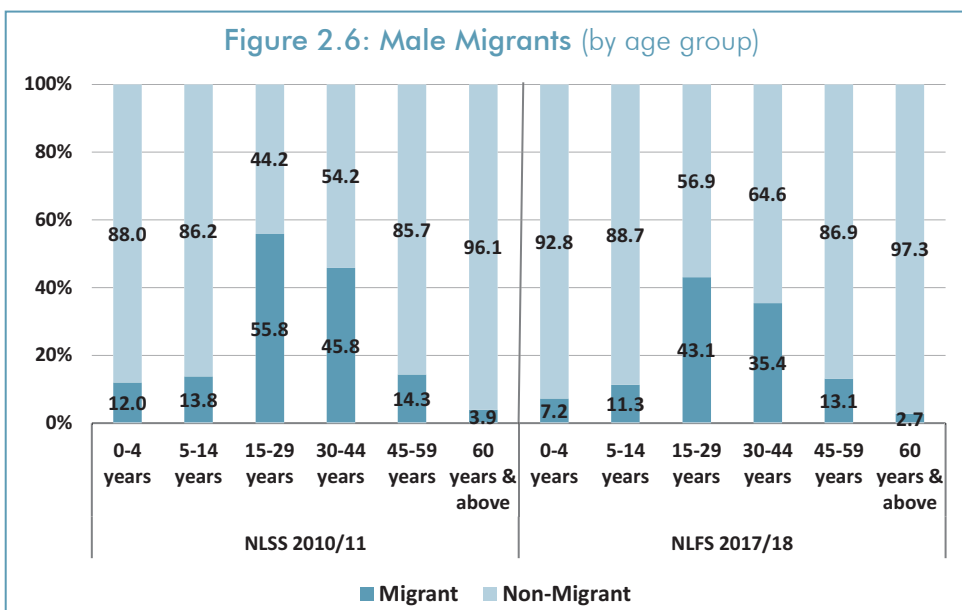
Source: Nepal Living Standard Survey 2010/11; Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Figure 2.5 reiterates the fact that the rate of women's migration was low across all age groups as well. The highest proportion of women migrants is from the group 15-29 years (19%) as reported by both NLSS 2010/11 and NLFS 2017/18, with migrants accounting for nearly 19 per cent of that cohort in 2010/11 and 13 per cent in 2017/18.
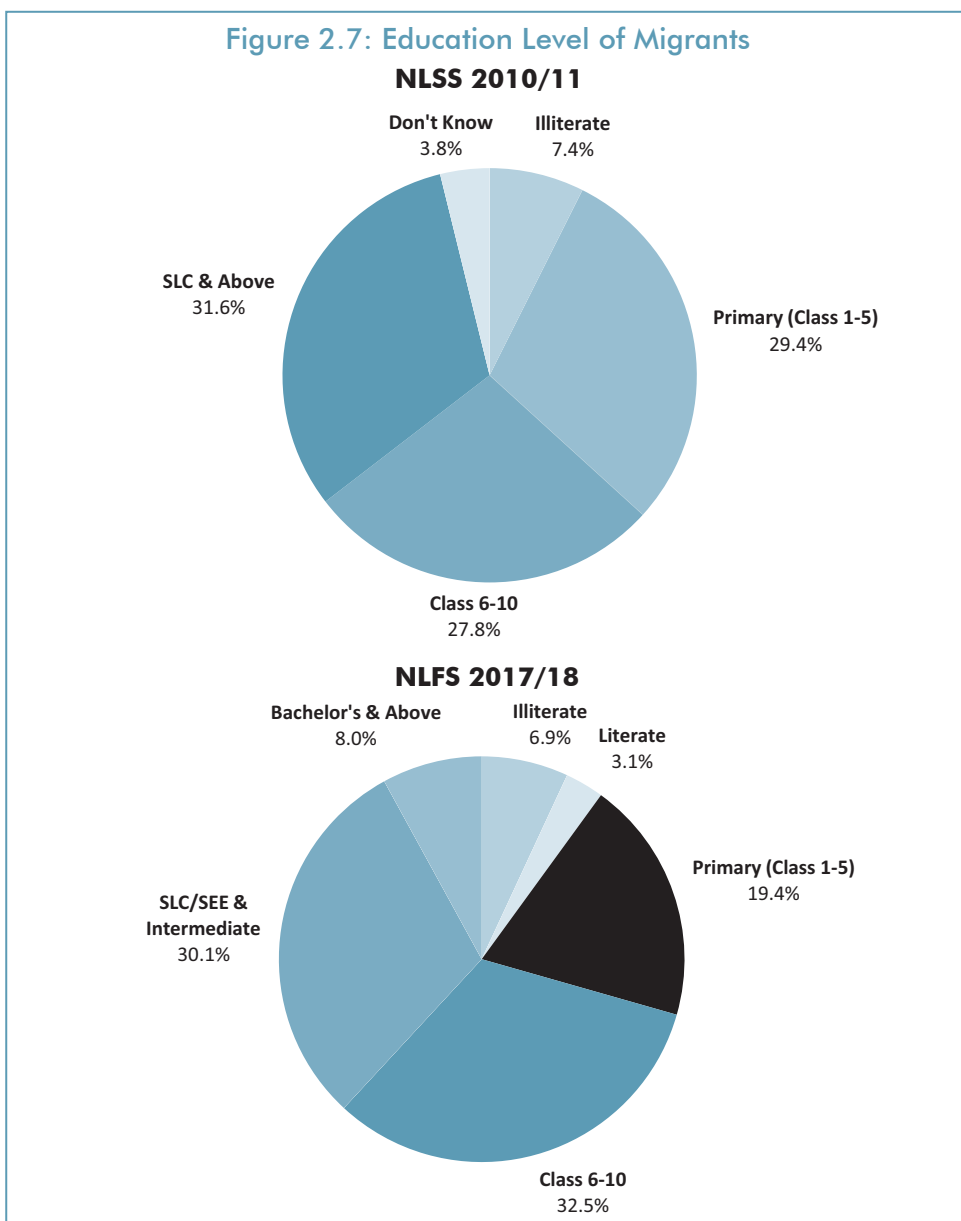
Figure 2.7: Education Level of Migrants

NLSS 2010/11

Don't Know 3.8%
Illiterate 7.4%
SLC & Above 31.6%
Primary (Class 1-5) 29.4%
Class 6-10 27.8%

NLFS 2017/18

Bachelor's & Above 8.0%
Illiterate 6.9%
Literate 3.1%
SLC/SEE & Intermediate 30.1%
Primary (Class 1-5) 19.4%
Class 6-10 32.5%

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 and NLFS 2017/18 datasets

Figure 2.8: Education Level of Migrant Population

Education Level	Male	Female
Literate (Levelless)	2.7	4.6
Bachelor's & above	7.4	10.4
SLC/SEE & Intermediate	29.1	34.5
Class 6-10	34.5	23.8
Primary (Class 1-5)	19.9	17.4
Illiterate	6.3	9.3
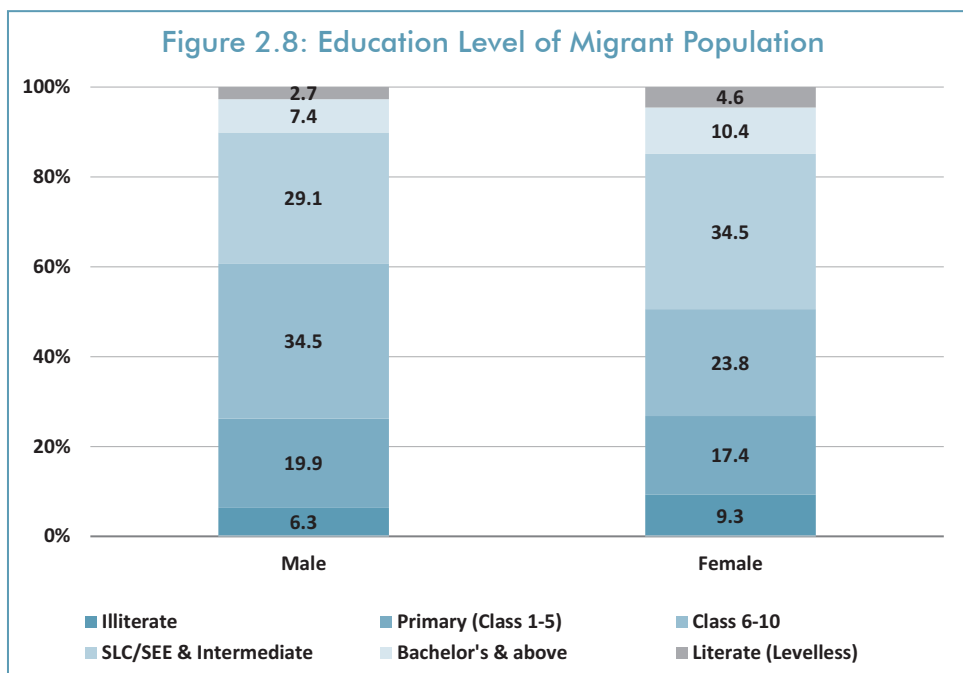
Source: Calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

The proportion of migrants is higher among males across all age groups. As with women, the largest proportion of the male migrant population reported by both NLSS 2010/11 and NLFS 2017/18 is in the 15-29 age group (Figure 2.6). More than half the men (56%) from this group were migrants in 2010/11 along with a significant proportion from the 30-44 group (46%) while NLFS 2017/2018 found those figures to be 43 per cent in the age group 15-29 and 35 per cent in the 30-44 group.

2.4 Education Level of Migrants

The breakdown of the education levels of migrants as per NLSS 2010/11 and NLFS 2017/18 is presented in Figure 2.7. Among the migrants, about a third, according to NLSS 2010/11, and more than 38 per cent, according to NLFS 2017/18, had received education of SLC/SEE[6] and above while more than half had education less than SLC/SEE. Sex-disaggregated data from NLFS 2017/18 shows that a higher proportion of females have SLC/SEE or higher-level education (Figure 2.8).

2.5 Marital Status of Migrants

There was a greater likelihood of migrants being married than single. Figure 2.9 shows that, according to NLSS 2010/11, irrespective of sex, more than half the migrants (55%) were married. Slightly more than half of the migrants, whether male or female, had been married once but this proportion was slightly higher in the case of females (58%) than among males (54%). Cases of poly-marriages and re-marriages were found to a certain degree among male migrants (4%) but were very rare among female migrants (1%).

Figure 2.9: Marital Status of Migrants (by sex)
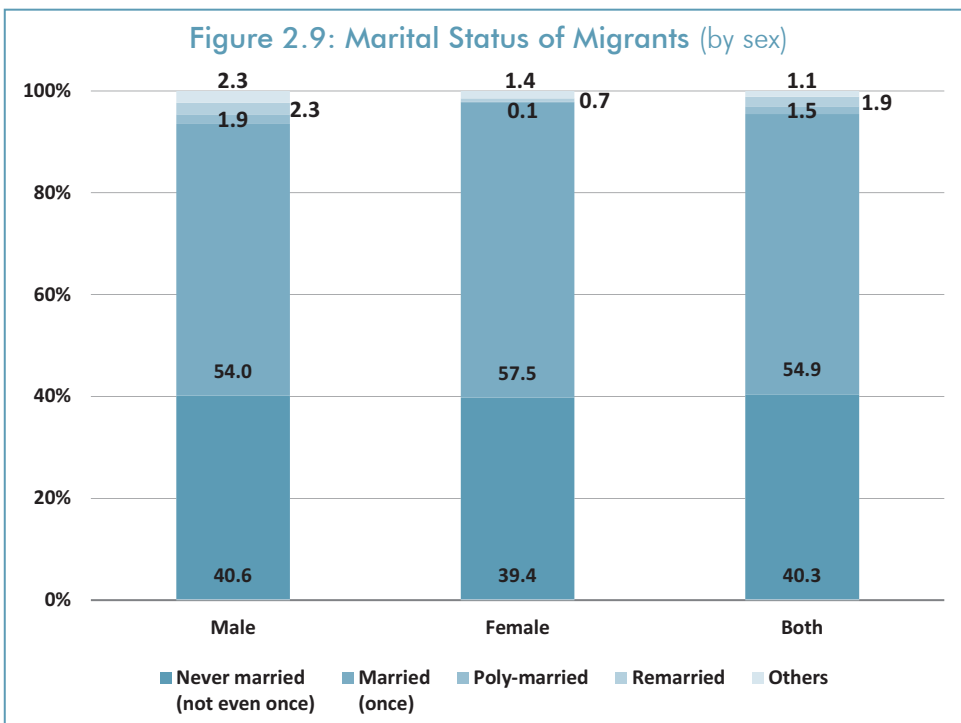
Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

2.6 Economic Status of Migrant Households

An analysis of migrants by wealth quintile reveals that migration is largely a phenomenon driven by those from the higher quintiles. Migration drops with a decrease in the household's economic status. NLSS 2010/11 showed that even though the migrant population was distributed across all wealth groups, the upper two quintiles accounted for more than half of all migrants (55.2%) (Figure 2.10). Further disaggregation of the data indicated that household economic condition
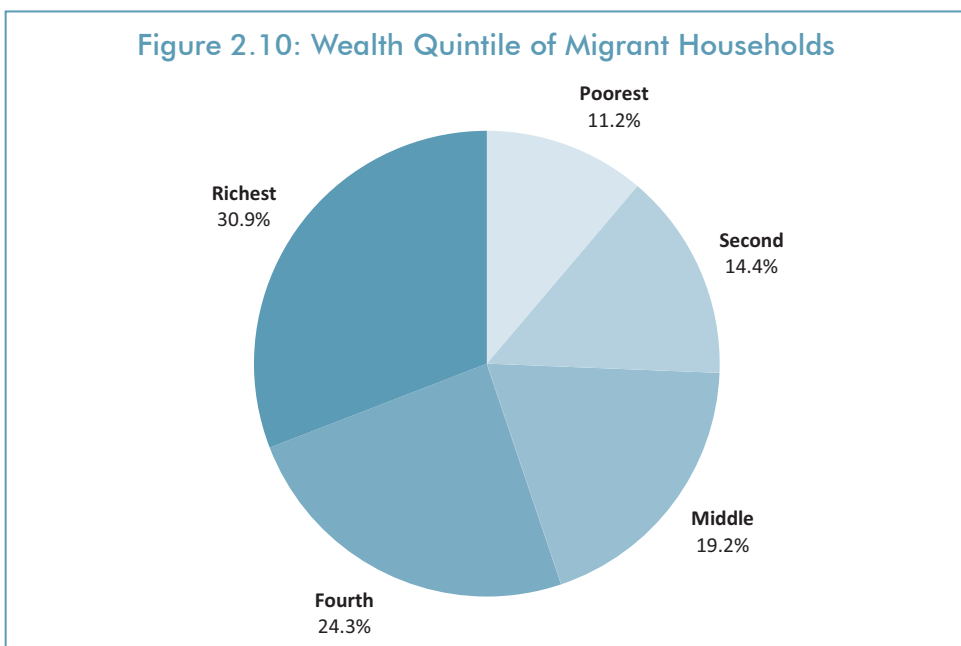
Figure 2.10: Wealth Quintile of Migrant Households

Poorest
11.2%

Richest
30.9%

Second
14.4%

Middle
19.2%

Fourth
24.3%

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

Figure 2.11: Destination of Migrants (by household wealth quintile)

	Poorest	Second	Middle	Fourth	Richest
Within Nepal	38.0	49.0	53.3	62.8	65.1
Outside Nepal	62.0	51.0	46.7	37.2	34.9

■ Outside Nepal ■ Within Nepal
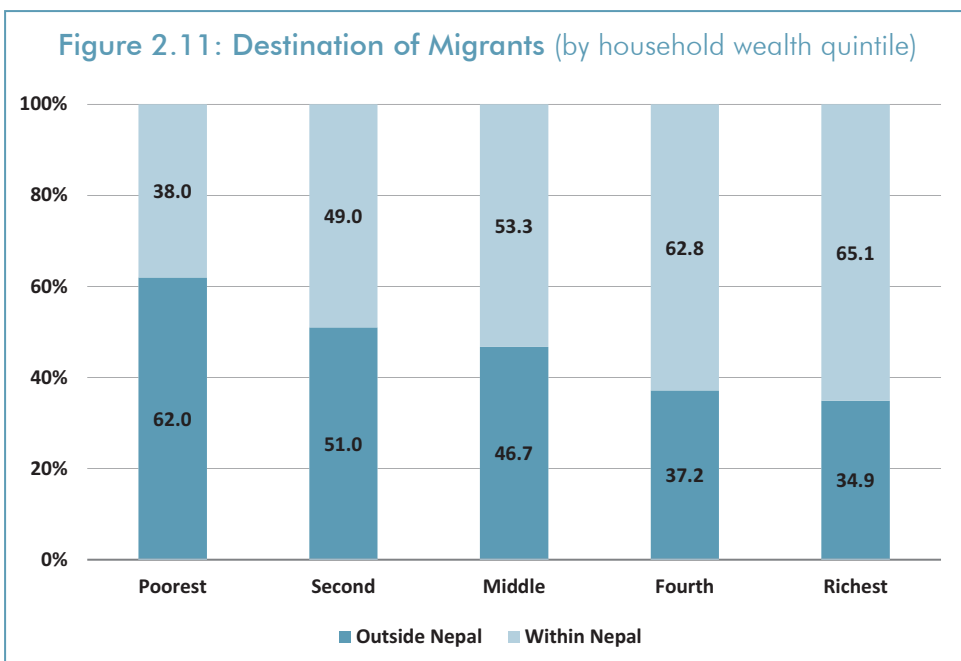
Source: Nepal Living Standard Survey 2010/11

had a strong bearing on whether migrants are likely to migrate abroad or within Nepal. The poorer the household the more likely for a migrant to be away from the country. For instance, in the poorest quintile, 62 per cent of the migrants were outside Nepal, while in the richest quintile, 65 per cent were within the country (Figure 2.11). This is likely because households from the poorer quintiles find fewer in-country employment opportunities and most migrate as unskilled or semi-skilled workers, primarily to India (see also Section 3.7: Economic Status of International Migrants). Migrants from richer quintiles, however, are likely to be better educated and have more marketable skills. As a result, they were likely to find employment within Nepal. For disaggregated data based on the destination of migrants (international and internal) see Sections 3.10 and 5.8.

2.7 Origin of Migrants

NLSS 2010/11 data showed that nearly half the migrants (47%) were from the Hill region, with close to 10 per cent were from the Mountains (Figure 2.12). Thus, although the Tarai was home to more than half the national population, the proportion of migrants from the Tarai was smaller compared to the other two ecological regions. (According to the 2011 census, only 6.7 per cent of the population live in the Mountain region, while 43 per cent and 50.3 per cent live in the Hills and Tarai, respectively.)
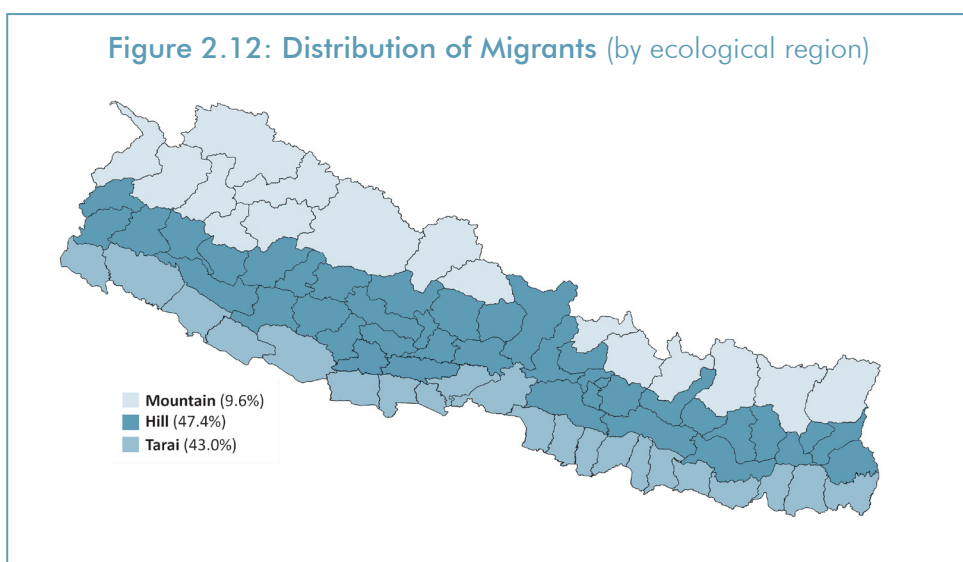
Figure 2.12: **Distribution of Migrants** (by ecological region)

Mountain (9.6%)
Hill (47.4%)
Tarai (43.0%)

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

Figure 2.13: Origin of Migrants (by province)
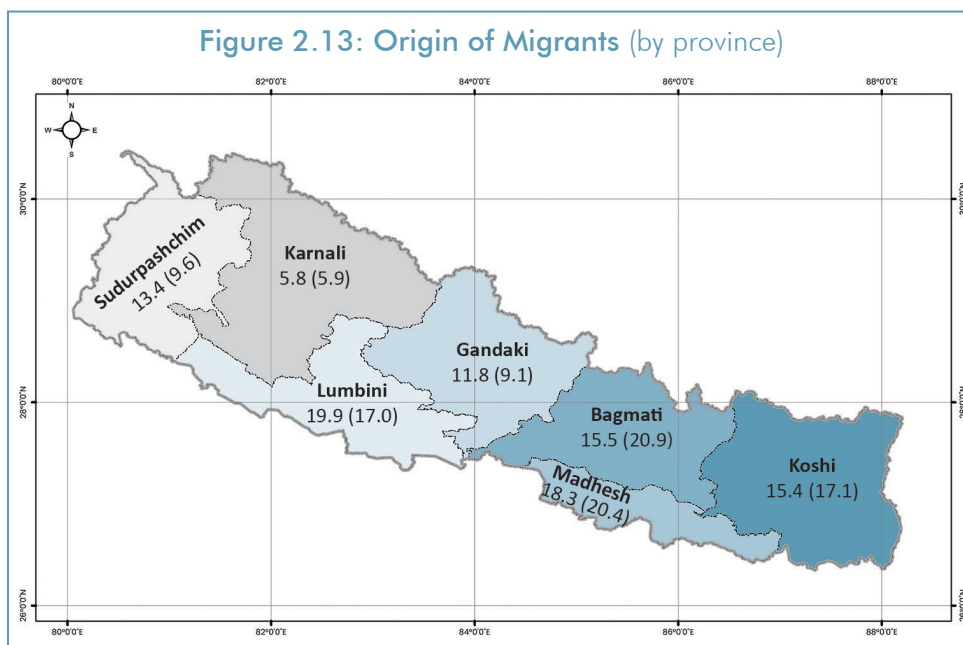
Note: The figures in parentheses show the share of the country's population in each province in 2011.

Looking at the province-wise distribution of the migrant population based on NLFS 2017/18 data, the highest proportion are from Lumbini at 19.9 per cent followed by Madhesh at 18 per cent and Bagmati at 16 per cent (Figure 2.13).

2.8 Destination of Migrants

Underscoring historical trends, the number of Nepalis going abroad continued to rise in the past couple of decades. NLSS 2010/11 suggested that the majority of migrants moved within Nepal (57%) (Figure 2.14). In contrast, NLFS 2017/18 showed that the majority of the migrants (55%) had headed to international destinations (Figure 2.15). Sex disaggregation showed that women migrate overwhelmingly within the country; going abroad was still largely a male phenomenon.

2.9 Reasons for Migration

Work-related migration—defined as 'looking for work', 'start new job', 'start new business' and 'job transfer'—was the reason for a significant proportion

Figure 2.14: Destination of Migrants
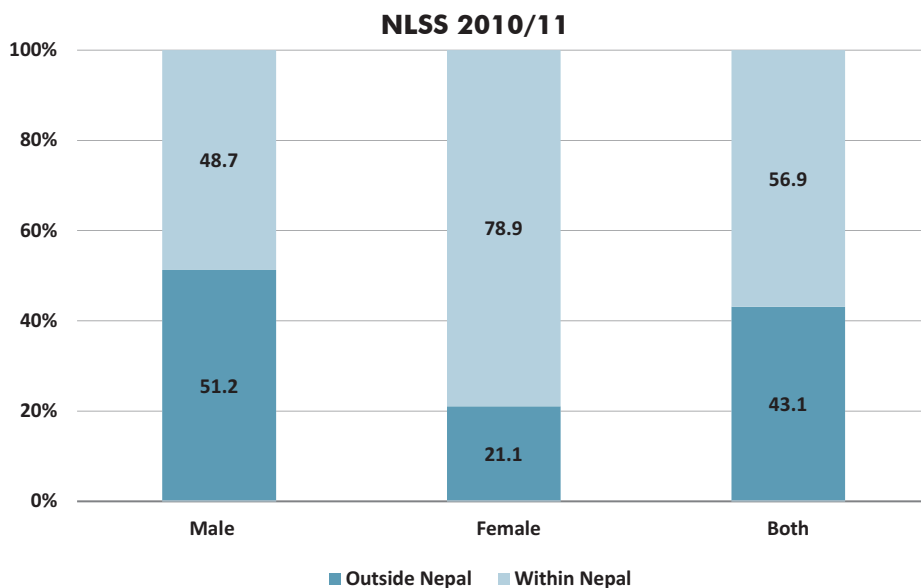
NLSS 2010/11

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

Note: Only 0.04 per cent of the respondents reported not knowing the destination of the migrant(s) from their households (CBS, Nepal Living Standard Survey 2010/11).
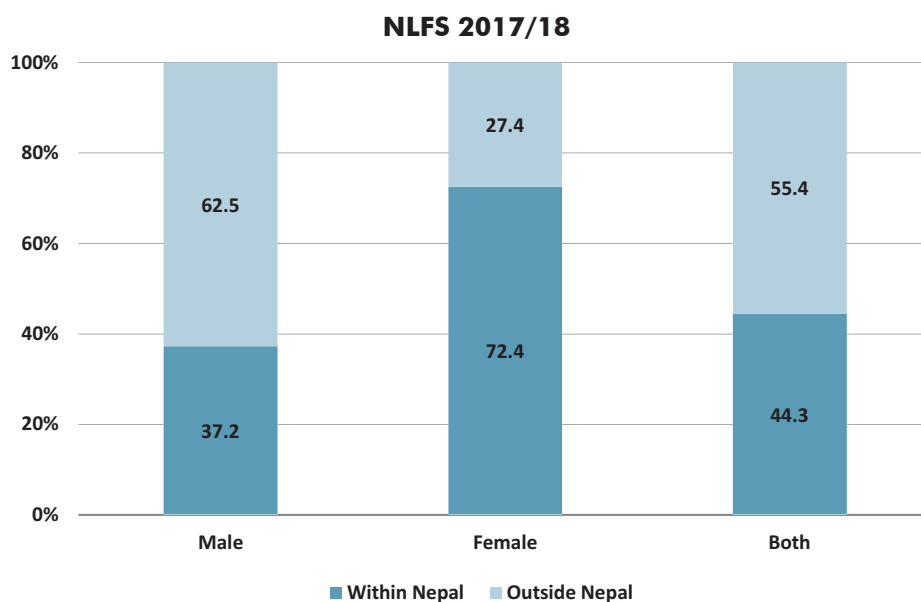
NLFS 2017/18

Source: Calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Note: A very small proportion (less than 0.5%) of respondents reported they did not know the destination of the migrant(s) from their households.

Figure 2.15: Reasons for Migration
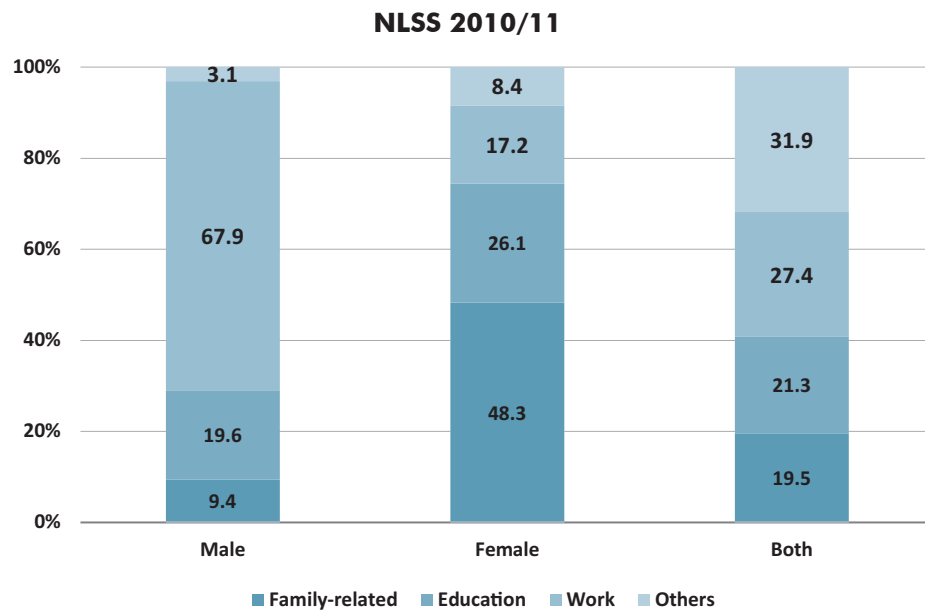
NLSS 2010/11

Source: Nepal Living Standard Survey 2010/11
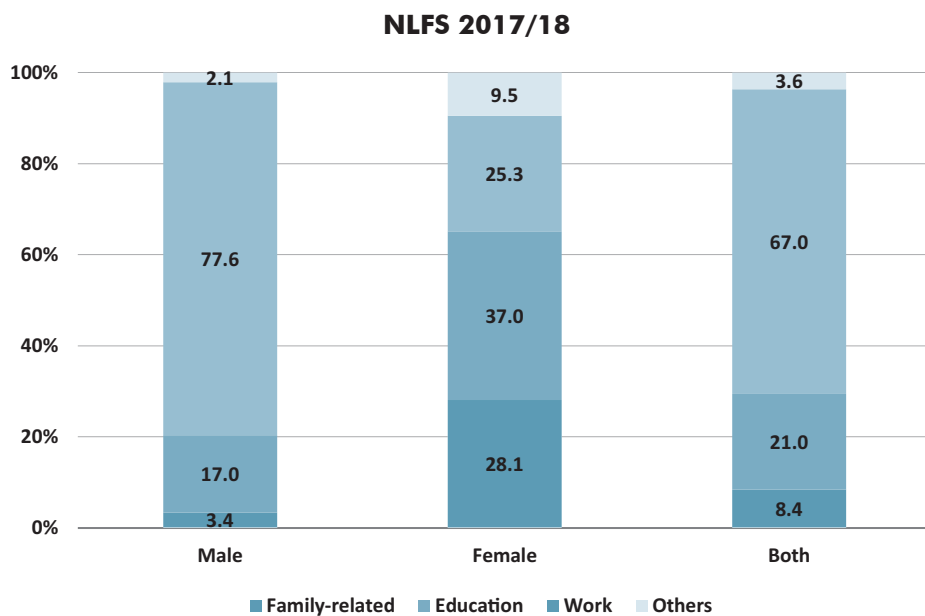
NLFS 2017/18

Source: Calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

of individuals (27%) migrating, according to NLSS 2010/11. Education (21%) was listed as the most important reason after work. Similarly, family-related migration (20%) was also one of the primary factors leading individuals to leave their households, which was true especially in the case of female migrants (48%) (Figure 2.15). However, the survey did not specify what family-related migration consists of. Marriage migration had not been considered by the survey either since women are not considered to be part of their natal household after marriage.

As reported in NLFS 2017/18, in the case of males, about four-fifths were away for reasons of employment. However, in the case of females, on the whole, education was the single biggest reason for migration (Figure 2.15). The findings of the NLFS 2017/18 were similar to those of NLSS 2010/11, with work being the major reason for migration for males for 78 per cent with education for females being the highest, at 37 per cent. Work-related migration was comparatively much lower among women (25%) than for men, which suggests that men leave their homes to earn while women's migration was tied more to their education and the migration of their families (as dependents). Interestingly, proportionately more women than men migrated for education.

3. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Migration to international destinations, primarily for employment, has been a defining feature of Nepali migration since the late 1990s. It was estimated more than a decade ago that there are over 4 million migrants abroad and that nearly half of all households in Nepal either have at least one migrant in a foreign country or someone who has returned from a stint abroad (World Bank 2011). India, the Gulf region (primarily Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE) and Malaysia are the main international destinations for Nepali migrants. This chapter presents data on international migrants as reported by the Nepal Labour Force Survey (NLFS) 2008 and 2017/18, the Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS) 2010/11, the National Population Census 2011 and 2021, and the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) 2016.

3.1 Trends in International Migration

Over the past 60 years, the number of international migrants from Nepal has increased significantly from just under 200,000 in the 1950s to approximately 2.2

Figure 3.1: International Migrants from Nepal
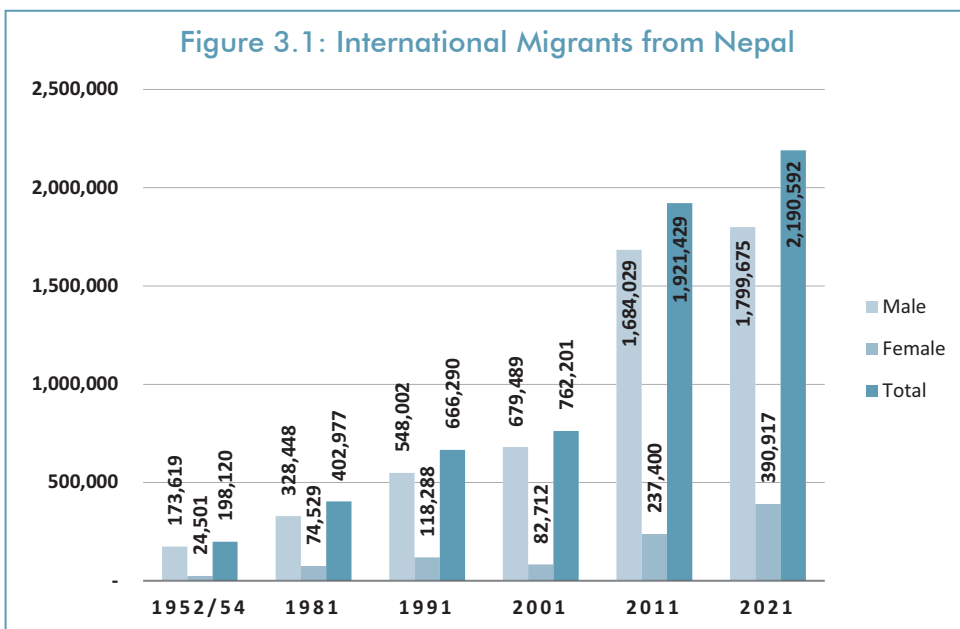
Source: Data from Khatiwada 2014 and Census 2021

Figure 3.2: Proportion of International Migrants (of total population)
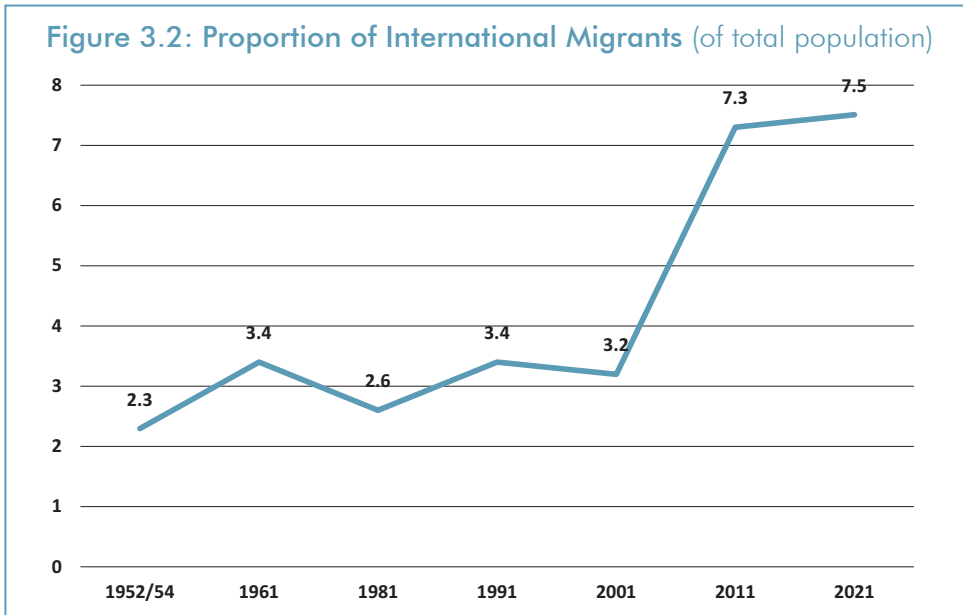
Source: Khatiwada 2014 and Census 2021

million by 2021 (Figure 3.1). The most visible change occurred between 2001 and 2011 when the number of Nepalis abroad more than doubled.

Census data over the years suggested that the proportion of international migrants has increased continually over the decades despite some dips in 1981 and 2001. But, overall, the growing popularity of foreign employment and student migration had increased the proportion of international migrants from 2.3 per cent of the total population in 1952/54 census to 7.5 per cent by the year 2021 (Figure 3.2).

3.2 Households with International Migrants

Derived from NLFS 2017/18, Figure 3.3 showed the proportion of households with at least one migrant in the seven provinces. Around 16 per cent of the total households from Karnali had one or more migrant, while 40 per cent of the households had migrants in Gandaki. Census 2021 showed that Sudurpashchim constituted the highest proportion of households with one or more migrants followed by Gandaki and Lumbini Province.

Figure 3.3: Migrant and Non-migrant Households (by province)

Census 2011

Province	Households without Migrants	Households with Migrants
Koshi	72.3	27.7
Madhesh	80.8	19.2
Bagmati	81.8	18.2
Gandaki	60.0	40.0
Lumbini	67.7	32.3
Karnali	84.0	16.0
Sudurpashchim	72.1	27.9

■ Households without Migrants   ■ Households with Migrants

NLFS 2017/18

Province	Non-migrant Households	Migrant Households
Koshi	72.9	27.1
Madhesh	70.5	29.5
Bagmati	82.2	17.8
Gandaki	64.8	35.2
Lumbini	63.7	36.3
Karnali	74.2	25.8
Sudurpashchim	58.4	41.6

■ Non-migrant Households   ■ Migrant Households

Source: Census 2011; calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Figure 3.3 (contd...)

Census 2021

Source: Census 2021

3.3 Sex of International Migrants

According to the 2011 census, women comprise a significantly lower proportion of international migrants—12.4 per cent—a ratio that has remained quite unchanged in the intercensal decade between 2001 and 2011 that saw an exponential increase in international migration. However, this ratio increased by almost 5 percentage points to 17.8 per cent in 2021. Hence, there were 22 females for every 100 males abroad in the 2021 census, an increase compared to 14:100 in 2011 and 12:100 in 2001. Even though the ratio had largely remained unchanged, the absolute number of female migrants did increase nearly three-fold, from 82,712 in 2001 to 237,400 in 2011. But between 2011 and 2021, the number of female migrant only increased by 1.5 times to 390,917. The smaller number of females among international migrants could also be due to various discrepancies in data,[7] as will be discussed in Section 4.2.

As evident from Figure 3.4, NLFS 2008, NLSS 2010/11, Census 2011 and 2021, NDHS 2011 and 2016 and NLFS 2017/18 showed that a major proportion of international migrants were males. NLFS 2008 and 2017/18 as well as NDHS 2011 and 2016 also showed that there had only been a minor change in the proportion of male and female international migrants.

Figure 3.4: Sex of International Migrants
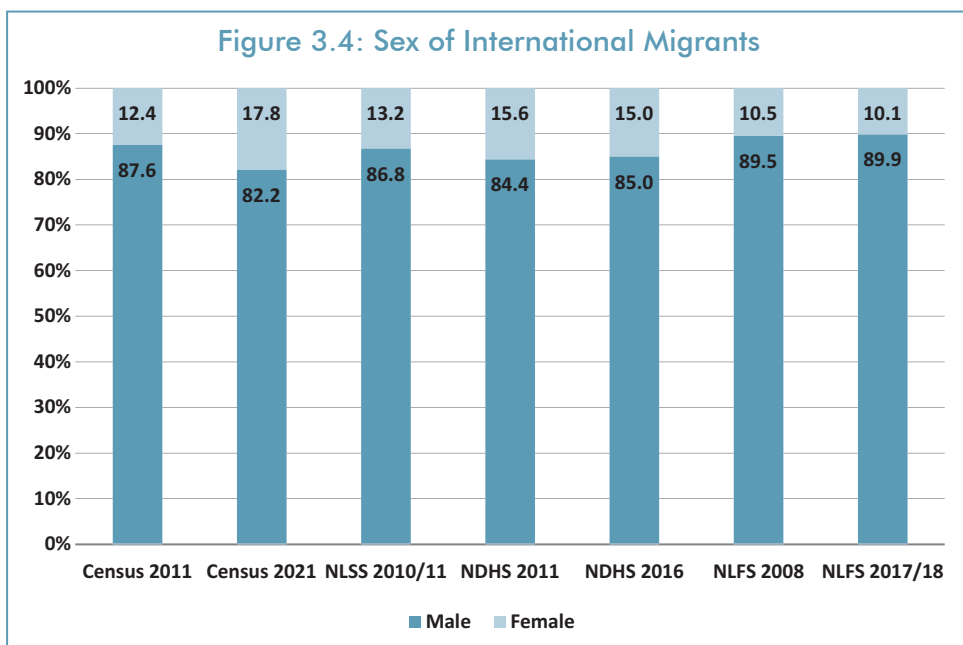
Source: Census 2011, 2021; Calculation based on NLSS 2010/11, NDHS 2011 and 2016, NLFS 2008 and 2017/18 datasets

3.4 Age of International Migrants

Mirroring the trend of migration in general, the age groups 15-29 and 30-44 together accounted for more than 80 per cent of international migrants (Figure 3.5), with employment and education being the key drivers of migration.

The findings from NLSS, NLFS and NDHS were consistent that most international migrants were aged between 15 and 44 years, with, those in the 15-29 group comprising nearly half of all international migrants (Figure 3.5).

3.5 Education Level of International Migrants

While most migrants going abroad have some level of education, only a quarter were educated beyond the secondary level, as both NLSS 2010/11 and the 2011 census showed (Figures 3.6). The more recent surveys, NLFS 2017/18 and Census 2021 showed that this proportion had increased to 31 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively (Figure 3.6 and 3.7).
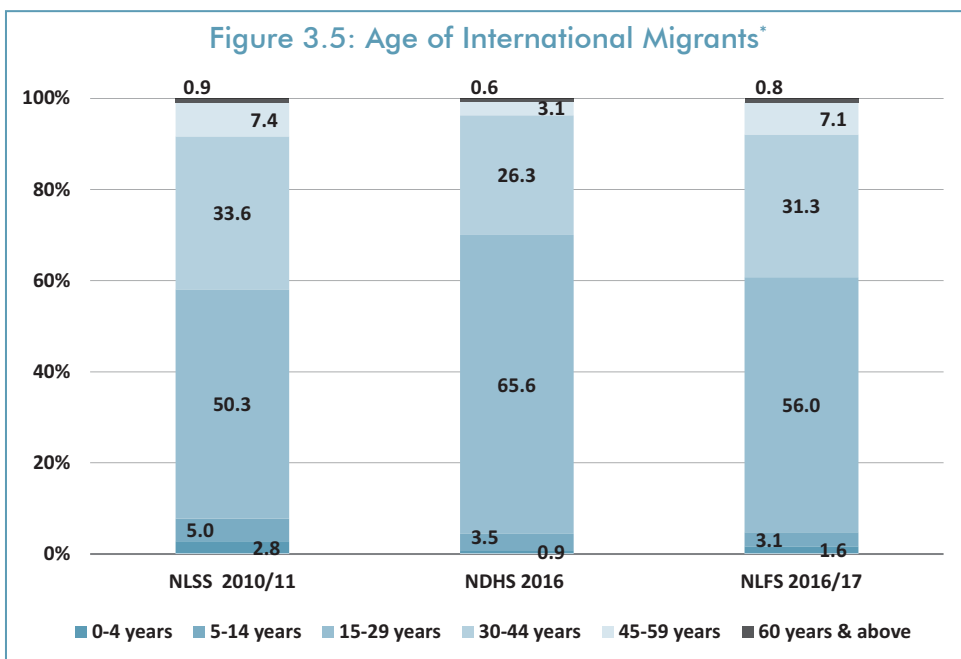
Figure 3.5: Age of International Migrants*

Legend: ■ 0-4 years ■ 5-14 years ■ 15-29 years ■ 30-44 years ■ 45-59 years ■ 60 years & above

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11, NDHS 2016 and NLFS 2017/18 datasets
* NLFS provides age of migrants at the time of migration while NLSS provides age of migrants at the time of survey.

Figure 3.6: Education Level of International Migrants

Legend: ■ Illiterate ■ Literate ■ Primary (Class 1-5) ■ Class 6-10 ■ SLC/SEE & Intermediate ■ Bachelor's & above ■ Not Stated

Source: Census 2011; Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 and NLFS 2017/18 datasets

Figure 3.7: Education Level of International Migrants (by sex)
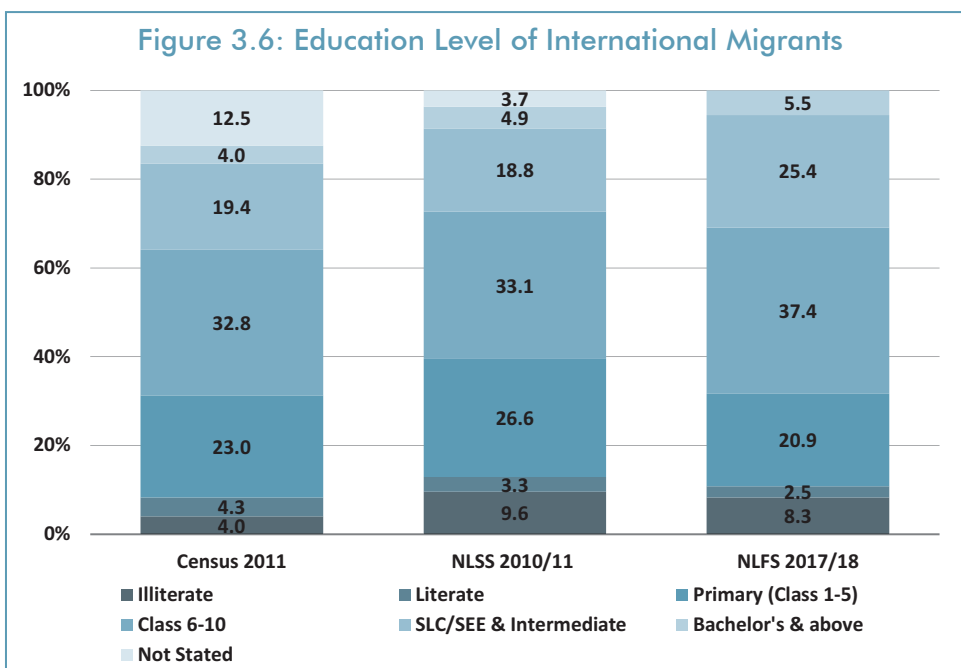
Source: Census 2021

Figure 3.8: Marital Status of International Migrants
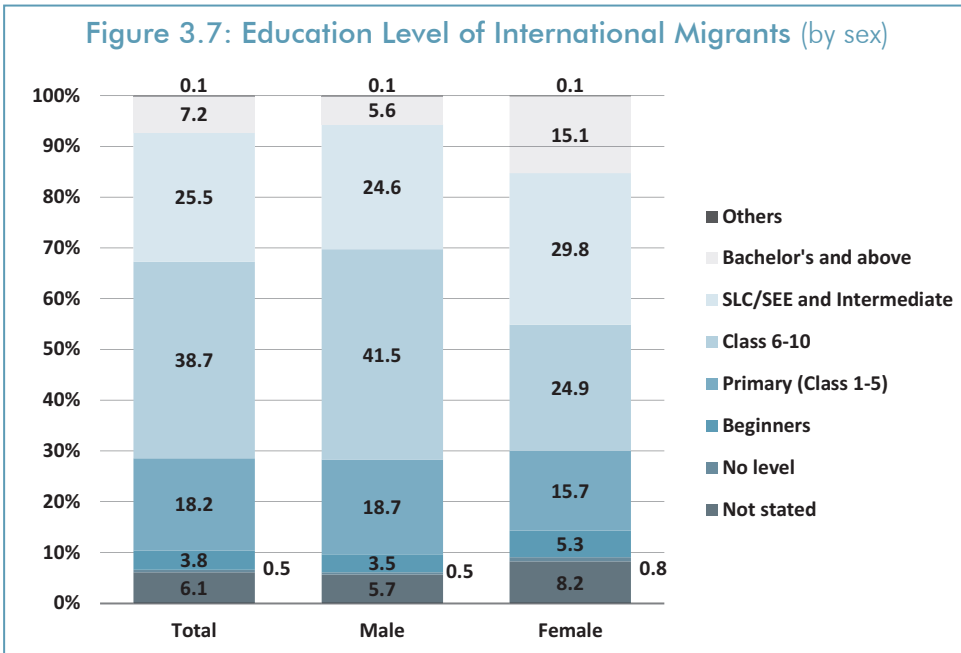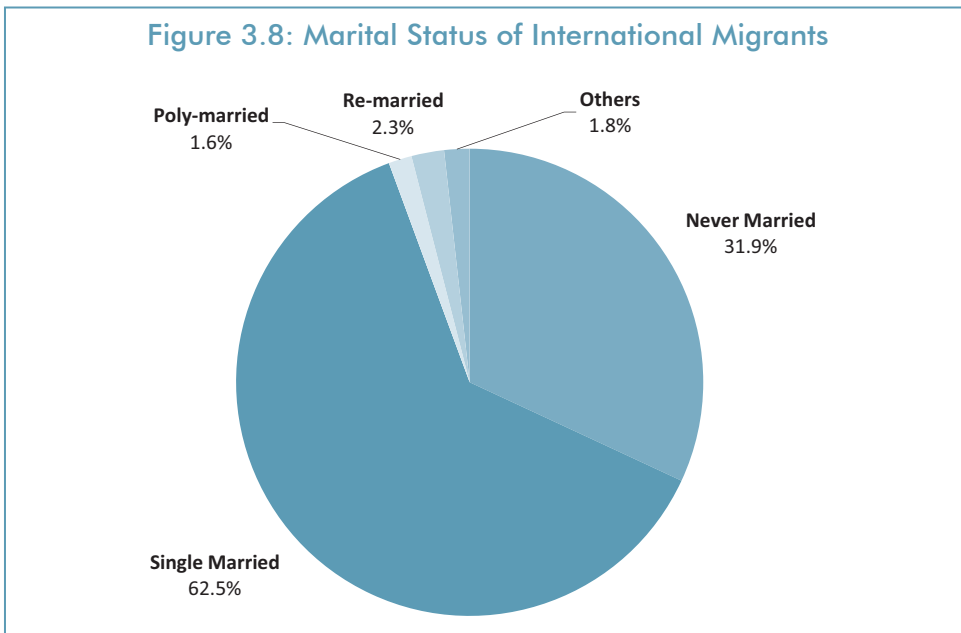
Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

3.6 Marital Status of International Migrants

A dominant two-thirds of international migrants were married (Figure 3.8).

3.7 Economic Status of International Migrants

While individuals belonging to the whole range of consumption quintiles were found to have migrated to foreign lands, a higher proportion of international migrants belonged to the richer quintiles (Figure 3.9). But there are some notable differences as well. According to NLSS 2010/11, 16 per cent of international migrants figured among the poorest quintiles. More significantly, within the two richest quintiles, there were more migrants going abroad.

On the other hand, NDHS data from 2011 and 2016 showed that majority of the international migrants belonged to the lower wealth quintiles and this proportion had increased slightly over the years (Table 3.1). Additionally, the table shows that India was the prime destination for migrants from the poorer quintiles compared to migrants from the wealthier sections of society, who tend to migrate more to countries other than India.

Figure 3.9: Wealth Quintiles of International Migrants

Poorest 16.1%
Richest 25.0%
Second 17.1%
Fourth 21.0%
Middle 20.8%
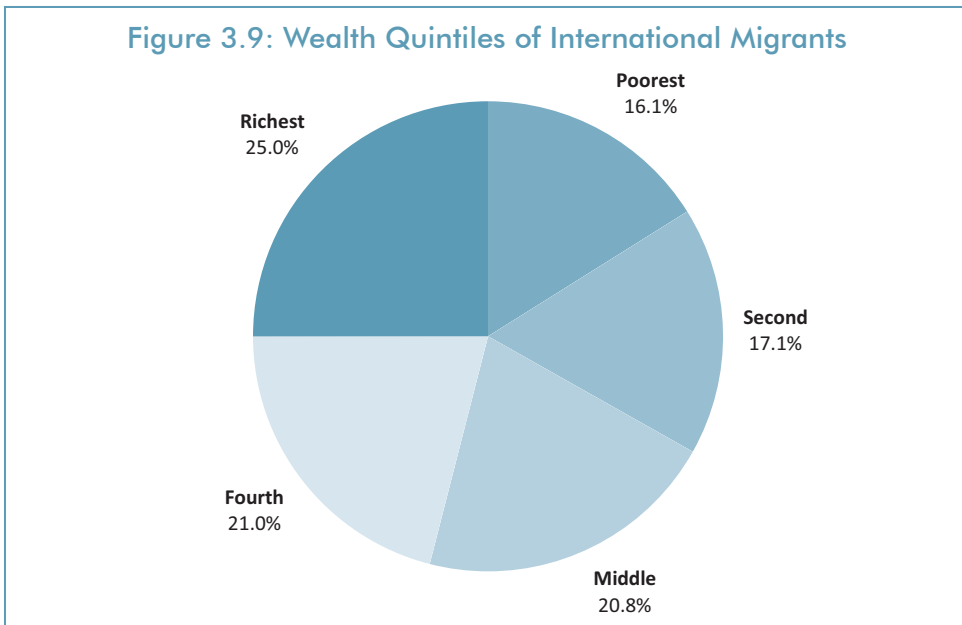
Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

Table 3.1: International Migrants (2011 and 2016)
(by wealth quintiles)

Wealth Quintile	India		International (Excluding India)		Total	
	2011	2016	2011	2016	2011	2016
Poorest	27.9	32.5	11.6	13.3	18.3	18.9
Poorer	26.9	22.7	16.9	18.9	21.0	20.0
Middle	18.8	21.2	22.1	24.3	20.8	23.4
Richer	14.9	13.0	24.1	22.4	20.4	19.6
Richest	11.4	10.6	25.3	21.2	19.6	18.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Calculation based on NDHS 2011 and 2016 datasets

3.8 Ethnicity of International Migrants

Figure 3.10 presents the ethnicity of the international migrants based on NLFS 2017/18 data. The majority of international migrants were from the Hill Caste groups (36%) followed by Hill Janajatis (25%) and Hill Dalits (12%).

Figure 3.10: Ethnicity of International Migrants
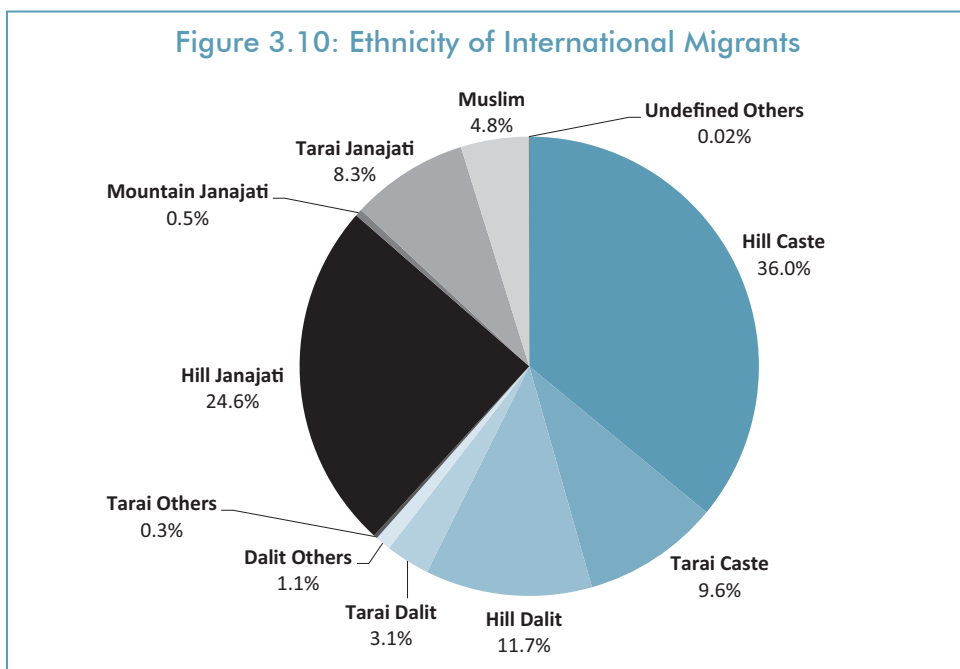
Source: Calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

3.9 Origin of International Migrants

As shown in Figure 3.11, the 2011 census found that an overwhelming proportion of international migrants (85%) were from rural areas while even the lower percentage in NLSS 2010/11 (72%) denoted a considerable majority. By the time of NDHS 2016, NLFS 2017/18 and Census 2021, an opposite trend was evident. But this turnaround had less to do with migration behaviour and more with successive changes in how urban and rural areas have been classified over the years. There were 58 municipalities (i.e., areas classified as urban) in 2011 and this number increased to 191 in 2014 and 217 in 2015 (MoHP, New Era and ICF International 2017). Concurrently, the number of village development committees (VDCs), the local governments in rural Nepal stood at 3157 in 2015 (Ghimire 2017). Following the promulgation of the Constitution of Nepal 2015 and formation of the Commission for Restructuring of Village, Municipalities, and Special, Protected and Autonomous Areas (commonly known as Local Level Restructuring Commission, or LLRC) in 2016, the 217 municipalities and 3157 VDCs were reorganised into 753 local government units (six metropolitan cities, 11 sub-metropolitan cities and 276 municipalities representing the urban areas, and another 460 termed rural municipalities). NDHS 2016, NLFS 2017/18 and

Figure 3.11: Origin of International Migration (rural/urban)

	Rural	Urban
Census 2011	85.1	14.9
Census 2021	47.8	52.2
NLSS 2010/11	71.6	28.4
NDHS 2011	89.4	10.6
NDHS 2016	42.7	57.3
NLFS 2008	88.0	12.0
NLFS 2017/18	37.1	62.9
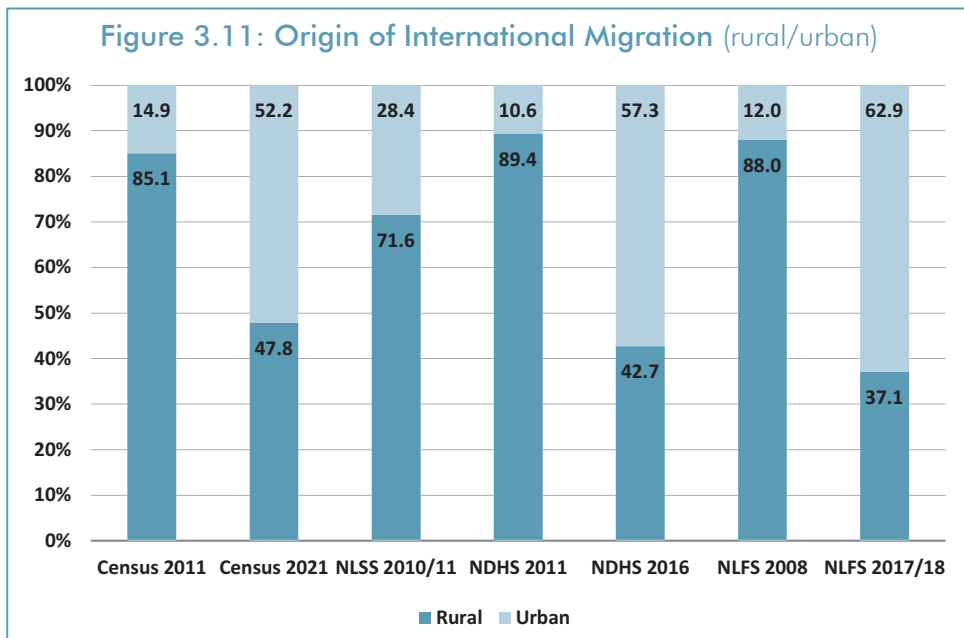
Source: Census 2011, 2021; Calculations based on NDHS 2011 and 2016, NLFS 2008 and 2017/18 and NLSS 2010/11 datasets

Figure 3.12: Distribution of International Migrants
(by ecological region)

Mountain (5.3%)
Hill (45.2%)
Tarai (49.5%)
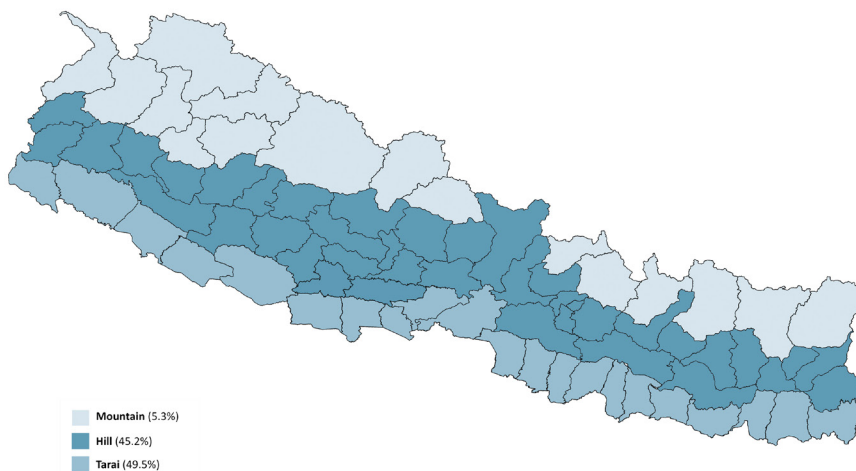
Source: Census 2021

Figure 3.13: International Migrants' District of Origin

Absentee Population
<1000
1000-9999
10,000-24,999
25,000-49,999
50,000-100,000
>100,000
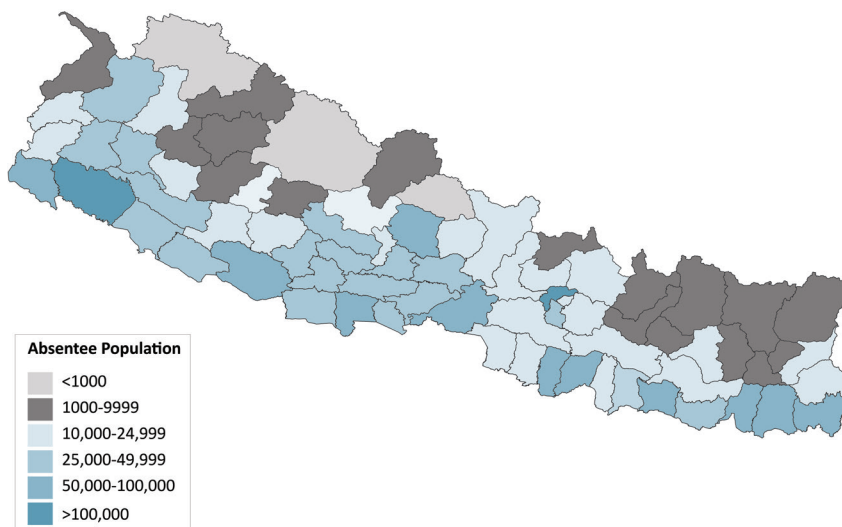
Source: Census 2021

Figure 3.14: International Migrant
(by province and sex)

NLFS 2017/18

■ Male ■ Female

Census 2021

■ Male ■ Female
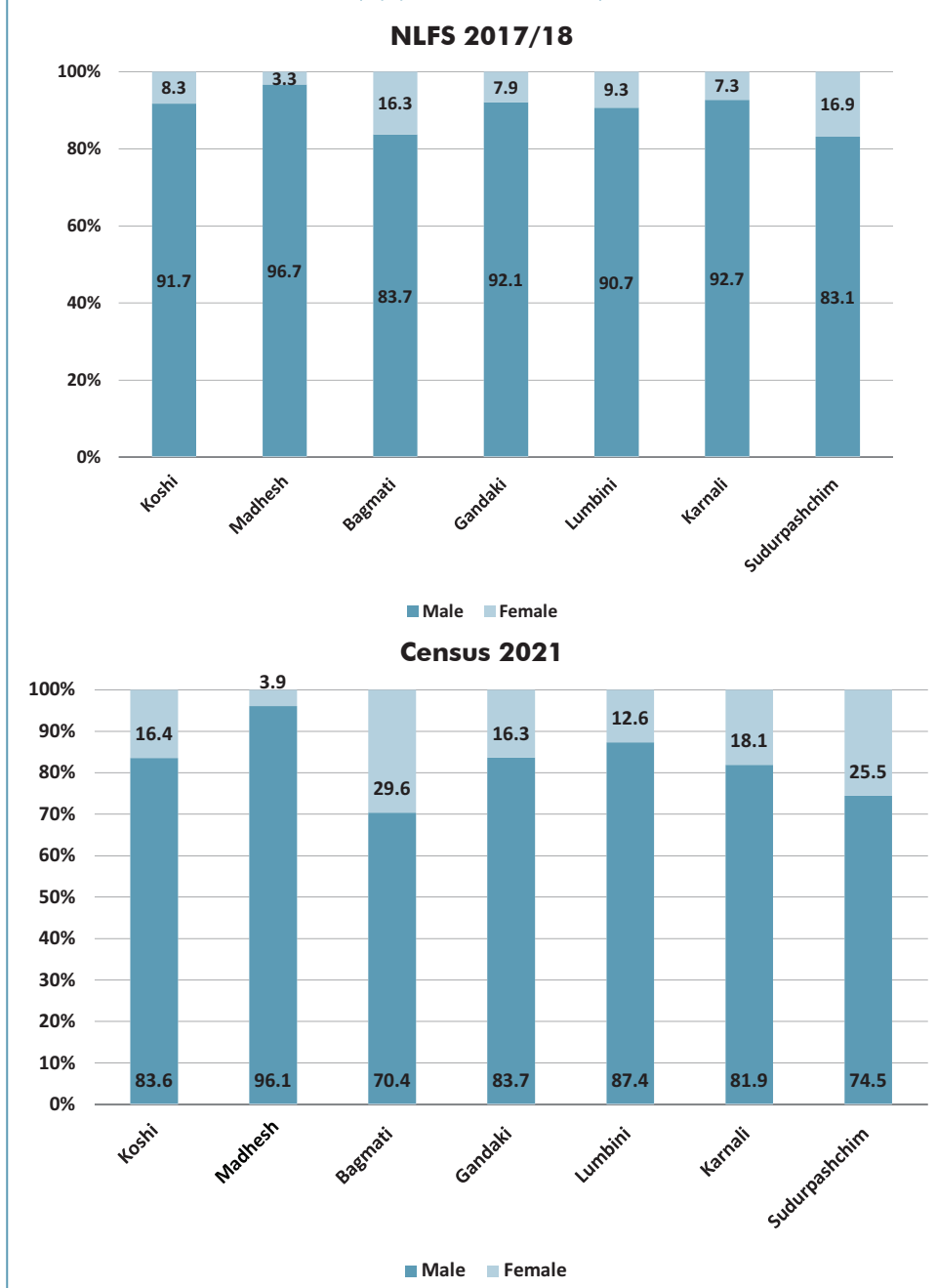
Census 2021 are based on the latest urban and rural classification.

A comparison of origin of migrants based on ecological zones showed the Hills (45%) sending more migrants abroad than the Tarai (50%) and the Mountains (5%) combined (Figure 3.12).

Among the districts, Kathmandu, Kailali and Jhapa account for the highest number of international migrants at 7, 5 and 4 per cent, respectively (Figure 3.13). Likewise, Rupandehi, Morang, Dhanusa, Kanchanpur, Sunsari and Siraha among the Tarai districts, and Hill districts of Kaski and Chitwan from Gandaki and Bagmati provinces are the other international migrant-exporting districts. It is interesting to note that while international migrants from the Tarai and the Eastern and Western Hills originate from a number of districts, Kathmandu District is home to nearly half of those from the Hills in Bagmati Province.

The proportions of male and female international migrants within each province are presented in Figure 3.14.

3.10 Destination of International Migrants

Given its proximity and socio-cultural affinities as well as the open border between the two countries, India has long been a favourite destination for Nepalis. But, now, countries in the Middle East had overtaken India as the primary destination for Nepali males.[8] For female migrants, however, India still stands out as the single largest destination.

Data from NDHS 2016 and NLFS 2017/18 showed that India remained the most popular destination for international migrants followed by Malaysia and Qatar (Figure 3.15). More recent data from Census 2021 showed that most Nepalis have migrated to countries in the Middle East followed by India. Census 2021 showed that higher proportion of migrants in Middle East are male (Figure 3.16). The proportion of female migrants was higher in USA and Canada. Sex-disaggregation of NLFS 2017/18 showed India to be where nearly half the female international migrants were headed (49%) followed by Australia (8%) and Japan (7%) whereas for male international migrants the most preferred destinations were India (36%), Malaysia (16%) and Qatar (15%) (Figure 3.17). Similarly, Census 2021 showed that more than two-fifth of female international migrants were in India followed by countries in South East Asia. A more detailed data on international migrants by sex and countries as well as province and countries are presented in Annex I and II.

Figure 3.15: Destination of International Migrants

Census 2011

USA & Canada
2.5%

Other Countries
2.1%

Not Stated
1.1%

Other Asian
2.9%

ASEAN
13.0%

Europe
3.3%

Middle East
37.6%

India
37.6%

Source: Census 2011

NDHS 2016*

Others
8.7%

Malaysia
17.1%

Japan
1.9%

South Korea
1.0%

Kuwait
2.5%

Qatar
16.4%

India
29.4%

Dubai
8.5%

Saudi Arabia
14.5%
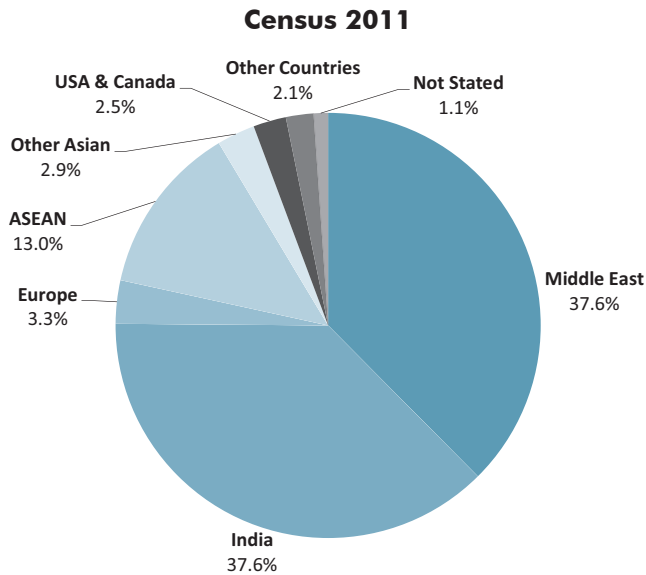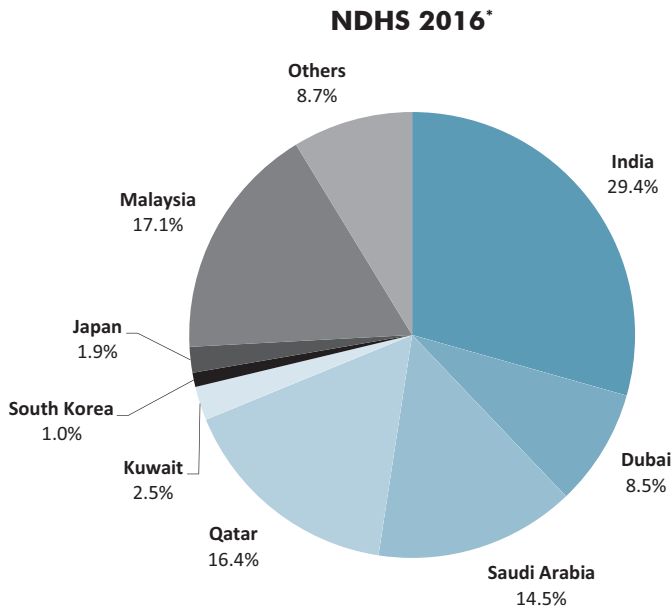
Source: Calculation based on NDHS 2016 dataset
* The Nepal Demographic and Health Survey includes Dubai as a country in their raw dataset and does not mention the United Arab Emirates, where the city of Dubai is located.

Figure 3.15 (contd...)
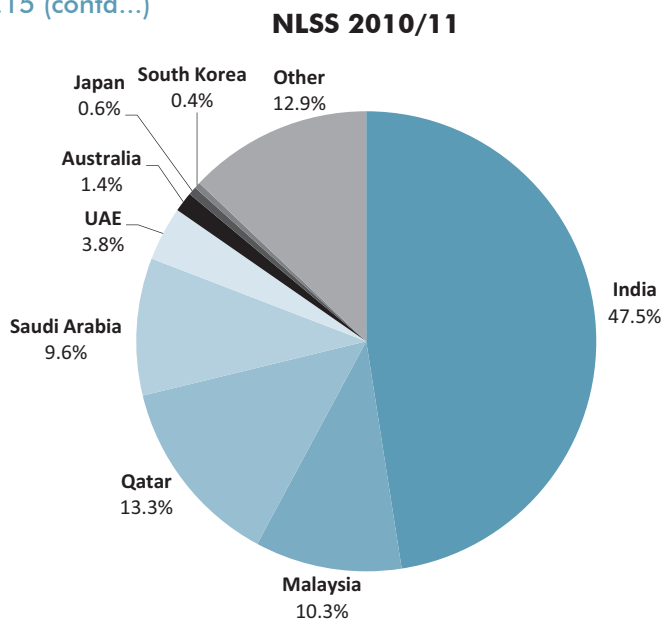
NLSS 2010/11

Japan 0.6%
South Korea 0.4%
Other 12.9%
Australia 1.4%
UAE 3.8%
Saudi Arabia 9.6%
India 47.5%
Qatar 13.3%
Malaysia 10.3%

Source: Calculation based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

NLFS 2017/18

South Korea 1.7%
Other 8.6%
Japan 1.8%
Australia 2.1%
Kuwait 2.5%
UAE 7.1%
India 37.4%
Saudi Arabia 10.9%
Qatar 13.5%
Malaysia 14.4%
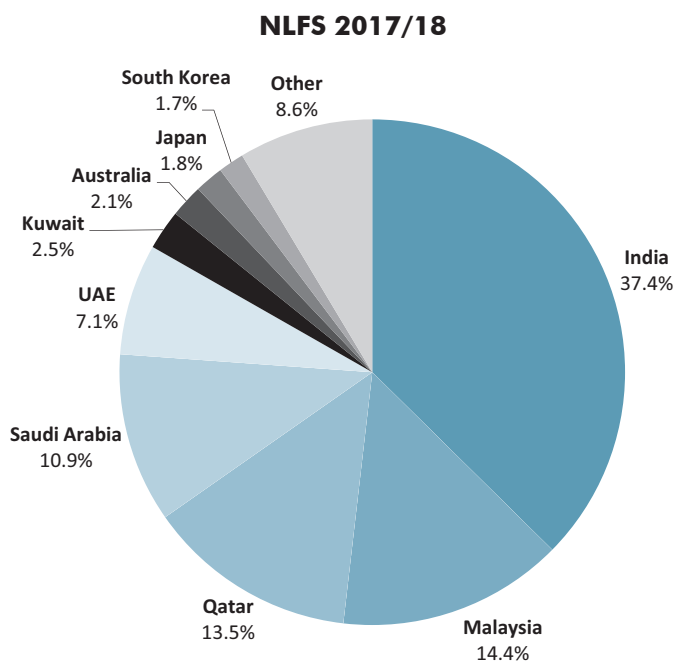
Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Figure 3.15 (contd...)
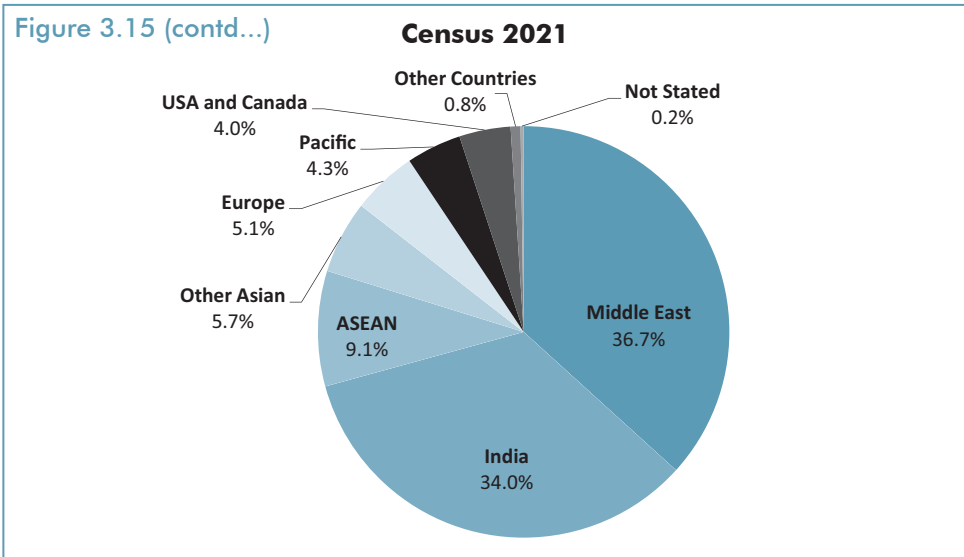
Census 2021

Source: Census 2021

Figure 3.16: Sex Distribution of International Migrants

Census 2011

■ Male ■ Female
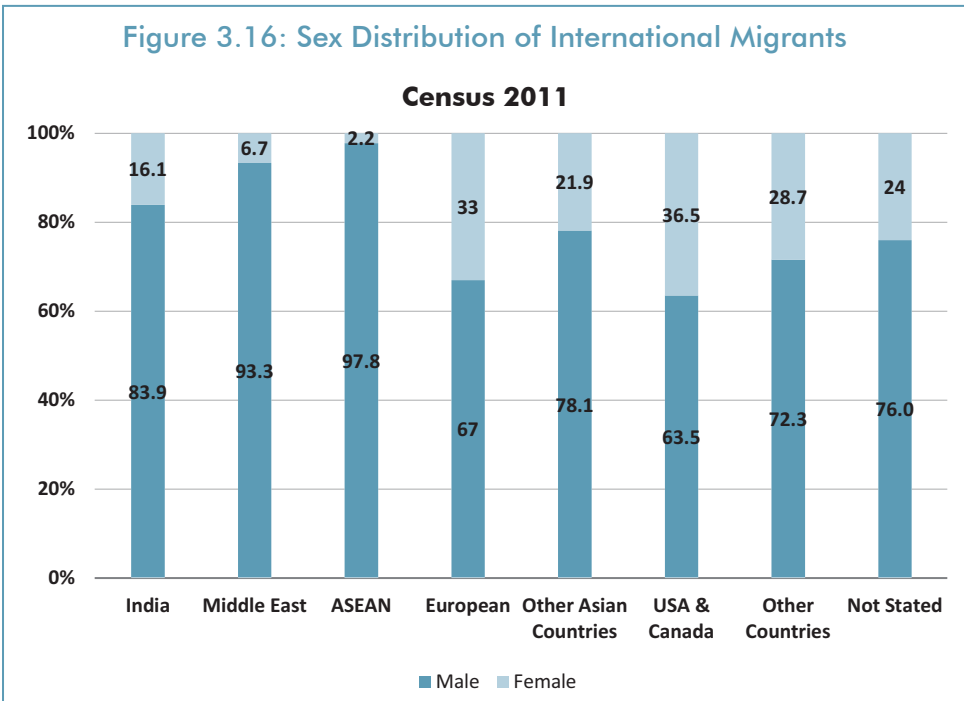
Source: Census 2011

Figure 3.16 (contd...)
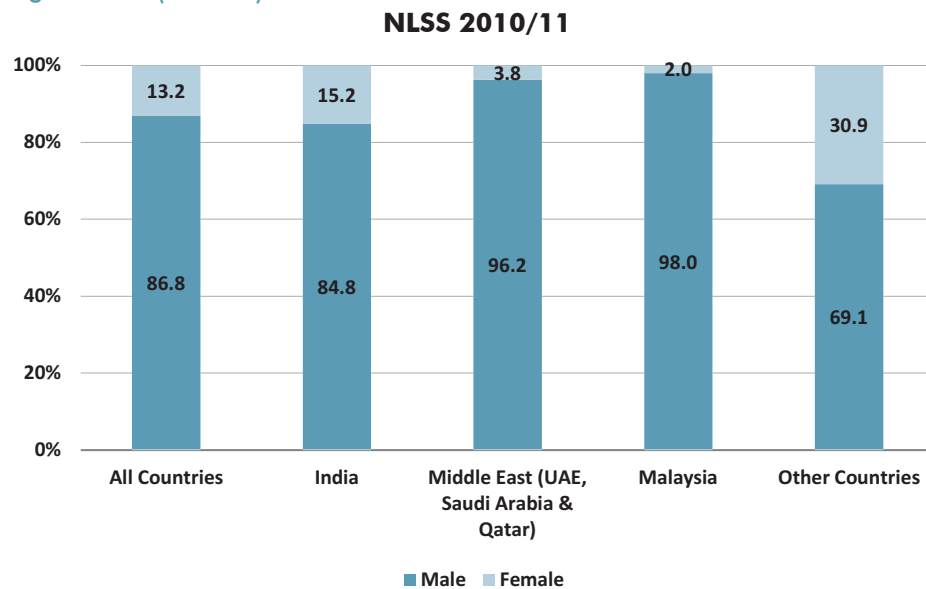
NLSS 2010/11

Source: Calculation based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset
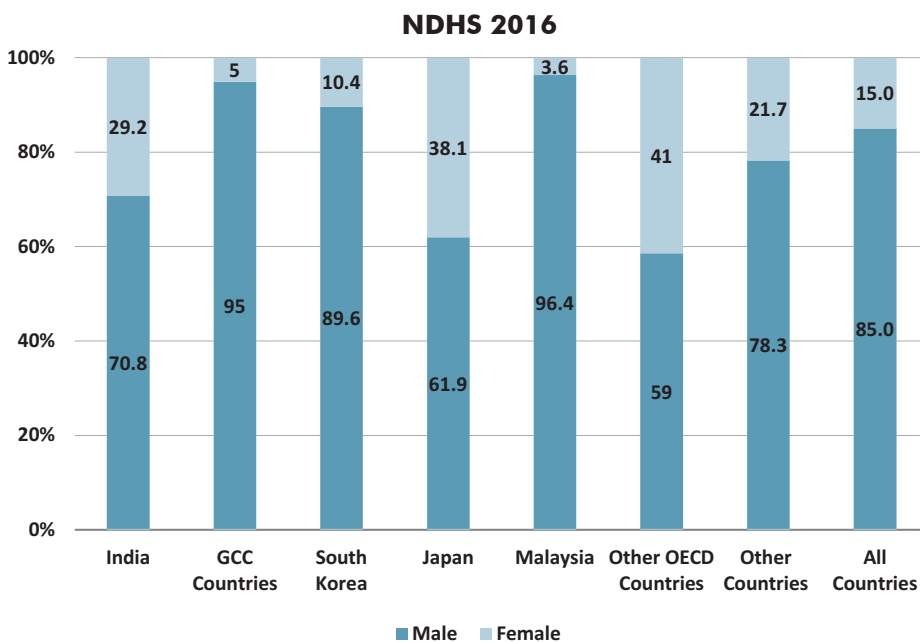
NDHS 2016

Source: Calculation based on NDHS 2016 dataset

Figure 3.16 (contd...)

NLFS 2017/18
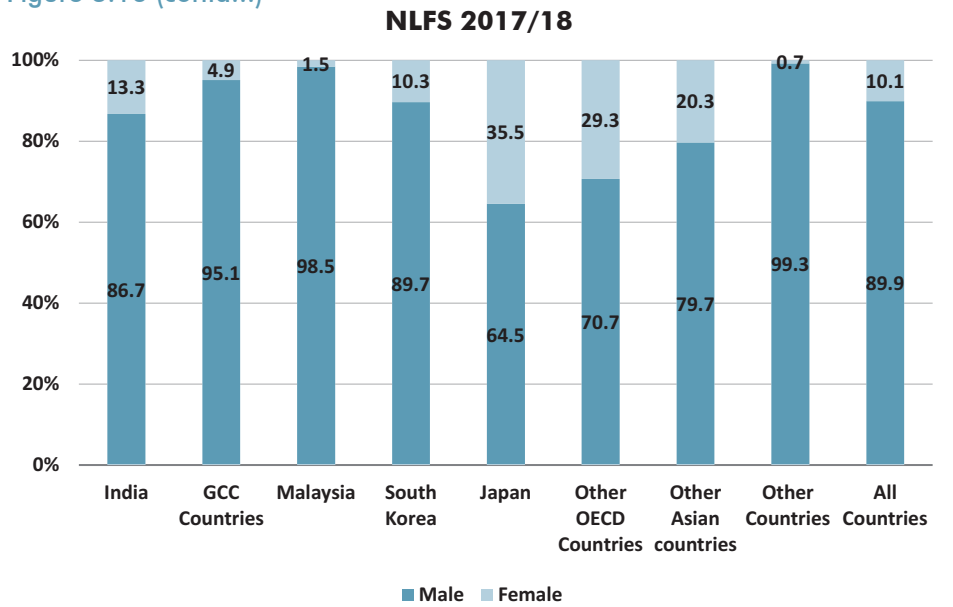
Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset
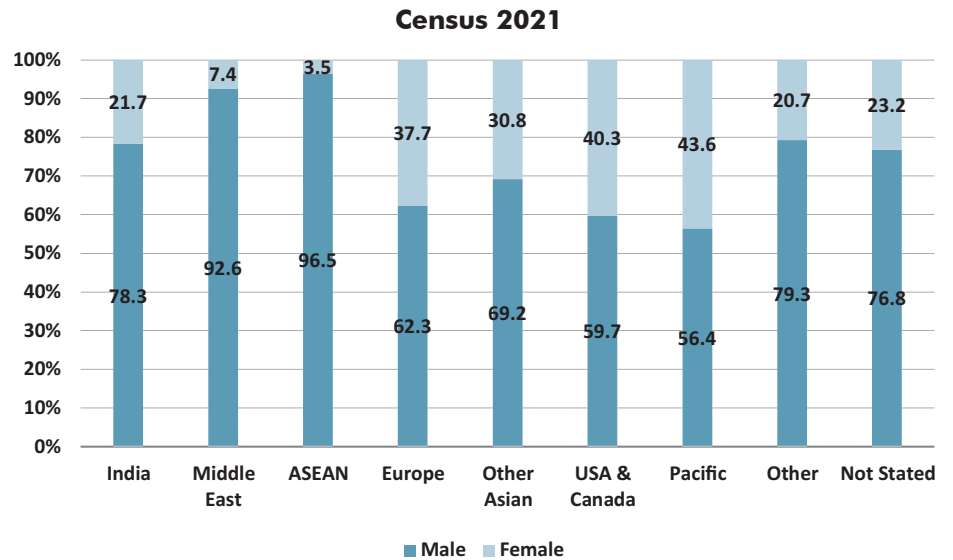
Census 2021

Source: Census 2021

Figure 3.17: Destination of International Migrants (by sex)

NDHS 2016

Male

India 24.4%
Qatar 18.8%
Saudi Arabia 16.9%
Dubai 8.9%
Kuwait 2.1%
Malaysia 19.4%
South Korea 1.1%
Japan **1.4%**
Other Countries 7.0%

Female

India 57.5%
Qatar 2.8%
Saudi Arabia 0.9%
Dubai 6.3%
Kuwait 4.2%
Malaysia 4.2%
South Korea 0.7%
Japan 4.7%
Other Countries 18.7%
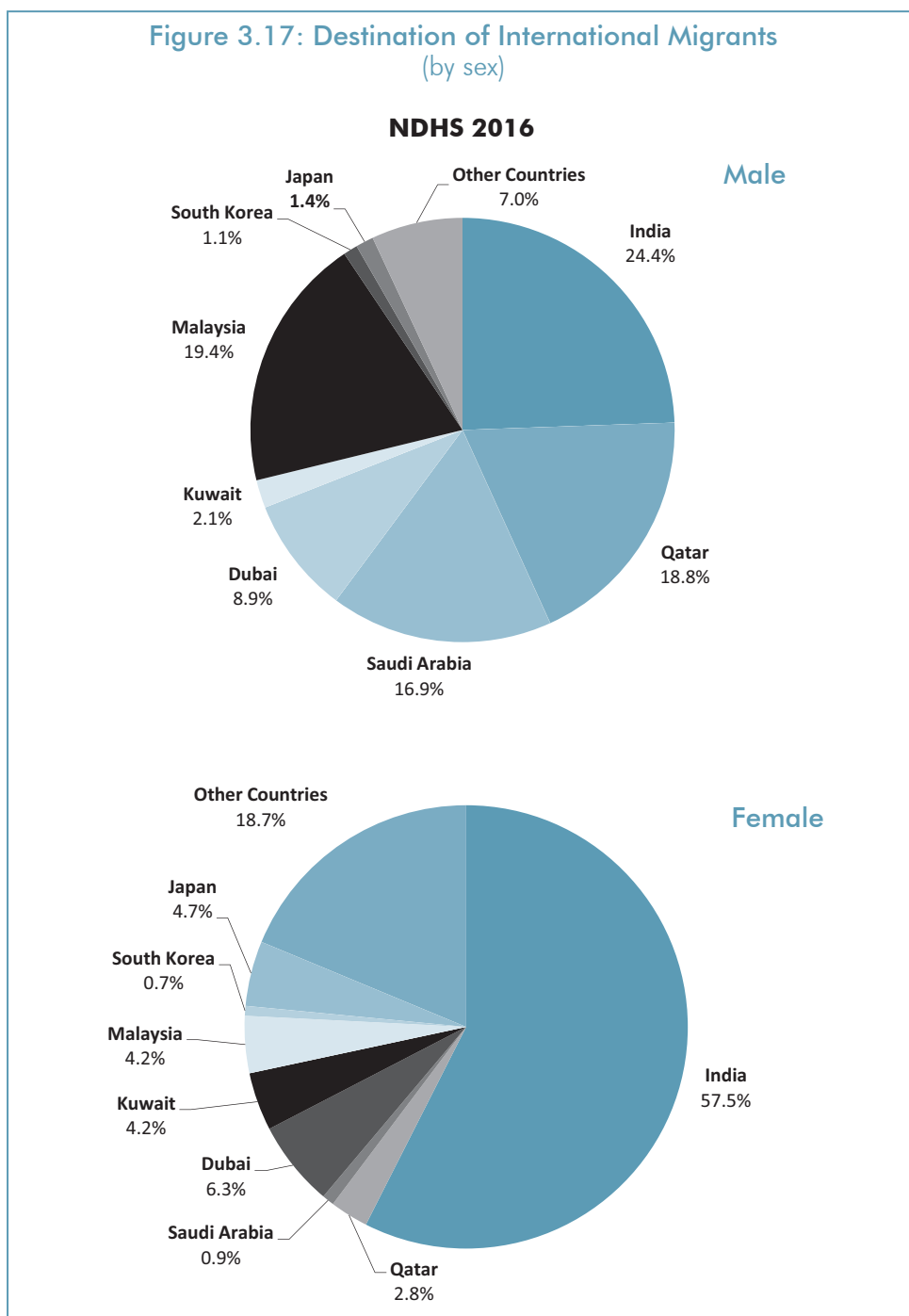
Source: Calculation based on NDHS 2016 dataset

Note: Other OECD countries includes Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and United States of America.

Figure 3.17 (contd...)   **NLFS 2017/18**

Male

India
36.1%

Malaysia
15.8%

Qatar
14.8%

Saudi Arabia
11.8%

United Arab
Emirates
7.2%

Kuwait
2.1%

South Korea
1.6%

Australia
1.5%

Japan
1.3%

Other
7.6%

Female

India
49.0%

Malaysia
15.1%

Qatar
7.8%

Saudi Arabia
6.5%

United Arab
Emirates
6.1%

Kuwait
2.2%

South Korea
2.1%

Australia
1.7%

Japan
1.3%
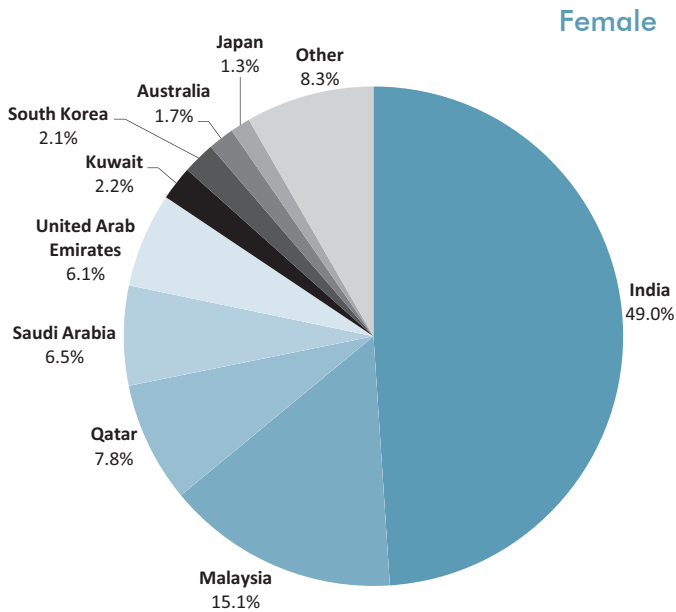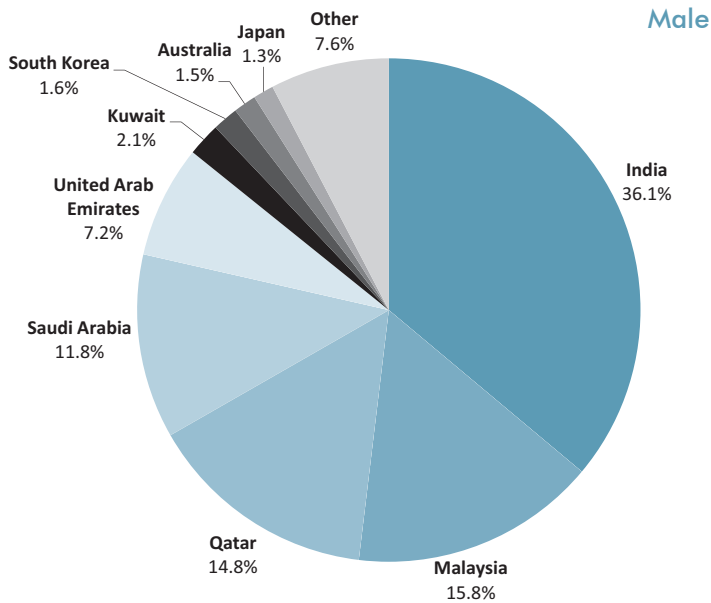
Other
8.3%

Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Note: Other OECD countries includes Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America.

Figure 3.17 (contd...)

Census 2021

Male

Pacific
3.0%

USA & Canada
2.9%

Other
0.8%

Other Asian
3.9%

Europe
4.8%

India
32.5%

ASEAN
41.5%

Middle East
10.7%

Female

Pacific
10.6%

Other
0.9%

USA & Canada
9.2%

India
41.6%

Other Asian
10.8%

Europe
9.9%

ASEAN
15.2%

Middle East
1.8%
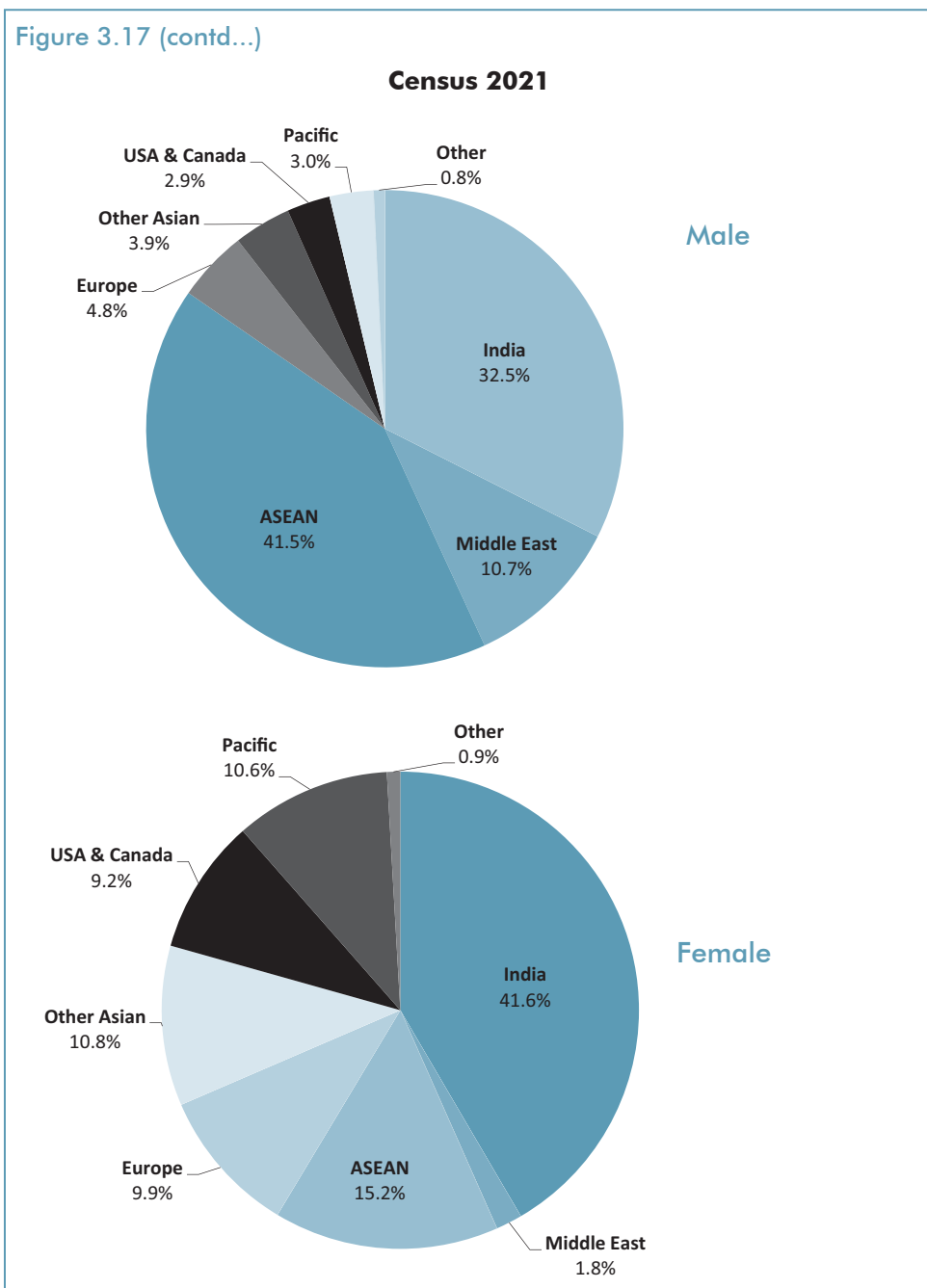
Source: Census 2021

3.11 Reasons for Migration

Migration to the Gulf countries and Malaysia has accelerated since the 1990s for a number of reasons, including:

- Nepal's adoption of liberal policies on foreign employment and foreign travel;
- A general sense of insecurity arising out of the Maoist insurgency that lasted from 1996 to 2006; and
- The coincident growth in the economies of destination countries.

Lack of employment opportunities and critical infrastructure required to support robust economies, particularly in Nepal's rural areas, continue to be the major drivers of international migration. As a result, an overwhelming majority (79%) went abroad for work according to NLSS 2010/11 (Figure 3.18).

However, as can been seen in Figure 3.19, the primary reasons for migration also varied across sex and destination countries. A very high percentage of men migrated to India and other countries for work, but that is true for only a few female migrants going to India. Census 2011 and 2021, NDHS 2016 and NLFS 2017/18 (Figure 3.19) all showed that the proportion of females migrating for work was higher in other countries. Marriage and dependence on other migrant family members were the primary reasons for women migrating to India. Of

Figure 3.18: Reason for Migration

Other 2.5%
Together with Family/Relatives 9.7%
Other Family Reasons 2.6%
Education & Training 6.1%
Other Work Related 36.1%
Looking for Work 42.9%
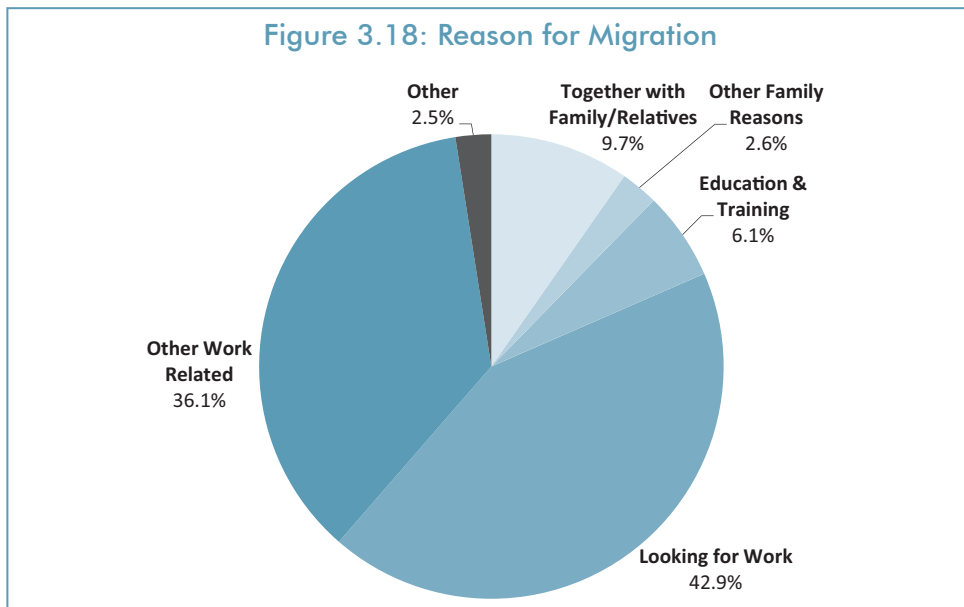
Source: Calculation based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

Figure 3.19: Reason for Migration (by destination and sex)

Census 2011

Male (India): Work 85.7, Education 3.6, Dependant 5.2, Others 3.9, Not Stated 1.6
Female (India): Work 32.2, Education 7.4, Dependant 50.3, Others 6.3, Not Stated 3.8
Male (Other Country): Work 87.5, Education 5.1, Dependant 2.1, Others 4.1, Not Stated 1.2
Female (Other Country): Work 57.0, Education 20.7, Dependant 14.7, Others 5.6, Not Stated 2.0

India — Male, Female
Other Country — Male, Female

Legend: Work, Education, Dependant, Others, Not Stated

NDHS 2016

Male (India): Work 88.1, Study 7.6, Other 0.3 / 0.4, 3.5
Female (India): Work 6.7, Study 6, Marriage 62.8, Accompanying Family 23.2, Other 1.3
Male (Other Country): Work 95.1, Study 4.2, 0.5, 0.1, 0
Female (Other Country): Work 57.7, Study 19.5, Marriage 6.3, Accompanying Family 15, Other 1.5

India — Male, Female
Other Country — Male, Female

Legend: Work, Study, Marriage, Accompanying Family, Other

Source: Census 2011; calculation based on NDHS 2016 dataset

Figure 3.19 (contd...)

NLFS 2017/18

India — Male: Work 88.1, Study/Training 5.8, Dependant 1.1, Others 4.9
India — Female: Work 29.7, Study/Training 7.0, Dependant 56.1, Others 7.1
Other Country — Male: Work 93.0, Study/Training 6.2, Dependant 0.2, Others 0.6
Other Country — Female: Work 62.1, Study/Training 23.1, Dependant 12.5, Others 2.3

Legend: Work, Study/Training, Dependant, Others

Census 2021

India — Male: Work 82.5, Education 3.9, Dependent 11.4, Others 1.0, Not Stated 1.2
India — Female: Work 48.6, Education 6.4, Dependent 38.6, Others 4.1, Not Stated 2.3
Other Countries — Male: Work 85.2, Education 8.8, Dependent 4.6, Others 0.5, Not Stated 0.8
Other Countries — Female: Work 48.1, Education 30.0, Dependent 18.3, Others 2.2, Not Stated 1.4

Legend: Work, Education, Dependent, Others, Not Stated

Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset; Census 2021

Table 3.2: International Migrants (by occupation and sex)

Occupations	International Countries (excluding India)		India	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Elementary Occupations	30.7	25.9	32.9	29.2
Sales & Service	19.5	14.1	33.1	6.1
Craft & Related Trade	10.1	0.3	6.6	0.6
Armed Forces	0.3	0.0	5.6	0.0
Plant & Machine Operators/Assemblers	10.4	0.6	3.5	0.0
Technicians & Associate Professionals	1.1	4.1	1.0	0.8
Clerical Support	1.3	3.4	0.7	0.0
Skilled Agriculture	0.6	0.0	0.3	0.4
Managers	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.0
Professionals	0.7	1.2	0.1	0.6
Unknown	25.1	50.2	16.2	62.3

Source: Calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

the women who went to other countries, a smaller proportion cited marriage or dependence as the main reason. Census 2021, NDHS 2016 and NLFS 2017/18 also showed that a higher proportion of women went abroad for studies compared to men (Figure 3.19). It should, however, be noted that this does not mean more women than men are studying abroad; only that very many more men migrate abroad for work. Census 2011 showed that a total of 76,886 males and 33,678 females went abroad for education with males numbering 21,670 in India and 55,216 in countries other than India with the corresponding figures for female students being 8,612 and 25,066. The number of male and female migrating for education increased to 130,397 (22,900 in India) and 78,980 (10,366 in India) in 2021.

NLFS 2017/18 data shows that approximately 177,000 males (62,000 in India and 116,000 in other countries) and approximately 50,000 females (11,000 in India and 39,000 in other countries) went abroad for further studies. These figures showed that there has been significant increase in migration for education to international destinations. It is likely that limited education and employment opportunities in Nepal and the anticipation for better education and employment opportunities abroad has led to the surge in the mobility of Nepalis to foreign countries for education.

3.12 Occupation of International Migrants

The occupations of male and female international migrants, according to NLFS 2017/18, irrespective of their reason for migration, are presented in Table 3.2.[9] A higher proportion of male migrants to both India (33%) and other foreign countries (31%) were engaged in elementary occupations such as helpers, cleaners and labourers. The majority of female migrant workers (29%) in India were employed in the elementary occupations as well. Similarly, in the case of female migrant workers in other international countries, elementary occupations constituted the higher proportion (26%) followed by service and sales (14%).

4. LABOUR MIGRATION

This chapter presents information on labour migrants, i.e., migrants whose purpose of movement is employment. The data used here is based on the number of labour permits issued by the Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE) along with an analysis of the Nepal Labour Force Survey (NLFS) 2017/18 and Census 2021, consisting of data for migrants whose reason for migration is 'service/job' and 'looking for job'. Furthermore, this chapter also uses data from Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE), Foreign Employment Board (FEB) and Nepal Labour Migration Report 2022 from the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS), the apex body governing labour migration from Nepal.

4.1 Trends

The number of Nepalis going abroad for employment has been rising steadily, and, at times, rapidly, over the past couple of decades. Figure 4.1 shows the number of Nepalis who obtained labour permits from DoFE over the course of the 30 years that records have been maintained for. Any Nepali who wants to go to a third country other than India for work has to get labour permits from the department. In order to get this permit, aspirant migrants have to submit passports, visas, contracts, insurance policies and orientation training certificate, among others. It should be noted that since Nepal and India share an open border, allowing unhindered movement to and fro without the need to present any kind of documentation, and there is no requirement for labour permits for Nepalis to work in India, such individuals are thus not covered in the DoFE data presented here.

The most striking feature has been the increase in the number of labour permits issued, rising exponentially in later years. (District-wise data on the number of labour permits issued is presented in Annex III.) There have been noticeable surges two times. As seen in Figure 4.1, there were sharp increases in 1998/99 and 2001/02, which could have resulted from the dearth of employment opportunities and growing insecurity in the country, both by-products of the Maoist insurgency that had engulfed the country at the time.[10] But, this increase could equally have also resulted from a more liberal policy regime adopted[11] and international migration being increasingly seen as a means to gainful employment.

In 2008/09, however, the number of individuals going abroad for employment

Figure 4.1: Number of New and Renewed Labour Permits Issued (in '000)

New Labour Permits Issued (in '000): 3.6, 2.2, 2.1, 3.3, 7.7, 27.8, 35.5, 55.0, 104.7, 105.0, 106.3, 139.7, 165.3, 204.5, 249.1, 220.0, 294.1, 354.7, 384.7, 453.5, 527.8, 512.9, 418.7, 383.5, 354.1, 236.2, 178.0, 72.1, 348.9, 494.2

Renewed Labour Permits (in '000): 153.7, 164.5, 176..., 204.7, 238.1, 259.4, 258.6, 272.6, 190.5, 94.6, 281.2, 277.1, 166.7

Total Labour Permits (New and Renewed) (in '000): 538.4, 618.1, 704.1, 717.6, 656.8, 642.9, 612.7, 508.8, 368.4, 166.7, 630.1, 771.3
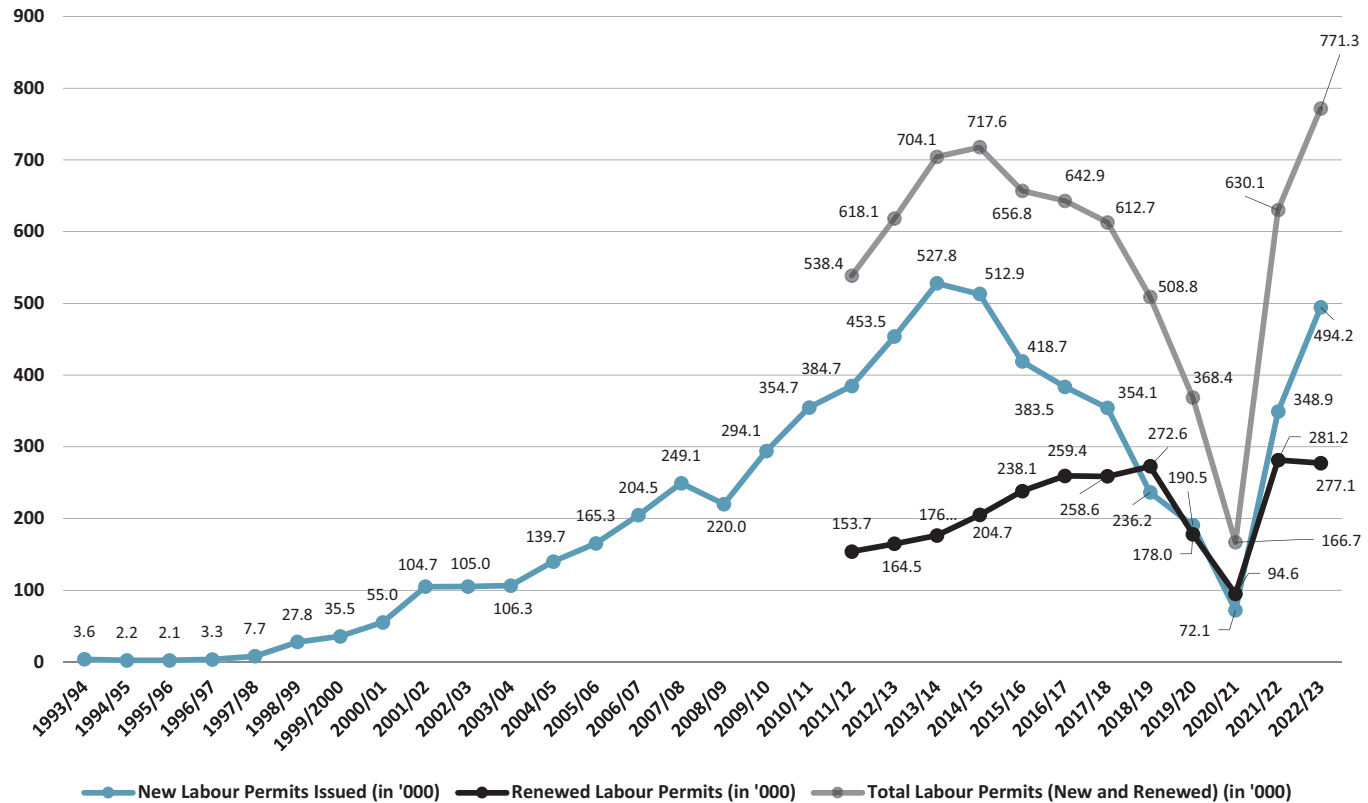
Source: Department of Foreign Employment

Notes: i. The data on renewed labour permits—issued to migrant workers returning to the same job on a renewed contract—is available only from 2011/12 when it became mandatory. ii. The new labour permits data includes the number of labour permits issued through a recruiting agency, including at the individual level and as legalized entry.

actually decreased. That was the result of the global financial downturn of 2008, when Malaysia, the biggest importer of Nepali migrants for some years till then (Figure 4.12), started giving greater priority to its citizens than to migrant workers, while also tightening its immigration policies to restrict 'irregular' and 'illegal' migration (Abidin and Rasiah 2009). After picking up pace after a couple of years and reaching a high of 527,814 in 2013/14, later years have also seen a sharp decrease in the number of labour permits issued. The drop in the labour permits issued in 2014/15 can be attributed to the disruption caused by the devastating earthquake in April 2015 in the aftermath of which the number of labour permits issued saw an immediate decline as it was imperative for household members to be closer to home for reconstruction and rehabilitation (Sijapati et al 2015; Ministry of Labour and Employment [MoLE] 2016). Labour permits for Malaysia in the last few years has also seen a downward spike due to a halt in the issuance of labour permits to that country starting May 2018 as the two governments negotiated the terms and conditions for the employment of Nepalis in Malaysia. While a bilateral agreement was signed in October 2018, the process of sending new migrant workers to Malaysia was delayed due to disputes between two countries regarding the provision of pre-visa services to Malaysia-bound workers. It was only a year later, in September 2019, that a new agreement could finally be signed on the resumption of labour migration to Malaysia (Mandal 2019).

The coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19 pandemic) in 2020 severely impacted the foreign employment and labour migration sector of Nepal (Baniya et al 2020; Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security [MoLESS] 2022). Consequently, the number of labour permits issued in 2019/20 and 2020/21 was also affected. The departure of Nepali workers to South Korea was halted in February 2020 by the Nepal chapter of the Human Resources Development Service of South Korea in response to the rapidly spreading virus. Qatar also temporarily banned the entry of migrant workers from Nepal on 9 March 2020. Meanwhile, the Government of Nepal temporarily suspended the issuance of labour permits starting 12 March 2020. Subsequently, as the Government of Nepal and the destination countries lifted Covid-19-related restrictions and resumed international flights, DoFE resumed issuance of re-entry labour permits starting 29 June 2020 and of new labour permits starting 30 August 2020. The second wave of the pandemic in Nepal led to a month-long suspension of in-person issuance of labour permits in May 2021. These institutional blockages are likely to have been the main cause for the decrease in the number of labour permits in 2019/20 and 2020/21 compared to earlier years. After a decline in the number of labour approvals in the prior two years due to the pandemic, the number rose to 630,089 in 2021/22 as the labour migration sector slowly resumed and peaked at 771,327 in 2022/23.

Figure 4.2: Number of Permits Issued as Legalised Entry, 2012/13–2021/22
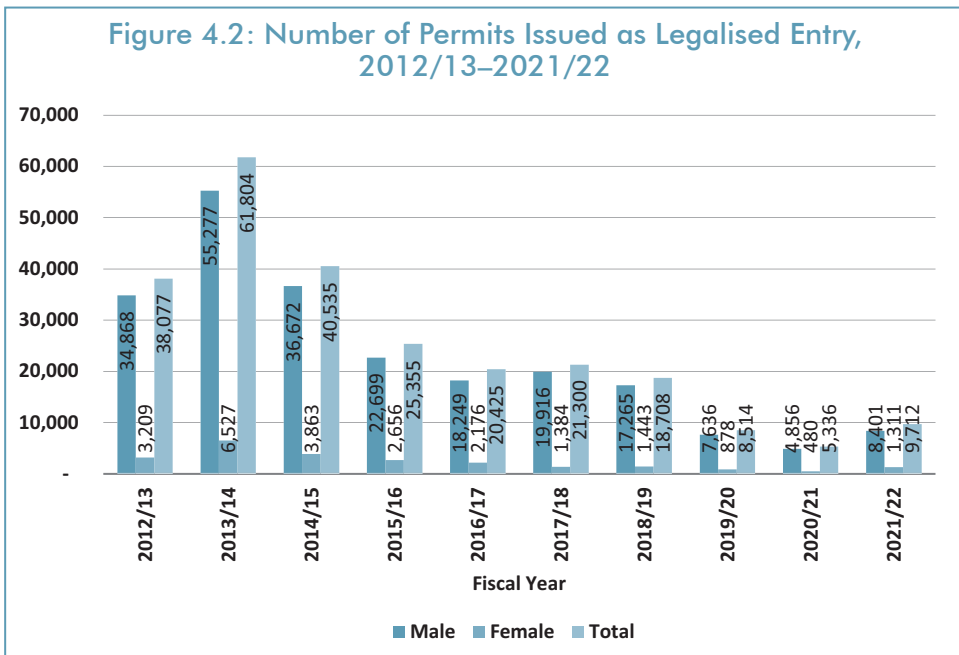
Starting in the year 2011, the government, made it mandatory for workers to renew their labour permits if they wished to return to the same country for same job after the expiry of their earlier contracts. Prior to that renewal of labour permits was not mandatory and Nepali workers could use their new contract or other such documents from employers in destination countries to return to the same country for employment. The available data on the number of re-entry labour permits shows a steady increase over nine years before the pandemic. Most noteworthy is the fact that in 2020/21, re-entry permits exceeded the number of new permits. This could be because in the immediate aftermath of the first Covid-19 lockdown, the government began by issuing only re-entry permits before resuming issuance of new labour permits a couple of months later. It is also possible new job openings were limited due to the impact of Covid-19.

Figure 4.2 shows the number of labour permits issued to migrants who went for employment to a foreign country through irregular channels, i.e., without a labour permit, and returned to get permits for the same country—known as 'legalisation'. According to the 2018 *Labour Migration for Employment*, this number has been decreasing in recent years because more migrants are using regular means to migrate for employment compared to earlier times (MoLE 2018). The decrease in the number of labour permits issued for legalised entry in the 2019/20 and 2020/21, however, is also due to the Covid-19 pandemic,

Figure 4.3: Percentage of New Labour Permits Issued to Women, 2006/07–2022/23
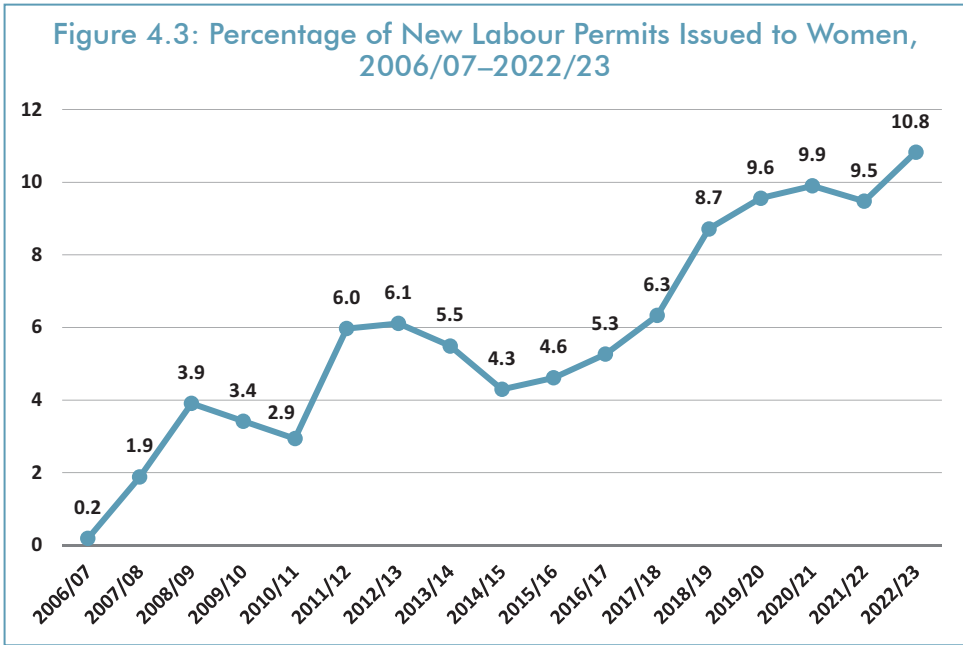
Source: Department of Foreign Employment

which saw the suspension and disruption in the issuance of all kinds of labour permits. On the other hand, the low number of permits under this category in 2021/22 was due to the decision of the Government. Starting 24 May 2022, labour permits previously issued under regularisation category were merged with category on individual labour permits.

4.2 Sex of Labour Migrants

According to the 2011 census, only 12 per cent of the total international migrants (1,921,494) were women, including those going to India. The Nepal Migration Survey conducted by the World Bank (2011) around the same time estimated this figure to be 6 to 7 per cent. NDHS 2016 reported this to be at 15 per cent. All of these figures are for the migrants in general, not only labour migrants.

As mentioned earlier, the population of female migrant workers is much smaller than that of males. DoFE records show around 5 per cent of the labour permits were issued to females in the period 2006/07 to 2022/23.[12] Over the last 17 years, however, the proportion of female going for foreign employment has increased (Figure 4.3). It should, however, be noted that a significant number of female migrants also use irregular channels of migration, i.e., travelling via Indian airports

or beyond or on tourist visas to circumvent the periodic government bans imposed on women's mobility to certain countries, and, hence, are not captured especially in the data maintained by DoFE. NLFS 2017/18, also showed that only 5 per cent of the migrants who went abroad for work are female. More recent data, from Census 2021, however, showed that 11 per cent of total migrants who went abroad for work were female. This consists of those whose reason for migration was 'service/job' and 'looking for work' and does not include those whose reason for migration was education, as dependents, family-related or something else even if they were engaged in some kind of work in destination countries.

Labour migration for women has always been restrictive even before 1990 with various conditionalities in place to get labour permits. That has been followed by bans imposed on foreign employment time and again in the last two decades and more, ostensibly to protect female migrant workers from exploitation such as sexual and physical abuse and violence and trafficking (McCarthy 2021). Figure 4.4 shows the sex breakdown of migrants to the top five destination countries for males between 2016/17 and 2022/23 with figures in parentheses showing the total number of labour permits issued for those countries.

Figure 4.4: Sex Breakdown across Top Five Male Migrant Destinations, 2016/17–2022/23

Source: Department of Foreign Employment

Figure 4.5: Sex Breakdown across Top Five Female Migrant Destinations, 2016/17–2022/23
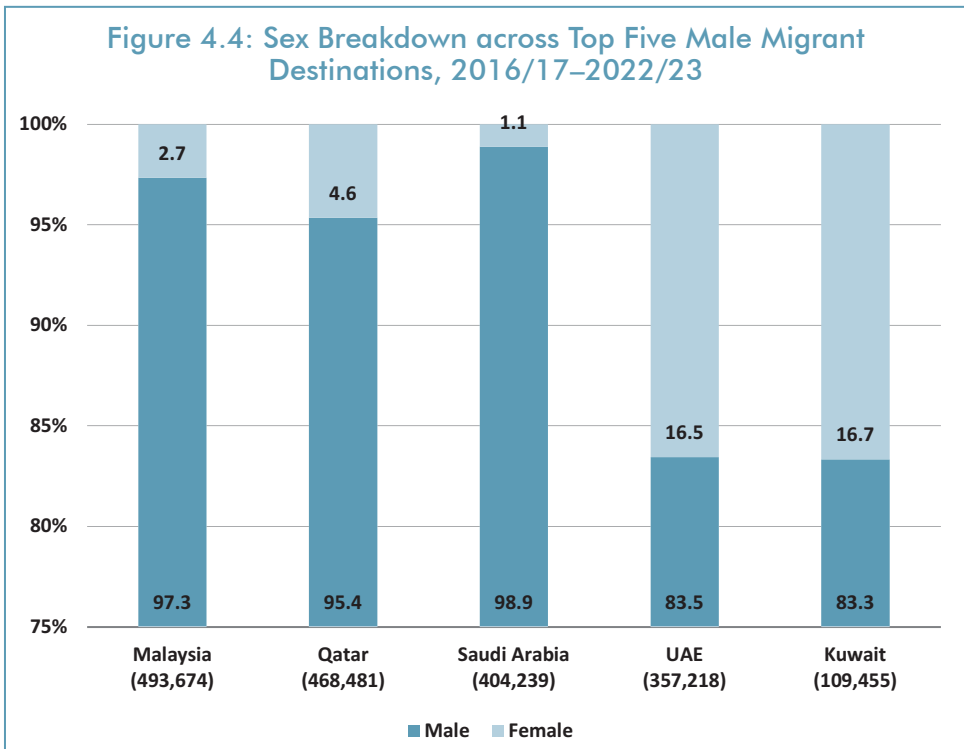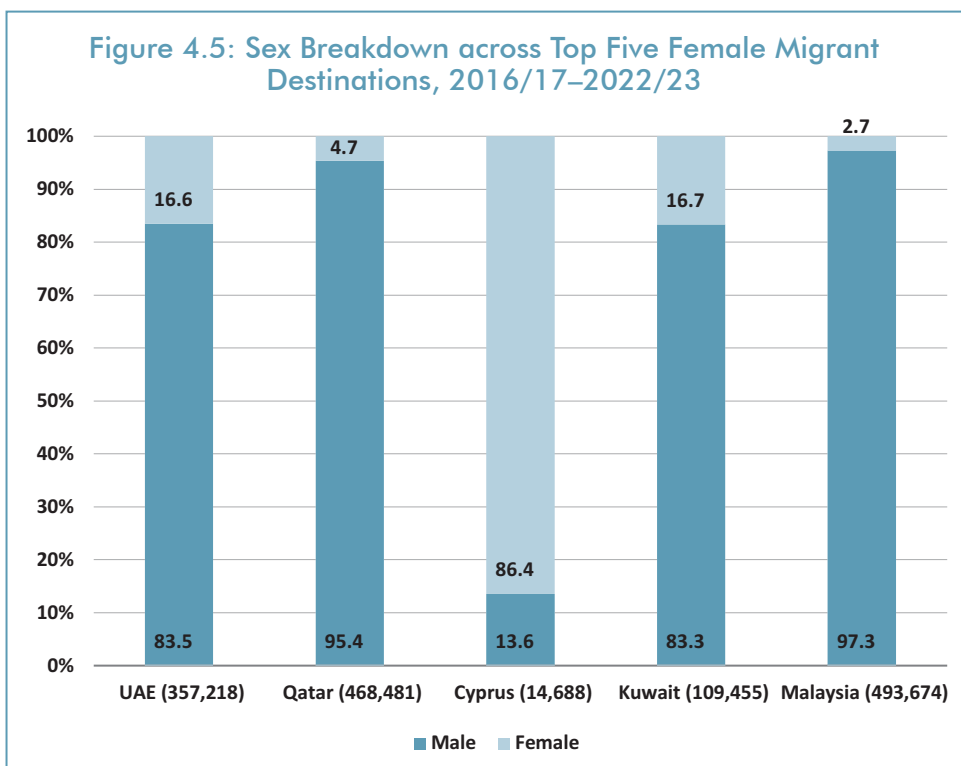
Source: Department of Foreign Employment

Despite these restrictions, women have been going abroad for work in large numbers. Lebanon was a major destination for female migrant workers until 2009 when the Nepali government banned women from working there as domestic workers. The ban brought a drastic and immediate decrease in the number of labour permits issued to Nepali women going to Lebanon, from 2,490 in 2007/08 and 3,696 in 2009/10 down to just 84 in 2010/11, rising only slightly in successive years but falling again with only one permit issued to Nepali women in 2018/19, three in 2019/20, none in 2020/21, three in 2021/22 and seven in 2022/23. This can only be explained by the continuing ban imposed by the Nepali government on migration for domestic work to Gulf countries, including Lebanon.

Over the period 2016/17–2022/23, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, the UAE and Kuwait were the top five popular destinations for male migrant workers (Figure 4.4). Nepali migrant workers to Saudi Arabia are almost all men, with women comprising only 1.1 per cent during that period. The UAE, Qatar, Cyprus, Jordan and Kuwait emerged as the top five popular destinations for women migrant

workers (Figure 4.5). Part of this variance in the choice of destination between women and men could reflect the fact that a sizeable proportion of females who do migrate to Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia are not included in the DoFE data because they use irregular/'illegal' channels to go to these countries.

Figure 4.6: Average Age of Labour Migrants
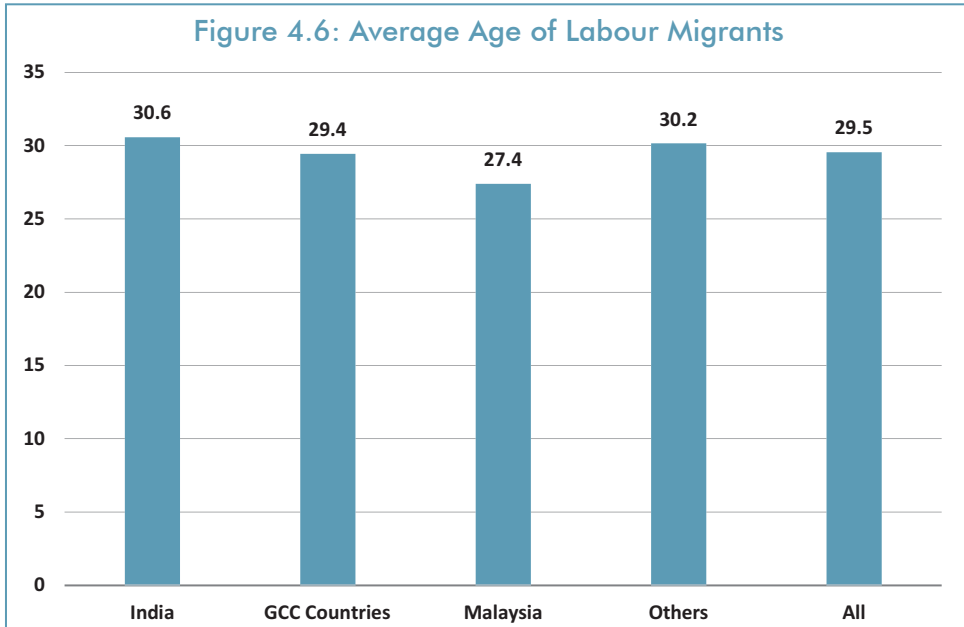
Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

4.3 Age of Labour Migrants

The average age of labour migrants working abroad was 30 years with slight differences in terms of destination (Figure 4.6). The age of labour migrants going to countries like Malaysia (27 years) and the Gulf states (29 years) was lower than that of those going elsewhere (30 years) while those going to India were slightly older (31 years) on average.

4.4 Education Level of Labour Migrants

As the NLFS shows, most labour migrants have obtained some level of education, with those educated up to the secondary education consisting of more than 40 per cent (Figure 4.7).
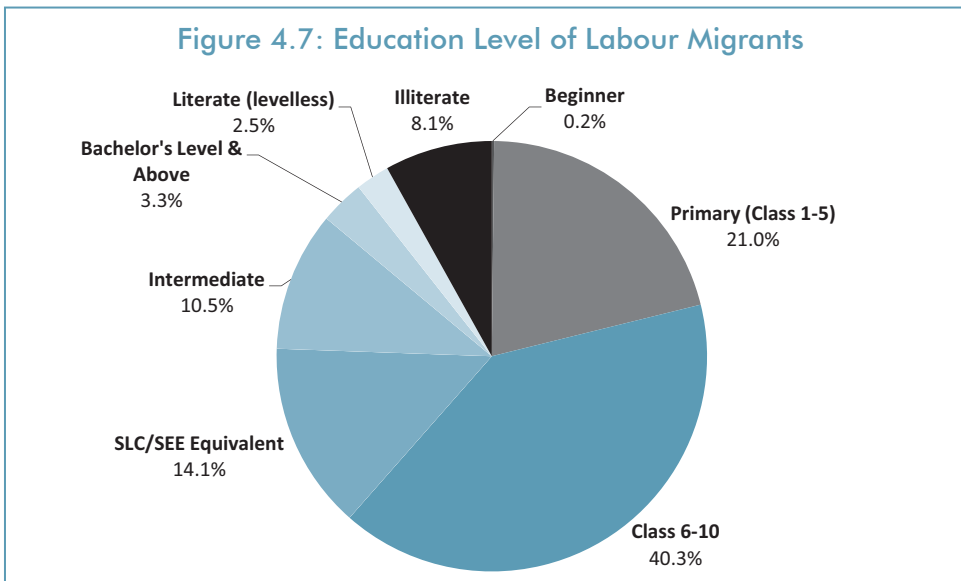
Figure 4.7: Education Level of Labour Migrants

Literate (levelless) 2.5%
Illiterate 8.1%
Beginner 0.2%
Bachelor's Level & Above 3.3%
Primary (Class 1-5) 21.0%
Intermediate 10.5%
SLC/SEE Equivalent 14.1%
Class 6-10 40.3%

Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Figure 4.8: Education Level of Labour Migrants (by destination)

Legend: ■ Illiterate ■ Literate ■ Class 6-10 ■ SLC/SEE or Equivalent ■ Intermediate ■ Bachelor's & Above
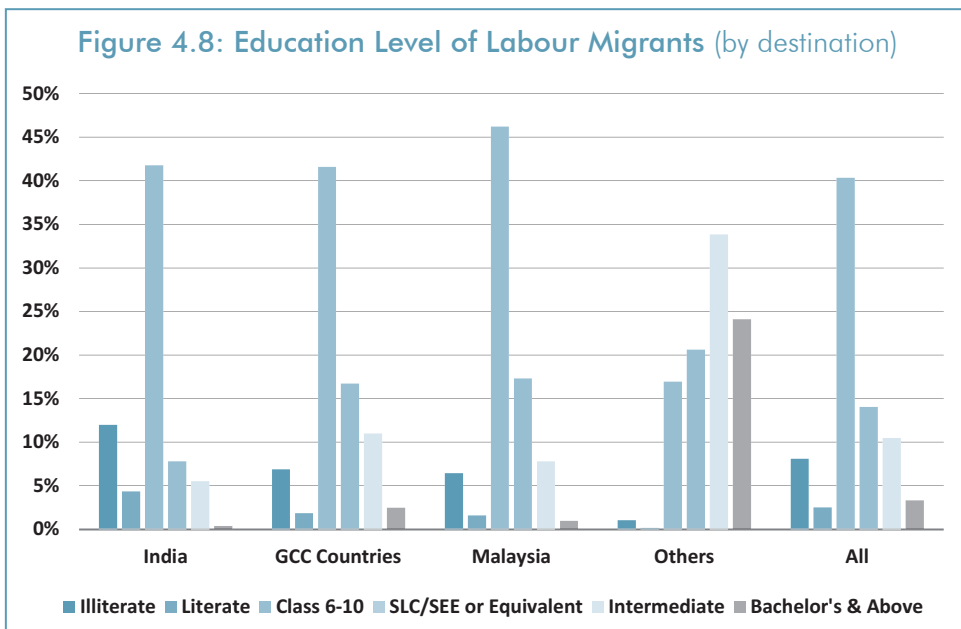
Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Figure 4.9: Origin Province of Labour Migrants

NLFS 2017/18

Sudurpashchim 15.1%
Koshi 16.0%
Karnali 5.4%
Madhesh 17.9%
Lumbini 21.5%
Bagmati 12.3%
Gandaki 11.9%

Census 2021

Sudurpashchim 13.8%
Koshi 16.9%
Karnali 4.5%
Madhesh 17.7%
Lumbini 21.2%
Bagmati 12.7%
Gandaki 13.2%
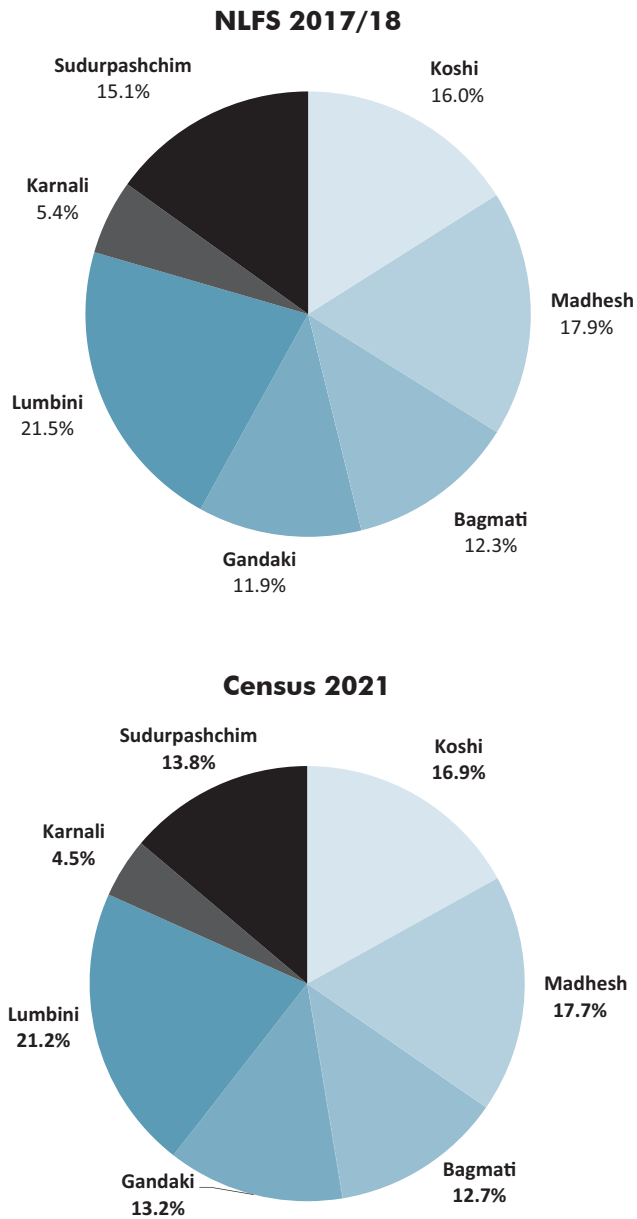
Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset; Census 2021

Better-educated and -skilled workers tend to opt for employment in industrialised countries in the West, while those seeking employment in India, Malaysia and the Gulf are generally less educated. More than a third of the migrants to other countries in 2017/18 had at least an intermediate degree[13] compared to just over 10 per cent of migrants to countries in the Gulf region and less than 10 per cent to countries such as India and Malaysia (Figure 4.8).

4.5 Origin of Labour Migrants

As discussed under the Sections 2.7 (current migrants) and 3.9 (international migration), the highest proportion of those going for foreign employment originate in Lumbini (22%) followed by Madhesh (18%) (Figure 4.9). More recent data, from Census 2021, showed that most migrants who went abroad for work were also from Lumbini and Madhesh provinces.

4.6 Destination of Labour Migrants

Information on the destination of migrant workers is available from DoFE since, by law, individuals are required to obtain government approval (in the form of labour permits) before going abroad for work. However, the absence of systematic record-keeping of labour migrants, particularly data on migrant returnees or those who re-migrate (with another labour permit), renders the data misleading. Although in more recent years DoFE has started keeping records of migrants who re-migrate to the same country, also missing from the data is the population of workers who may have migrated through informal/illegal channels and who legally re-enter that country after having migrated through irregular channels the first time. Nonetheless, the annual data from the DoFE does provide some indication of the number of Nepali migrant workers in different countries around the world. (Since the provision of obtaining labour permits does not apply in the case of those going to India, the discussion in this sub-section does not cover them.)

The Government of Nepal has identified 111 international destinations open for foreign employment via private recruitment agencies.[14] (Although featuring in the list of approved countries, there are bans currently in going to work in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya.) Between 1993/94 and 2022/23, Qatar was the most popular destination for Nepali labour migrants, followed by Malaysia and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait,
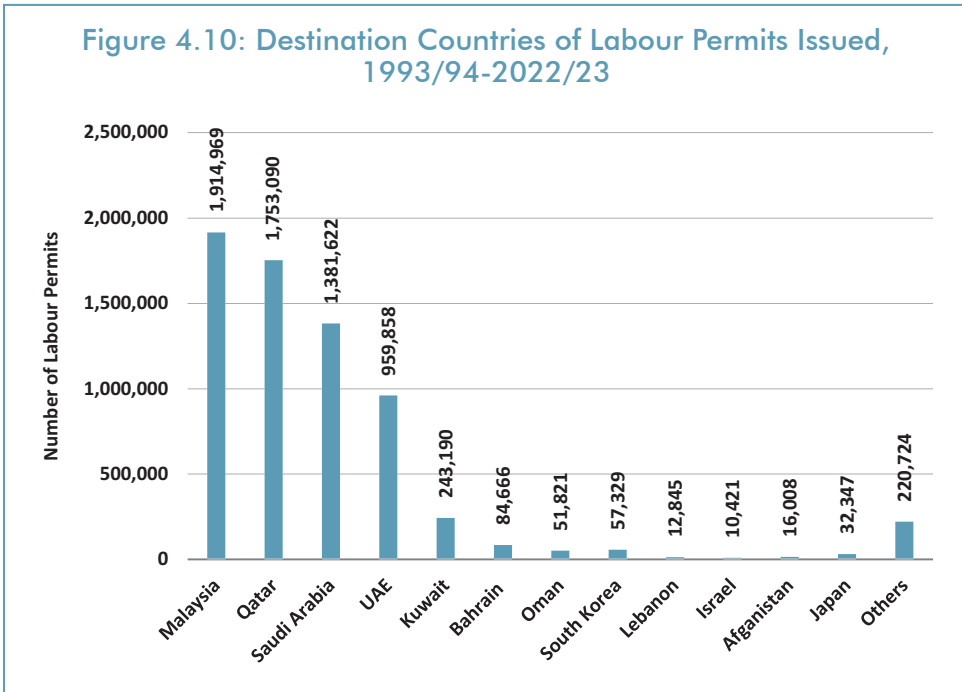
Figure 4.10: Destination Countries of Labour Permits Issued, 1993/94-2022/23

Number of Labour Permits

- Malaysia: 1,914,969
- Qatar: 1,753,090
- Saudi Arabia: 1,381,622
- UAE: 959,858
- Kuwait: 243,190
- Bahrain: 84,666
- Oman: 51,821
- South Korea: 57,329
- Lebanon: 12,845
- Israel: 10,421
- Afganistan: 16,008
- Japan: 32,347
- Others: 220,724

Source: Department of Foreign Employment

Figure 4.11: Major Destination Countries of Labour Permits Issued, 1993/94-2022/23

- Others: 7.2%
- Kuwait: 3.6%
- UAE: 14.2%
- Saudi Arabia: 20.5%
- Malaysia: 28.4%
- Qatar: 26.0%
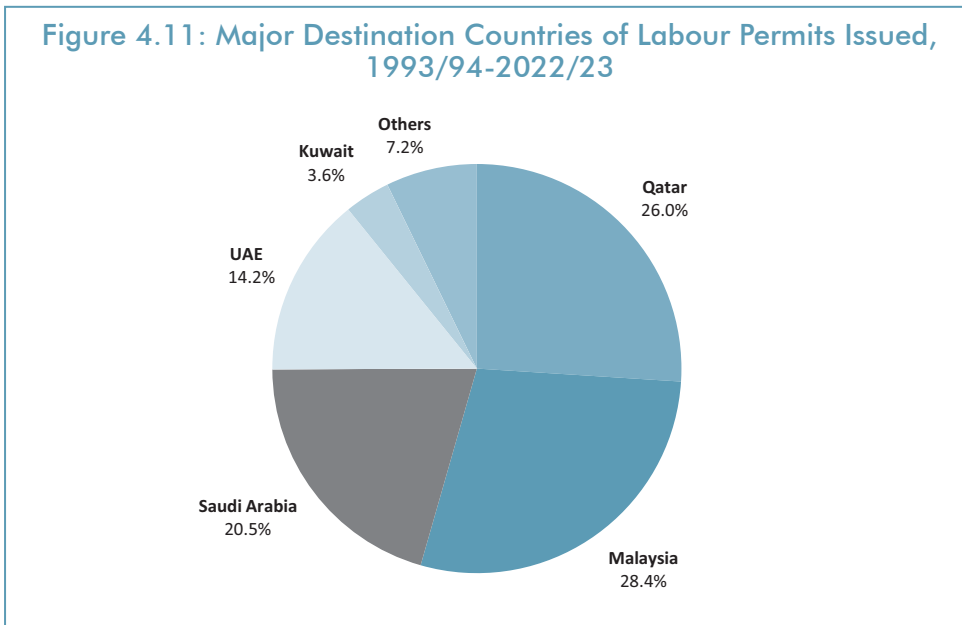
Source: Department of Foreign Employment

Figure 4.12: Labour Permits Issued for Top Four Destinations
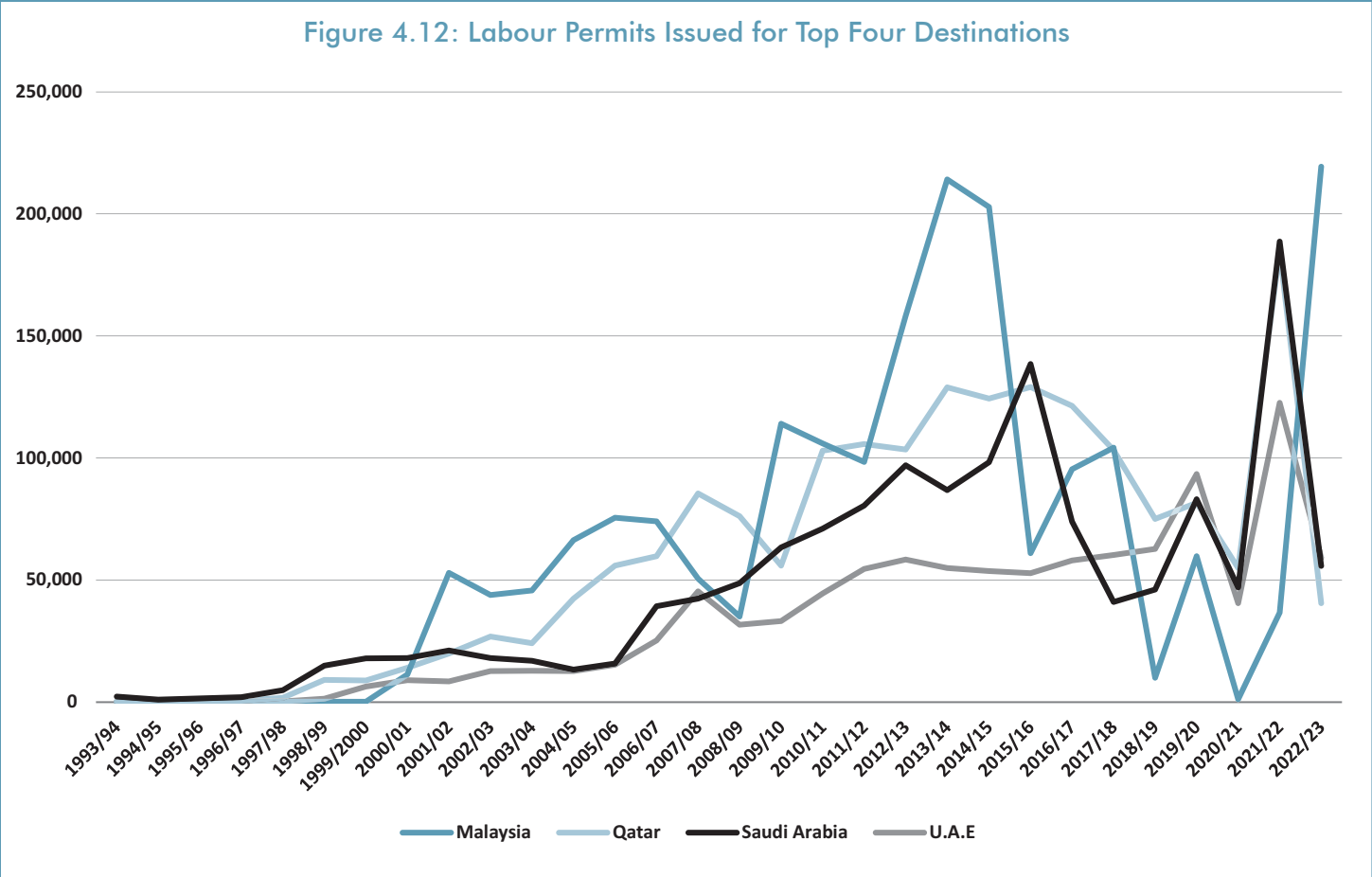
Malaysia   Qatar   Saudi Arabia   U.A.E

Bahrain and Oman. In fact, nearly 90 per cent of Nepali labour migrants went to just four countries: Malaysia (28%), Qatar (26%), Saudi Arabia (21%) and the United Arab Emirates (14%) (Figure 4.11). The highly sought-after destination of South Korea, where Nepali migrant workers started going in large numbers following the institution of a government-to-government (G2G) system in 2007 accounted for less than 1 per cent (35,178) of the labour permits. However, this figure excludes the number of Nepali migrants to South Korea under the Employment Permit System (EPS), especially since 2016/17. According to the Nepal Labour Migration Report 2022, 79,921 Nepalis (74,498 males and 5,423 females) migrated to South Korea through EPS from the year 2008 till 15 November 2022.

As shown in Figure 4.12, Saudi Arabia was the top international migrant destination until the year 2000/01. Thereafter, Malaysia rapidly overtook all the other countries. The sharp decrease in the number of migrants to Malaysia for a few years in the latter half of the 2000s contrasts with the steady rise of Qatar as a major migrant destination. Malaysia re-emerged as the most popular destination for Nepalis until 2010/11, after which Qatar edged past it in 2011/12. However, since 2012/13 there has been shift between Malaysia and Qatar with Malaysia the most popular destination in the years 2012/13-2014/15, 2017/18 and 2022/23 and Qatar in the years 2015/16-2016/17 and 2018/19-2021/22.

4.7 Ethnicity of Labour Migrants

The NLFS 2017/18 showed that the highest proportion of migrants from among Hill Janajatis migrated to Malaysia (46%) while India was the preferred choice for Hill Caste groups (43%) and Hill Dalits (48%), and the Gulf countries for Tarai Dalits (42%) and Tarai Janajatis (43%). Similarly, more than two-thirds of the Muslims (69%) migrated to the Gulf countries. This suggests that migration is somewhat of an 'ethnicised' phenomenon. Although people belonging to all social groups migrate everywhere, there are visible patterns in terms of destination country, indicating differences caused by factors such as socio-economic conditions or social networks, which ultimately also determine the benefits accrued from migration as well as the differential impacts it has. In the far-western region of Nepal, previous studies have shown that social network plays an important role in choice of India as a destination as migrants are found to follow in the footsteps of their community members or where there are networks of fellow villagers or friends helping them find a job in India (Thieme 2003; 2006).

Figure 4.13: Ethnicity of Labour Migrants (by destination)
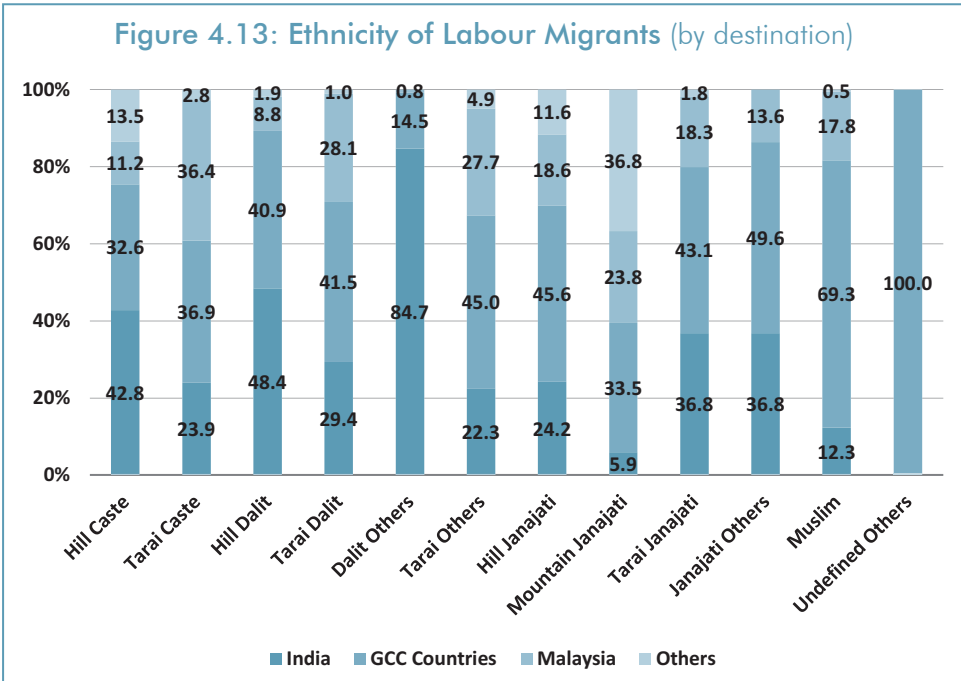
Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

4.8 Occupation of Labour Migrants

Although NLSS 2010/11 provided information about the kind of work Nepalis are engaged in abroad, given that it identified 98 such sectors and also included categories such as students (8%) and a large proportion (21%) reporting 'Don't Know', analysis of the data is not altogether helpful in understanding the occupations of Nepali labour migrants in destination countries.

In NLFS 2017/18 as well, sector of employment of 17 per cent of the migrants was reported as 'Unknown'. Family members are not always aware of the type of job the migrant in their household is engaged in in the destination country. The data showed that most Nepalis seek employment in elementary occupations such as labourers and cleaners (38% in Inida and 33% in other countries) (Figure 4.14). Although NLFS 2017/18 did not mention which specific sector within the elementary occupation migrants were engaged in, based on how it is defined, one can deduce that more than a third of migrants were involved in unskilled jobs. Another sector engaging a large proportion of labour migrants was 'service workers and shop and market sales workers' (35% in Inida and 20% in other countries).

Analysis of occupation for female labour migrants going to India and the rest of
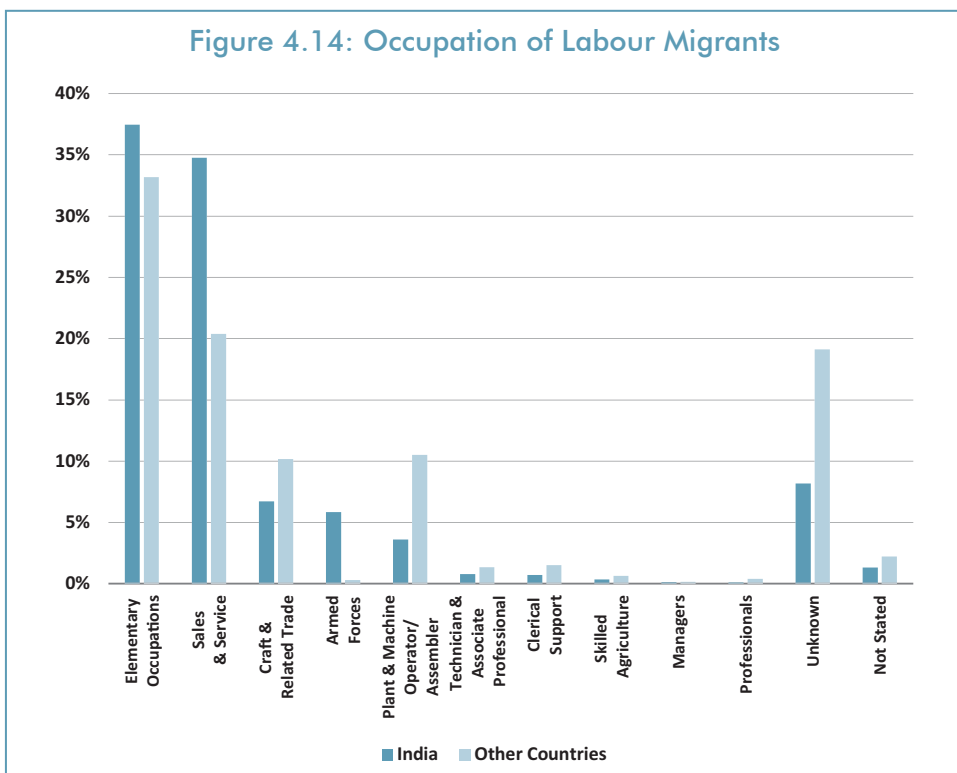
Figure 4.14: Occupation of Labour Migrants

Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Figure 4.15: Occupation of Women Labour Migrants
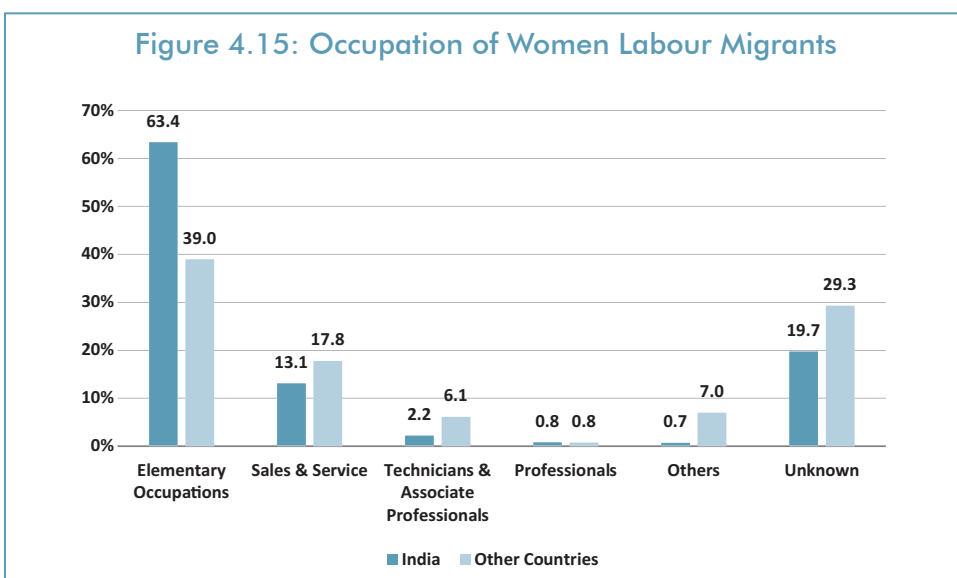
Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Table 4.1: Proportion of Deaths Relative to Workforce in Destination Countries, 2008/09–2021/22

Total Number of Deaths	Deaths	Total Labour Permits Issued	Deaths per 10,000 Workers
Saudi Arabia	2924	1,032,814	28.3
Malaysia	3519	1,285,834	27.4
Bahrain	159	64,226	24.8
South Korea	160	67,185	23.8
Kuwait	388	184,696	21.0
Japan	46	22,013	20.9
Lebanon	21	10,221	20.5
Oman	81	41,901	19.3
Afghanistan	28	14,394	19.5
Qatar	2083	1,254,492	16.6
United Arab Emirates	1111	681,792	16.3
Israel	9	6,623	13.6

Source: Department of Foreign Employment; data from 2008/09 to 2017/18 provided to CESLAM by the Foreign Employment Board; data for 2018/19 from MoLESS 2020; data for 2019/20 to 2020/21 from the annual reports of the Foreign Employment Board, accessed 21 January 2022, https://bit.ly/3INu9MK; data for 2021/22 from MoLESS 2022

Figure 4.16: Number of Deaths, 2008/09–2021/22

Source: Department of Foreign Employment; data from 2008/09 to 2017/18 provided to CESLAM by the Foreign Employment Board; data for 2018/19 from MoLESS 2020; data for 2019/20 to 2020/21 from the annual reports of the Foreign Employment Board, accessed 21 January 2022, https://bit.ly/3INu9MK; data for 2021/22 from MoLESS 2022

Figure 4.17: Number of Deaths of Migrant Workers, 2008/09–2021/22*

Cardiac arrest
14.6%

Heart attack
6.6%

Murder
0.6%

Natural death
20.1%

Suicide
11.4%

Traffic accident
12.9%

Workplace accident
7.2%

Disease
7.1%

Other or unidentified cause
19.5%

Source: Department of Foreign Employment; data from 2008/09 to 2017/18 provided to CESLAM by the Foreign Employment Board; data for 2018/19 from MoLESS 2020; data for 2019/20 to 2020/21 from the annual reports of the Foreign Employment Board, accessed 21 January 2022, https://bit.ly/3lNu9MK; data for 2021/22 from MoLESS 2022

the world in the NLFS 2017/18 suggested that higher proportion of women were found working in elementary jobs (63% and 39%, respectively) regardless of their destination (Figure 4.15).

4.9 Death and Injuries

According to the data from the FEB and Nepal Labour Migration Report 2022 from MoLESS, 10,762 migrant workers lost their lives between 2008/09 and 2021/22 (Figure 4.16). The figures on deaths and injuries include only those who received compensation from the FEB. Hence, the actual figure is likely to be higher since there would be cases where no compensation had been paid while those who had migrated through irregular channels would not be eligible for the same.

The leading cause of death is 'natural causes' (20%), cardiac arrest (15%) and traffic accidents (13%) with suicides also quite high at 11 per cent (Figure 4.17).

As shown in Figure 4.18, the highest number of deaths occurred in Malaysia (3519) and the Gulf countries (6746), which can be attributed to the fact that these are the top destinations for Nepali migrant workers.
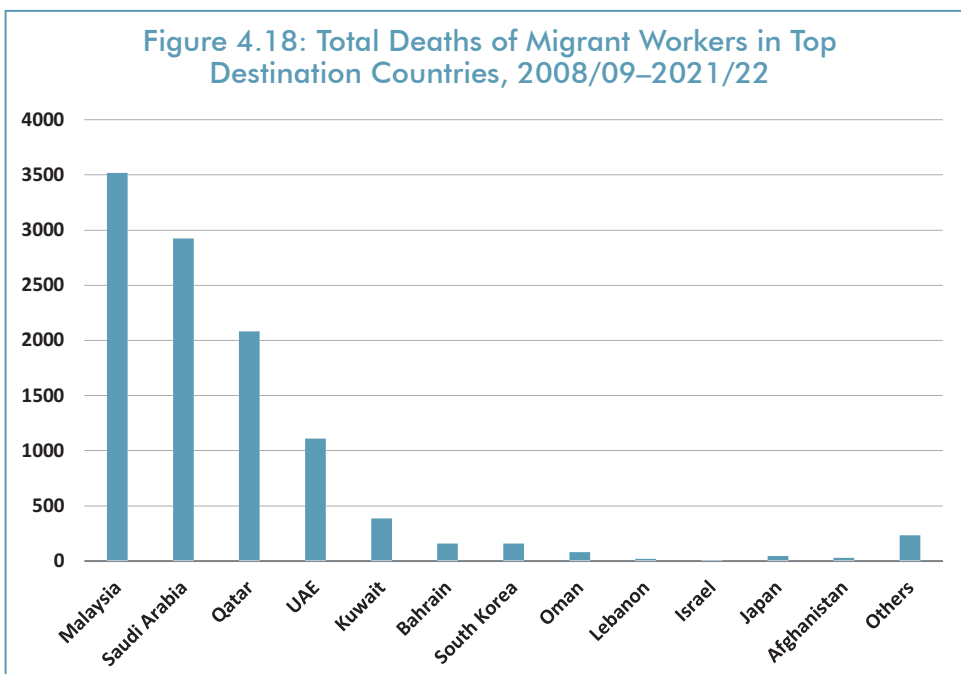
Figure 4.18: Total Deaths of Migrant Workers in Top Destination Countries, 2008/09–2021/22

Source: Data from 2008/09 to 2017/18 provided to CESLAM by the Foreign Employment Board; data for 2018/19 from MoLESS 2020; data for 2019/20 to 2020/21 from the annual reports of the Foreign Employment Board, accessed 21 January 2022, https://bit.ly/3lNu9MK; data for 2021/22 from MoLESS 2022

Figure 4.19: Cause of Death, 2008/09–2021/22*

Male

Other or unidentified cause, 1697, 18.9%
Cardiac arrest, 1348, 15.0%
Heart attack, 612, 6.8%
Murder, 56, 0.6%
Natural death, 1825, 20.3%
Suicide, 965, 10.8%
Traffic accident, 1144, 12.8%
Workplace accident, 645, 7.2%
Disease, 679, 7.6%

Female

Other or unidentified cause, 33, 15.4%
Cardiac arrest, 14, 6.5%
Heart attack, 15, 7.0%
Murder, 1, 0.5%
Natural death, 32, 15.0%
Suicide, 55, 25.7%
Traffic accident, 27, 12.6%
Workplace accident, 11, 5.1%
Disease, 26, 12.1%
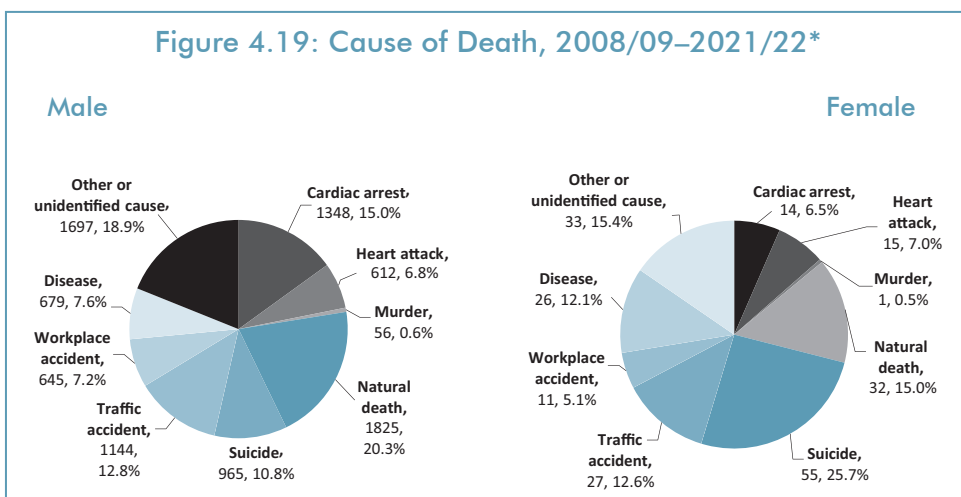
Source: Data from 2008/09 to 2017/18 provided to CESLAM by the Foreign Employment Board; data for 2018/19 from MoLESS 2020; data for 2019/20 to 2020/21 from the annual reports of the Foreign Employment Board, accessed 21 January 2022, https://bit.ly/3lNu9MK; data for 2021/22 from MoLESS 2022

* This figure does include workers' deaths for 2018/19 and 2019/20

Figure 4.20: Disability of Migrant Workers, 2008/09–2021/22
(by destination)

Others, 230, 10.8%

Malaysia, 686, 32.3%

UAE, 336, 15.8%

Qatar, 396, 18.6%

Saudi Arabia, 476, 22.4%
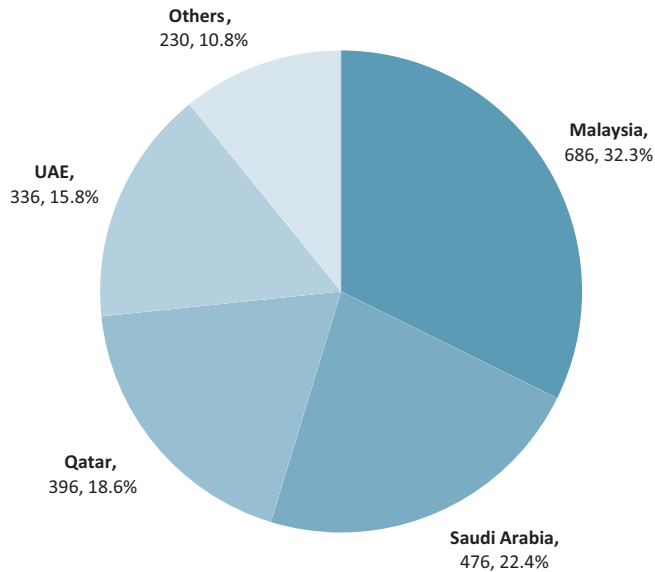
Source: Data provided to CESLAM by the Foreign Employment Board for 2008/09 to 2020/21; data for 2021/22 from MoLESS 2022

Figure 4.21: Disability of Migrant Workers, 2008/09–2021/22
(by destination and sex)

	Malaysia	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	UAE	Kuwait	Lebanon	Israel	Other
Male	674	392	472	313	72	0	1	120
Female	12	4	4	23	16	2	2	17

■ Male   ■ Female
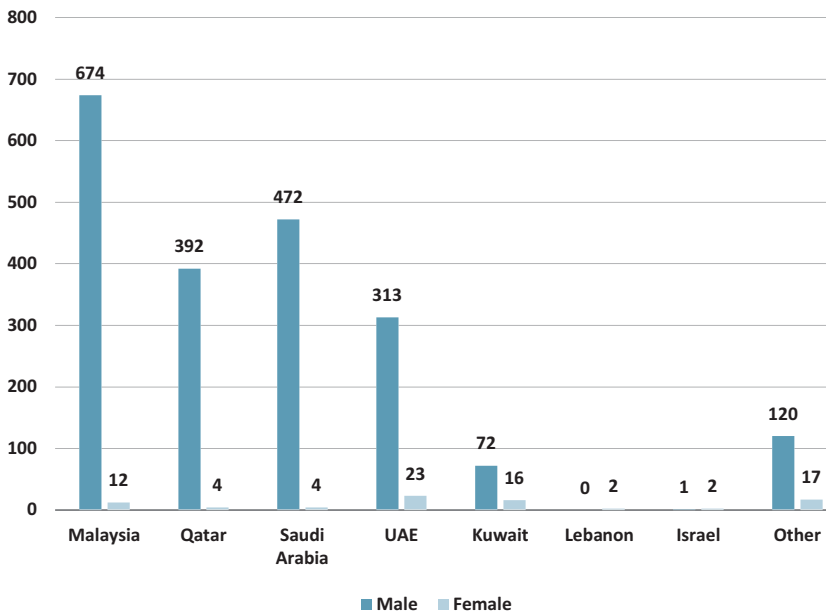
Source: Data provided to CESLAM by the Foreign Employment Board for 2008/09 to 2020/21; MoLESS 2022

Table 4.1 shows the number of Nepali workers' deaths in proportion to their population in countries of destination, which shows South Korea in the lead.

Suicide is the major cause of death in the case of female migrant workers (26%) while suicide is also high among male migrants as shown in Figure 4.19. While there is no research on the high rate of suicide among male and female migrant workers and causes of suicide may vary, stress, depression, mental and emotional toll as a result of harsh working condition, cultural shock, etc. could be likely factors driving migrant workers to suicide. On the other hand, natural death and death due to cardiac arrest and heart attack were highest among males.

Work-related injuries constitute one of the major cause of disabilities/ injuries among migrant workers. Figure 4.20 shows the number of reported disabilities among migrant workers in the top four destination countries. The higher number of disabilities in Malaysia (32%), Qatar (19%), UAE (15%) and Saudi Arabia (22%) can be attributed to their being the countries with the highest number of Nepali workers. Sex-disaggregated data on the reported disabilities of migrant workers in destination countries is presented in Figure 4.21. As with the data on the death of migrants, this figure represents only those who applied for compensation from the FEB.

5. INTERNAL MIGRATION

Mobility within the country has always been a key feature of migration in Nepal and most of the historical literature on migration dealt with that phenomenon. In contrast, recent years has seen an almost exclusive focus on external labour migration even though migration from one part of the country to another remains unabated. This chapter considers data from the Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS) 2010/11, the Nepal Labour Force Survey (NLFS) 2008 and 2017/18, the National Census 2011 and 2021, and the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) 2011 and 2016 to look at internal migration in Nepal.

'Internal migrants' discussed in this chapter are those categories of people called 'internal absentees' by NLSS and NLFS, i.e., those who are away or expected to be away from their households for more than six months in the 12 months prior to the survey, having moved to another place within the country and 'internal migrants' by NDHS, i.e., those household members who are away (within Nepal) from home at the time of the survey and whose last migration stint had taken place within the last 10 years (see Table 1.2). Internal migrants are enumerated at the place of origin in contrast to 'lifetime migrants' who are counted at the place of destination (see Chapter 6). Immigrants from a third country who have migrated within Nepal during the period under consideration are dealt with in 'Immigration', a separate chapter.

5.1 Households with Internal Migrants

Province-level data on households with and without internal migrants (Figure 5.1) show that Gandaki and Karnali have the highest proportion of internal migrant households while Bagmati (NLFS 2017/18) and Madhesh (Census 2021) have the lowest.

5.2 Sex of Internal Migrants

As reported in NLSS 2010/11 and NLFS 2008 and 2017/18 and Census 2021, men dominate internal migration although women's mobility is not too far behind. On the other hand, NDHS 2011 and 2016 present an opposite scenario with the proportion of female internal migrants higher (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.1 Migrant and Non-migrant Households

NLFS 2017/18

Province	Non-migrant Households	Migrant Households
Koshi	82.2	17.8
Madhesh	84.5	15.5
Bagmati	86.6	13.4
Gandaki	77.7	22.3
Lumbini	83.2	16.8
Karnali	78.7	21.3
Sudurpashchim	80.8	19.2

■ Non-migrant Households ■ Migrant Households

Census 2021

Province	Non-migrant Households	Migrant Households
Koshi	87.1	12.9
Madhesh	93.4	6.6
Bagmati	85.0	15.0
Gandaki	79.4	20.6
Lumbini	87.4	12.6
Karnali	85.8	14.2
Sudurpashchim	84.3	15.7

■ Non-migrant Households ■ Migrant Households

Source: Calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset; Census 2021

NDHS 2011 and 2016 incorporated information on lifetime and periodic migrants who had migrated elsewhere in the 10 years before the survey. Lifetime migrants are those who shifted their place of residence permanently more than five years prior to the survey and periodic migrants are those who had migrated

Figure 5.2: Sex of Internal Migrants
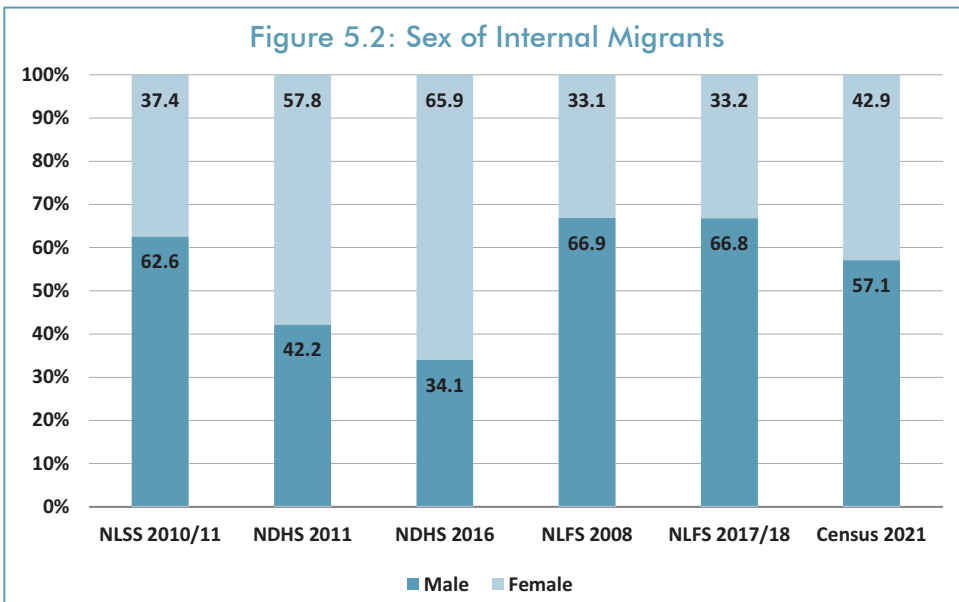
Source: Calculation based on NLSS 2010/11, NDHS 2011 and 2016, NLFS 2008 and 2017/18 datasets; Census 2021

in the five years before the survey. As NDHS included household members who were away from home at the time of the survey (within or outside Nepal) and whose last migration stint had taken place within the previous 10 years, the inclusion of those who had migrated due to marriage, particularly in the case of women, is likely to have resulted in female internal migrants being in higher proportion than male internal migrants.

Women's mobility is linked to that of their families' to a higher degree than men's, a subject dealt with at greater length in Section 5.10.

5.3 Age of Internal Migrants

As with the migrant population in general (Section 2.3), NLSS 2010/11 showed that nearly half belong to the age group 15-29 years (Figure 5.3). NLFS 2017/18 showed this age group comprising more than half the internal migrant while according to NDHS 2016 that figure was 70 per cent. Because it consisted largely of those joining the workforce, pursuing higher education, and getting married, it is only to be expected that the mobility of this age group is greater compared to others.

Figure 5.3: Age of Internal Migrants*
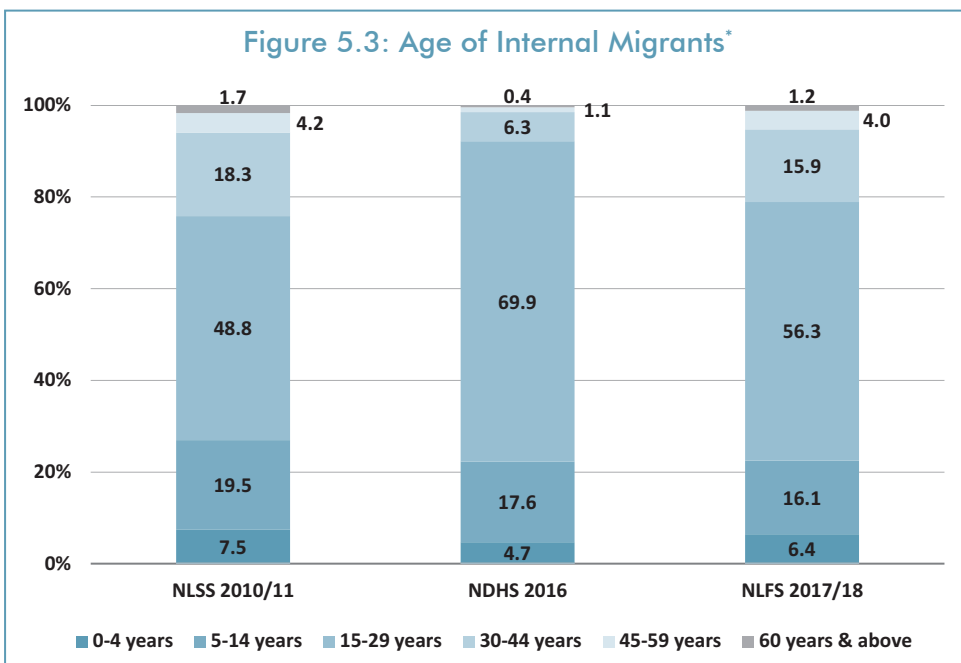
Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/1, NDHS 2016 and NLFS 2017/18 datasets

* NLFS provides age of migrants at the time of migration while NLSS provides age of migrants at the time of survey.

Figure 5.4: Education Level of Internal Migrants
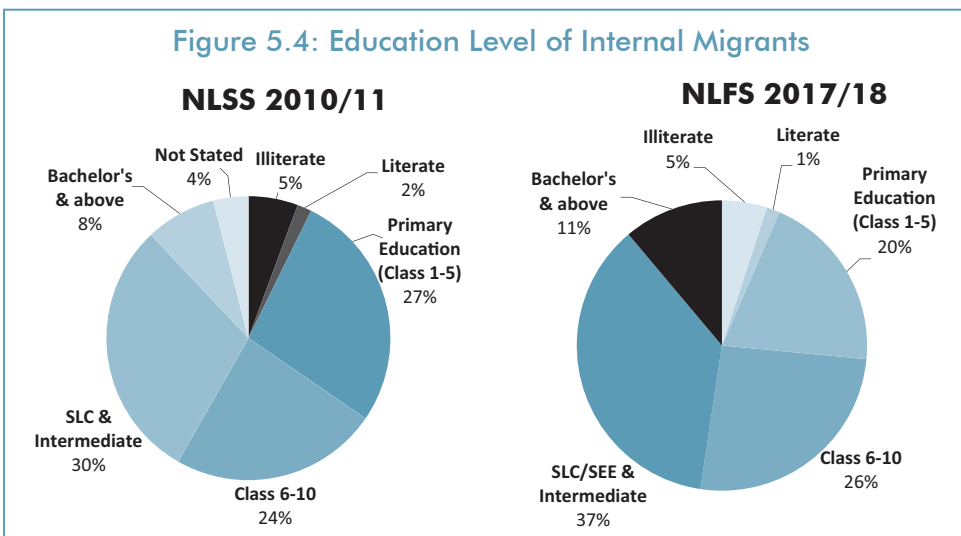
Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 and NLFS 2017/18 datasets

5.4 Education Level of Internal Migrants

According to NLSS 2010/11, the majority of internal migrants had completed Class 6-10 education while those with at least an SLC/SEE and intermediate education (or Class 12 or equivalent) accounted for nearly 30 per cent (Figure 5.4). More recent data from NLFS 2017/18 showed that the majority of internal migrants, at 26 per cent, had completed 6-10 education and 20 per cent, SLC/SEE and intermediate. Gendered analysis of the education level of internal migrants showed that similar proportions of males and females had some secondary education. However, a higher proportion of females (7%) than males (4%) had no education, a trend reversed for higher level education (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5: Education Level of Internal Migrants (by sex)
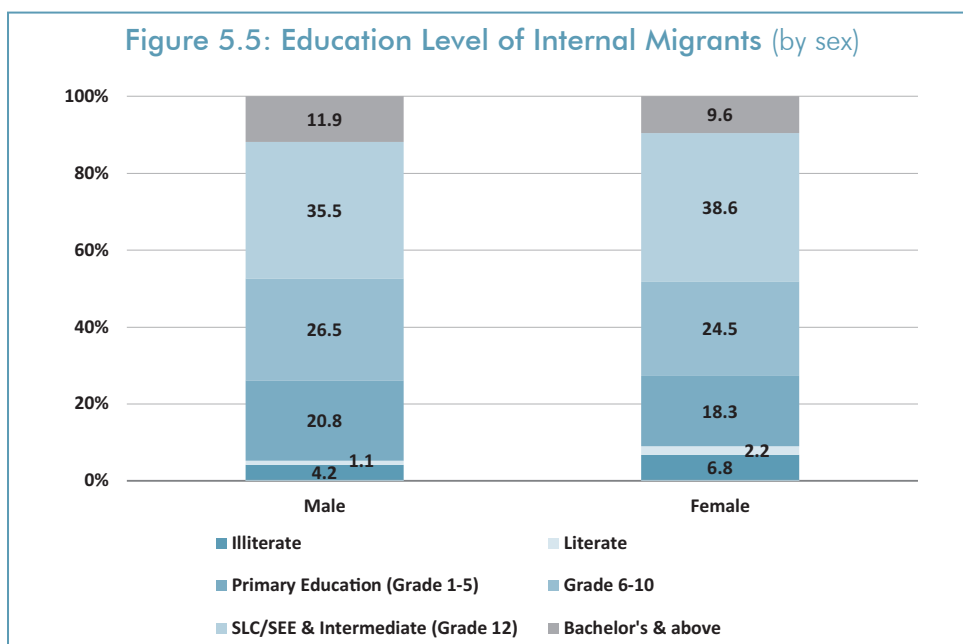
Source: Calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

5.5 Marital Status of Internal Migrants

As reported by NLSS 2010/11, equal proportions of migrants had never been married (48%) and married once (48%) (Figure 5.6). Those who had married multiple times, remarried and in other marital arrangements together accounted for only 4 per cent of all internal migrants.
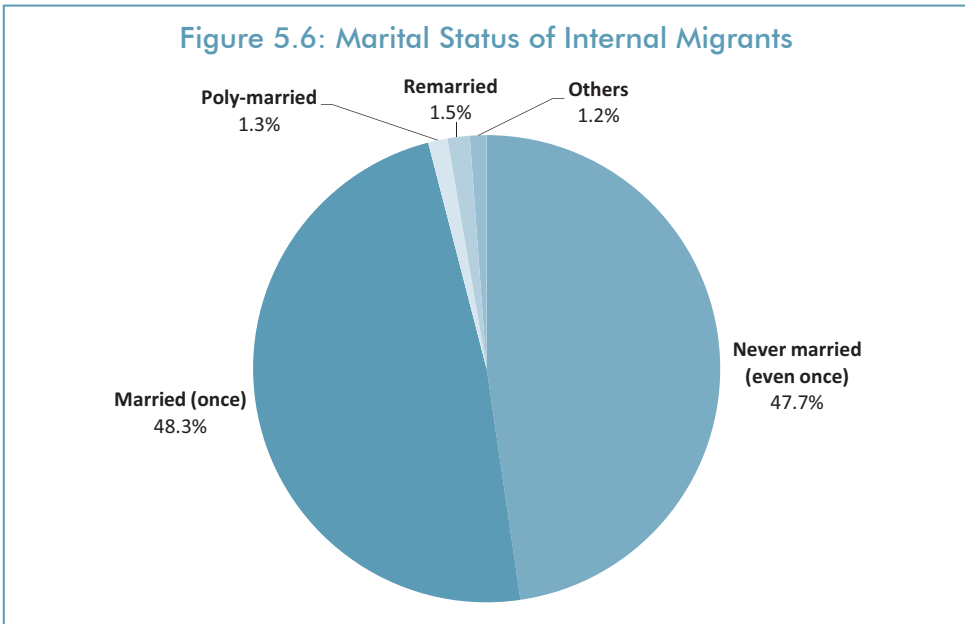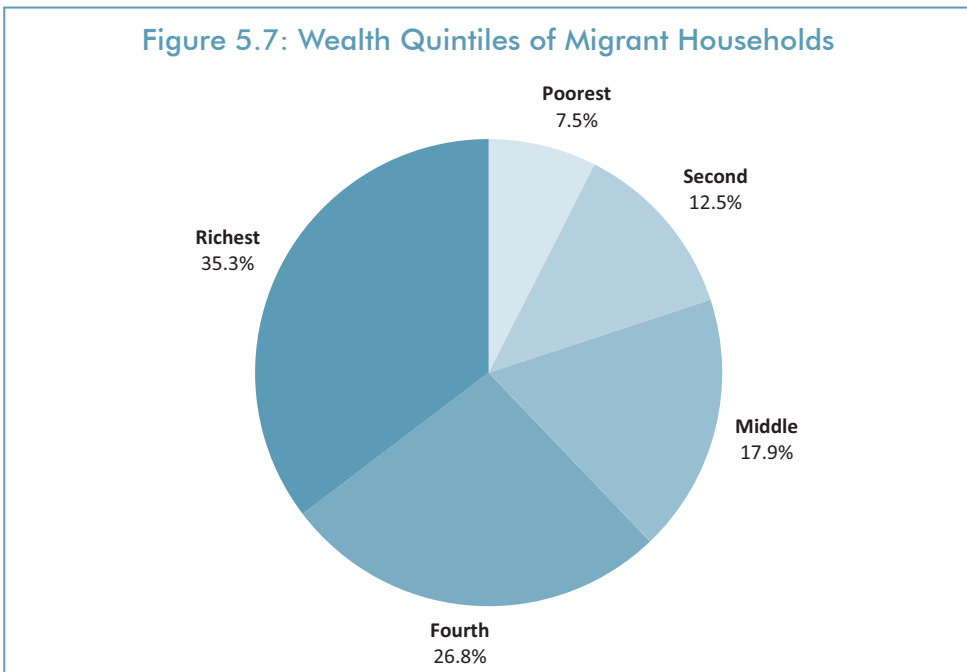
Figure 5.6: Marital Status of Internal Migrants

Poly-married
1.3%

Remarried
1.5%

Others
1.2%

Never married
(even once)
47.7%

Married (once)
48.3%

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

Figure 5.7: Wealth Quintiles of Migrant Households

Poorest
7.5%

Second
12.5%

Richest
35.3%

Middle
17.9%

Fourth
26.8%

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

Figure 5.8: Internal Migrants (2011 and 2016) (by wealth quintile)
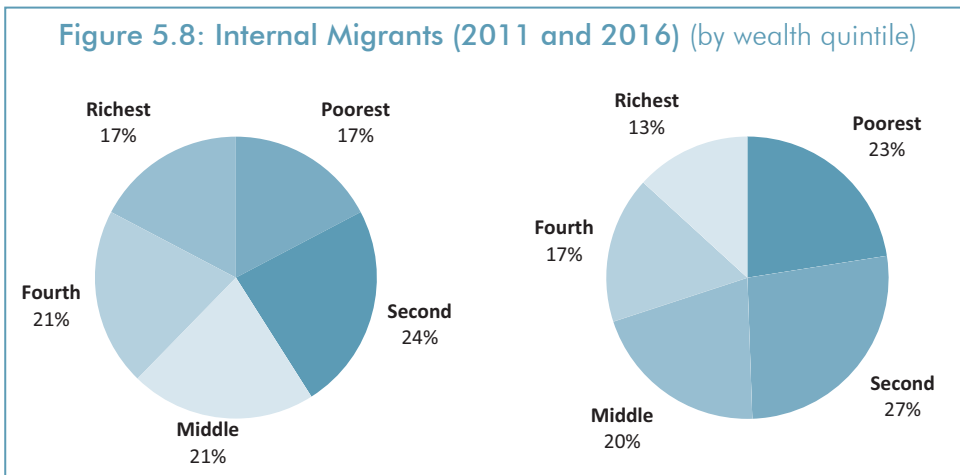
Source: Calculation based on NDHS 2011 and 2016 datasets

5.6 Economic Status of Internal Migrants

Internal migration declined sharply with the decreasing economic status as reported by NLSS 2010/11 (Figure 5.7). The richer the household the higher the likelihood of its members having migrated internally. The probability of a household from the richest quintile having internal migrants was nearly five times greater than that of one from the lowest quintile.

Looking at the NDHS data from 2011 and 2016 (Figure 5.8), internal migrants from the poorer wealth quintiles had increased (17 to 24%) between the two surveys, with corresponding decreases in the two top quintiles.

5.7 Ethnicity of Internal Migrants

Figure 5.9 shows internal migrants across different caste and ethnic group clusters. NLFS 2017/18 showed that the majority of the internal migrants were from Hill Castes (42%) and Hill Janajatis (27%), while Tarai Dalits made up the smallest proportion of internal migrants (1%).

5.8 Origin and Destination of Internal Migrants

Among the three ecological zones, the Mountains contributed the smallest number of internal migrants (12%), which is more a reflection of the small population
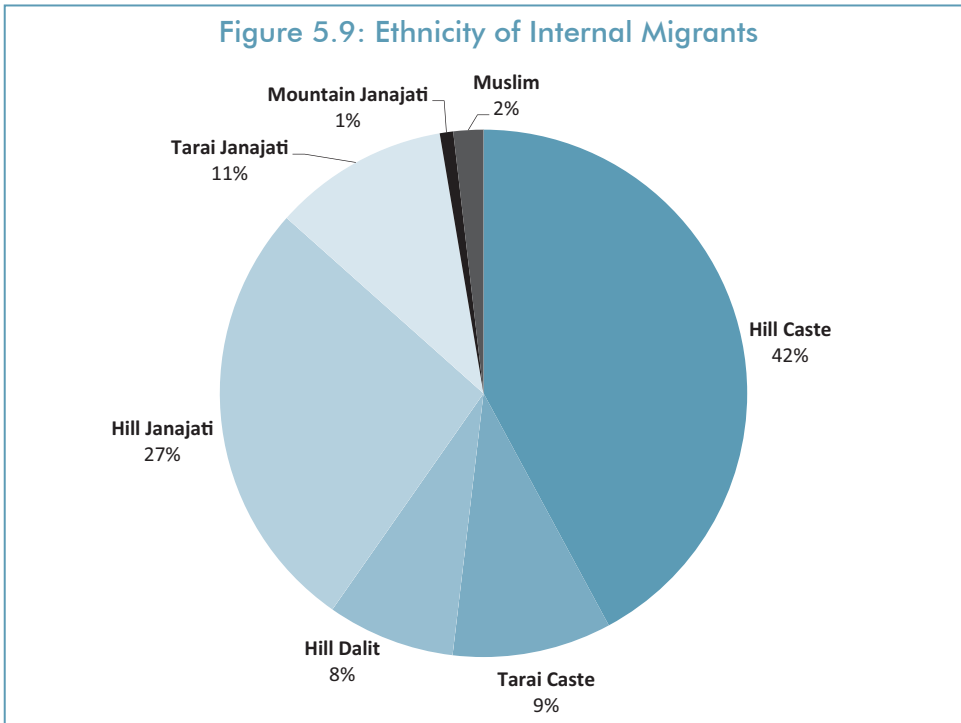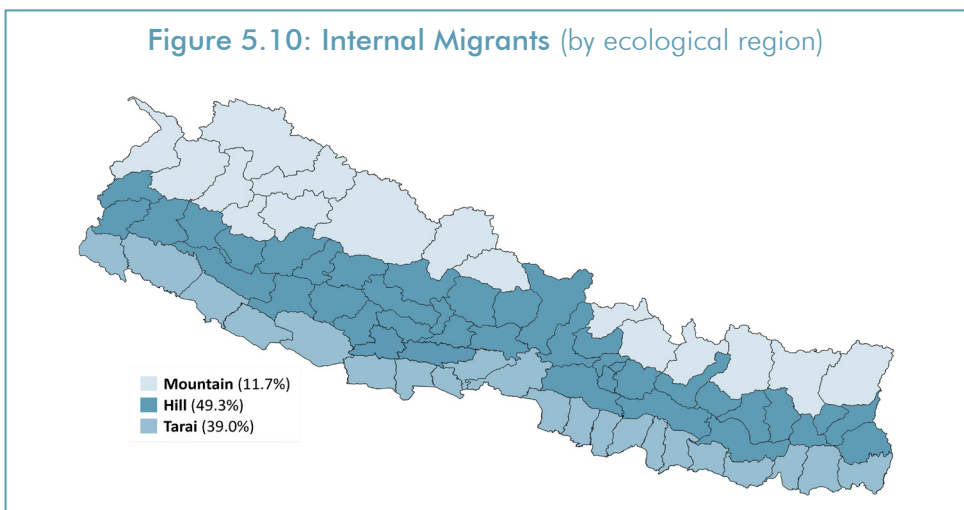
Figure 5.9: Ethnicity of Internal Migrants

Source: Calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 datasets

Figure 5.10: Internal Migrants (by ecological region)

Mountain (11.7%)
Hill (49.3%)
Tarai (39.0%)

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 datasets

Figure 5.11: Internal Migrants (by settlement type)
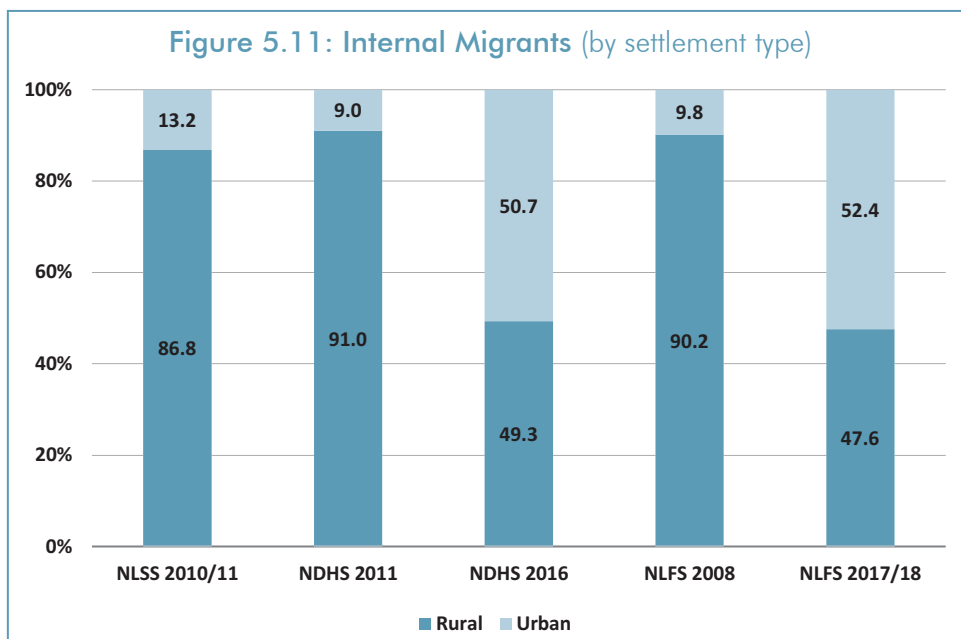
Source: Calculation based on NLSS 2010/11, NDHS 2011 and 2016, NLFS 2008 and 2017/18 datasets

base of the Mountain region than anything else. The population from the Hills was more mobile (49%) compared to those from the Tarai (39%) and Mountains (Figure 5.10). To put these numbers in perspective, according to Census 2011, only 7 per cent of the population lived in the Mountain region, compared to 43 and 50 per cent in the Hills and the Tarai, respectively.

According to NLFS 2008, nine of 10 internal migrants were from rural areas (Figure 5.11), a proportion that held true across the gender divide as well. However, over the years, the share of internal migrants from rural Nepal has gone down, as seen in the NDHS 2016 and NLFS 2017/18 data.[15]

NLFS 2017/18 data also showed that compared to other provinces, Lumbini had the highest ratio of women internal migrants (42%) while Sudurpashchim had the lowest (27%) (Figure 5.12).

According to NLSS 2010/11, over a fifth of Nepal's population consisted of internal migrants, with the proportion of the migrant population higher in urban areas (63%) than in the rural parts (38%) (Figure 5.13).

Migration from rural to urban area (53%) accounted for more than half of all internal migration (Figure 5.14). That was followed by migration from rural to rural area (34%).

The Tarai is the top recipient of internal migrants. As illustrated in Tables 5.1 and 5.2, among all the ecological zones, net migration is positive only in the Tarai
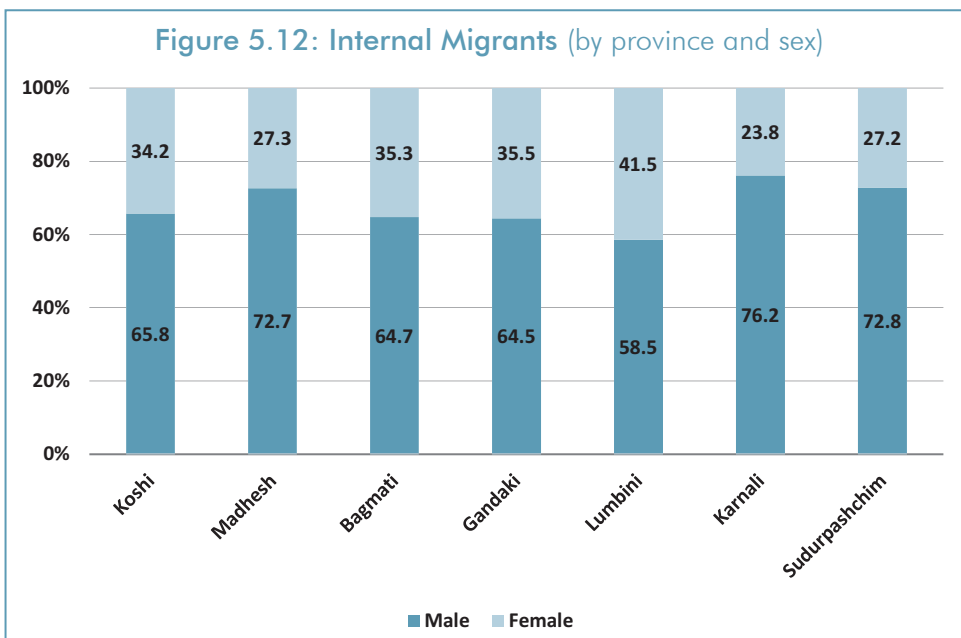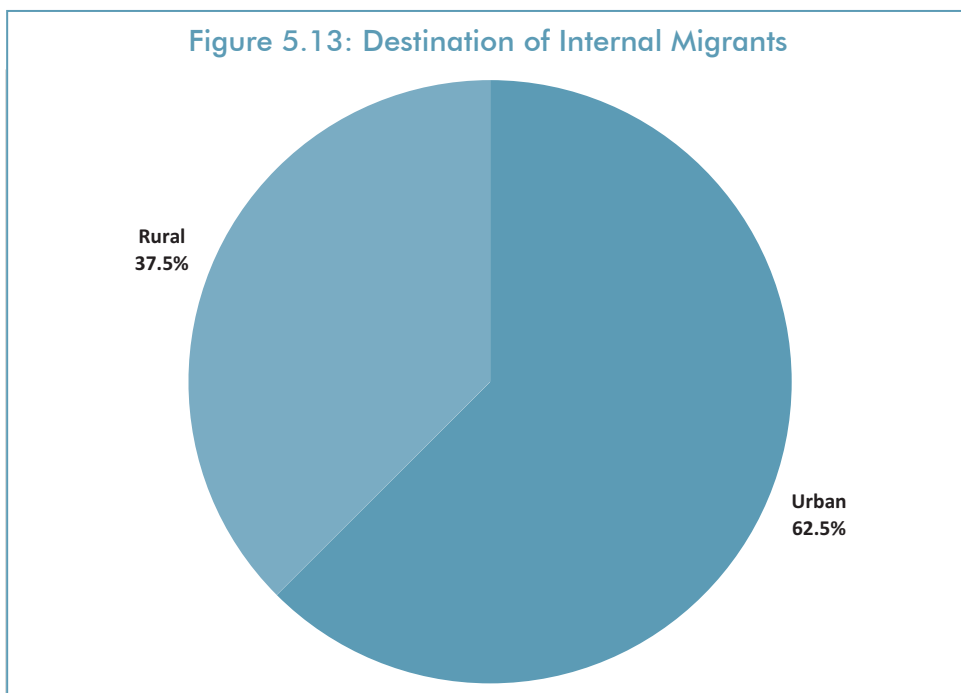
Figure 5.12: Internal Migrants (by province and sex)

Province	Male	Female
Koshi	65.8	34.2
Madhesh	72.7	27.3
Bagmati	64.7	35.3
Gandaki	64.5	35.5
Lumbini	58.5	41.5
Karnali	76.2	23.8
Sudurpashchim	72.8	27.2

■ Male ■ Female

Source: Calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Figure 5.13: Destination of Internal Migrants

Rural 37.5%

Urban 62.5%

Source: Calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Figure 5.14: Internal Migrants (by origin and destination)
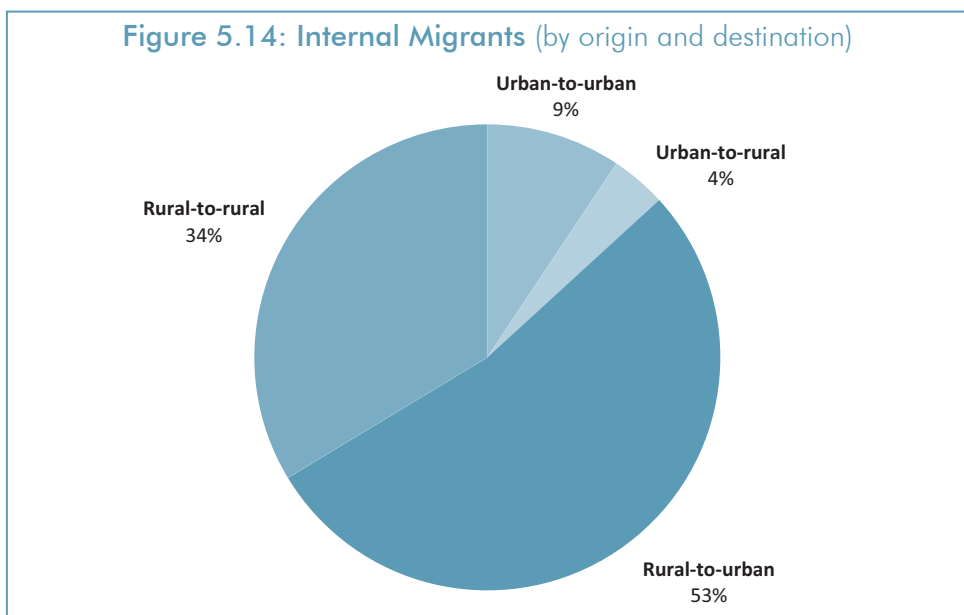
Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

region while the Hill region has the highest level of out-migration. This indicates a continuity in the Hill-to-Tarai migration that began in the late 1950s. According to the 2011 census, a total of 3,788,070 individuals were born in a district other than the one they were enumerated in, with women accounting for 57 per cent of them. Only 6 per cent of this group of people were born in urban areas, and of all

Table 5.1: Internal Migration in Numbers
(by place of origin and destination)

Destination	Origin				Per cent In-migration
	Mountain	Hill	Tarai	Total	
Mountain	–	37,672	7,497	45,169	2.2
Hill	213,714	–	375,101	588,815	28.2
Tarai	180,587	1,273,599	–	1,454,186	69.6
Total	394,301	1,311,271	382,598	2,088,170	100.0
Out-migration (%)	18.9	62.8	18.3	100.0	
Net migration	-349,132	-722,456	1,071,588		

Source: Suwal 2014

Table 5.2: Internal Migration in Percentage
(by sex and place of origin and destination)

Destination	Origin							
	Mountain		Hills		Tarai		In-migration	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	% of Males	% of Females
Mountain	–	–	25.4	74.6	51.7	48.3	1.4	2.8
Hill	–	–	–	–	50.1	49.9	30	26.7
Tarai	–	–	44.5	55.5	–	–	68.6	70.5
Total	–	–	44.0	56.0	50.1	49.9	100	100
Out-migration (sex %)	19.4	18.4	60.5	64.7	20.1	16.8	–	–

Source: Suwal 2014

those internal migrants in urban centres, 76 per cent were born in rural areas. At the district level, Kathmandu is the only district where individuals born in other districts (at 52%) outnumber the native-born population.

Table 5.3 presents data from NLFS 2017/18 on the origin and destination

Figure 5.15: Reason for Internal Migration, NLSS 2010/11

- Other 7%
- Together with family/relatives 19%
- Other family reasons 12%
- Education & training 31%
- Looking for work 13%
- Other work related 18%
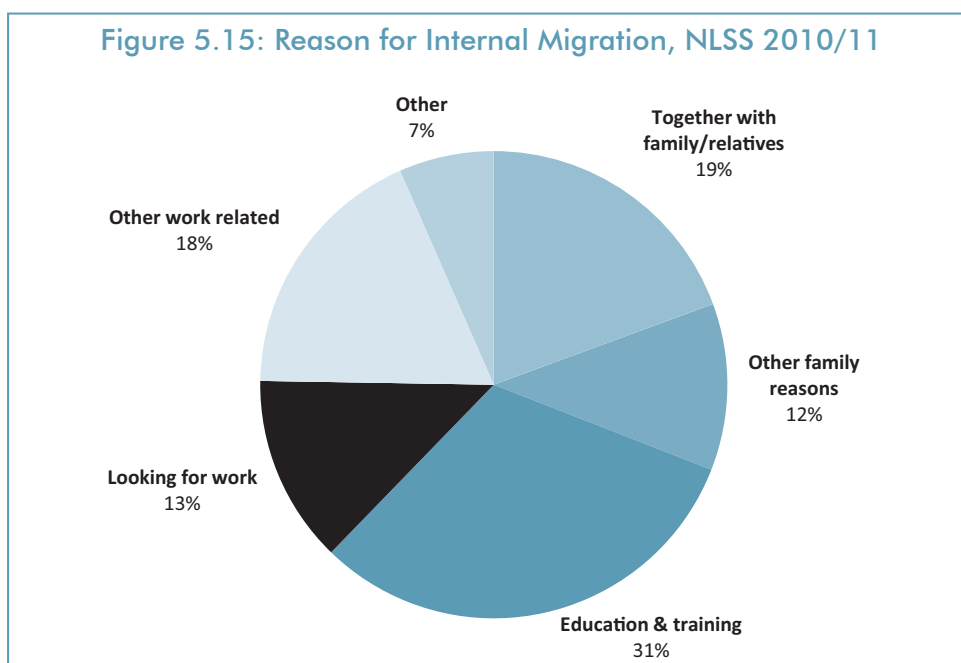
Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

Table 5.3: Trend of Internal Migration (by origin and destination province)

Province	Destination (to)							Total
	Koshi	Madhesh	Bagmati	Gandaki	Lumbini	Karnali	Sudurpas-chim	
Koshi	46.1	1.9	47.1	3.0	0.9	0.9	0.0	100
Madhesh	9.2	36.4	49.0	3.0	1.9	0.4	0.0	100
Bagmati	2.1	2.0	89.6	3.2	2.4	0.3	0.4	100
Gandaki	2.1	1.1	37.1	51.1	8.0	0.2	0.4	100
Lumbini	0.7	0.4	31.4	5.3	58.7	2.3	1.1	100
Karnali	2.2	0.1	30.2	7.5	18.8	38.7	2.5	100
Sudurpashchim	0.5	0.5	31.9	3.6	5.8	1.1	56.7	100

(Origin (from) — row label for the left axis)

Source: Calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

province of internal migrants. More than half the internal migrants from Bagmati, Gandaki, Lumbini and Sudurpashchim and nearly 40 per cent of internal migrants from Karnali migrated within the province. In the case of Koshi and Madhesh, migration to Bagmati province was higher than within the provinces. Bagmati also stood out by far as the most popular destination for people from all the other provinces, probably a reflection of the fact that the capital, Kathmandu, is located here.

5.9 Reasons for Internal Migration

In general, education and training, and family are commonly cited reasons for the internal migration of those aged below 15 years. It is a common practice among families living in areas without educational opportunities to send their children to study elsewhere. Migrants from older age groups typically migrate for family reasons.

As stated earlier, work was the main reason cited for internal migration with nearly a third attributed to employment (Figure 5.15). Education and training (31%) and 'family reasons' (31%) were other factors inducing people to migrate to other parts of the country.

There are, however, notable differences across the sex groups (Figure 5.16) as shown by NLSS 2010/11, NDHS 2016 and NLFS 2017/18. The NLSS 2010/11 data showed that 'family reasons' and migration as dependents (52%) constituted the major reason for female migration while for males it was related to work (43%).

NLFS 2017/18 showed that study/training (45%) was the main reason for female migration. That is followed by migration as dependents (26%) and work (17%). In contrast, the primary reasons for male internal migration are employment (54%) and then education (36%) (Figure 5.16).

In contrast, however, NDHS 2016 showed marriage to be the main reason for women's internal migration (69%) in contrast to employment (46%) and education (34%) for men. The reason for this anomaly compared to other surveys is because unlike NDHS 2016 the others do not include marriage as a reason for migration with women considered part of their natal household after marriage.

Figure 5.16: Reason for Migration (by sex)

NLSS 2010/11

Male

Other 4.9%
Family-related/As Dependant 18.6%
Work-related 42.9%
Education/Training 33.6%

Female

Other 9%
Work-related 11%
Family-related/As Dependant 52%
Education/Training 28%

NDHS 2016

Male

Accompanying Family 15.8%
Other 2.0%
Marriage 2.0%
Work 46.3%
Study 33.9%

Female

Other 0.7%
Work 6.0%
Accompanying Family 13.3%
Study 10.7%
Marriage 69.2%

NLFS 2017/18

Male

Other 4.4%
Dependant 5.6%
Work-related 54.4%
Education/Training 35.5%

Female

Other 11.2%
Dependant 26.3%
Work-related 17.2%
Education/Training 45.3%

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11, NDHS 2016 and NLFS 2017/18 datasets

5.10 Occupation of Internal Migrants

Figure 5.17 shows the distribution of internal migrants across various sectors of employment. The largest proportion of male internal migrants were employed in are 'service and sales' (13%) followed by 'craft and related trade' (12%) and 'elementary' occupations (at 10%). For females, the major occupations were 'service and sales' (6.8%) and 'elementary' occupations such as helpers, cleaners, labourers (5%). These relatively low figures are due to the fact that nearly 77 per cent of female and 41 per cent of male internal migrant's occupation was reported as 'unknown'.

Figure 5.17: Occupation of Internal Migrants (by sex)
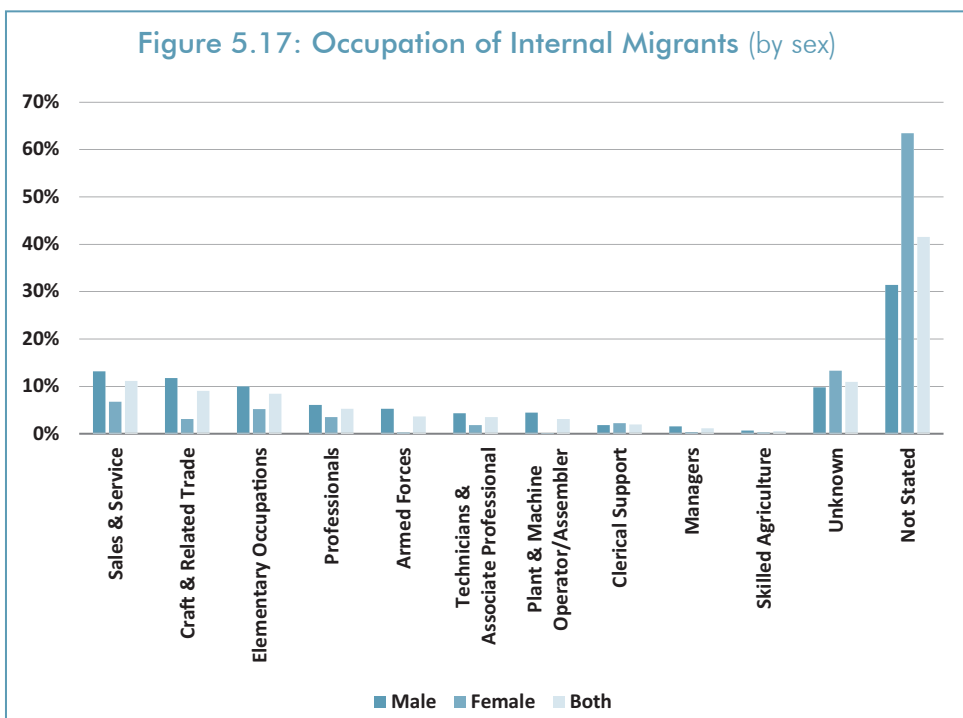
Source: Calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

6. LIFETIME MIGRATION

This chapter presents findings of the Nepal Labour Force Survey (NLFS) 2017/18 to gain an understanding of lifetime migration in Nepal. As defined by NLFS 2017/18, 'lifetime migrants' refers to those who were not born in their current place of residence but have moved to the place of enumeration either from another VDC or municipality or from another country in contrast to internal migrants who are away or expected to be away from their households for more than six months in the 12 months prior to the survey, having moved to another place within the country (see Chapter 5). Lifetime migrants are enumerated at the place of destination as opposed to the place of origin for 'absentees' or internal migrants.

6.1 Sex

Figure 6.1 shows that the majority of lifetime migrants are female (70%). The higher proportion of female lifetime migrants could be because women become permanent members of the household, they are married into and because lifetime migrants are enumerated at the place of destination.

Figure 6.1: Lifetime Migrants (by sex)

Male 30%

Female 70%

■ Male ■ Female
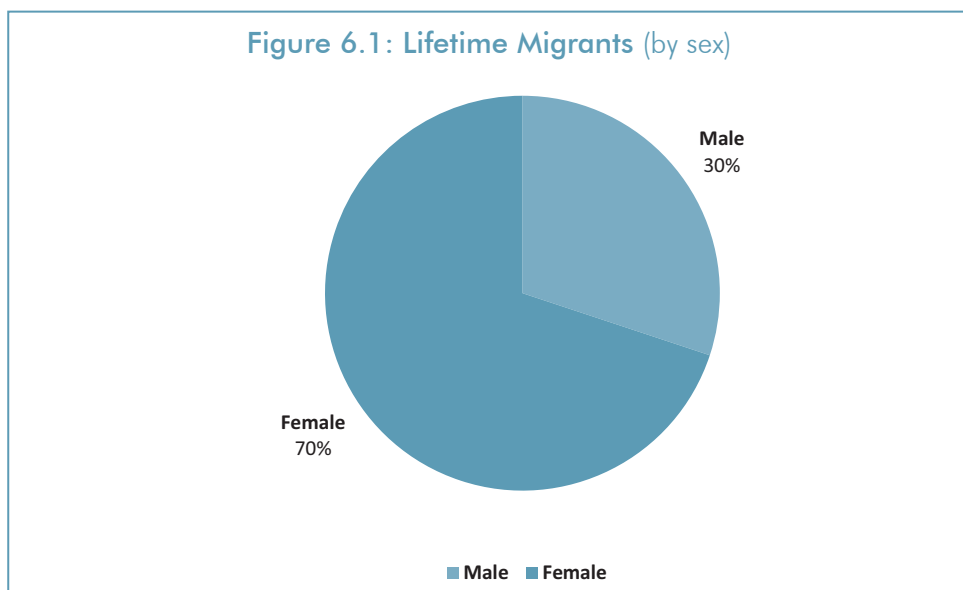
Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

6.2 Age at Migration

As with other forms of migration, the age group of 15-29 years comprise the highest proportion of lifetime migrants (31%) and together with the 30-44-year group make up nearly 60 per cent (Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2: Age at Migration
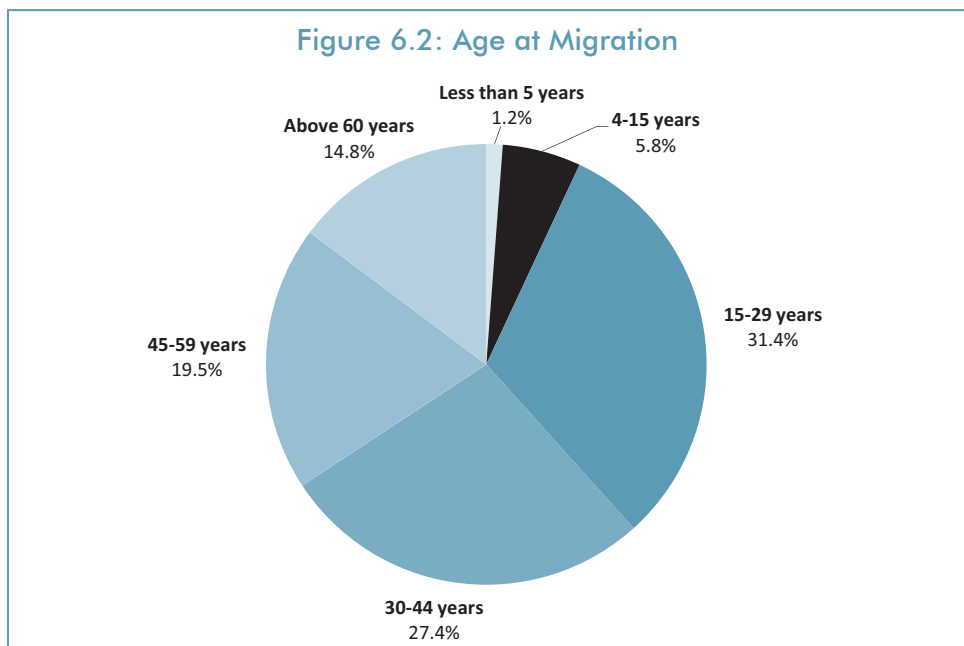
Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

6.3 Origin and Destination of Lifetime Migrants

Lifetime migrants by their place of origin and current location in terms of province is presented in Table 6.1.

NLFS 2008 showed that rural-to-rural migration accounted for more than 60 per cent of all lifetime migration (Figure 6.3). In fact, the volume of migration between rural areas was three times more than that of rural-to-urban migration. In contrast, in NLFS 2017/18, rural-to-urban migration accounted for more than 60 per cent of the lifetime migration. As previously mentioned, the periodic restructuring of municipalities and rural municipalities in the past decade is most likely the reason for such change in the trend figure (see Section 3.9 for more details).

Table 6.1: Trend in Lifetime Migration by Origin and Current Location in terms of Province

Current residence	From Urban Nepal		% of Total	From Rural Nepal		% of Total	From India		% of Total	From Other Countries		% of Total
	Male	Female		Male	Female		Male	Female		Male	Female	
Koshi	44.5	55.5	17.8	30.5	69.5	17.4	29.7	70.3	19.9	44.2	55.8	28.6
Madhesh	15.7	84.3	13.6	16.1	83.9	14.2	6.7	93.3	37.1	0	0	0.0
Bagmati	46.3	53.7	44.8	41.4	58.6	28.4	60.1	39.9	10.3	47.3	52.7	47.9
Gandaki	37.3	62.7	8.8	27.7	72.3	10.0	55.2	44.8	5.4	29.5	70.5	14.6
Lumbini	50	50	7.1	27.9	72.1	15.4	24.5	75.5	21.1	12.6	87.4	4.8
Karnali	36.4	63.6	1.6	25.3	74.7	5.1	39.7	60.3	1.3	100	0	0.1
Sudurpashchim	30.2	69.8	6.2	24.5	75.5	9.6	35	65	5.0	49.8	50.2	4.0
			100			100			100			100

Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 datasets

Figure 6.3: Trends in Lifetime Migration
(by origin and current location, in terms of rural-urban division)

2008

Urban-to-urban 3%
Urban-to-rural 4%
Another Country to rural 10%
Another Country to urban 3%
Rural-to-urban 18%
Rural-to-rural 62%

2017/18

Another Country to rural 2.6%
Urban-to-urban 3.5%
Another Country to urban 5.4%
Urban-to-rural 0.8%
Rural-to-rural 22.5%
Rural-to-urban 65.1%
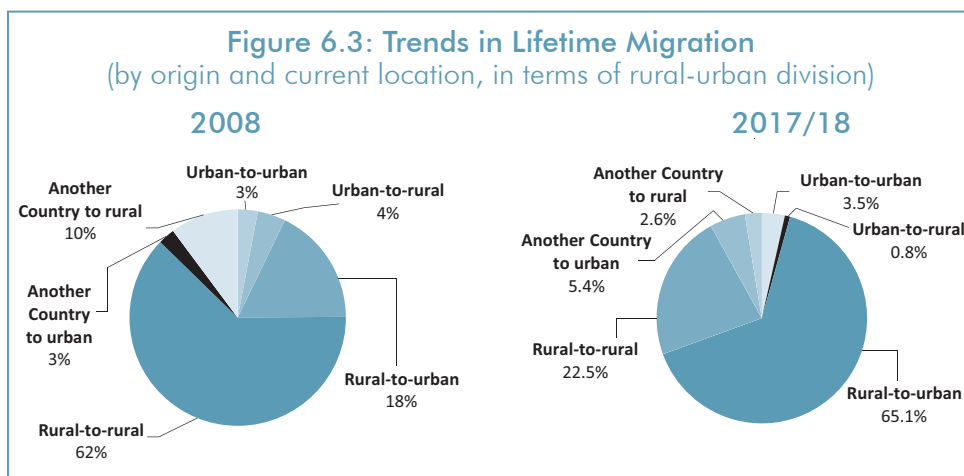
Source: NLFS 2008 and 2017/18

6.4 Reasons for Migration

Work, study and marriage were found to be the major reason for migration with notable differences across sexes as shown by NLFS (Figure 6.4). Marriage was the main reason for female lifetime migrants (76%) whereas for males it was 'family-related reasons' (33%) and work (25%).

Figure 6.4: Reason for Migration

Male

Natural Disaster 1.2%
Others 2.4%
Marriage 1.8%
Easier Lifestyle 20.9%
Other Family Reasons 32.7%
Study/ Training 15.8%
Work Related 25.1%

Female

Study/ Training 4.4%
Easier Lifestyle 3.9%
Natural Disaster 0.2%
Others 0.8%
Work Related 2.0%
Other Family Reasons 12.2%
Marriage 76.4%
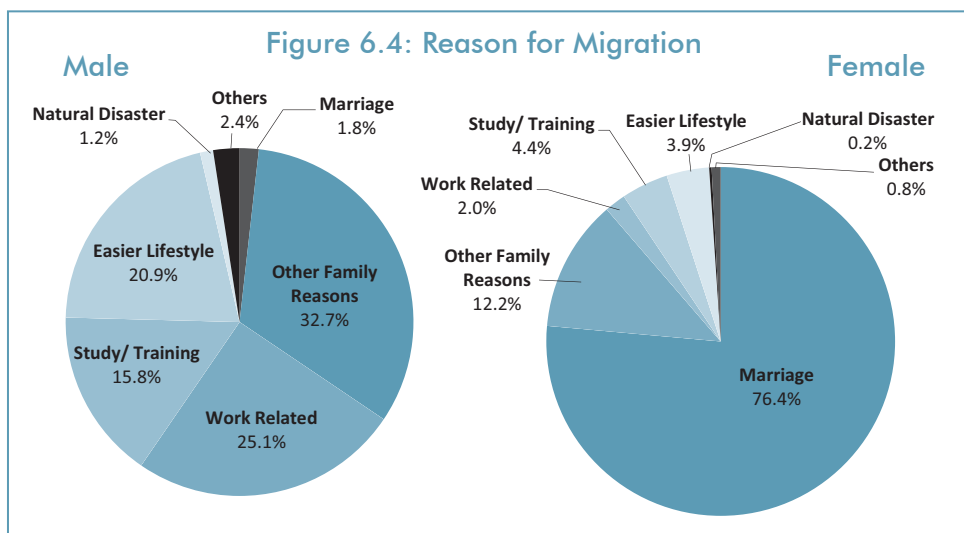
Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

7. IMMIGRATION

7.1 Trends

Immigration into Nepal is the migration of the foreign-born population into Nepal, consisting of both Nepali and foreign citizens. Data for both these categories is provided in Census 2011 and 2021. Immigration to Nepal, as tracked by decennial censuses from 1961 to 2021, has been more or less steady except for fluctuations between 1971 and 1991. The number of immigrants increased from 439,488 in 1991 to 583,599 in 2001 before decreasing slightly in 2011, at 469,580 and increasing to 734,663 in 2021. On the other hand, immigration of foreign citizens shot up nearly three and a half times between 1971 and 1981, peaking at 481,019 in 1981 (Figure 7.1). However, it plummeted more than five times in the next decade, reaching a level in 1991 less than that of 1961. Thereafter a steady growth of immigration of foreign citizens was witnessed between 1991 and 2011 even though the number of immigrants recorded in 2011 was only slightly higher than in 1961. A slight decrease was observed in the number of immigrants in 2021.

Except for the year 1981, most of the foreign citizens have been from India. There is nothing in the literature to explain the drastic increase in the number

Figure 7.1: Immigration Trend over the Years
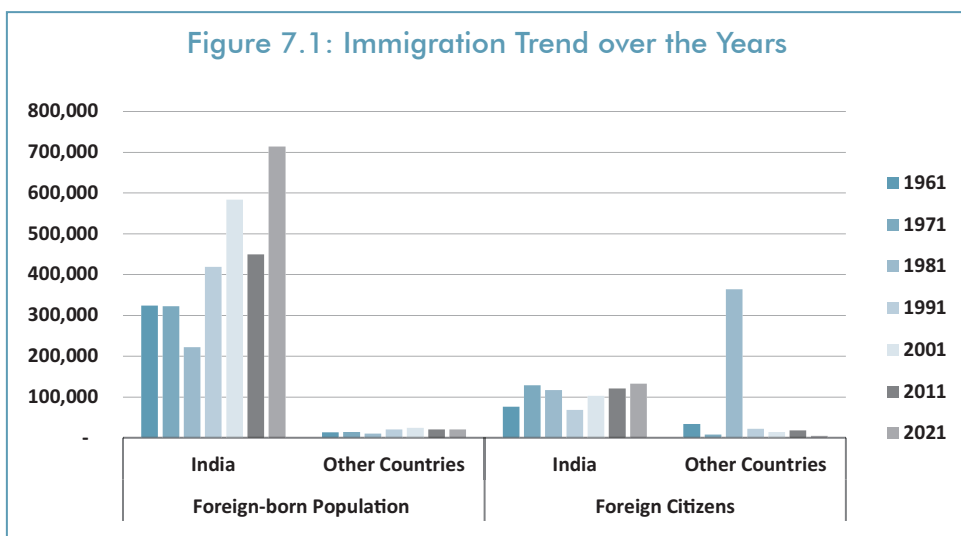
Source: Khatiwada 2014; Census 2021

Figure 7.2: Sex of Immigrants

Census 2011

Census 2021

of immigrants of foreign citizens into Nepal in the period 1971-81 or the equally drastic reduction in the period 1981-91. However, Kansakar posits that the latter could be because of misreporting by immigrants about their birthplace and citizenship due to the sensitivities around international migration and policy measures being contemplated to control and regulate international migration along the open border between Nepal and India at the time.[16]

7.2 Sex of Immigrants

According to the 2011 and 2021 census, a large proportion of immigrants in Nepal were female (Figure 7.2), constrasting the gender dynamics of the other forms of migration discussed elsewhere in this paper, in which mobility is largely the domain of males. On the other hand, foreign citizens coming into Nepal were in nearly equal proportion male and female in 2011. The proportion was higher for male foreign citizen in 2021.

7.3 Origin of Immigrants

Given the open border between India and Nepal, just as Nepalis continue to migrate to India in large numbers, Indians, too, have immigrated into Nepal for

Figure 7.3: Immigrants by Country of Origin

	2011		2021	
	Foreign-born Population (N=469,580)	Foreign Citizens (N=138,910)	Foreign-born Population (N=734,663)	Foreign Citizens (N=137,218)
Other Countries	4.4	13.0	2.8	3.2
India	95.6	87.0	97.2	96.8

■ India ■ Other Countries
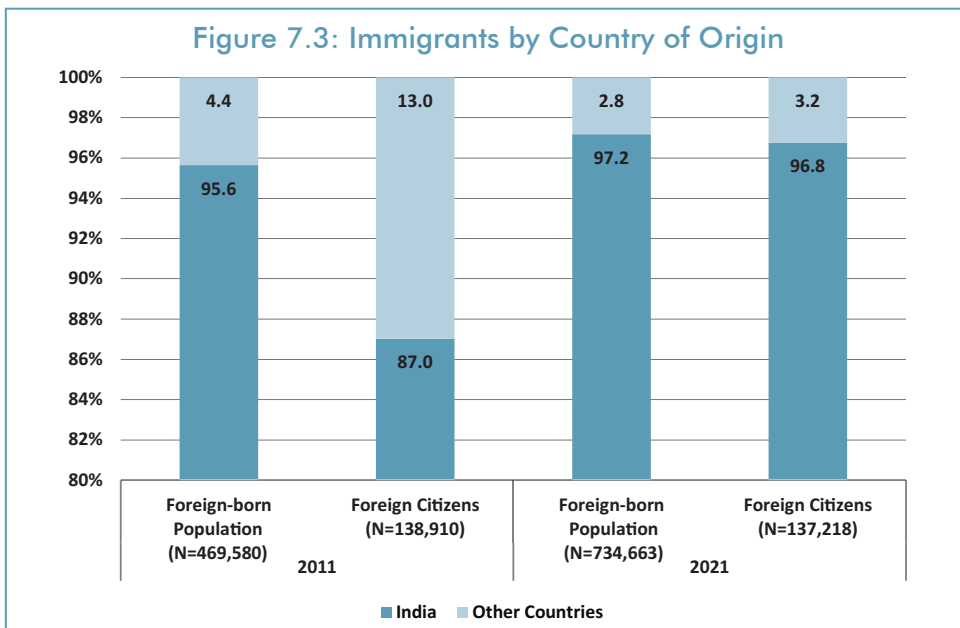
Source: Khatiwada 2014; Census 2021

various purposes. The 2021 census showed that of the total 734,663 immigrants enumerated, an overwhelming 97 per cent were from India (Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.4: Destination of Immigrants (by ecological region)

Source: Khatiwada 2014; Census 2021

Figure 7.5: Immigrants by Country of Origin and Ecological Region
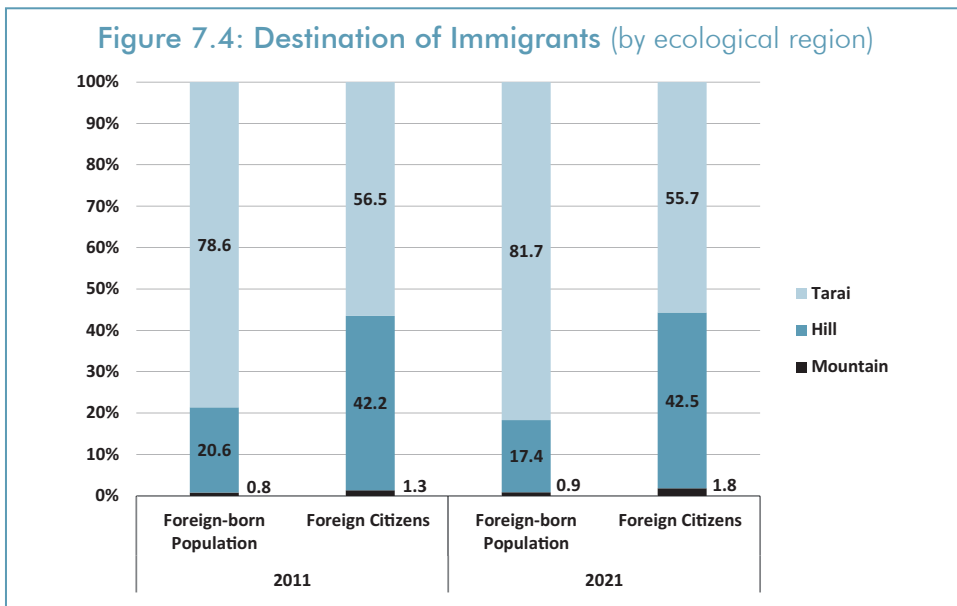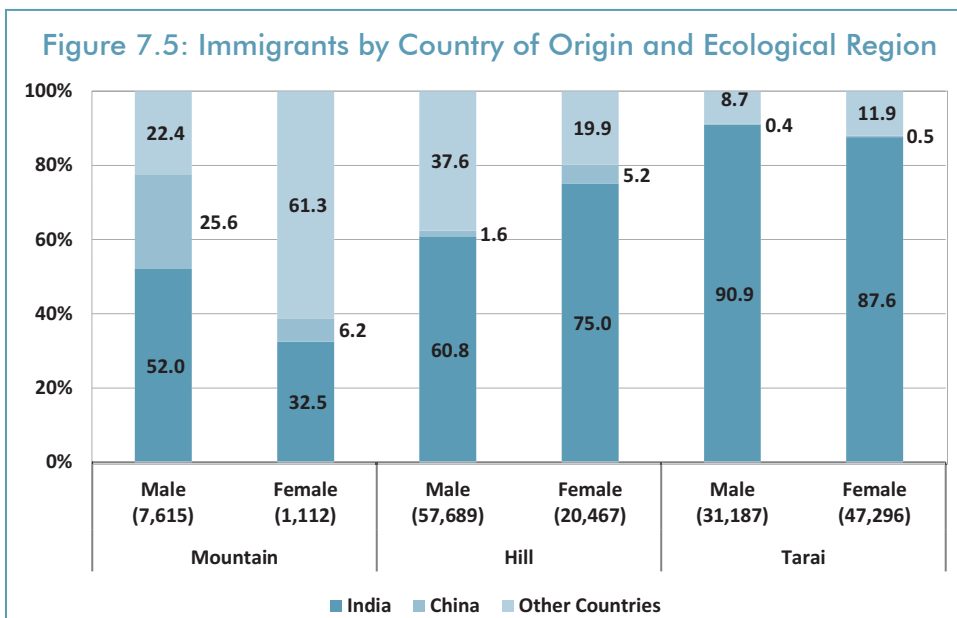
Source: Khatiwada 2014

7.4 Destination of Immigrants

The regional distribution of immigrants in terms of ecological region showed that the Tarai is the most preferred destination for immigrants, with nearly 82 per cent of the foreign-born population and 56 per cent of foreign citizens choosing it in 2021 (Figure 7.4). The proportion of female foreign citizens is higher than males in the Tarai (Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.6: Residence of Foreign Citizens (rural/urban)

2011

Rural, 65,174 46.9%

Urban, 73,736 53.1%

2021

Rural, 23,612 17.2%

Urban, 113,606 82.8%

Source: Khatiwada 2014; Census 2021

Figure 7.7: Residence of Foreign Citizens (province)

India							Other Countries						
Koshi	Madhesh	Bagmati	Gandaki	Lumbini	Karnali	Sudurpashchim	Koshi	Madhesh	Bagmati	Gandaki	Lumbini	Karnali	Sudurpashchim
19,019	27,307	48,361	12,321	18,681	691	6,401	228	114	3,256	612	150	22	55
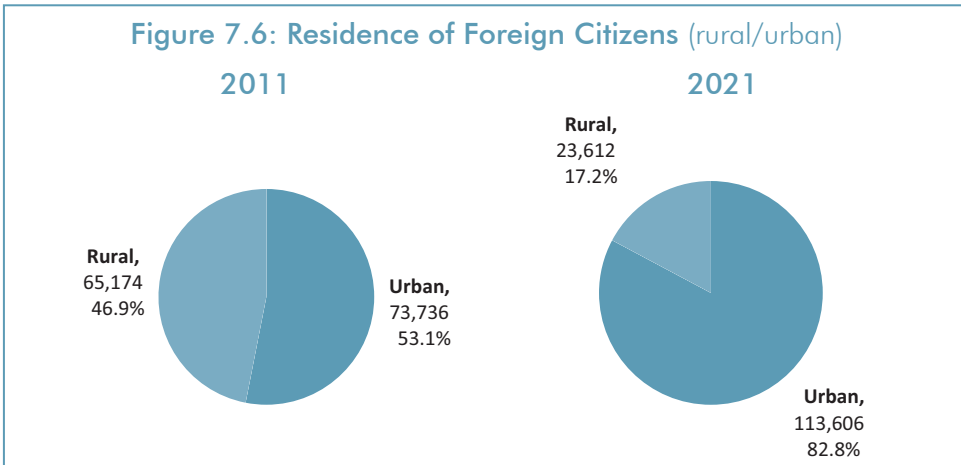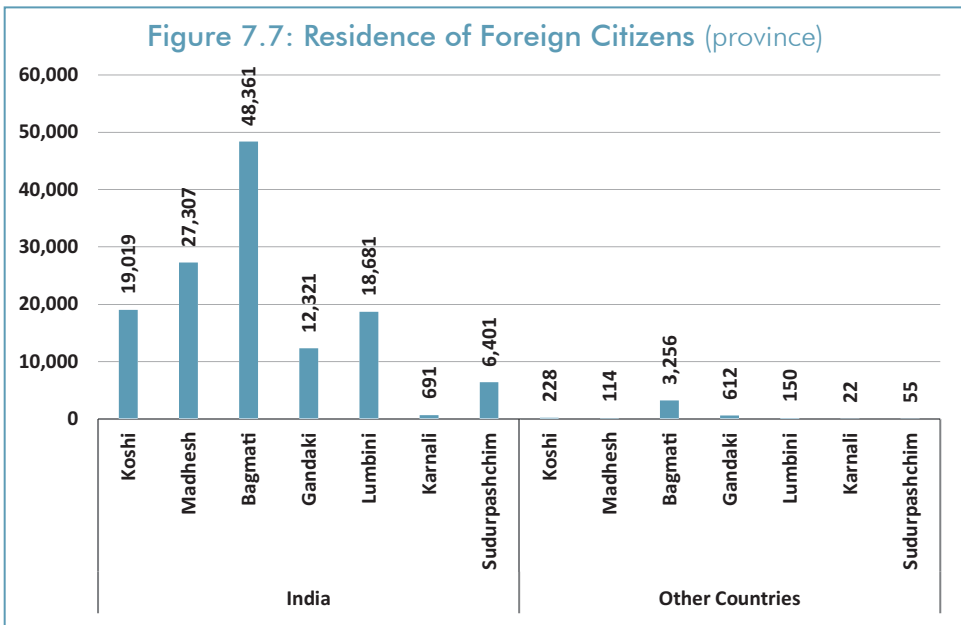
Source: Census 2021

Similarly, there were more Indians and citizens from other countries in Bagmati province (Figure 7.7). Both Census 2011 and 2021 showed that more foreign citizens preferred urban destinations over rural ones, but that proportion was only

Figure 7.8: Foreign Citizens by Country of Origin and Location

Census 2011

	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
	Urban		Rural		Total
Other Countries	1,661	2,236	3,393	8,157	26,997
China	736	676	489	671	3,732
India	43,944	24,483	19,815	32,649	173,355

India ■ China ■ Other Countries

Census 2021

	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
		Urban			Rural	
India	109,904	64,793	45,111	22,877	8,450	14,427
China	1,336	796	540	546	371	175
Other Countries	2,366	1,214	1,152	189	99	90

Source: Khatiwada 2014; Census 2021

6 per cent higher (Figure 7.6). In terms of sex distribution, however, there is great variation. There are more male foreign immigrants in Nepal's urban areas, reflective of the fact that male immigrants are attracted to employment opportunities in urban areas (Figure 7.8). On the other hand, female foreign citizens outnumber males in Nepal's rural areas, with most having immigrated to Nepal after marriage.

8. RETURNEES

Nepal Labour Force Survey (NLFS) 2017/18 asked questions about returnees, i.e., those who have returned after spending more than three months in a foreign country at any point during the previous five years. The survey asked about their last destination, reason for leaving, occupation in the destination country, earnings per month, medium through which they migrated, and reason for coming back. This chapter is based on the calculations of the raw data from NLFS 2017/18. It should be noted that the figures presented also include migrants who had migrated for work.

8.1 Sex

Figure 8.1 presents the sex composition of returnees. Males constituted an overwhelmingly high proportion of returnees and short-term migrants (89%).

Figure 8.1: Sex of Returnees
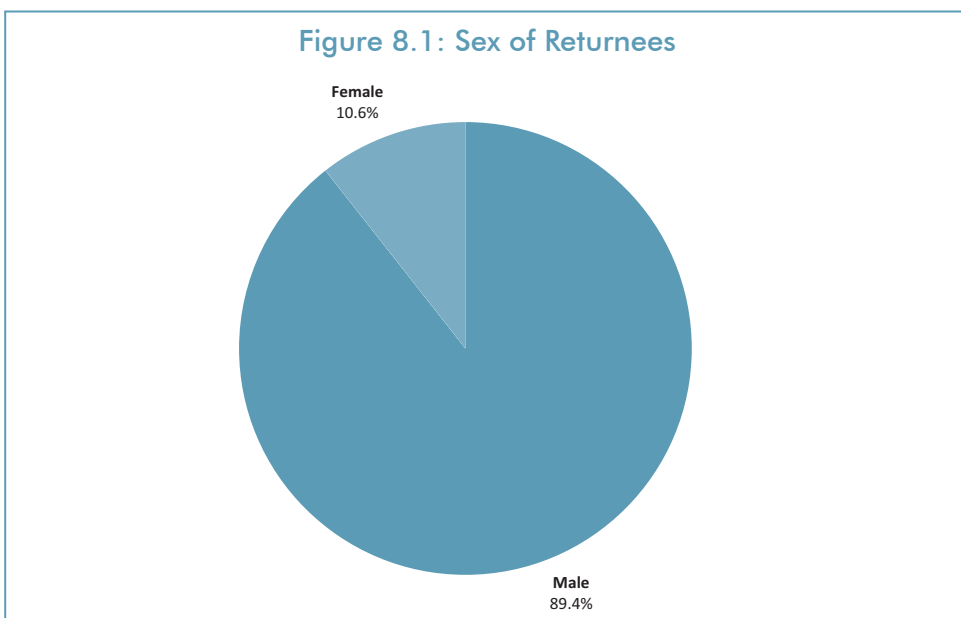
Female
10.6%

Male
89.4%

Source: Calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

8.2 Origin

The province-wise location of returnees is presented in Figure 8.2. Sudurpashchim constituted the highest proportion of male to female ratio followed by Bagmati and Lumbini.

Figure 8.2: Origin of Returnee Migrants (by province and sex)
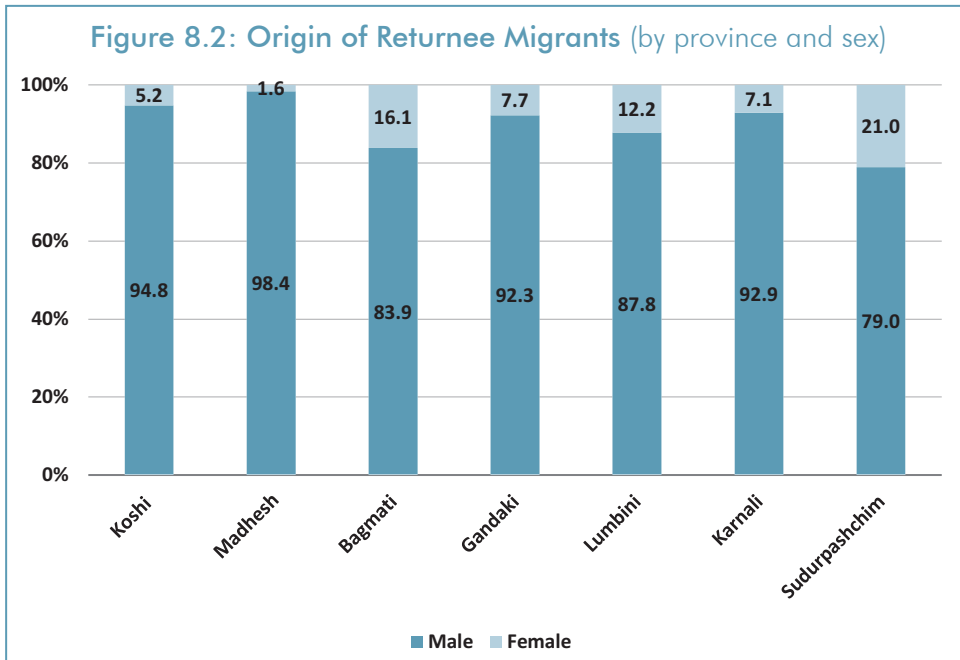
Source: Calculations based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

8.3 Medium of Migration

The medium used while migrating by returnees and short-term migrants is presented in Figure 8.3. More than half of both males and females used foreign employment agencies for migration while more females (45%) than male returnees (33%) had migrated through personal channels and relatives.

8.4 Last Destination

The largest group of male migrants had returned from India (28%) with those from Malaysia following closely behind at 24 per cent (Figure 8.4). In contrast, more than half the female returnees reported their last destination to be India (52%).

Figure 8.3: Medium of Migration (by sex)

Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Figure 8.4: Last Destination of Returnees (by sex)
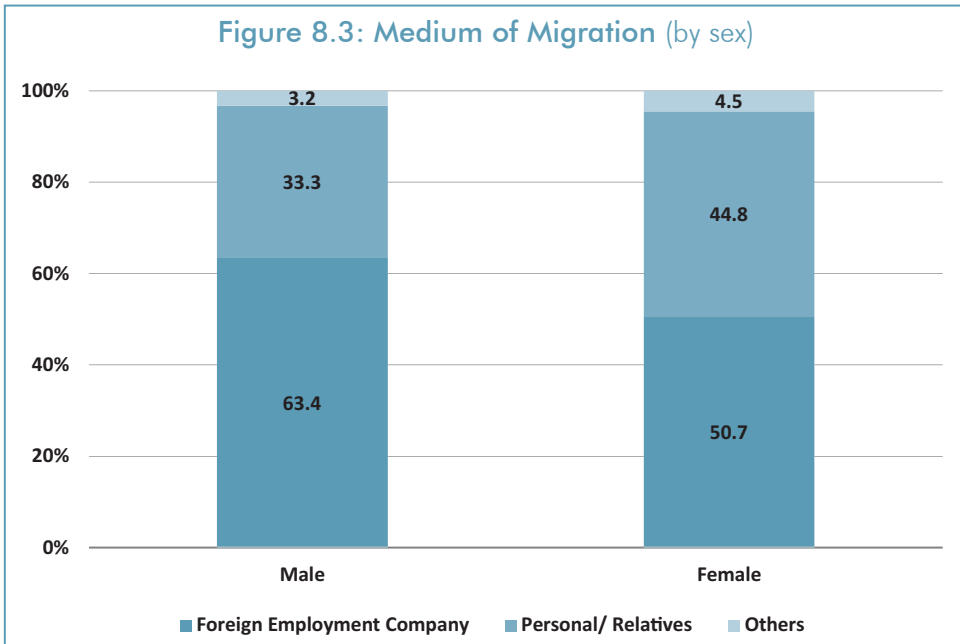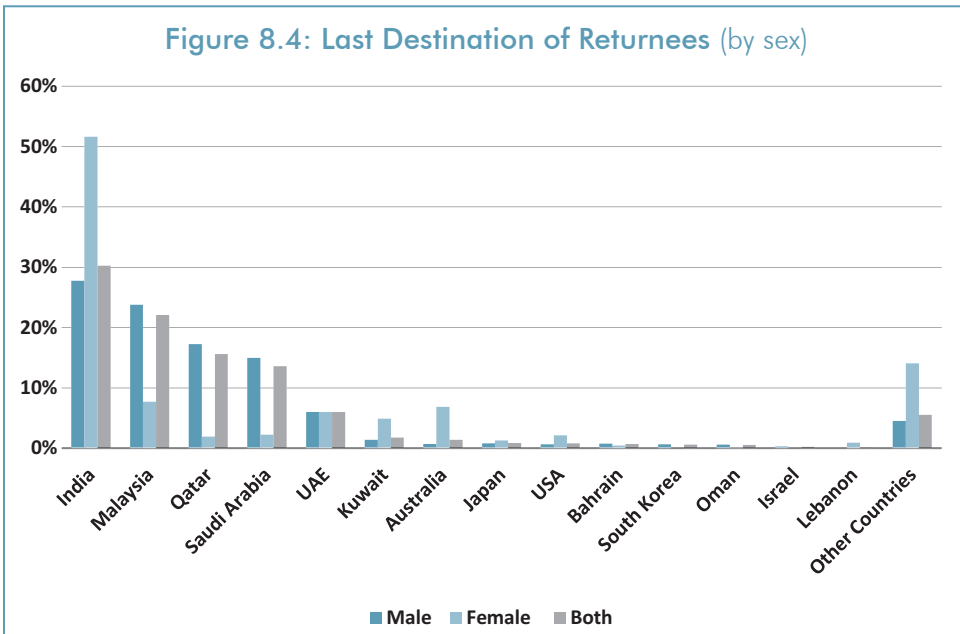
Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

8.5 Reasons for Migration

Figure 8.5 shows the proportionate data on the main reason for household members going abroad. Work-related reasons such as 'Service/Job' and 'Seeking job' were reported to be the main reason for migration by the returnees (85%).

Figure 8.5: Reason for Migration

Treatment 2%
Trade/Business 1%
Others 6%
Study/Training 3%
Dependant 4%
Seeking Job 22%
Service/Job 62%
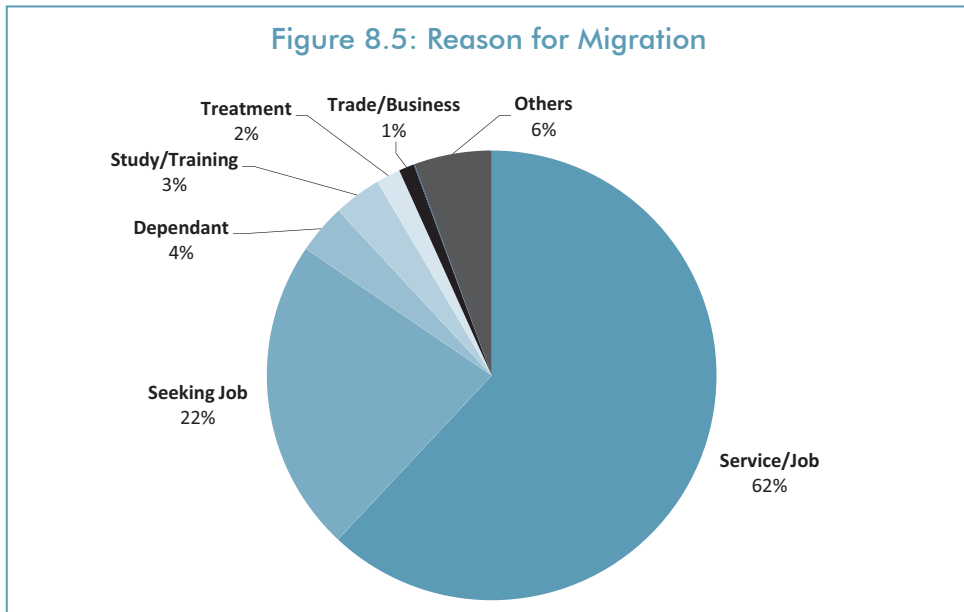
Source: Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

8.6 Reasons for Return

NLFS 2017/18 further asked those who answered their medium of migration to be foreign employment companies and others about their reason for returning (Figure 8.6). Male returnees reported completion of temporary work (24%) as the major reason for returning followed by wanting to search for better job (12%) and removal from work (10%). For females, disability, injuries or sickness (35%) was the main reason for them returning followed by completion of the temporary work (24%) and pregnancy and family responsibilities (5%).

Figure 8.6: Reason for Return (by sex)
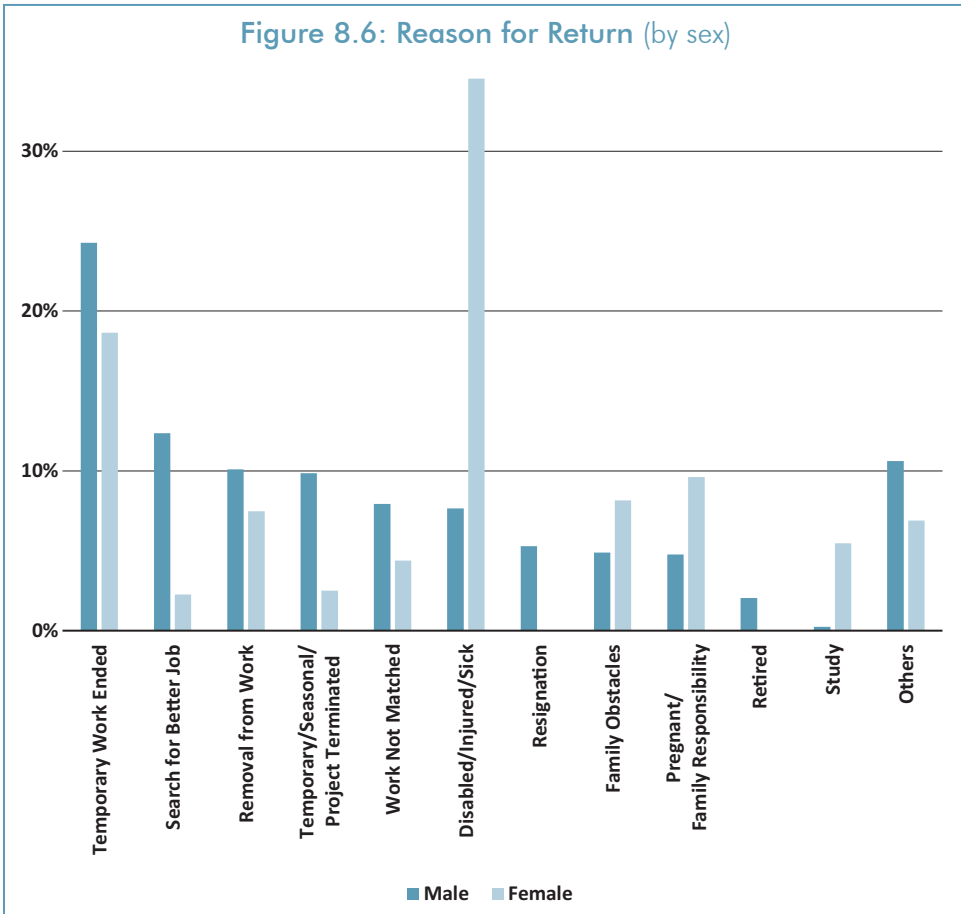
8.7. Earnings per Month

The average monthly earnings of the returnees in their last job abroad are presented in Figure 8.7. Female returnees on an average earned NPR 25,203 (ca. USD 240), which was somewhat less than their male counterparts who on an average earned NPR 29,923 (ca. USD 290) per month.

Province-wise disaggregation of the average earning of the returnees, as presented in Figure 8.8 shows that migrants from Bagmati had higher earnings than those from other provinces. This could be because of the choice of destination country since a higher proportion of migrants and returnees from the province were found to migrate to countries with higher pay compared to Sudurpashchim, where India was the major destination of more than 80 per cent of the international migrants.

Figure 8.7: Average Earnings of Returnees and Short-term Migrants (by sex)

Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Figure 8.8: Average Earnings (by province and sex)
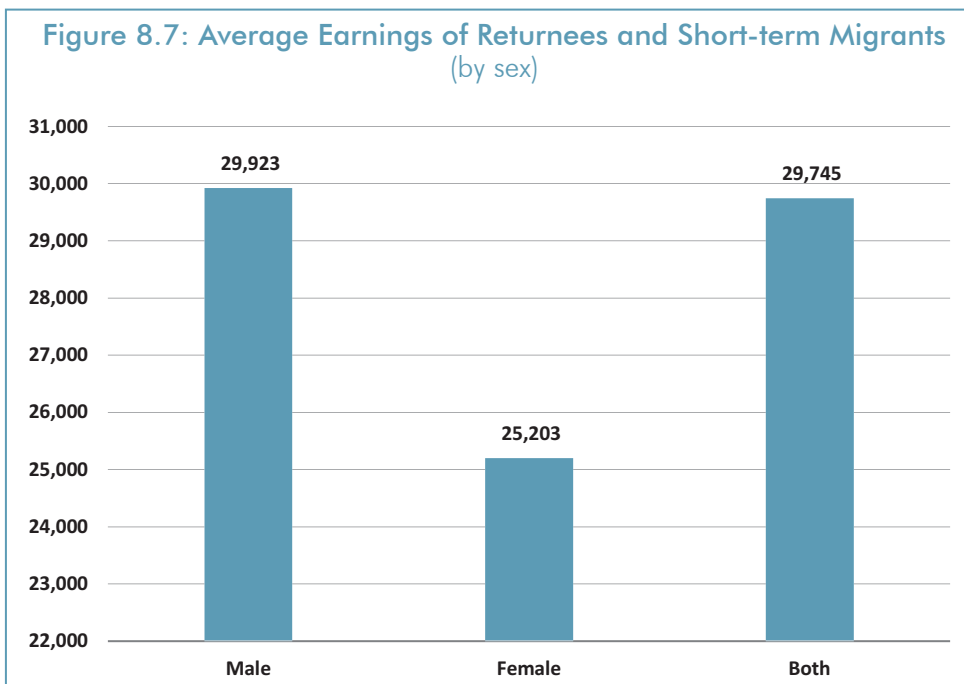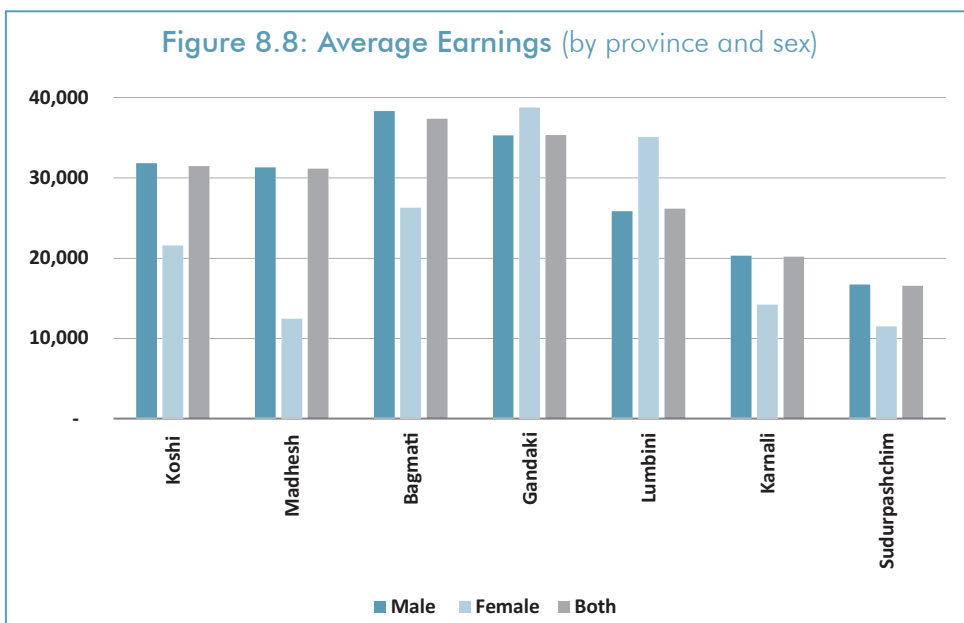
Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

A breakdown of average earning per month by country and sex is presented in the Table 8.1. In India, the most popular destination for migrant workers, particularly for seasonal migrants, male and female returnees earned an average of NPR 15,888 (ca. USD 150) and NPR 12,403 (ca. USD 120) per month, respectively. In Malaysia females, on average, earned less than their male counterparts while in Qatar the average earnings of both the male and female were similar.[17] Average earnings per month for other countries are presented in Annex IV.

Table 8.1: Average Earnings per Month (in NPR)
(by country and sex)

	Male	Female	Average
India	15,888	12,403	15,750
Bahrain	38,730	17,000	37,293
Japan	184,850	115,842	180,694
South Korea	101,469	-	101,469
Israel	96,907	-	96,907
Kuwait	36,794	25,265	33,579
Malaysia	30,372	21,667	30,064
Oman	35,637	20,000	35,348
Qatar	30,181	30,000	30,180
Saudi Arabia	34,464	23,421	34,320
United Arab Emirates	39,214	26,494	38,202

Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

8.8 Occupation of Returnees

Regardless of their main reason for leaving 85 per cent of the returnees reported to have done some kind of work in the destination country.

The occupation of the returnees in the destination is presented in Figure 8.10 (see Sections 3.12 and 4.8 for more information on occupation of international migrants and labour migrants who were in the destination countries at the time of survey). Around half of them had been engaged in elementary occupations, a trend that was more pronounced among women than men. Similarly, more female migrants were engaged in elementary occupation than male (Figure 8.11).

Figure 8.9: Worked in the Destination Country or Not

No
14.6%

Yes
85.4%
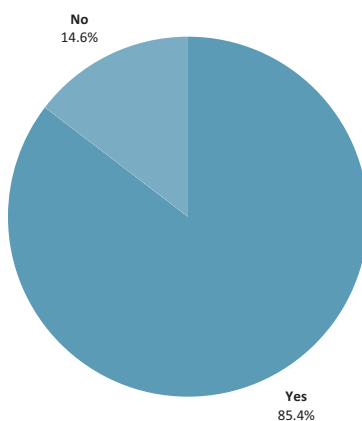
Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Figure 8.10: Occupation of Returnees and Short-term Migrants

Technicians & Associate
Professionals
1.5%

Professionals
0.2%

Managers
0.1%

Skilled Agriculture,
Forestry & Fishery
1.7%

Armed Forces
0.5%

Clerical Support
1.7%

Plant & Machine
Operators/
Assemblers
11.4%

Elementary
Occupations
45.6%

Craft & Related Trade
16.5%

Sales & Service
20.7%
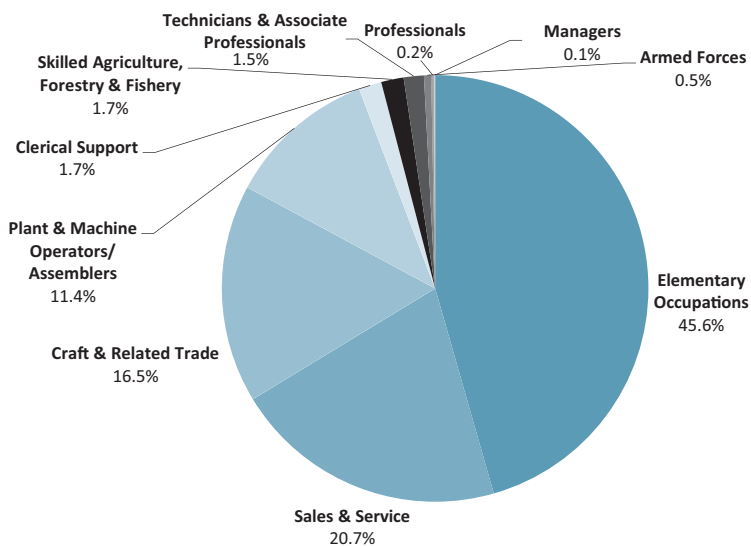
Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

Figure 8.11: Occupation of Returnees and Short-term Migrants
(by sex)

Male

- Technicians & Associate Professionals 1.6%
- Clerical Support 1.5%
- Armed Forces 0.6%
- Skilled Agriculture, Forestry & Fishery 1.8%
- Plant & Machine Operators/Assemblers 11.4%
- Craft & Related Trade 17.0%
- Sales & Service 20.9%
- Elementary Occupations 45.1%
- Professionals 0.2%

Female

- Plant & Machine Operators/Assemblers 10.5%
- Clerical Support 7.0%
- Craft & Related Trade 6.5%
- Sales & Service 16.7%
- Elementary Occupations 59.3%
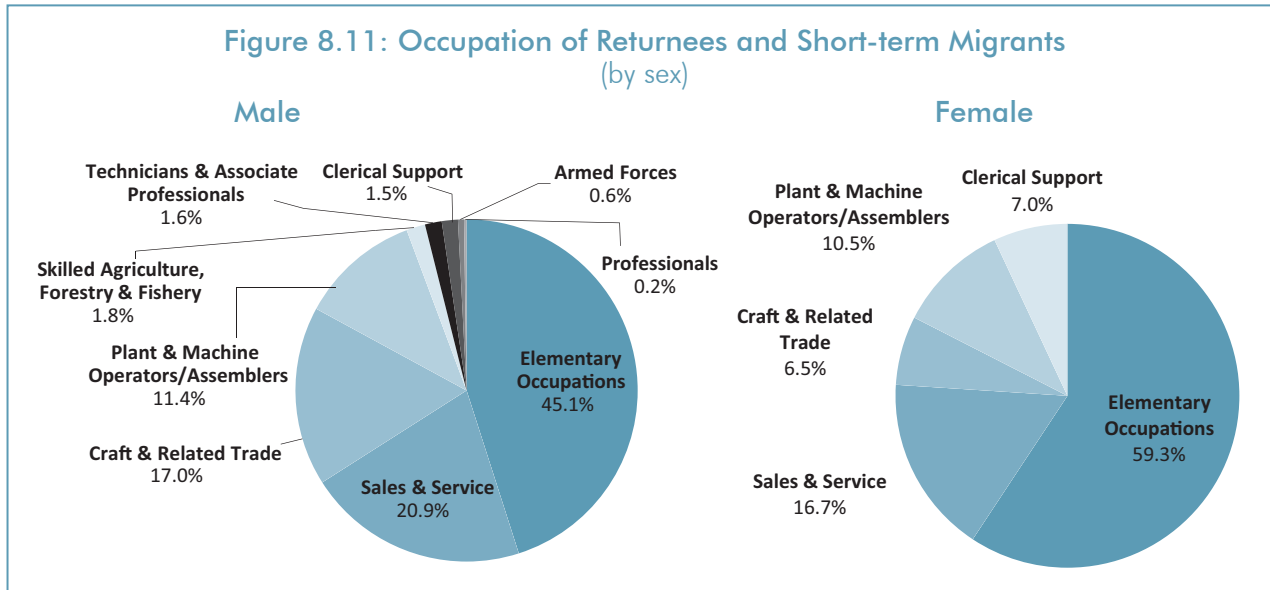
Calculation based on NLFS 2017/18 dataset

9. REMITTANCES

In 2022, Nepal ranked 9th globally in terms of remittances it received from abroad as a percentage of its gross domestic product (GDP). Accounting for 23.1 per cent equivalent of Nepal's GDP, remittance earnings were estimated to be more than USD 9.3 billion in 2022 (Ratha et al 2023).

International remittance earnings not only constitute the country's biggest source of foreign exchange but also account for a substantial share of Nepal's per capita income, plays an important role in boosting Nepal's economic growth, and in aiding poverty alleviation efforts as well (World Bank 2011; Sunam and MacCarthy 2016). It is estimated that 'a 10 per cent increase in official per-capita remittance leads to a 3.5 per cent decline in the proportion of people living in poverty' (Adams and Page 2005). The first evidence of this came with NLSS 2003/04, which showed that the increase in remittances between 1995/96 and 2003/04 contributed anywhere between a third to a half in reducing overall poverty headcount rate in that period. Further, NLSS 2010/11 also attributes the reduction in poverty from 42 per cent to 31 per cent between 1995/96 and 2002/03 and to 25 per cent in 2010/11 largely to the remittance-led economic growth.

Figure 9.1 shows the volume of remittances received from workers outside Nepal from 1990/91 to 2022/23, which has increased from NPR 2.1 billion (USD 49 million) in 1990/91 to NPR 1220.56 billion (USD 9.3 billion) in 2022/23. However, because the figures are based on Nepal Rastra Bank's data, they represent remittances received formally through financial institutions only. Most remittances, especially from India, are brought back by individuals or come via informal channels like *hundi*[18] and as such is not included in central bank's data. Although the government is trying to discourage informal means of remittance transfer and promote the use of banks and money transfer agencies, it is believed that a substantial proportion of remittances continue to enter the country outside of formal channels (Sharma and Thapa 2013). According to NLSS 2010/11, of the total remittances received, only 18.9 per cent came via financial institutions and 2.5 per cent in the form of *hundi*, while 78.6 per cent was carried in person.

9.1 Inflow and Outflow of Remittances

According to NLSS 2010/11, of the total remittance amount received by Nepali households, 20 per cent came from the internal sources, i.e., from within the country.

Figure 9.1: Remittance
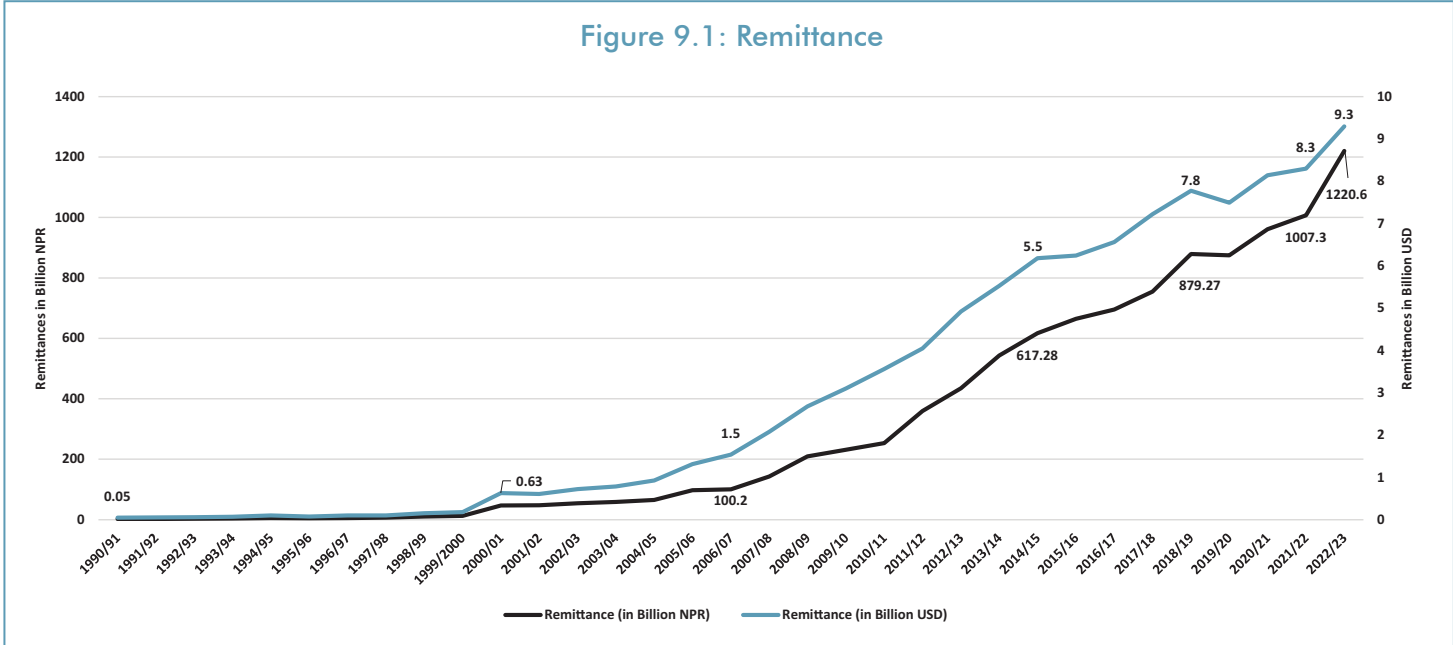
Source: MoF 2003, 2012, 2020; Nepal Rastra Bank, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023a

Note: Not adjusted for inflation. For exchange rate see: Nepal Rastra Bank 2023b. The period end (middle) value of exchange rate has been used for conversion. For FY 2022/23 period end (middle) rate for March/April has been used.

Figure 9.2: Share of Remittances (by destination)

India
14.0%

Other Countries
28.8%

Malaysia
10.5%

Saudi Arabia
12.4%

USA
4.2%

UK
3.7%

UAE
6.6%
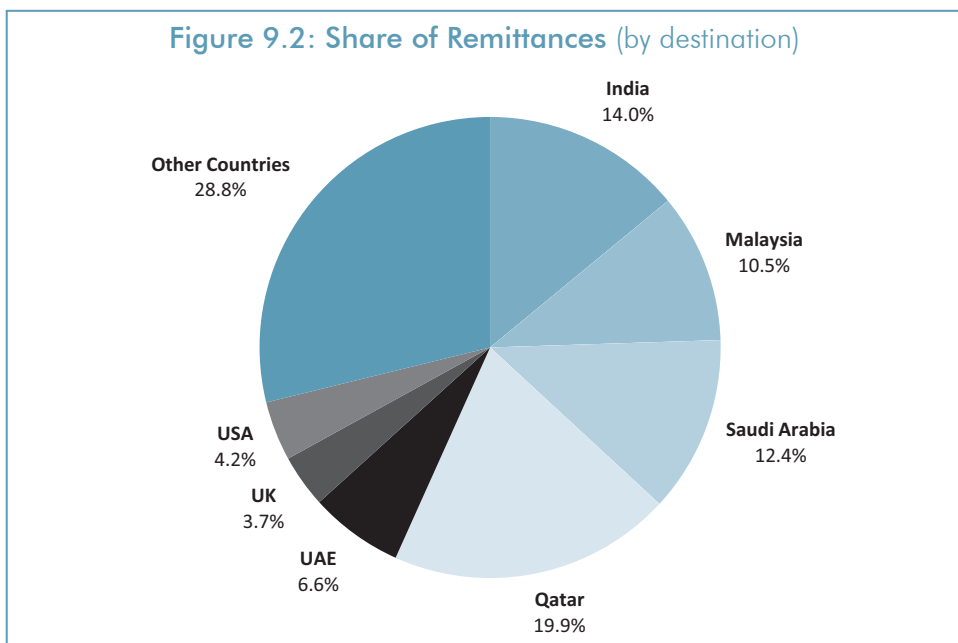
Qatar
19.9%

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

NLSS 2010/11 showed that the bulk of the remittances from international source (80%) came from migrants in the Gulf countries (Figure 9.2). Qatar (20%), Saudi Arabia (12%) and the UAE (7%) together accounted for around two-fifths of the total international remittances while significant proportions also came from India (14%) and Malaysia (11%).

Figure 9.3: Average Amount of Remittances from Various Destination (in '000 NPR)

Qatar	India	Saudi Arabia	Malaysia	UAE	USA	UK	Other Countries
115.8	29.5	108.6	93.5	133.1	254.1	164.8	93.3
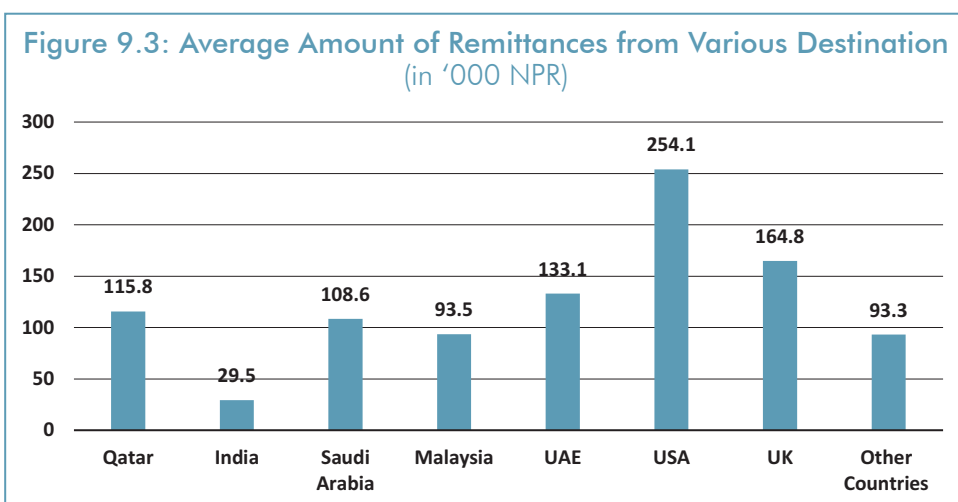
Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

Figure 9.4: Remittance Inflow in and Outflow from Nepal, 1993-2022
(in million USD)
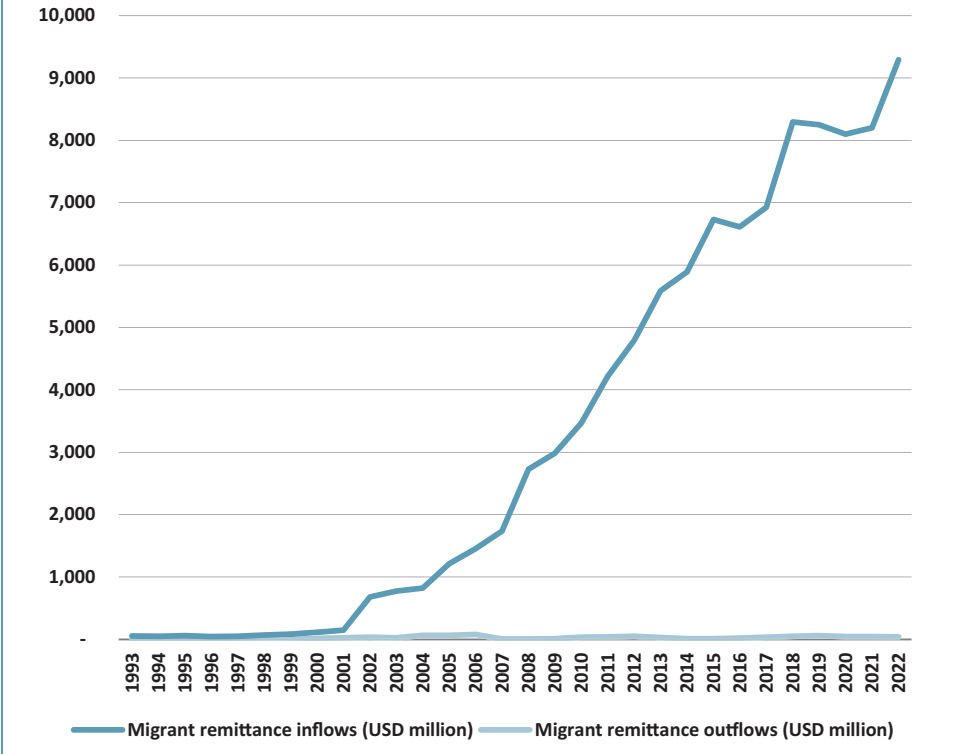
Source: World Bank 2023

Note: Not adjusted for inflation.

As reported by NLSS 2010/11, the average remittances received from India was much lower compared to other countries (Figure 9.3). The average from the USA was nearly eight times larger than that from India, the destination to host the largest number of Nepalis (see Figure 3.17 in section 3).

World Bank data shows that the remittance inflow into Nepal has increased rapidly over the years with the latest figure being an estimated USD 9.3 billion in 2022 while the outflow has remained low compared to inflow in the last two decades (Figure 9.4).

Qatar, Saudi Arabia, India, United Arab Emirates and United States were the top five sources of remittances over the period 2010-2017 (Figure 9.5). Figure 9.5 presents the top five destination countries that send the highest amount of remittances to Nepal. Included in the list are Malaysia and the GCC countries (with the exception of Oman, for which the data is not available) since they are

Figure 9.5: Remittance Inflow
(in million USD)

Legend: Qatar, Saudi Arabia, India, United Arab Emirates, United States, Kuwait, Malaysia, South Korea, Bahrain
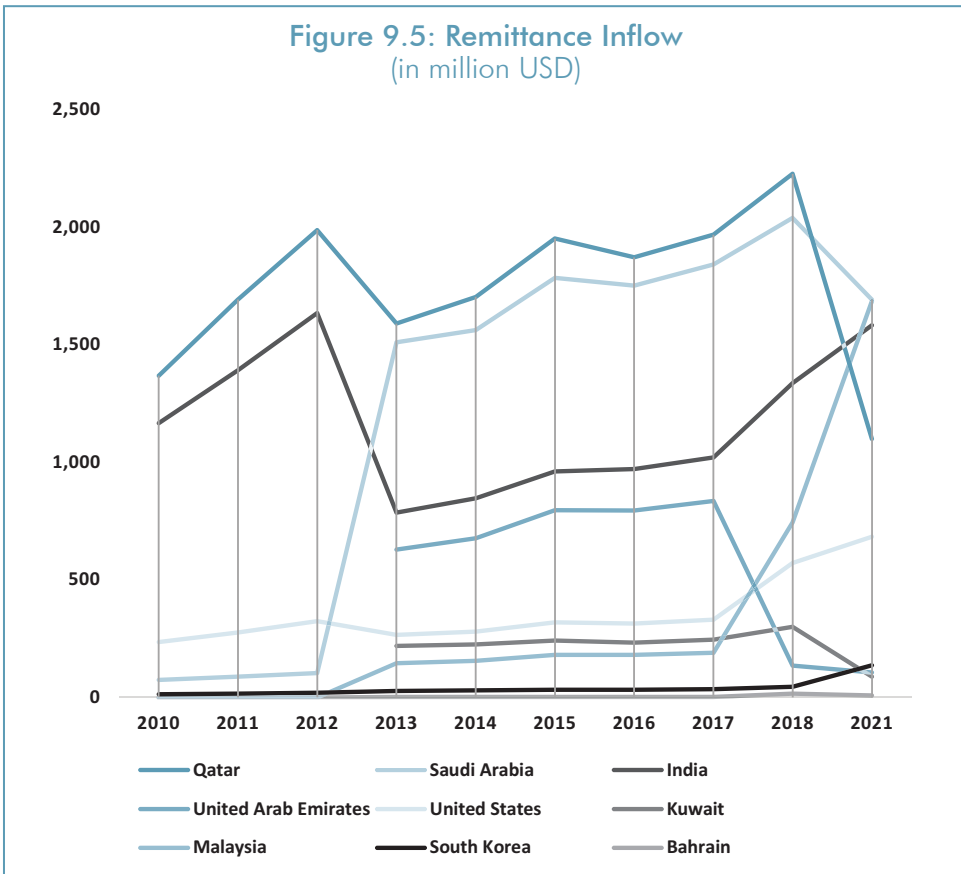
Note: Remittance inflow data for 2019 and 2020 is not available and for the UAE not available for 2010, 2011 and 2012.
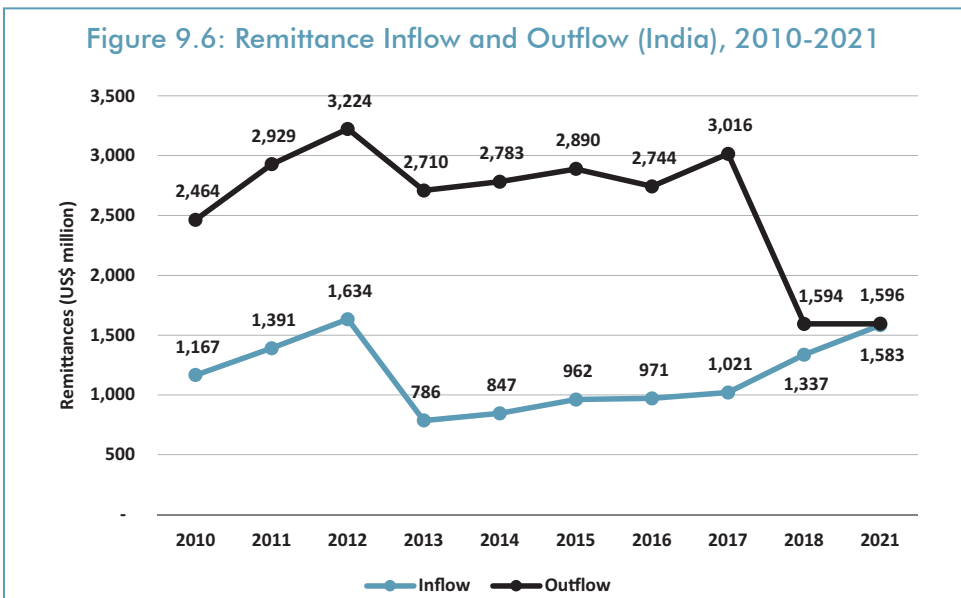
Figure 9.6: Remittance Inflow and Outflow (India), 2010-2021

Note: Data for remittance inflow and outflow for India is not available for 2019 and 2020.

the top destination of labour migrants from Nepal.

India is one of the most popular destinations for Nepali migrants. However, there is no official data in relation to migration and numbers of migrants in India. Looking at the remittance inflow and outflow data provided by the World Bank, remittance outflow to India is almost double the inflow into Nepal, with the outflow reaching an all-time high of USD 3.0 billion in 2017 (Figure 9.6).

9.2 Age of Individuals Sending Remittances

According to NLSS 2010/11, more than 70 per cent of both internal and international remittance earnings were sent by individuals in the 15-44 age group, which is consistent with the higher mobility of this cohort (Figure 9.7). A further breakdown shows that the rate of remittance was slightly higher for the 30-44 group even though individuals aged 15-29 make up half of all migrants (Section 2: Figure 2.4). The age group 30-44 comprised only about a quarter of the total migrant population but contribute 38 per cent of the remittances. A reason for this could be that quite a few of the migrants aged 15-29 are students and therefore remit less.

Figure 9.7: Age of Individuals Sending Remittances

- Less than 15 years 0.7%
- 15-29 years 34.2%
- 30-44 years 37.8%
- 45-59 years 18.2%
- 60 years & above 9.2%
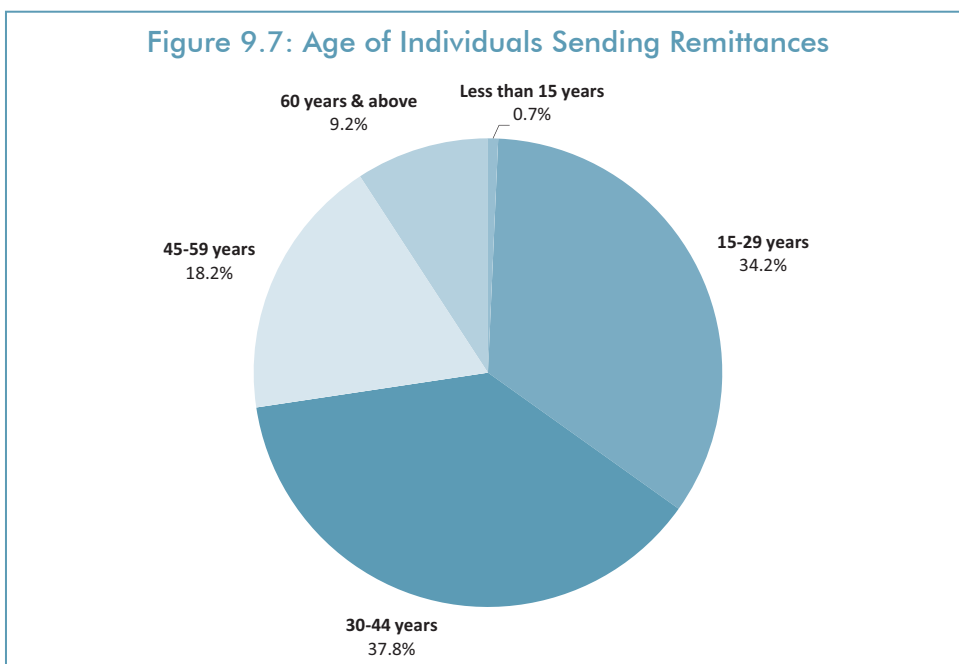
Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

9.3 Sex of Individuals Sending Remittances

Females' contribution to the remittances at 24 per cent, as reported by NLSS 2010/11 (Figure 9.8), was only slightly less than their proportion in the migrant population of 27 per cent (Figure 2.2).

Figure 9.8: Sex of Individuals Sending Remittances

Female
24.2%

Male
75.8%
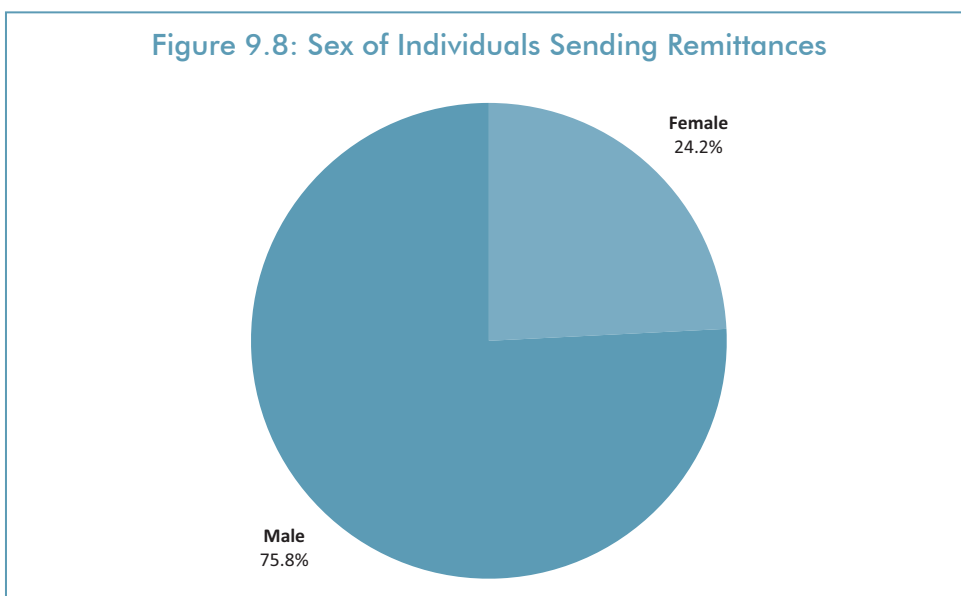
Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

9.4 Economic Status of Remittance-receiving Households

As reported in NLSS 2010/11, the amount of remittance received by households also varied by economic status (Figure 9.9). The wealthiest households received the highest proportion of remittances from migrants both in-country and abroad, and the pattern remains the same even when considering remittance earnings from internal and international sources separately (Figure 9.10).[19] This underscores the fact that a household's earnings from remittance are, among other factors, a function of its existing resources in that, the stronger a household's financial background, the higher its remittance earnings. Migrants from poorer households often lack the means, social connection and finance due to which they are unable to reach highly remunerative jobs, thus, limiting the amount of remittance they can sent back home.
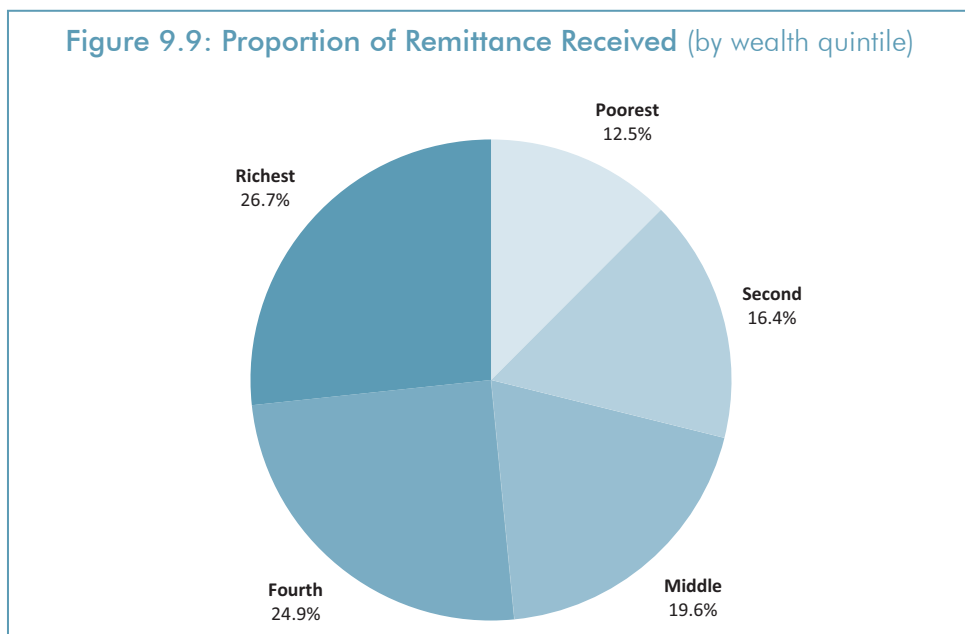
Figure 9.9: Proportion of Remittance Received (by wealth quintile)

Poorest
12.5%

Second
16.4%

Middle
19.6%

Fourth
24.9%

Richest
26.7%

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

Figure 9.10: Proportion of Remittance Received
(by wealth quintile and source)

Internal Source

Poorest
11.0%

Second
15.4%

Middle
18.7%

Fourth
27.0%

Richest
28.0%

External Source

Poorest
14.5%

Second
17.8%

Middle
20.9%

Fourth
22.0%

Richest
24.9%
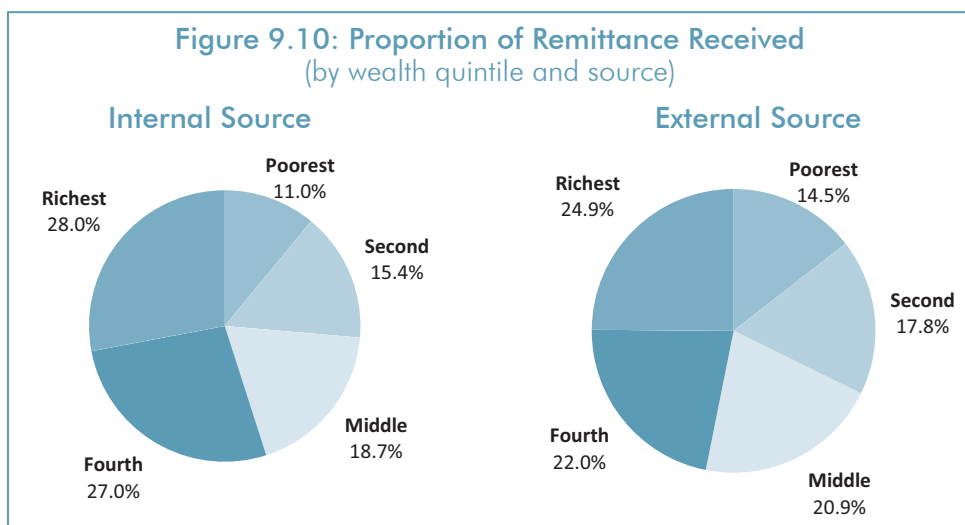
Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 dataset

9.5 Use of Remittances

According to NLSS 2003/04 and 2010/11, at the household level remittances have raised living standards by boosting consumption, and to some extent enabling repayment of loans and helping acquisition of property. Figure 9.11 illustrates the breakdown of a household's use of remittance earnings based on NLSS 2010/11. Almost 80 per cent was spent in meeting daily consumption needs. Repayment of loans (7%) appeared to be the next common item of expenditure from remittance earnings after consumption. It is reasonable to believe that some, if not all, of these loans were taken for the purpose of going for foreign employment. Recruitment agencies are often found charging huge fees to arrange international jobs while migrants also incur other costs associated with migrating abroad such as transportation costs from various parts of the country to Kathmandu and the cost of living in Kathmandu before departure. Capital formation, which may refer to the acquisition of fixed assets, accounted for the smallest proportion of the listed expenditures.

Figure 9.11: Use of Remittances

Education 3.5%
Capital Formation 2.4%
Other 3.6%
Household Property 4.5%
Repay Loans 7.1%
Daily Consumption 78.9%
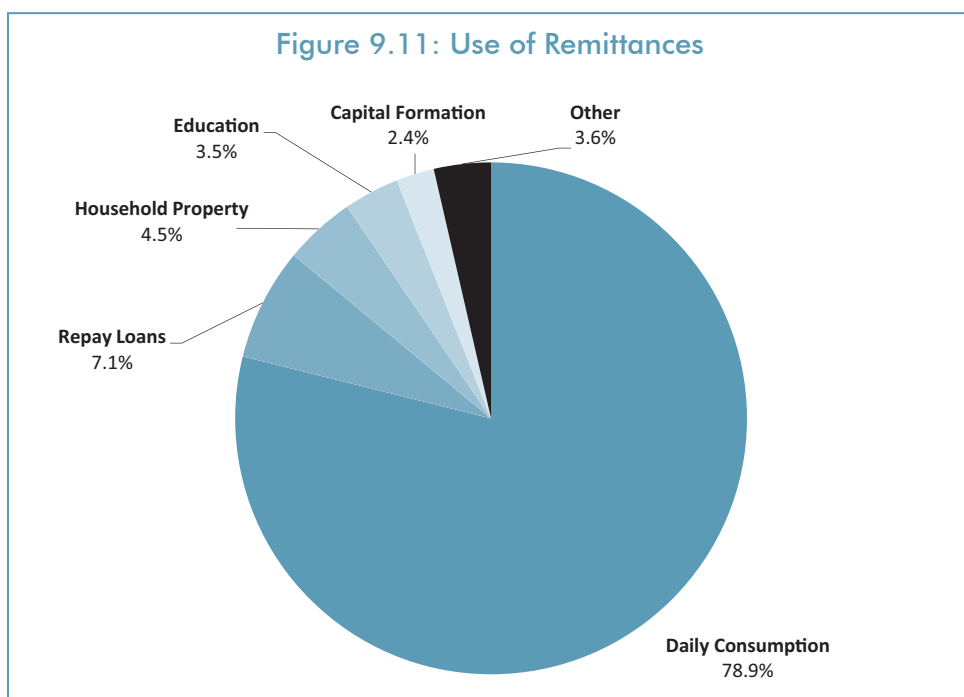
Source: Nepal Living Standard Survey 2010/11

10. CONCLUSION

The migration of Nepalis to international destinations has grown substantially over the years. Almost half the households in Nepal have at least one migrant abroad or a returnee. Most of the out-bound migration from Nepal is for work with the number of labour permits issued by the Department of Foreign Employment rising more than 400 times between 1993 and 2023.

India remains the top destination for foreign employment, followed by the Gulf countries (Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman), Malaysia, South Korea, and, finally, the developed countries of the West. In terms of sex, while the aforementioned countries are more favoured by men, more women than men are found going to destinations like Jordan and Cyprus.

There is a lack of consensus among the surveys considered in this paper regarding the origin of the population of internal migrants. That, however, is not the case with the data pertaining to the origin of international migrants in relation to destinations, with migrants from Karnali and Sudurpashchim provinces more likely to migrate to India while those from Madhesh and Koshi, showing a higher tendency to migrate to Malaysia and the Gulf countries.

Likewise, migration destinations were found to vary with the level of affluence, with the likelihood of having a member working abroad the highest for households that belong to the richer quintiles. And, among these, poorer households were likely to have migrants in India with the relatively better-off ones in the Gulf countries. In terms of proportion, the majority of individuals going to developed countries are from the richest quintile. A similar relationship exists between education levels and migrant destinations. Well-educated migrants either migrate to urban centres with the country, largely located in the Bagmati Province, or to developed countries in pursuit of high-skilled jobs. Migrants with little education and few vocational skills tend to migrate mostly to India and also to the Gulf region, where they seek employment in sectors that are labour-intensive.

Despite the increase in the number of Nepalis going abroad, including employment, internal migration continues to account for most of the migration in Nepal. Migration between rural areas within Nepal is the predominant feature of internal migration while the rural-to-urban migration has also been growing considerably, leading to a steep increase of the urban population over the years.

Unlike for women, employment is the primary driver of migration among male migrants, both within Nepal and internationally. Most women going to international destinations, mainly India, do so for reasons of marriage or as dependants. However,

more and more women are now on the move for work-related reasons, spanning a number of destinations across the globe. The Gulf and other developed countries attract this type of migration.

In terms of ethnicity of labour migrants, Hill Castes and Hill Dalits have a higher likelihood of migrating to India, whereas most Muslims have a propensity to migrate to the Gulf countries. For Hill Janajatis, Tarai Janajatis, Tarai Caste and Tarai Dalits the Gulf is the most favoured destination.

The Gulf has become the biggest source of remittances with the Nepali migrant worker base in these countries increasing more than ever. The countries in the Gulf account for nearly half of Nepal's total remittance earnings. However, even though the volume of total remittance earnings has increased dramatically over the years, data shows that remittances are used mostly for sustenance, i.e., to meet daily needs and repay loans.

Most male returnees and short-term migrants were found to have returned from India, Malaysia and Qatar while female returnees were mostly from India, followed by Malaysia and Australia. Foreign employment companies were the main medium used for migration by the male and female returnees and short-term migrants. In this cohort, the majority of males returned after the completion or termination of work, while in the case of females, it was mainly due to injury, sickness and disability. On average, female returnees and short-term migrants earned less than their male counterparts.

Since migration has a deep impact on the lives of individual Nepalis, the society and also the country, there is a need for more structured, consistent and periodic studies to help understand the various dimensions related to migration and its impact. This paper has made an attempt in that direction by providing a broad overview of the patterns of migration using extant sources. In the process, it has become evident that there is a need for some degree of coordination among surveys, particularly since these are few and far between. As all surveys have begun to look at some aspects of migration, were there to be a higher degree of consistency in defining at least a core set of indicators, comparability and trend analysis would be possible, helping generate a greater understanding of the rapidly evolving nature of migration and also in improving the management of the migration process itself.

ENDNOTES

1   The Department of Labour and Occupational Safety issued 11,920 labour permits to foreign workers between 1 January 2017 and 4 October 2023. See: Department of Labour and Occupational Safety n.d.

2   For more information and analysis from the Nepal Migration Survey, refer to Sharma et al 2014.

3   Our analysis in STATA is based on cross-section data of 5,988 households.

4   The first and second demographic and health surveys, conducted in 1996 (called the Family Health Survey then) and 2001, respectively, did not feature anything on migration and hence have been excluded from the discussion here.

5   Not to be confused with how the census defines an 'absentee' (see Table 1.2).

6   More popularly known as SLC and since 2017 called Secondary Education Examination (SEE), this standardised examination is taken at the end of primary plus ten years of schooling.

7   Studies reveal that because of the stigma attached to international migration in the South Asian context, families do not tend to reveal the migration of females. Haque 2005, 39-60; Sharma and Sharma 2011.

8   'Middle East' here includes 17 countries: Jordan, Cyprus, Turkey, Egypt, Yemen, Palestine, Syria, Israel, Iran. Iraq and Lebanon in addition to the six Gulf states, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

9   NLFS 2017/18 uses Nepal Standard Occupation Classification (NSOC) 1999 to categorise the occupation of the household members which is equivalent to International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88) https://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/isco88/publ4.htm.

10   The Maoist insurgency that began in 1996 has spread from its core areas by 1998/99 and the fighting intensified after November 2001 when the army was dragged into the conflict.

11   For more details on the policies and regulations affecting foreign labour migration from Nepal see, Sijapati and Limbu 2017.

12   It is only after fiscal year 2006/07 that the breakdown of labour permits by gender becomes available.

13   Intermediate level education in Nepal refers to higher secondary education or two years of schooling after the completion of SLC/SEE and is commonly known as +2. Prior to +2 the was conventional modes of intermediate education that included the Intermediate of Science (I. Sc.), Intermediate of Commerce (I. Comm.), Intermediate of Arts/Humanities (I. A.).

14   For the list of countries, see: Department of Foreign Employment n.d.

15   This is most likely due to the restructuring of local levels whereby large parts of rural Nepal were incorporated into urban administrative units (see Section 4.9 for more details).

16   This is most likely due to the restructuring of local levels whereby large parts of rural Nepal were incorporated into urban administrative units (see Section 4.9 for more details).

17   In Japan, South Korea and Israel, the average earning was comparatively higher than other countries. The data for the average earnings per month for Australia and USA are available for only one respondent each while for Japan, Israel, South Korea and Lebanon were eight, two, 12 and two respondents, respectively. Similarly, in case of Lebanon there were no male returnee respondents and for Israel and South Korea there were no female returnee respondents.

18   Hundi is 'a traditional system of remittance transfers widely practiced in the subcontinent whereby individuals in destination countries give money to an agent, who instructs his/her associates back home to deliver the money to the concerned individual referred by the remitter'. Sijapati and Limbu 2017, 17.

19   Remittances from migrants who have migrated within Nepal have been referred to as 'internal sources' and from those in foreign countries as 'external sources.'

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ANNEXES

Annex I: International Migrants (by country and sex)
(Nepal Labour Force Suvey 2017/18)

Destination Country	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Afghanistan	3,577	0.2	-	-	3,577	0.2
Algeria	1,064	0.1	-	-	1,064	0.1
Argentina	235	0	-	-	235	0
Australia	42,966	2.3	25,613	15.3	68,579	3.4
Austria	1,892	0.1	-	-	1,892	0.1
Bahrain	26,443	1.4	1,832	1.1	28,276	1.4
Bangladesh	6,825	0.4	754	0.4	7,579	0.4
Belgium	250	0	-	-	250	0
Brunei Darussalam	1,034	0.1	-	-	1,034	0.1
Bulgaria	1,502	0.1	-	-	1,502	0.1
Canada	2,052	0.1	740	0.4	2,792	0.1
Chile	4,037	0.2	-	-	4,037	0.2
China	9,212	0.5	1,206	0.7	10,418	0.5
Colombia	-	-	1,204	0.7	1,204	0.1
Croatia	239	0	-	-	239	0
Denmark	1,116	0.1	2,178	1.3	3,294	0.2
Finland	1,749	0.1	167	0.1	1,916	0.1
France	4,112	0.2	1,258	0.8	5,369	0.3
Georgia	-	-	-	-	-	-
Germany	4,558	0.2	1,338	0.8	5,895	0.3
Haiti	75	0	-	-	75	0
Hong Kong	4,330	0.2	5,555	3.3	9,885	0.5
Indonesia	1,416	0.1	-	-	1,416	0.1
Iraq	3,363	0.2	42	0	3,405	0.2
Ireland	698	0	-	-	698	0
Israel	4,597	0.2	2,239	1.3	6,837	0.3
Italy	440	0	-	-	440	0
Japan	38,528	2.1	21,178	12.6	59,706	2.9
Jordan	299	0	1,382	0.8	1,680	0.1
North Korea	2,363	0.1	-	-	2,363	0.1
South Korea	48,152	2.6	5,539	3.3	53,691	2.6
Kuwait	62,248	3.3	20,381	12.2	82,630	4.1
Kyrgyzstan	305	0	126	0.1	431	0

Destination Country	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Lebanon	413	0	448	0.3	861	0
Macao	5,042	0.3	-	-	5,042	0.2
Malaysia	461,883	24.7	7,248	4.3	469,131	23
Maldives	2,377	0.1	-	-	2,377	0.1
Mali	774	0	-	-	774	0
Mongolia	776	0	-	-	776	0
Netherlands	744	0	744	0.4	1,487	0.1
New Zealand	11,592	0.6	-	-	11,592	0.6
Oman	6,128	0.3	2,391	1.4	8,520	0.4
Pakistan	-	-	833	0.5	833	0
Philippines	1,939	0.1	-	-	1,939	0.1
Poland	2,587	0.1	-	-	2,587	0.1
Portugal	13,715	0.7	5,654	3.4	19,369	1
Qatar	432,765	23.1	4,244	2.5	437,009	21.4
Romania	2,153	0.1	-	-	2,153	0.1
Russian	1,734	0.1	-	-	1,734	0.1
Saudi Arabia	345,776	18.5	6,892	4.1	352,667	17.3
Singapore	896	0	-	-	896	0
South Africa	4,011	0.2	215	0.1	4,227	0.2
Spain	3,029	0.2	1,444	0.9	4,473	0.2
Sudan	629	0	-	-	629	0
Sweden	1,586	0.1	576	0.3	2,163	0.1
Switzerland	141	0	339	0.2	481	0
Taiwan	206	0	-	-	206	0
Tanzania	1,197	0.1	-	-	1,197	0.1
Thailand	1,313	0.1	-	-	1,313	0.1
Turkey	933	0	-	-	933	0
Turkmenistan	-	-	211	0.1	211	0
United Arab Emirates	210,985	11.3	20,103	12	231,088	11.3
United Kingdom	8,151	0.4	9,131	5.5	17,282	0.8
United States of America	51,654	2.8	14,054	8.4	65,709	3.2
Yemen	2,441	0.1	269	0.2	2,710	0.1
Others	12,983	0.7	-	-	12,983	0.6
Total	1,870,230	100	167,528	100	2,037,758	100

Annex II: : International Migrants (by country and province)
(Nepal Labour Force Survey 2017/18)

Country	Koshi		Madhesh		Bagmati		Gandaki		Lumbini		Karnali		Sudurpash-chim		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Afghanistan	935	0.2	-	-	1,481	0.4	628	0.2	533	0.2	-	-	-	-	3,577	0.2
Algeria	992	0.2	-	-	-	-	72	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,064	0.1
Argentina	-	-	-	-	-	-	235	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	235	0
Australia	5,096	1.2	-	-	47,597	11.3	4,871	1.7	9,248	2.7	508	0.9	1,259	2	68,579	3.4
Austria	-	-	-	-	1,573	0.4	319	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,892	0.1
Bahrain	5,466	1.3	-	-	3,680	0.9	7,559	2.6	11,146	3.2	424	0.7	-	-	28,276	1.4
Bangladesh	-	-	5,343	1.2	680	0.2	510	0.2	-	-	-	-	1,047	1.7	7,579	0.4
Belgium	-	-	-	-	-	-	250	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	250	0
Brunei Darussalam	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,034	0.3	-	-	-	-	1,034	0.1
Bulgaria	-	-	1,502	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,502	0.1
Canada	-	-	-	-	107	0	213	0.1	2,011	0.6	-	-	462	0.7	2,792	0.1
China	1,957	0.5	-	-	6,397	1.5	385	0.1	1,061	0.3	-	-	619	1	10,418	0.5
Chile	-	-	-	-	4,037	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,037	0.2
Colombia	1,204	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,204	0.1
Croatia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	239	0.1	-	-	-	-	239	0
Denmark	2,178	0.5	-	-	-	-	108	0	-	-	-	-	1,007	1.6	3,294	0.2
Finland	-	-	-	-	-	-	501	0.2	1,416	0.4	-	-	-	-	1,916	0.1
France	-	-	-	-	2,871	0.7	1,275	0.4	1,223	0.4	-	-	-	-	5,369	0.3

Country	Koshi		Madhesh		Bagmati		Gandaki		Lumbini		Karnali		Sudurpash-chim		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Germany	380	0.1	-	-	4,386	1	318	0.1	811	0.2	-	-	-	-	5,895	0.3
Haiti	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	75	0.1	75	0
Hong Kong	778	0.2	-	-	1,825	0.4	3,493	1.2	3,790	1.1	-	-	-	-	9,885	0.5
Indonesia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,416	0.4	-	-	-	-	1,416	0.1
Iraq	426	0.1	2,214	0.5	573	0.1	193	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,405	0.2
Ireland	-	-	-	-	139	0	215	0.1	343	0.1	-	-	-	-	698	0
Israel	691	0.2	491	0.1	5,375	1.3	280	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,837	0.3
Italy	-	-	-	-	-	-	440	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	440	0
Japan	4,259	1	622	0.1	29,185	6.9	15,060	5.2	7,112	2	115	0.2	3354	5.4	59,706	2.9
Jordan	-	-	-	-	1,272	0.3	299	0.1	-	-	-	-	110	0.2	1,680	0.1
North Korea	182	0	401	0.1	951	0.2	556	0.2	273	0.1	-	-	-	-	2,363	0.1
South Korea	10,133	2.5	868	0.2	15,121	3.6	9,032	3.1	13,818	4	1,844	3.2	2876	4.7	53,691	2.6
Kuwait	15,697	3.8	12,117	2.7	10,169	2.4	15,159	5.2	27,679	8	1,174	2	635	1	82,630	4.1
Kyrgyzstan	305	0.1	-	-	126	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	431	0
Lebanon	378	0.1	-	-	448	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	35	0.1	861	0
Macao	1,704	0.4	-	-	1,220	0.3	2,118	0.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,042	0.2
Malaysia	111,356	27.2	164,413	36.7	65,328	15.5	21,894	7.5	57,355	16.5	25,170	43	23615	38.3	469,131	23
Maldives	-	-	564	0.1	685	0.2	877	0.3	-	-	-	-	252	0.4	2,377	0.1
Mali	-	-	-	-	774	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	774	0
Mongolia	-	-	776	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	776	0
Netherlands	-	-	-	-	857	0.2	630	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,487	0.1
New Zealand	-	-	-	-	11,058	2.6	349	0.1	-	-	-	-	185	0.3	11,592	0.6
Oman	2,547	0.6	-	-	1,667	0.4	1,893	0.7	2,412	0.7	-	-	-	-	8,520	0.4
Pakistan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	833	0.2	-	-	-	-	833	0
Philippines	-	-	1,939	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,939	0.1

Country	Koshi		Madhesh		Bagmati		Gandaki		Lumbini		Karnali		Sudurpashchim		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Poland	-	-	-	-	922	0.2	272	0.1	1,394	0.4	-	-	-	-	2,587	0.1
Portugal	314	0.1	13,173	2.9	3,803	0.9	1,358	0.5	193	0.1	-	-	529	0.9	19,369	1
Qatar	91,875	22.5	124,296	27.7	49,424	11.7	80,445	27.7	71,738	20.6	9,543	16.3	9,688	15.7	437,009	21.4
Romania	560	0.1	-	-	1,592	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,153	0.1
Russian	-	-	-	-	-	-	323	0.1	754	0.2	657	1.1	-	-	1,734	0.1
Saudi Arabia	79,214	19.4	100,645	22.5	50,619	12	49,066	16.9	56,124	16.1	10,872	18.6	6,128	9.9	352,667	17.3
Singapore	-	-	-	-	896	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	896	0
South Africa	-	-	-	-	596	0.1	847	0.3	2,784	0.8	-	-	-	-	4,227	0.2
Spain	-	-	-	-	-	-	757	0.3	3,716	1.1	-	-	-	-	4,473	0.2
Sudan	-	-	-	-	181	0	449	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	629	0
Sweden	-	-	-	-	1,471	0.3	692	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,163	0.1
Switzerland	-	-	-	-	339	0.1	141	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	481	0
Taiwan	-	-	-	-	-	-	206	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	206	0
Tanzania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,197	0.3	-	-	-	-	1,197	0.1
Thailand	1,119	0.3	-	-	-	-	194	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,313	0.1
Turkey	99	0	-	-	617	0.1	139	0	78	0	-	-	-	-	933	0
Turkmenistan	-	-	-	-	211	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	211	0
United Arab Emirates	63,655	15.6	10,530	2.3	41,436	9.8	49,963	17.2	52,685	15.1	4,600	7.9	8,220	13.3	231,088	11.3
United Kingdom	1,251	0.3	-	-	8,376	2	3,767	1.3	3,359	1	-	-	529	0.9	17,282	0.8
United States of America	814	0.2	1,802	0.4	38,766	9.2	11,192	3.9	10,338	3	1,827	3.1	970	1.6	65,709	3.2
Yemen	788	0.2	1,621	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	300	0.5	-	-	2,710	0.1
Others	2,356	0.6	4,856	1.1	3,758	0.9	489	0.2	1	0	1,457	2.5	66	0.1	12,983	0.6
Total	408,708	100	448,171	100	422,587	100	290,029	100	348,114	100	58,491	100	61,657	100	2,037,758	100

Annex III: Number of Labour Permits Issued, 2004/05–09/10 (by district)

District	Labour Permits Issued (via Recruiting Agency)							
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10		
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Male	Female	Total
Achham	1	33	56	77	54	144	-	144
Arghakhanchi	90	1,309	1,551	1,512	1,499	1,276	10	1,286
Baglung	321	3,778	3,368	3,731	3,168	2,458	10	2,468
Baitadi	19	195	252	540	567	350	-	350
Bajhang	1	57	52	66	69	112	-	112
Bajura	2	27	26	28	125	116	-	116
Banke	73	1,168	1,279	1,276	1,185	1,354	10	1,364
Bara	117	1,495	1,608	2,590	2,137	1,837	22	1,859
Bardiya	70	1,102	1,053	1,127	860	1,042	4	1,046
Bhaktapur	81	840	756	991	1,002	448	12	460
Bhojpur	214	2,549	2,555	3,234	2,894	2,447	18	2,465
Chitwan	544	5,665	4,910	6,451	5,226	3,618	31	3,649
Dadeldhura	24	139	319	979	438	574	2	576
Dailekh	14	131	272	385	336	372	4	376
Dang	196	2,891	3,322	4,152	4,194	4,247	21	4,268
Darchula	16	342	265	619	182	303	4	307
Dhading	316	2,916	2,935	3,631	3,062	2,809	20	2,829
Dhankuta	339	2,941	2,529	2,986	2,578	2,705	23	2,728
Dhanusha	1,450	13,845	12,127	13,002	12,756	10,550	5	10,555
Dolakha	143	1,411	1,544	1,725	1,800	1,457	55	1,512
Dolpa	3	8	11	34	33	10	-	10
Doti	4	49	64	95	88	75	-	75
East Nawalparasi	334	3,345	3,210	4,187	3,675	3,108	14	3,122
East Rukum	29	360	363	463	443	419	-	419
Gorkha	325	3,570	3,599	4,519	3,802	2,865	23	2,888
Gulmi	199	2,148	2,053	2,364	2,030	1,689	6	1,695
Humla	10	35	20	124	18	37	2	39
Ilam	223	2,169	2,338	3,465	3,916	3,679	52	3,731
Jajarkot	5	64	167	385	303	357	3	360
Jhapa	936	9,700	8,236	11,078	11,268	8,729	126	8,855
Jumla	4	6	12	45	36	33	-	33
Kailali	35	386	474	669	736	1,554	13	1,567
Kalikot	1	15	16	59	86	90	-	90
Kanchanpur	50	740	916	975	841	911	5	916
Kapilvastu	117	1,362	1,403	1,581	1,457	1,601	14	1,615
Kaski	483	4,735	4,302	4,915	4,488	2,872	29	2,901
Kathmandu	206	2,267	2,415	3,260	2,750	1,411	49	1,460
Kavrepalanchowk	178	2,309	2,679	3,391	3,032	2,399	68	2,467
Khotang	355	3,559	3,385	4,373	3,389	2,832	15	2,847

Note: Following the 2015 Constitution and the introdcution of federalism in the country, two new districts were added to the existing 75 districts by splitting Nawalparasi into Nawalparasi East and Nawalparasi West and Rukum into Rukum East and Rukum West. The Foreign Employment Information Management System (FEIMS) database has been updated to reflect

District	Labour Permits Issued (via Recruiting Agency)							
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10		
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Male	Female	Total
Lalitpur	83	1,263	1,215	1,431	1,427	810	23	833
Lamjung	269	2,730	2,573	3,125	2,900	2,255	19	2,274
Mahottari	814	7,622	7,562	8,175	7,300	17,145	32	17,177
Makwanpur	142	1,988	2,440	3,586	3,366	2,902	91	2,993
Manang	4	22	66	143	157	70	1	71
Morang	655	7,605	7,239	9,004	8,311	7,674	82	7,756
Mugu	-	16	11	75	109	33	1	34
Mustang	3	40	41	50	85	43	2	45
Myagdi	226	2,458	1,939	2,452	1,938	1,418	10	1,428
Nuwakot	198	2,364	2,408	3,152	2,813	2,138	68	2,206
Okhaldhunga	188	1,704	1,765	2,049	1,859	1,519	21	1,540
Palpa	251	2,824	2,802	3,617	3,011	2,333	17	2,350
Panchthar	304	3,367	3,327	4,221	3,702	3,623	28	3,651
Parbat	189	2,384	2,136	2,582	2,194	1,438	2	1,440
Parsa	73	912	1,167	1,398	1,127	923	5	928
Pyuthan	44	720	870	1,005	1,077	923	1	924
Ramechap	138	1,648	1,639	2,515	1,994	1,653	41	1,694
Rasuwa	43	560	561	908	522	510	24	534
Rautahat	90	1,698	1,742	1,662	1,760	1,682	9	1,691
Rolpa	132	1,652	2,464	3,102	3,003	2,940	4	2,944
Rupandehi	354	4,893	4,181	5,103	4,618	3,187	17	3,204
Salyan	65	1,073	1,516	3,466	2,380	2,538	12	2,550
Sankhuwasabha	279	2,491	2,556	2,971	2,339	2,346	18	2,364
Saptari	447	4,606	4,872	5,928	4,980	5,340	6	5,346
Sarlahi	219	2,946	3,086	4,846	4,139	3,965	30	3,995
Sindhuli	169	2,145	2,419	2,896	2,859	2,619	65	2,684
Sindhupalchowk	194	2,235	2,288	2,694	3,085	2,353	204	2,557
Siraha	884	9,231	8,509	9,645	9,107	7,965	6	7,971
Solukhumbu	72	807	766	1,000	926	758	25	783
Sunsari	366	4,443	4,720	6,649	5,577	4,559	61	4,620
Surkhet	43	421	704	816	662	860	2	862
Syangja	443	4,456	4,086	4,740	4,077	2,886	10	2,896
Tanahu	509	5,030	5,072	6,626	5,230	4,240	17	4,257
Taplejung	187	1,936	1,842	2,662	2,427	1,927	15	1,942
Tehrathum	195	1,997	1,934	2,056	1,718	1,578	6	1,584
Udaypur	246	2,687	2,968	3,687	3,443	3,400	45	3,445
West Nawalparasi	231	2,320	2,227	2,909	2,554	2,161	10	2,171
West Rukum	70	851	859	1,080	1,042	986	3	989
Total	16,347	177,806	175,014	219,110	196,341	78,590	1,703	180,293

these changes, the system still records the erstwhile districts since the data on districts is based on the passport issued and these changes are not reflected in the older passports. The data on labour permits for these four districts are extrapolations based on the proportion of absentee and total population for the respective districts as per the 2021 census.

Annex III (contd..): Number of Labour Permits Issued, 2010/11–12/13

Districts	Labour Permits Issued (via Recruiting Agency)								
	2010/11			2011/12			2012/13		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Achham	341	5	346	449	2	451	549	7	556
Arghakhanchi	2,151	18	2,169	2,155	27	2,182	3,347	79	3,426
Baglung	4,533	21	4,554	4,803	47	4,850	5,799	94	5,893
Baitadi	495	-	495	554	1	555	1,358	3	1,361
Bajhang	165	-	165	192	-	192	469	1	470
Bajura	89	-	89	176	3	179	359	4	363
Banke	2,606	16	2,622	2,513	25	2,538	4,714	101	4,815
Bara	3,958	21	3,979	4,120	38	4,158	7,036	166	7,202
Bardiya	2,107	26	2,133	1,927	34	1,961	3,752	106	3,858
Bhaktapur	1,069	24	1,093	1,205	49	1,254	1,400	96	1,496
Bhojpur	3,019	61	3,080	3,218	89	3,307	4,926	269	5,195
Chitwan	5,209	81	5,290	5,662	172	5,834	8,943	468	9,411
Dadeldhura	845	4	849	1,596	16	1,612	1,036	13	1,049
Dailekh	594	3	597	667	5	672	1,353	23	1,376
Dang	5,588	42	5,630	5,027	52	5,079	8,003	196	8,199
Darchula	335	1	336	365	1	366	672	4	676
Dhading	5,408	62	5,470	5,340	139	5,479	6,973	362	7,335
Dhankuta	2,701	47	2,748	2,635	56	2,691	3,996	192	4,188
Dhanusha	12,985	15	13,000	11,622	21	11,643	18,849	47	18,896
Dolakha	1,861	66	1,927	2,207	154	2,361	3,713	436	4,149
Dolpa	11	-	11	9	-	9	13	1	14
Doti	113	-	113	206	1	207	453	4	457
East Nawalparasi	5,184	55	5,239	4,924	100	5,024	7,047	230	7,277
East Rukum	642	-	642	707	2	709	1,003	3	1,006
Gorkha	4,018	67	4,085	4,284	131	4,415	5,623	286	5,909
Gulmi	2,967	39	3,006	2,917	44	2,961	5,234	137	5,371
Humla	71	1	72	109	4	113	43	2	45
Ilam	4,764	119	4,883	4,770	265	5,035	6,036	565	6,601
Jajarkot	955	5	960	814	6	820	1,335	7	1,342
Jhapa	11,626	393	12,019	11,131	647	11,778	16,568	1,413	17,981
Jumla	49	-	49	69	-	69	173	5	178
Kailali	10,488	34	10,522	7,231	71	7,302	2,484	89	2,573
Kalikot	111	-	111	146	5	151	490	3	493
Kanchanpur	1,813	13	1,826	1,464	18	1,482	2,905	52	2,957
Kapilvastu	3,267	19	3,286	3,117	35	3,152	6,358	80	6,438
Kaski	4,275	69	4,344	4,249	116	4,365	6,354	274	6,628
Kathmandu	2,442	164	2,606	3,099	247	3,346	5,269	685	5,954
Kavrepalanchowk	3,072	106	3,178	4,171	201	4,372	7,283	732	8,015
Khotang	3,934	48	3,982	4,067	116	4,183	6,220	255	6,475

Districts	Labour Permits Issued (via Recruiting Agency)								
	2010/11			2011/12			2012/13		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Lalitpur	1,157	51	1,208	1,718	73	1,791	2,366	215	2,581
Lamjung	3,169	43	3,212	3,034	66	3,100	4,335	150	4,485
Mahottari	14,554	9	14,563	9,452	24	9,476	12,562	46	12,608
Makwanpur	3,832	133	3,965	4,592	240	4,832	7,735	793	8,528
Manang	44	1	45	25	4	29	17	4	21
Morang	11,068	274	11,342	10,354	440	10,794	15,794	1,002	16,796
Mugu	53	1	54	47	4	51	77	3	80
Mustang	34	2	36	18	4	22	38	10	48
Myagdi	2,410	42	2,452	2,365	36	2,401	3,274	106	3,380
Nuwakot	2,986	95	3,081	3,645	186	3,831	6,048	692	6,740
Okhaldhunga	2,024	38	2,062	1,905	86	1,991	3,063	200	3,263
Palpa	3,670	29	3,699	4,131	54	4,185	5,394	128	5,522
Panchthar	4,368	64	4,432	3,882	121	4,003	5,591	311	5,902
Parbat	2,642	24	2,666	2,890	31	2,921	3,747	83	3,830
Parsa	1,877	14	1,891	2,225	19	2,244	3,718	87	3,805
Pyuthan	1,725	8	1,733	1,561	10	1,571	2,611	35	2,646
Ramechap	2,421	69	2,490	3,100	142	3,242	4,257	435	4,692
Rasuwa	421	14	435	561	85	646	875	190	1,065
Rautahat	3,110	6	3,116	3,277	21	3,298	6,526	82	6,608
Rolpa	3,507	8	3,515	3,665	21	3,686	5,587	68	5,655
Rupandehi	5,914	64	5,978	5,867	119	5,986	10,563	293	10,856
Salyan	4,053	13	4,066	4,896	54	4,950	5,169	88	5,257
Sankhuwasabha	2,878	33	2,911	2,247	44	2,291	3,382	163	3,545
Saptari	8,212	14	8,226	7,314	18	7,332	11,246	29	11,275
Sarlahi	6,122	38	6,160	5,653	68	5,721	10,066	271	10,337
Sindhuli	4,195	66	4,261	4,918	173	5,091	6,299	406	6,705
Sindhupalchowk	2,629	164	2,793	3,284	498	3,782	5,974	1,725	7,699
Siraha	11,122	7	11,129	9,212	11	9,223	13,918	27	13,945
Solukhumbu	1,024	38	1,062	1,093	118	1,211	1,608	262	1,870
Sunsari	7,024	175	7,199	7,325	298	7,623	10,987	611	11,598
Surkhet	1,667	8	1,675	1,349	7	1,356	2,826	73	2,899
Syangja	4,600	45	4,645	4,604	82	4,686	7,615	163	7,778
Tanahu	5,898	31	5,929	6,208	62	6,270	8,212	165	8,377
Taplejung	2,247	37	2,284	2,036	78	2,114	2,861	146	3,007
Tehrathum	2,031	20	2,051	1,949	34	1,983	2,864	84	2,948
Udaypur	4,033	97	4,130	4,144	127	4,271	6,013	347	6,360
West Nawalparasi	3,601	33	3,634	3,419	62	3,481	4,896	140	5,036
West Rukum	1,503	12	1,515	1,649	36	1,685	2,345	52	2,397
Total	259,686	3,465	263,151	253,531	6,496	60,027	78,597	17,175	395,772

Annex III (contd..): Number of Labour Permits Issued, 2013/14–15/16

Districts	Labour Permits Issued (via Recruiting Agency)								
	2013/14			2014/15			2015/16		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Achham	770	-	770	982	5	987	528	5	533
Arghakhanchi	3,575	51	3,626	3,822	70	3,892	3,246	47	3,293
Baglung	5,788	88	5,876	6,284	99	6,383	4,841	72	4,913
Baitadi	1,763	3	1,766	1,826	7	1,833	1,168	7	1,175
Bajhang	676	1	677	953	1	954	319	1	320
Bajura	523	5	528	732	4	736	470	6	476
Banke	5,571	63	5,634	5,882	90	5,972	5,389	108	5,497
Bara	8,872	145	9,017	8,811	184	8,995	7,362	176	7,538
Bardiya	4,325	87	4,412	4,851	92	4,943	4,092	82	4,174
Bhaktapur	1,519	92	1,611	1,300	134	1,434	969	134	1,103
Bhojpur	5,738	226	5,964	5,723	288	6,011	4,550	221	4,771
Chitwan	9,221	407	9,628	8,268	414	8,682	6,491	382	6,873
Dadeldhura	1,135	4	1,139	1,295	9	1,304	677	7	684
Dailekh	2,022	27	2,049	2,181	18	2,199	1,579	23	1,602
Dang	9,899	167	10,066	9,922	249	10,171	8,272	221	8,493
Darchula	939	7	946	1,163	11	1,174	805	2	807
Dhading	7,377	400	7,777	6,965	463	7,428	5,180	359	5,539
Dhankuta	4,392	172	4,564	4,337	198	4,535	3,601	164	3,765
Dhanusha	21,440	52	21,492	22,193	46	22,239	19,891	56	19,947
Dolakha	4,164	494	4,658	3,958	536	4,494	2,493	423	2,916
Dolpa	22	1	23	47	2	49	70	16	86
Doti	615	1	616	751	4	755	471	9	480
East Nawalparasi	7,529	170	7,699	7,370	168	7,538	6,164	150	6,314
East Rukum	1,169	3	1,172	1,349	5	1,354	998	2	1,000
Gorkha	6,157	251	6,408	5,942	283	6,225	4,561	268	4,829
Gulmi	5,035	82	5,117	5,589	101	5,690	4,281	71	4,352
Humla	84	2	86	75	4	79	73	2	75
Ilam	6,159	471	6,630	5,884	558	6,442	5,156	474	5,630
Jajarkot	1,897	11	1,908	2,122	19	2,141	1,428	7	1,435
Jhapa	17,568	1,155	18,723	16,839	1,327	18,166	14,522	1,186	15,708
Jumla	297	-	297	382	2	384	419	6	425
Kailali	3,306	93	3,399	3,613	58	3,671	2,295	72	2,367
Kalikot	727	3	730	799	7	806	507	4	511
Kanchanpur	3,425	38	3,463	3,569	52	3,621	2,655	45	2,700
Kapilvastu	7,090	55	7,145	7,997	59	8,056	7,688	57	7,745
Kaski	5,735	225	5,960	5,482	222	5,704	4,434	223	4,657
Kathmandu	5,153	663	5,816	4,167	826	4,993	3,206	775	3,981
Kavrepalanchowk	7,668	761	8,429	7,048	767	7,815	4,910	649	5,559
Khotang	7,002	275	7,277	7,219	311	7,530	5,914	251	6,165

Districts	Labour Permits Issued (via Recruiting Agency)								
	2013/14			2014/15			2015/16		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Lalitpur	2,537	255	2,792	2,086	316	2,402	1,507	287	1,794
Lamjung	4,430	126	4,556	4,081	141	4,222	3,441	145	3,586
Mahottari	15,657	46	15,703	16,669	54	16,723	15,253	41	15,294
Makwanpur	8,786	831	9,617	8,272	893	9,165	6,340	815	7,155
Manang	63	6	69	76	16	92	43	5	48
Morang	17,179	734	17,913	16,771	852	17,623	14,419	702	15,121
Mugu	140	5	145	258	3	261	204	1	205
Mustang	49	10	59	53	8	61	46	12	58
Myagdi	3,165	115	3,280	3,111	111	3,222	2,597	92	2,689
Nuwakot	6,588	676	7,264	6,000	721	6,721	4,105	557	4,662
Okhaldhunga	3,694	160	3,854	3,896	233	4,129	2,702	188	2,890
Palpa	5,689	76	5,765	5,606	97	5,703	4,340	84	4,424
Panchthar	5,596	208	5,804	5,876	316	6,192	5,304	262	5,566
Parbat	3,688	57	3,745	3,597	67	3,664	2,804	67	2,871
Parsa	6,443	54	6,497	6,076	83	6,159	4,821	64	4,885
Pyuthan	3,378	30	3,408	4,055	36	4,091	3,363	44	3,407
Ramechap	5,094	401	5,495	4,676	505	5,181	3,273	432	3,705
Rasuwa	812	136	948	744	106	850	434	101	535
Rautahat	8,833	64	8,897	9,631	70	9,701	7,716	70	7,786
Rolpa	6,124	78	6,202	6,698	93	6,791	5,443	101	5,544
Rupandehi	11,585	163	11,748	12,134	181	12,315	9,739	158	9,897
Salyan	6,208	78	6,286	6,210	87	6,297	4,886	96	4,982
Sankhuwasabha	3,981	131	4,112	3,701	158	3,859	2,941	143	3,084
Saptari	13,456	25	13,481	13,967	41	14,008	13,361	44	13,405
Sarlahi	13,201	187	13,388	14,392	211	14,603	12,909	208	13,117
Sindhuli	7,179	331	7,510	7,319	387	7,706	5,368	344	5,712
Sindhupalchowk	7,096	1,244	8,340	5,840	1,137	6,977	4,298	971	5,269
Siraha	17,258	18	17,276	17,034	21	17,055	14,487	25	14,512
Solukhumbu	1,778	251	2,029	1,929	346	2,275	1,390	278	1,668
Sunsari	12,357	480	12,837	12,628	502	13,130	10,830	389	11,219
Surkhet	3,559	40	3,599	3,896	56	3,952	2,876	53	2,929
Syangja	6,893	116	7,009	7,066	172	7,238	5,872	129	6,001
Tanahu	8,236	152	8,388	8,037	176	8,213	6,546	166	6,712
Taplejung	3,191	134	3,325	3,210	159	3,369	2,553	137	2,690
Tehrathum	2,972	93	3,065	2,997	95	3,092	2,399	84	2,483
Udaypur	7,355	338	7,693	7,318	340	7,658	5,563	283	5,846
West Nawalparasi	5,230	104	5,334	5,119	103	5,222	4,285	92	4,377
West Rukum	2,732	64	2,796	3,152	65	3,217	2,339	36	2,375
Total	428,559	14,768	443,327	31,873	16,651	448,524	352,472	14,469	366,941

Annex III (contd..): Number of Labour Permits Issued, 2016/17–18/19

Districts	Labour Permits Issued (via Recruiting Agency)								
	2016/17			2017/18			2018/19		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Achham	473	7	480	405	3	408	270	4	274
Arghakhanchi	2,706	44	2,750	2,454	45	2,499	1,759	43	1,802
Baglung	4,474	86	4,560	4,222	91	4,313	2,999	76	3,075
Baitadi	1,247	12	1,259	1,129	8	1,137	600	9	609
Bajhang	396	5	401	381	2	383	211	6	217
Bajura	461	12	473	414	17	431	197	9	206
Banke	5,585	109	5,694	4,753	136	4,889	2,874	136	3,010
Bara	8,227	212	8,439	6,062	270	6,332	2,275	196	2,471
Bardiya	4,107	93	4,200	3,289	104	3,393	2,117	138	2,255
Bhaktapur	705	141	846	521	182	703	393	143	536
Bhojpur	4,519	292	4,811	4,048	287	4,335	2,356	204	2,560
Chitwan	5,262	415	5,677	4,683	525	5,208	3,695	495	4,190
Dadeldhura	747	7	754	693	2	695	364	5	369
Dailekh	1,588	25	1,613	1,412	30	1,442	746	26	772
Dang	8,282	255	8,537	7,342	306	7,648	4,659	260	4,919
Darchula	911	7	918	697	6	703	357	4	361
Dhading	3,924	485	4,409	3,257	495	3,752	2,209	395	2,604
Dhankuta	3,716	236	3,952	2,862	254	3,116	1,958	259	2,217
Dhanusha	20,663	55	20,718	22,486	47	22,533	13,658	65	13,723
Dolakha	2,073	431	2,504	1,504	464	1,968	1,234	426	1,660
Dolpa	84	5	89	42	3	45	28	9	37
Doti	550	5	555	474	4	478	313	9	322
East Nawalparasi	5,682	139	5,821	5,075	191	5,266	3,493	196	3,689
East Rukum	1,023	6	1,029	883	6	889	488	9	497
Gorkha	3,877	258	4,135	3,194	277	3,471	2,677	261	2,938
Gulmi	3,739	90	3,829	3,263	76	3,339	2,304	75	2,379
Humla	53	1	54	52	3	55	39	3	42
Ilam	5,406	665	6,071	4,776	768	5,544	2,689	699	3,388
Jajarkot	1,414	22	1,436	1,147	23	1,170	616	10	626
Jhapa	13,862	1,453	15,315	13,691	1,820	15,511	9,142	1,786	10,928
Jumla	468	8	476	297	2	299	185	6	191
Kailali	2,583	100	2,683	2,270	103	2,373	1,480	75	1,555
Kalikot	490	5	495	407	7	414	238	5	243
Kanchanpur	2,697	54	2,751	2,447	72	2,519	1,430	43	1,473
Kapilvastu	6,625	45	6,670	6,312	58	6,370	3,596	51	3,647
Kaski	3,779	243	4,022	3,561	285	3,846	2,973	265	3,238
Kathmandu	2,443	748	3,191	1,894	800	2,694	1,377	682	2,059
Kavrepalanchowk	4,154	823	4,977	3,499	967	4,466	2,169	770	2,939
Khotang	5,666	292	5,958	4,927	293	5,220	3,054	224	3,278

Districts	Labour Permits Issued (via Recruiting Agency)								
	2016/17			2017/18			2018/19		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Lalitpur	1,168	318	1,486	1,011	338	1,349	693	319	1,012
Lamjung	3,128	125	3,253	2,949	150	3,099	2,355	155	2,510
Mahottari	15,868	55	15,923	15,703	60	15,763	8,738	65	8,803
Makwanpur	5,086	984	6,070	4,223	1,183	5,406	2,683	982	3,665
Manang	15	2	17	30	4	34	8	7	15
Morang	13,430	811	14,241	12,837	1,056	13,893	8,200	1,027	9,227
Mugu	170	6	176	168	-	168	137	3	140
Mustang	32	6	38	22	15	37	20	14	34
Myagdi	2,434	127	2,561	2,264	131	2,395	1,714	101	1,815
Nuwakot	3,287	673	3,960	2,663	706	3,369	2,210	726	2,936
Okhaldhunga	2,152	191	2,343	1,650	213	1,863	1,419	164	1,583
Palpa	4,011	82	4,093	3,621	92	3,713	2,524	68	2,592
Panchthar	4,837	334	5,171	4,130	334	4,464	2,482	344	2,826
Parbat	2,550	60	2,610	2,342	85	2,427	1,781	63	1,844
Parsa	5,496	75	5,571	3,936	67	4,003	1,364	68	1,432
Pyuthan	3,188	28	3,216	2,962	64	3,026	2,069	41	2,110
Ramechap	2,518	473	2,991	1,868	531	2,399	1,439	432	1,871
Rasuwa	309	79	388	227	113	340	193	118	311
Rautahat	8,988	79	9,067	7,034	108	7,142	2,716	80	2,796
Rolpa	5,118	106	5,224	4,992	120	5,112	3,211	91	3,302
Rupandehi	8,093	152	8,245	7,676	202	7,878	4,403	180	4,583
Salyan	5,127	90	5,217	4,238	108	4,346	2,135	105	2,240
Sankhuwasabha	2,892	184	3,076	2,811	152	2,963	1,852	176	2,028
Saptari	13,359	34	13,393	11,164	51	11,215	5,315	37	5,352
Sarlahi	14,575	260	14,835	11,885	355	12,240	6,169	275	6,444
Sindhuli	4,513	420	4,933	3,763	475	4,238	2,544	410	2,954
Sindhupalchowk	3,690	1,077	4,767	2,772	1,245	4,017	2,075	1,193	3,268
Siraha	16,083	25	16,108	17,140	31	17,171	11,536	20	11,556
Solukhumbu	1,210	314	1,524	894	361	1,255	553	281	834
Sunsari	9,770	511	10,281	9,612	622	10,234	6,150	542	6,692
Surkhet	2,792	63	2,855	2,302	66	2,368	1,551	68	1,619
Syangja	4,927	144	5,071	4,688	139	4,827	3,620	120	3,740
Tanahu	5,674	152	5,826	5,345	165	5,510	4,366	189	4,555
Taplejung	2,473	137	2,610	2,543	178	2,721	1,682	161	1,843
Tehrathum	2,334	108	2,442	2,110	98	2,208	1,348	101	1,449
Udaypur	5,519	374	5,893	4,585	453	5,038	2,923	334	3,257
West Nawalparasi	3,949	83	4,032	3,525	112	3,637	2,428	119	2,547
West Rukum	2,395	79	2,474	2,059	93	2,152	1,195	69	1,264
Total	**337,821**	**16,712**	**354,533**	**304,569**	**19,308**	**323,877**	**191,023**	**7,325**	**208,348**

Annex III (contd..): Number of Labour Permits Issued, 2019/20–21/22

Districts	Labour Permits Issued (via Recruiting Agency)								
	2019/20			2020/21			2021/22		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Achham	212	4	216	47	1	48	308	26	334
Arghakhanchi	1,304	37	1,341	517	12	529	2,358	86	2,444
Baglung	2,286	61	2,347	800	18	818	3,655	136	3,791
Baitadi	609	4	613	161	2	163	1,115	28	1,143
Bajhang	199	4	203	44	-	44	254	22	276
Bajura	217	4	221	48	2	50	244	24	268
Banke	2,114	163	2,277	804	47	851	4,574	247	4,821
Bara	2,095	187	2,282	641	65	706	5,425	364	5,789
Bardiya	2,013	134	2,147	639	42	681	3,563	168	3,731
Bhaktapur	316	111	427	84	44	128	409	187	596
Bhojpur	1,821	166	1,987	462	61	523	2,736	311	3,047
Chitwan	2,560	397	2,957	931	167	1,098	4,648	737	5,385
Dadeldhura	326	3	329	80	1	81	548	19	567
Dailekh	724	22	746	193	11	204	1,135	42	1,177
Dang	4,113	229	4,342	1,620	86	1,706	7,119	512	7,631
Darchula	433	12	445	65	4	69	681	21	702
Dhading	2,265	403	2,668	802	151	953	4,031	848	4,879
Dhankuta	1,549	169	1,718	404	60	464	2,129	272	2,401
Dhanusha	9,728	38	9,766	5,235	11	5,246	22,102	78	22,180
Dolakha	1,210	399	1,609	318	142	460	2,009	617	2,626
Dolpa	30	4	34	9	-	9	56	6	62
Doti	247	2	249	81	1	82	429	8	437
East Nawalparasi	2,793	194	2,992	933	68	1,003	5,226	320	5,558
East Rukum	437	13	440	166	3	163	847	22	847
Gorkha	2,470	234	2,704	729	98	827	4,090	492	4,582
Gulmi	1,708	71	1,779	536	23	559	2,872	92	2,964
Humla	31	2	33	4	-	4	41	8	49
Ilam	2,353	504	2,857	623	179	802	2,953	757	3,710
Jajarkot	639	14	653	162	5	167	892	27	919
Jhapa	7,158	1,397	8,555	2,087	560	2,647	9,825	2,200	12,025
Jumla	174	-	174	84	2	86	371	8	379
Kailali	1,352	78	1,430	315	31	346	2,129	139	2,268
Kalikot	201	5	206	60	5	65	264	9	273
Kanchanpur	1,422	47	1,469	302	13	315	2,252	58	2,310
Kapilvastu	3,030	58	3,088	935	18	953	6,109	90	6,199
Kaski	1,905	213	2,118	543	81	624	3,056	401	3,457
Kathmandu	1,011	571	1,582	286	165	451	1,304	853	2,157
Kavrepalanchowk	2,125	738	2,863	659	267	926	3,633	1,380	5,013
Khotang	2,664	165	2,829	770	59	829	3,661	319	3,980

Districts	Labour Permits Issued (via Recruiting Agency)								
	2019/20			2020/21			2021/22		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Lalitpur	538	249	787	143	80	223	748	472	1,220
Lamjung	1,879	130	2,009	526	35	561	2,694	224	2,918
Mahottari	6,689	46	6,735	3,376	21	3,397	16,037	103	16,140
Makwanpur	2,203	861	3,064	771	297	1,068	4,389	1,624	6,013
Manang	13	5	18	4	1	5	10	4	14
Morang	6,650	905	7,555	1,905	329	2,234	9,964	1,413	11,377
Mugu	83	2	85	18	1	19	112	2	114
Mustang	16	6	22	3	1	4	22	13	35
Myagdi	1,181	90	1,271	316	41	357	1,546	189	1,735
Nuwakot	2,065	649	2,714	625	240	865	3,226	1,185	4,411
Okhaldhunga	1,293	149	1,442	391	58	449	1,928	293	2,221
Palpa	1,943	58	2,001	632	26	658	3,283	125	3,408
Panchthar	2,111	286	2,397	566	92	658	2,895	385	3,280
Parbat	1,284	49	1,333	394	30	424	1,753	98	1,851
Parsa	1,353	56	1,409	482	17	499	2,892	89	2,981
Pyuthan	1,699	45	1,744	684	13	697	3,251	71	3,322
Ramechap	1,401	344	1,745	409	130	539	2,283	622	2,905
Rasuwa	233	139	372	72	74	146	441	215	656
Rautahat	2,682	81	2,763	1,311	28	1,339	8,211	194	8,405
Rolpa	2,836	66	2,902	1,279	21	1,300	4,856	160	5,016
Rupandehi	3,615	202	3,817	1,057	82	1,139	7,509	340	7,849
Salyan	2,482	62	2,544	865	33	898	4,458	163	4,621
Sankhuwasabha	1,475	131	1,606	347	51	398	1,881	217	2,098
Saptari	5,254	24	5,278	1,707	8	1,715	10,641	60	10,701
Sarlahi	5,264	229	5,493	2,179	76	2,255	12,260	473	12,733
Sindhuli	2,249	331	2,580	815	106	921	4,047	654	4,701
Sindhupalchowk	2,210	1,214	3,424	713	518	1,231	3,647	1,663	5,310
Siraha	8,277	23	8,300	4,438	5	4,443	17,003	45	17,048
Solukhumbu	582	227	809	194	112	306	1,277	493	1,770
Sunsari	4,735	549	5,284	1,815	169	1,984	8,621	819	9,440
Surkhet	1,396	75	1,471	425	16	441	2,684	103	2,787
Syangja	2,430	122	2,552	843	47	890	4,179	234	4,413
Tanahu	3,149	149	3,298	970	68	1,038	5,505	335	5,840
Taplejung	1,307	129	1,436	285	40	325	1,553	188	1,741
Tehrathum	1,004	76	1,080	245	30	275	1,295	130	1,425
Udaypur	2,698	321	3,019	850	93	943	4,412	592	5,004
West Nawalparasi	1,914	118	2,027	640	41	679	3,580	196	3,764
West Rukum	1,048	70	1,128	398	14	418	2,032	118	2,172
Total	**157,085**	**15,125**	**172,210**	**55,872**	**5,549**	**61,421**	**286,178**	**26,238**	**312,416**

Annex III (contd..): Number of Labour Permits Issued, 2022/23

Districts	Labour Permits Issued (via Recruiting Agency) 2022/23			Districts	2022/23		
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
Achham	2,375	178	2,553	Lalitpur	1,277	547	1,824
Arghakhanchi	4,599	233	4,832	Lamjung	3,077	305	3,382
Baglung	6,247	309	6,556	Mahottari	13,911	181	14,092
Baitadi	3,800	122	3,922	Makwanpur	5,516	1,907	7,423
Bajhang	2,017	98	2,115	Manang	139	18	157
Bajura	1,691	106	1,797	Morang	12,211	1,852	14,063
Banke	6,513	404	6,917	Mugu	447	11	458
Bara	8,724	466	9,190	Mustang	120	18	138
Bardiya	5,768	293	6,061	Myagdi	1,774	248	2,022
Bhaktapur	2,024	289	2,313	Nuwakot	3,978	1,335	5,313
Bhojpur	4,817	501	5,318	Okhaldhunga	2,716	325	3,041
Chitwan	5,887	1,047	6,934	Palpa	4,231	205	4,436
Dadeldhura	1,942	91	2,033	Panchthar	3,871	469	4,340
Dailekh	2,866	134	3,000	Parbat	1,920	141	2,061
Dang	10,289	768	11,057	Parsa	4,814	131	4,945
Darchula	1,727	83	1,810	Pyuthan	3,677	107	3,784
Dhading	5,886	1,204	7,090	Ramechap	3,218	810	4,028
Dhankuta	3,881	464	4,345	Rasuwa	643	230	873
Dhanusha	17,555	146	17,701	Rautahat	9,843	239	10,082
Dolakha	2,827	829	3,656	Rolpa	5,787	359	6,146
Dolpa	374	43	417	Rupandehi	9,636	566	10,202
Doti	741	23	764	Salyan	7,142	438	7,580
East Nawalparasi	6,134	478	6,617	Sankhuwasabha	3,348	385	3,733
East Rukum	1,944	187	2,130	Saptari	12,237	188	12,425
Gorkha	5,025	693	5,718	Sarlahi	14,336	704	15,040
Gulmi	3,414	183	3,597	Sindhuli	5,983	997	6,980
Humla	387	47	434	Sindhupalchowk	4,957	1,744	6,701
Ilam	4,219	1,052	5,271	Siraha	13,357	171	13,528
Jajarkot	2,477	89	2,566	Solukhumbu	1,760	638	2,398
Jhapa	12,579	2,853	15,432	Sunsari	9,261	899	10,160
Jumla	755	30	785	Surkhet	4,232	203	4,435
Kailali	3,532	275	3,807	Syangja	4,359	344	4,703
Kalikot	734	34	768	Tanahu	5,707	520	6,227
Kanchanpur	3,862	160	4,022	Taplejung	2,295	262	2,557
Kapilvastu	6,665	148	6,813	Tehrathum	2,238	182	2,420
Kaski	3,598	635	4,233	Udaypur	6,366	822	7,188
Kathmandu	1,709	873	2,582	West Nawalparasi	4,314	233	4,542
Kavrepalanchowk	4,897	1,661	6,558	West Rukum	2,884	328	3,213
Khotang	4,876	411	5,287	**Total**	**366,939**	**36,702**	**403,641**

* The data on labour permits issued from 2004/05 to 2009/10 correspond to the Nepali calendar year. Thereafter, labour permits data followed the fiscal year. Hence, data for the first three months of the Nepali calendar year 2066 (i.e. 2009/10) is missing.

** There is no gender segregation of this data for the years 2004/05 to 2008/09.

Annex IV: Average Monthly Earnings of Male and Female Returnees (by destination country)
(Nepal Labour Force Survey 2017/18)

Countries	Male	Female	Total	Countries	Male	Female	Total
India	15,888	12,403	15,750	Lebanon	-	37,976	37,976
Afghanistan	55,022	150,000	64,630	Malaysia	30,372	21,667	30,064
Australia	400,000	-	400,000	Maldives	23,237	-	23,237
Bahrain	38,730	17,000	37,293	Morocco	50,000	-	50,000
Bangladesh	20,000	-	20,000	Norway	148,326	-	148,326
Bhutan	10,000	-	10,000	Oman	35,637	20,000	35,348
Brazil	30,000	-	30,000	Qatar	30,181	30,000	30,180
Canada	111,022	-	111,022	Russian	35,000		35,000
Macao	45,000	-	45,000	Saudi Arabia	34,464	23,421	34,320
Cyprus	58,500	-	58,500	Singapore	37,707	45,000	39,658
Egypt	16,000	-	16,000	South Africa	69,676	-	69,676
Iraq	40,903	-	40,903	Sudan	90,000	-	90,000
Israel	96,907	-	96,907	Turkmenistan	40,000	-	40,000
Japan	184,850	115,842	180,694	United Arab Emirates	39,214	26,494	38,202
Jordan	33,275	-	33,275	United Kingdom	-	100,000	100,000
Kenya	70,000	-	70,000	United States of America	150,000	-	150,000
North Korea	80,000	-	80,000	Others	27,479	-	27,479
South Korea	101,469		101,469	Don't know	40,000		40,000
Kuwait	36,794	25,265	33,579	**Total**	**29,923**	**25,203**	**29,745**

Sadikshya Bhattarai is a Research Coordinator at the Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility at Social Science Baha. She has a Master's degree in Forest and Nature Management from the University of Copenhagen. She has been working on diverse issues relating to migration and mobility, including internal and transnational migration, and livelihoods.

Bipin Upadhyaya has a master's degree in Statistics from Tribhuvan University. Having worked at the Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility for seven years, he is currently Statistician at the Economic Research Department of the Nepal Rastra Bank. He possesses advanced proficiency in statistical software such as SPSS, STATA, R, and Eviews, and data collection tools like CSPro, Kobo Toolbox, ODK, Survey Monkey, and Qualtrics. His research interests include econometric models and studies related to labour migration.

Sanjay Sharma has a PhD in Sociology from the National University of Singapore. His doctoral research focused on the lived migration experiences of women from Nepal and their patriarchal and colonial encounters. He has been researching migration in and beyond Nepal for more than 12 years. His research interests also encompass gender, governance, democratization, and climate change.

The Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility is a research centre within
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