

Research Paper VI

STATE OF MIGRATION IN NEPAL

Sanjay Sharma, Shibani Pandey
Dinesh Pathak & Bimbika Sijapati-Basnett



Centre for the Study of
Labour and Mobility

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I. INTRODUCTION

Migration is a common phenomenon in both its domestic and international dimensions in Nepal. Traditionally, most of the migration took place within the country's borders, with some people going to India and Tibet. Nepal's entry into the global economy 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, while immigration into Nepal continues to be mostly from India – a fact facilitated by the open border between the two countries.

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, still very few and far between. However, as will be elaborated upon in the next section, with recent nation-wide surveys, primarily the Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11, the National Census 2011, and the Nepal Migration Survey 2009, covering significant grounds on migration, unavailability of data is no longer a significant barrier to understanding migration trends in the country.

This paper uses publicly accessible information to provide an overview of the current state of migration in the country. Drawing mainly upon national-level 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 other indicators such as reasons for migration, areas of employment, literacy levels, economic status, and caste/ethnic identity to provide a broad understanding of migration trends in Nepal and identify gaps in information and highlight areas that require further investigation.

2. METHODOLOGY

The data used here is taken from the Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11, the National Census of 2001 and 2011, the Nepal Demographic Health Survey 2006 and 2011, the Nepal Labour Force Survey 2008, and the Nepal Migration Survey 2009. Where required, records maintained by the Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE) have also been considered. The paper also goes beyond the published reports on the Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS) 2010/11 and analyses the NLSS raw data provided by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS).¹

The chapter divisions of this paper follows the different ways in which the condition of migration has been captured in these surveys: absentees, internal migrants, international migrants, international labour migrants, and immigrants in Nepal. Given its overall importance to the country, the issue of remittances has been dealt with in a separate section.

Table 1: Indicators Used in the Surveys

<p>1. Absentees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. gender ii. age iii. marital status iv. place of origin v. destination vi. level of education vii. wealth quintile² viii. reason for absence 	<p>2. Internal Absentees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. gender ii. age iii. marital status iv. place of origin v. destination vi. level of education vii. wealth quintile viii. reason for migration ix. ethnic background x. occupational status 	<p>3. International Migrants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. gender ii. age iii. marital status iv. place of origin v. destination vi. level of education vii. wealth quintile viii. reason for migration ix. ethnic background x. occupation
<p>4. Labour Migrants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. gender ii. age iii. marital status iv. place of origin v. destination vi. level of education vii. wealth quintile viii. ethnic background ix. occupation 	<p>5. Immigrants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. gender ii. country of origin iii. place of settlement in Nepal 	<p>6. Remittances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. gender ii. age iii. source iv. receiving area v. wealth quintile vi. ethnic background vii. use

A major limitation of the paper is that it is constrained by the data in the aforementioned surveys, which, apart from the Nepal Migration Survey 2009,

deal with subjects beyond migration as well (e.g., the purpose of the Nepal Living Standards Survey is to measure poverty). Accordingly, only the indicators given in Table 1 have been considered while dealing with migration in its various manifestations.

2.1 Understanding the Concepts

One of the problems with using information from so many different sources lies in making comparisons because of how each has conceptualised the terms ‘migrant’, ‘absentee’ and ‘migration’ as well as the indicators mentioned in Table 2.³ Despite this difficulty and recognising the limitations it imposes, this paper attempts to provide a complete overview of the current state of migration as can be derived from existing national surveys, and, to 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 major migration-related indicators used in this paper. (See also Table 2 for a comparison across surveys.)

2.1.1 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 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 had 7020.⁴ For this paper, in addition to making use of the NLSS reports, a separate analysis of the raw data was undertaken for a more in-depth understanding of the migration dynamics.

Variables: NLSS 2003/04 and 2010/11 contains comprehensive information about migrants in terms of: i) gender, ii) age, iii) marital status, iv) origin (rural/urban, ecological zone, development region, eco-development region), v) destination, vi) level of education, vii) consumption quintile, viii) reason for

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migration, ix) occupational status, x) remittance (size and distribution) and profile of remitters, and xi) absentee children under 14.

Definitions

Migrant: The survey's definition of migration is 'geographical or spatial mobility between one geographical unit and another,'⁵ while a migrant is considered to be 'a person who has changed his/her residence from a previous place (another Village Development Committee or municipality or another country) to the present place (VDC or municipality)'.⁶

Absentee: An absentee is an individual considered by the household to be a member at the time of the interview but who is excluded from the survey's definition of household membership because of his/her prolonged absence (currently or expected to be away for more than six months).⁷

Migrants are counted at the destination and, hence, by definition, are all living within the country, including immigrants, whereas absentees are enumerated at the place of origin and can consist of both internal and external migrants.

2.1.2 National Census, 2001 and 2011

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

Variables: This paper includes information from the census on: i) gender, ii) age (at migration), iii) origin (rural/urban, ecological zone, development region, eco-development region), 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, and xi) duration of migration.

Definitions

Migrant: A migrant is defined in the census as 'a person who moves either from his [or her] place of birth to another area or keeps on moving stepwise⁸ or circular⁹ by changing his [or her] residence more or less frequently by being either seasonal, temporary, semi-permanent or permanent migrant depending upon the duration of migration and reasons for migration within a defined geographic area'.¹⁰

Absentee: The census considers an absentee to be any member of a household who has been abroad for six or more months prior to the time of enumeration. Migrants are counted at the destination and, hence, are all living within the country whereas absentees, although enumerated at the place of origin, denote only external migrants. The census deals with immigrants as a separate category.

2.1.3 National Demographic and Health Survey, 2006 and 2011

The National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) examines issues of health and population using nationally representative household-level data. This paper draws on the last two NDHSs, 2006 (8707 households) and 2011 (10,826 households).¹¹

Variables: Both surveys profile migrants by: i) gender, ii) age (at migration), iii) origin (rural/urban, ecological zone, development region, eco-development region), iv) destination, v) reason for migration, and vi) duration of migration. Additionally, NDHS 2006 also includes information on the education level of migrants and their marital status, while NDHS 2011 analyses wealth quintiles.

Definition

Migrant: While NDHS 2006 collected information on the status of household members who had migrated in the 12-month period prior to the survey, NDHS 2011 also included individuals who had migrated from the household in the previous 10 years prior to the survey. NDHS 2011 made a distinction between ‘life-time migration’ and ‘period migration’, with the former indicating a permanent shift in place of residence that occurred more than five years before the survey,¹² and the latter referring to the mobility patterns of internal migrants in the five years before the survey. These differences apart, both NDHSs considered internal migrants as well as international migrants, distinguishing between those who had gone to India and those going to other countries.

2.1.4 National Labour Force Survey, 2008

The National Labour Force Survey (NLFS) was 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

Table 2: Recent Surveys, Variables and Definitions Used

Survey Indicators	Census 2001	Census 2011	NDHS 2006	NDHS 2011
Variables	i. gender ii. origin (rural/urban, ecological zone, development region, eco-development region) iii. destination iv. reason for migration v. place of residence (in Nepal) vi. country of origin (for immigrants) place of birth vii. age (of immigrants)	i. gender ii. age (at migration) iii. origin (rural/urban, ecological zone, development region, eco-development region) 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. gender ii. age iii. marital status iv. origin (rural/urban, ecological zone, development region, eco-development region) v. level of education vi. destination vii. duration of migration	i. gender ii. age (at migration) iii. origin (rural/urban, ecological zone, development region, eco-development region) iv. destination v. reason for migration vi. duration of migration vii. wealth quintile
Migrant	A person who moves either from his [or her] place of birth to another area or keeps on moving stepwise ¹⁴ or circular ¹⁵ by changing his [or her] residence more or less frequently by being either a seasonal, temporary, semi-permanent or permanent migrant, depending upon the duration of migration and reasons for migration within a defined geographic area (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).			
	A household member who had moved away in the 12-month period prior to the survey.			A person who has migrated away from the household in the 10 years prior to the survey.

Survey	NLFS 2008	NLSS 2003/04 and 2010/11	NMS 2009
Indicators			
Variables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) gender ii) age iii) origin (rural/urban, ecological zone, development region, eco-development region) iv) destination v) level of education vi) reason for migration vii) economic status viii) last place of residence ix) remittance (in a separate chapter) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. gender ii. age iii. marital status iv. origin (rural/urban, ecological zone, development region, eco-development region) 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)(separate section on absentee children under 14) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. volume of migration ii. gender iii. age iv. marital status v. origin (rural/urban, ecological zone, development region, eco-development region) vi. destination vii. level of education viii. ethnicity ix. sector of work x. occupation (before and after migration) xi. wealth quintile xii. remittances xiii) income and savings xiii. means of funding
Migrant	Any household member who was not born in their current place of residence but who moved to their current residence from another VDC or municipality or from another country (i.e., internal migrants and immigrants).	NA	NA
Absentee	An individual considered by the household to be a member at the time of the interview 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).	NA	NA

relevant to labour. Two NLFSs have been administered in Nepal thus far, one in 1998/99 and another in 2008. This paper considers only the 2008 survey (which had a sample size of 15,976 households).¹³

Variables: NLFS 2008 contains information specific to migrant workers, namely, i) gender, ii) age, iii) origin (rural/urban, ecological zone, development region, eco-development region), iv) destination, v) level of education, vi) reason for migration, vii) economic status, viii) last place of residence, and ix) remittance (in a separate chapter).

The definitions of ‘migrant’ and ‘absentee’ used in NLFS follow NLSS.

2.1.5 Nepal Migration Survey, 2009

The findings of the Nepal Migration Survey (NMS) 2009 (sample size of 3,200 households) are given in the World Bank report ‘Large-scale Migration & Remittances in Nepal: Opportunities, Issues, Challenges & Opportunities’.

Variables: While the primary focus of NMS is on international migration, it does contain information on internal migration as well. Some of the key variables considered by this survey are: i) volume of migration, ii) gender, iii) age, iv) marital status, v) origin (rural/urban, ecological zone, development region, eco-development region), vi) destination, vii) level of education, viii) ethnicity, ix) sector of work, x) occupation (before and after migration), xi) wealth quintile, xii) remittances, xiii) income and savings, and xiv) means of funding, among others.

2.2 Additional Issues for Consideration

Since migration has become a major societal phenomenon in the last couple of decades, all national surveys have perforce recognised it by now, and the more recent ones have dealt with it at some length. To take one example, while NLFS 1998/99 did not feature any questions 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, and only the Nepal Migration Survey 2009 has looked specifically at migration.

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. But, since the surveys do not examine the same indicators, direct comparisons are difficult and could potentially be misleading. This is true not only for the different surveys, but also for the same survey over different years. For instance, NDHS 2006 collected information on the educational and marital status of migrants, while NDHS 2011 did not. Additionally, unlike NDHS 2011, NDHS 2006 did not look at some key indicators relevant to the background characteristics of migrants such as their economic status (as inferred from wealth quintiles) and reasons for migration.

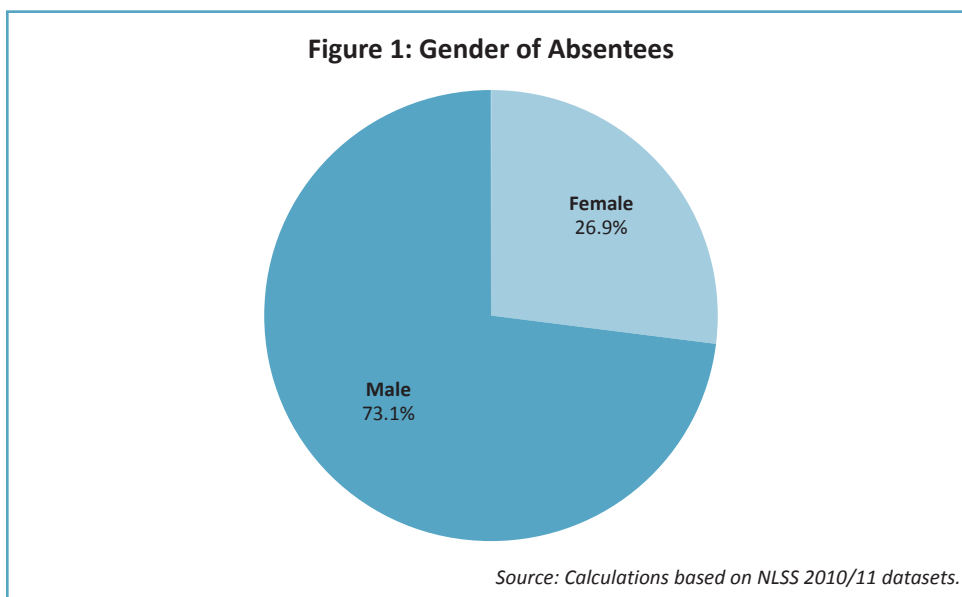
There are also differences in the way different surveys define and categorise migration as alluded to in the previous section. The distinctions between an absentee and a migrant and between internal and international migrants are not clear in all the surveys. Had a common definition been employed and 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 institution, the Central Bureau of Statistics, adopting such an approach would not have been impossible either.

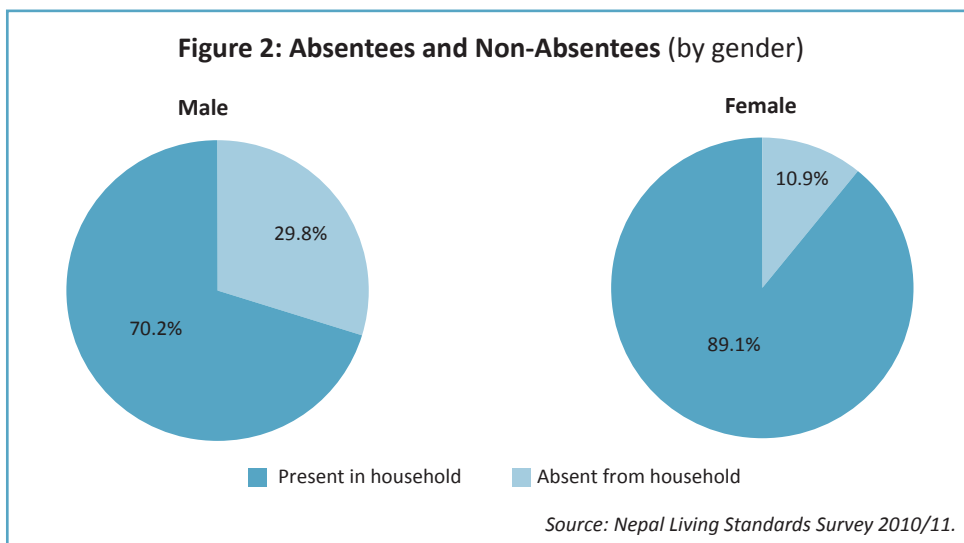
3. ABSENTEES

The discussion in this section does not distinguish between migrants based on their destination but presents data on the ‘absentee population’¹⁶ as documented by the Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11. As previously mentioned, the survey defines an absentee as someone who, at the time of enumeration, was temporarily away from the household for more than six months or was not expected to return for at least six months, and hence, includes both internal and external migrants.

3.1 Gender of Absentee Population

In 2010/11, about a fifth of the population of Nepal was found to be absent from their households. Among the absentees, males outnumber females by a ratio of nearly three is to one (Figure 1). Similarly, nearly a third of the men were absent from their homes while the ratio for women absentees was much smaller (Figure 2).¹⁷





3.2 Age of Absentee Population

In terms of age distribution, nearly half the absentees fall in the age group 15-29 years, followed by those aged 30-44.¹⁸ The former age group, which consists largely of individuals who have joined the workforce recently, can be considered to be the most active and most mobile category of individuals.

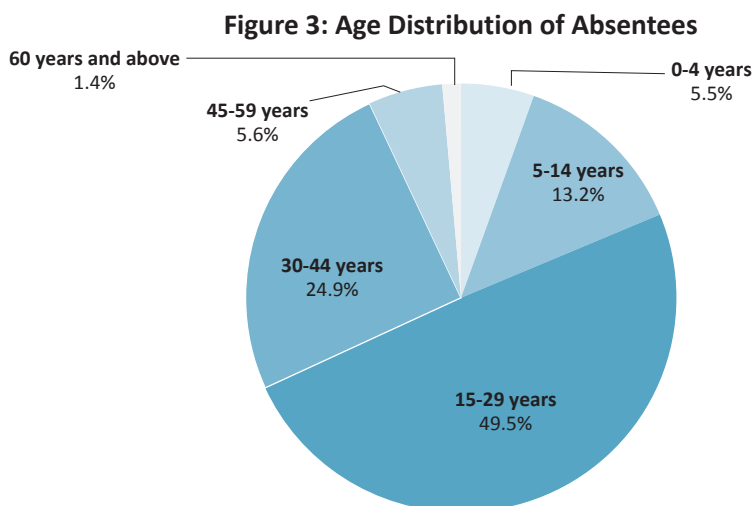
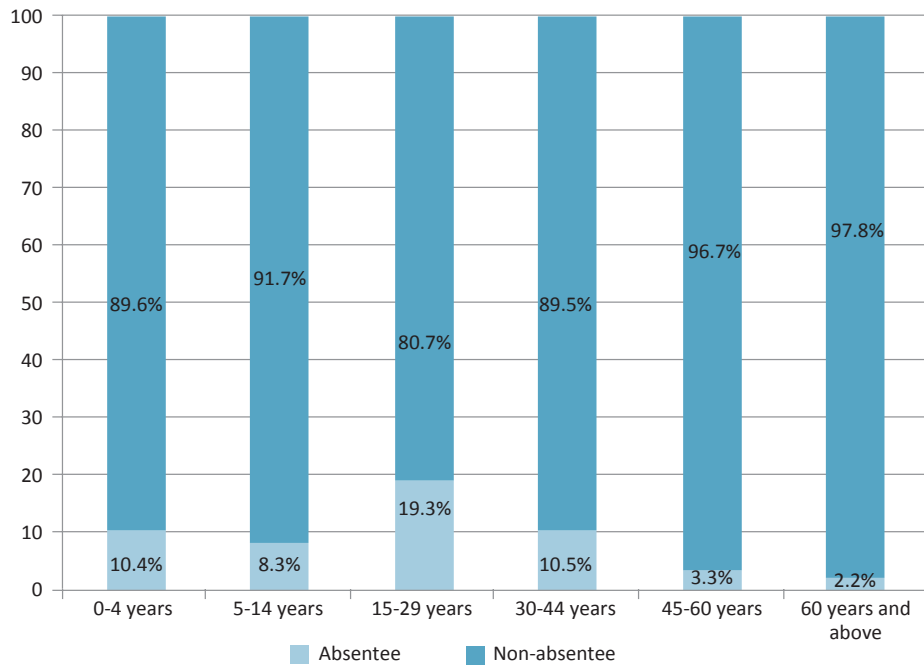
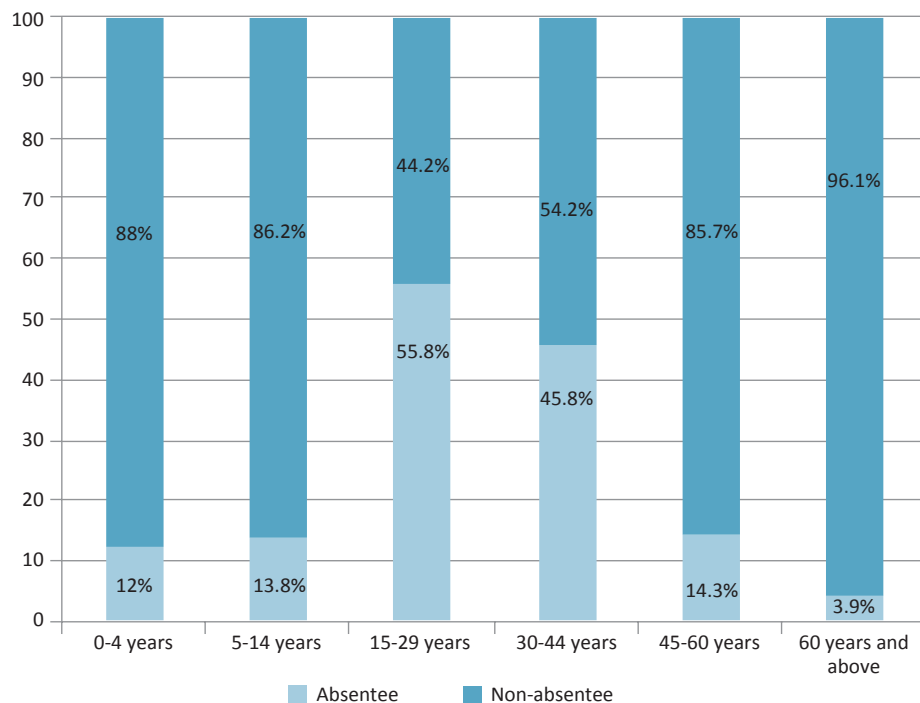


Figure 4: Female Absentees (by age group)



Source: Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11.

Figure 5: Male Absentees (by age group)



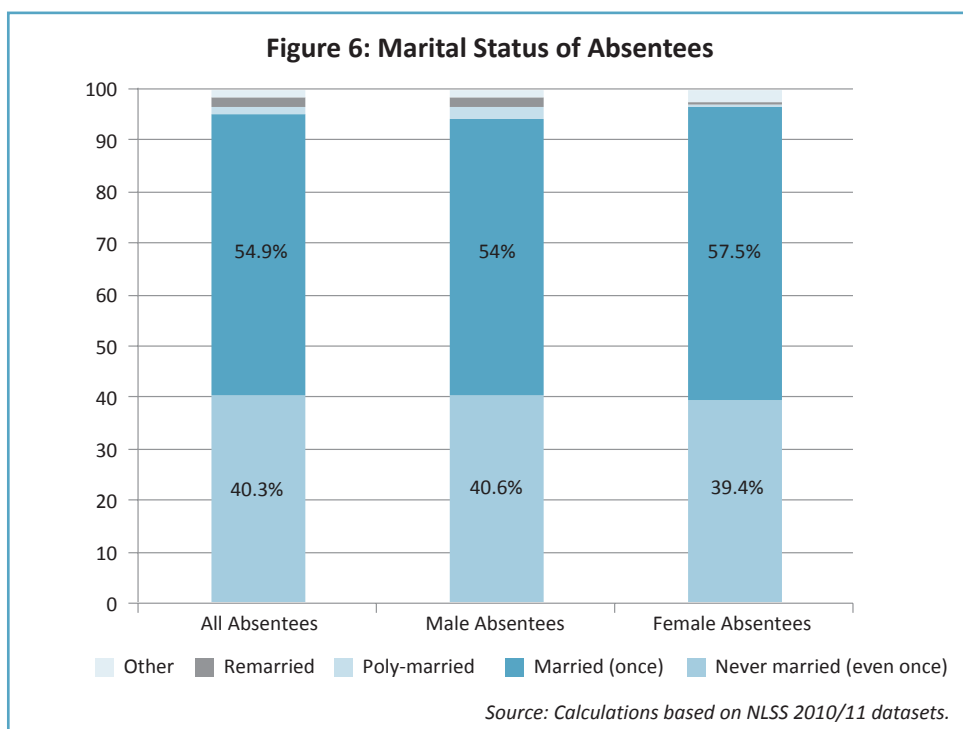
Source: Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11.

Figures 4 and 5 reiterate the fact that women are not as mobile as their male counterparts. The proportion of absentee females is relatively low across all age groups. The highest is in the age group 15-29 years, with nearly 20 per cent of the female population from that cohort absent from their households in 2010/11.¹⁹

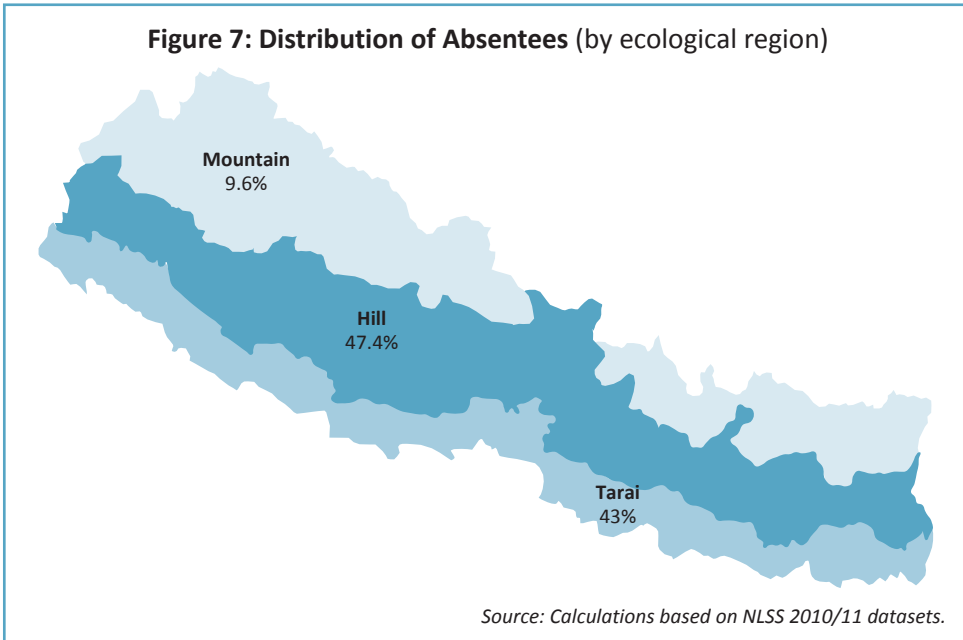
The proportion of absentees is higher among males than females across all age groups. As with women, the largest proportion of the male absentee population is also in the age group 15-29 years, with more than half the men from this group absent from their homes in 2010/11 along with a significant number from the 30-44 group.²⁰

3.3 Marital Status of Absentee Population

There is a greater likelihood of absentees being married than single. Figure 6 shows that, irrespective of gender, more than half the people absent from their households are married. Slightly more than half of the absentees, whether male



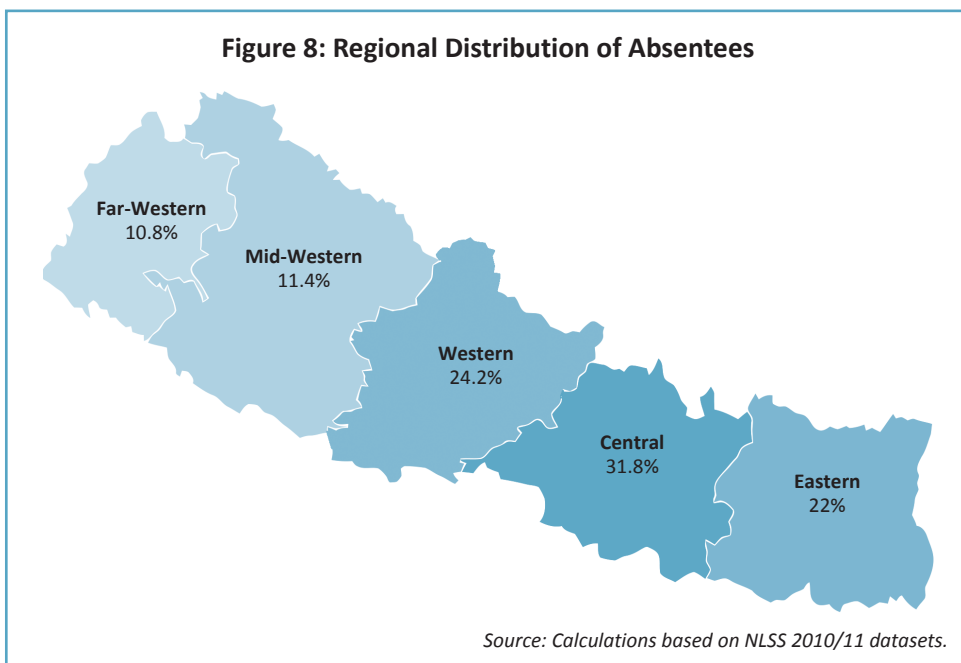
or female, have been married once, but this proportion is slightly higher in the case of females than males. Cases of poly-marriages and re-marriages are found to a certain degree among male absentees, but are very rare among female absentees.²¹



3.4 Origin of Absentee Population

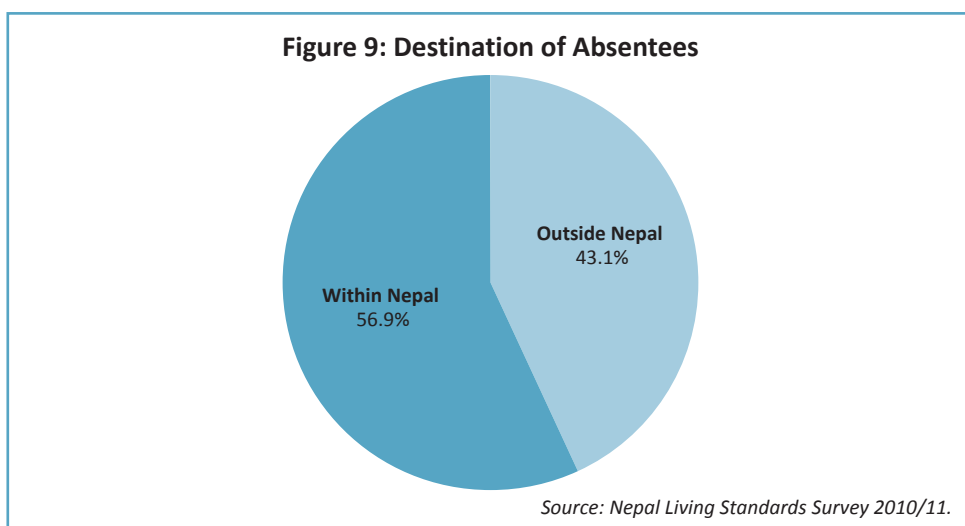
Nearly half the individuals absent from their households are from the Hill region, and only a small number are from the Mountains.²² This could be a result of the varying population sizes living in the three ecological regions.²³

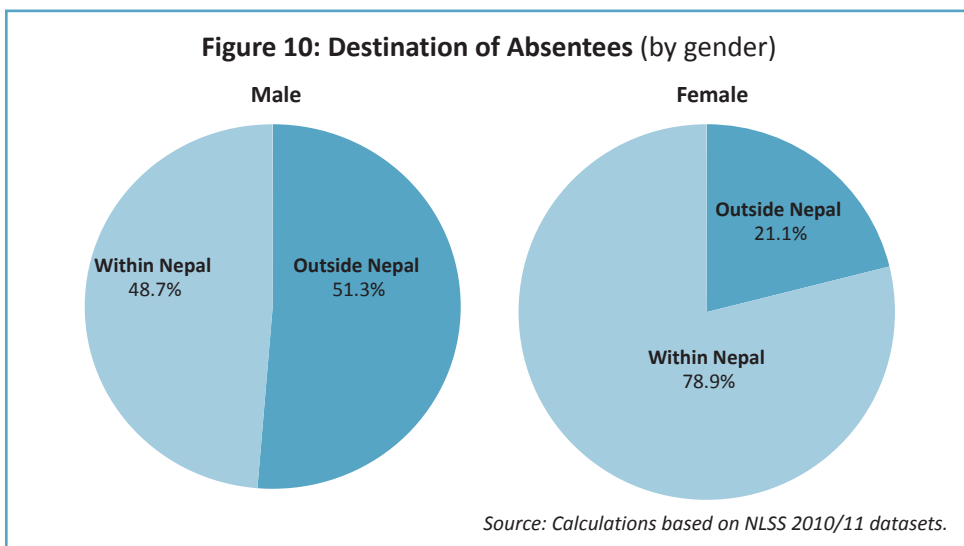
The link between population size and the proportion of absentees is seen across developmental regions as well. The most-populated Central Region accounts for the highest proportion of absentees while the least-populated Far-Western Region contributes the smallest proportion. There is, however, a slight discrepancy in this trend while comparing the Eastern and Western Regions. A total of 21.9 per cent (5,811,555) of Nepal's population live in the Eastern Region and 18.6 per cent (4,926,765) in the Western Region.²⁴ But, as shown in Figure 8, the proportion of absentees is slightly greater in the Western Region than in the Eastern.



3.5 Destination of Absentee Population

Underscoring historical trends, even as the number of Nepalis going abroad has continued to rise in the past couple of decades, the majority of absentees are found to have moved within Nepal.²⁵

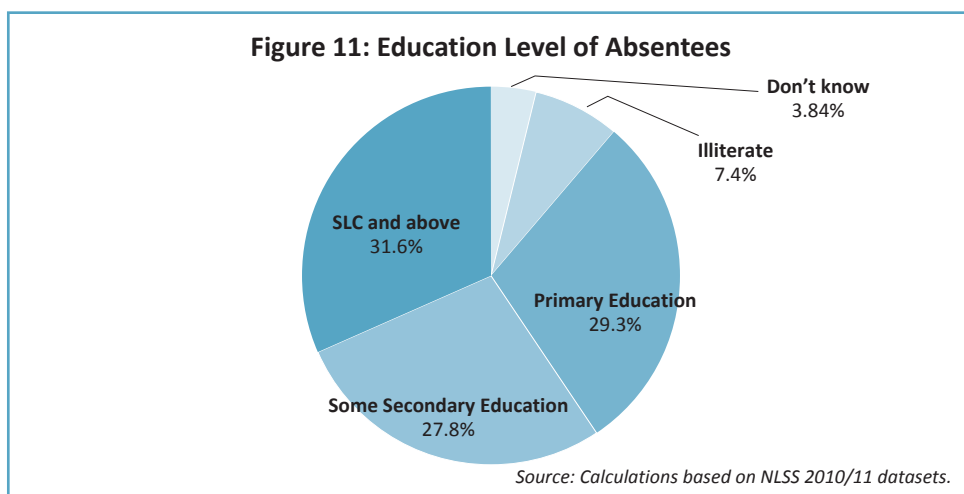




Disaggregation by gender shows that women migrate overwhelmingly within the country, suggesting that going abroad is still largely a male phenomenon.

3.6 Education Level of Absentee Population

Career prospects and other opportunities are typically better for educated individuals and so the mobility of individuals who have had at least some secondary-level education is higher than among those with primary education,



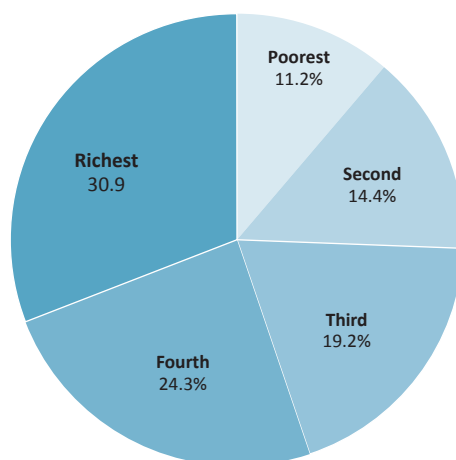
and individuals with primary education have higher mobility than the illiterate, the least mobile group. Individuals who have received at least their School Leaving Certificate (SLC),²⁶ the widely regarded benchmark of formal education in Nepal, account for the majority of absentees.²⁷ A breakdown of the education levels of absentees is presented in Figure 11.

3.7 Economic Status of Absentee Population

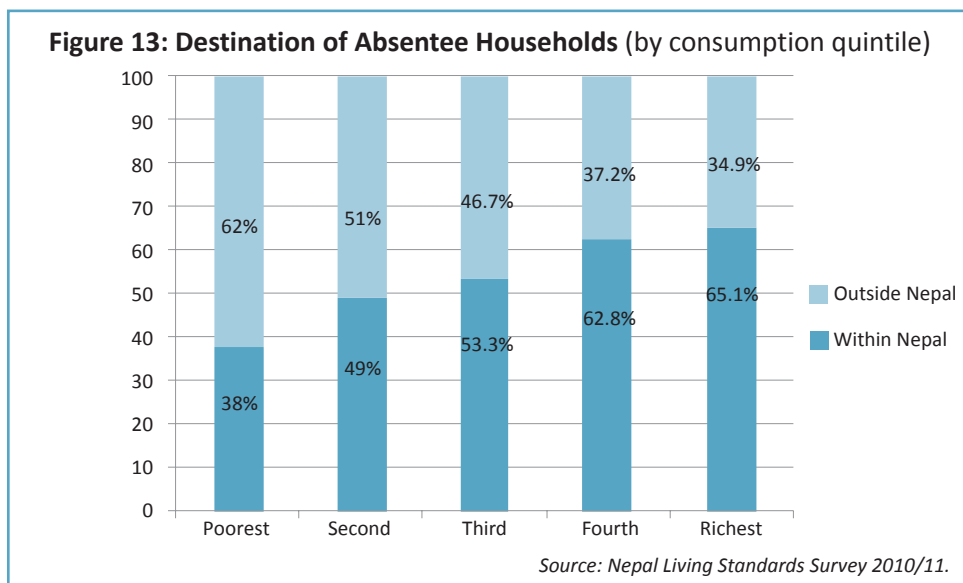
An analysis of the absentee population by wealth quintile reveals that migration is largely driven by those in the higher quintiles. Migration drops with the decrease in the household's economic well-being. NLSS 2010/11 shows that, even though the absentee population is distributed across all wealth groups, the upper two quintiles (richest and fourth richest) account for more than half.²⁸

Further disaggregation of the data indicates that the household economic condition has a strong bearing on whether absentees are likely to migrate abroad or within Nepal. The poorer the household the more likely for an absentee to be away from the country. For instance, in the poorest quintile, 62 per cent of the absentees were outside Nepal, while in the richest quintile, 65.1 per cent were within the country (Figure 13).²⁹ This is likely because households from

Figure 12: Consumption Quintile of Absentees



Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 datasets.

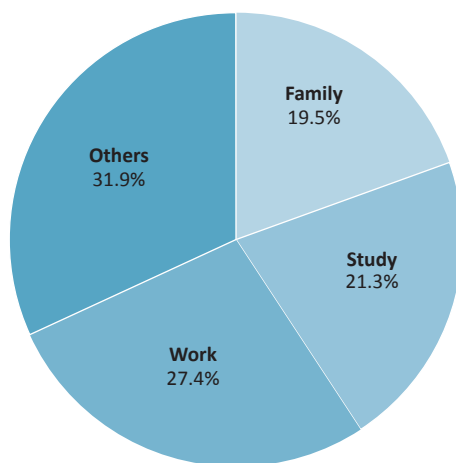


the poorer quintiles find fewer in-country employment opportunities and most migrate as unskilled or semi-skilled workers, primarily to India (see also Section 6.8: Economic Status of Labour Migrants). Absentees from richer quintiles, however, are likely to be better educated and have more marketable skills. As a result, they are likely to find employment within Nepal.

3.8 Reason for Absence

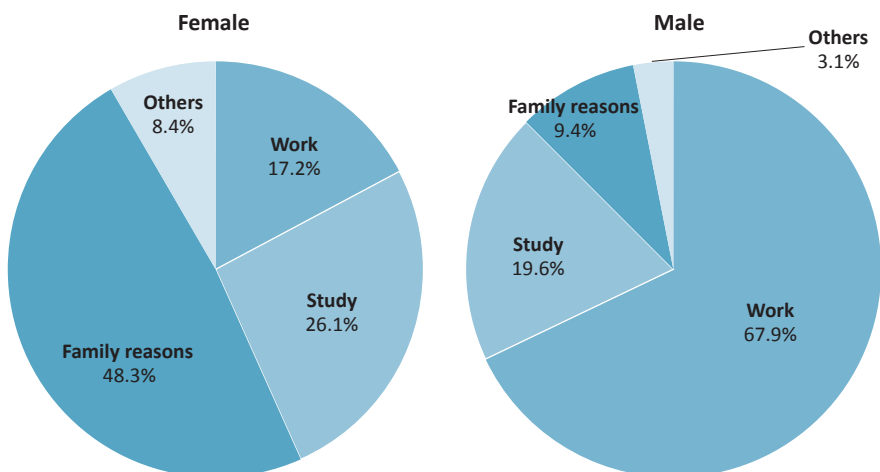
Work-related migration – defined as ‘looking for work’, ‘start new job’, ‘start new business’ and ‘job transfer’ – was the cause for a significant proportion of individuals to migrate away from home.³⁰ Education was listed as the most important reason after work. Similarly, family was also one of the primary factors leading individuals to leave their households, which is true especially in the case of female migrants as described below.

Figure 15 presents the reasons for an individual’s absence from their household across gender as reported in NLSS 2010/11.³¹ In the case of males, approximately 70 per cent are away for reasons of employment. However in the case of females, on the whole, ‘family reasons’, including marriage, is the single biggest cause for their absence. Furthermore, work-related absence is comparatively much lower

Figure 14: Reason for Absence

Source: Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11.

among women than men, which suggests that men leave their homes to earn while women's absence is tied more to the migration of their respective families. Interestingly, in terms of proportion, more women than men migrate in pursuit of education.³²

Figure 15: Reason for Absence (by gender)

Source: Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11.

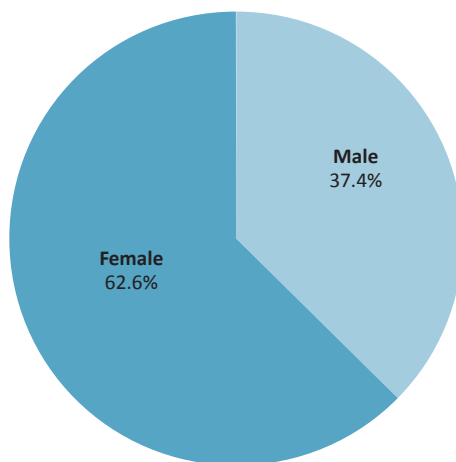
4. INTERNAL MIGRATION³³

While mobility within the country has always been a key dimension of migration in Nepal, the focus of research in recent years has been almost exclusively on external labour migration. This chapter considers data from NLSS 2010/11, particularly the raw data provided by the CBS, and NDHS 2011, NLFS 2008, National Census 2001, and Nepal Migration Survey 2009 to assess the situation of internal migrants in the country.

4.1 Gender of Internal Migrants

Men dominate internal migration although women's mobility is not too far behind. Women's mobility, however, is attached to that of their families to a higher degree than men's, an issue that is dealt at greater length in Section 4.9: Reasons for Internal Migration.

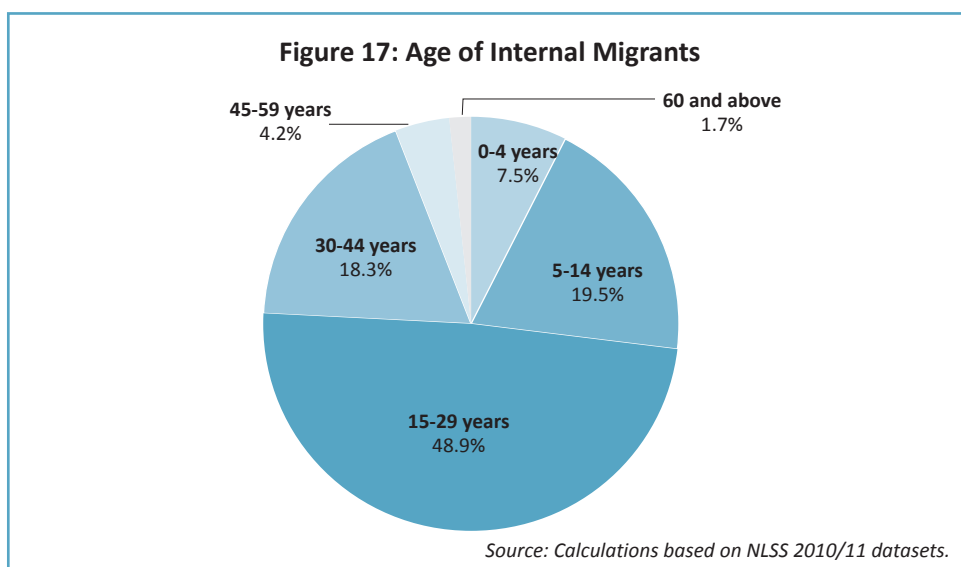
Figure 16: Gender of Internal Migrants



Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 datasets.

4.2 Age of Internal Migrants

As with the absentee population in general (Section 3.3), the data on internal migrants also shows that among internal migrants, about half are of the age group 15–29. Because this group consists largely of those joining the workforce, pursuing higher education and getting married, the mobility of this group is greater compared to other age groups.

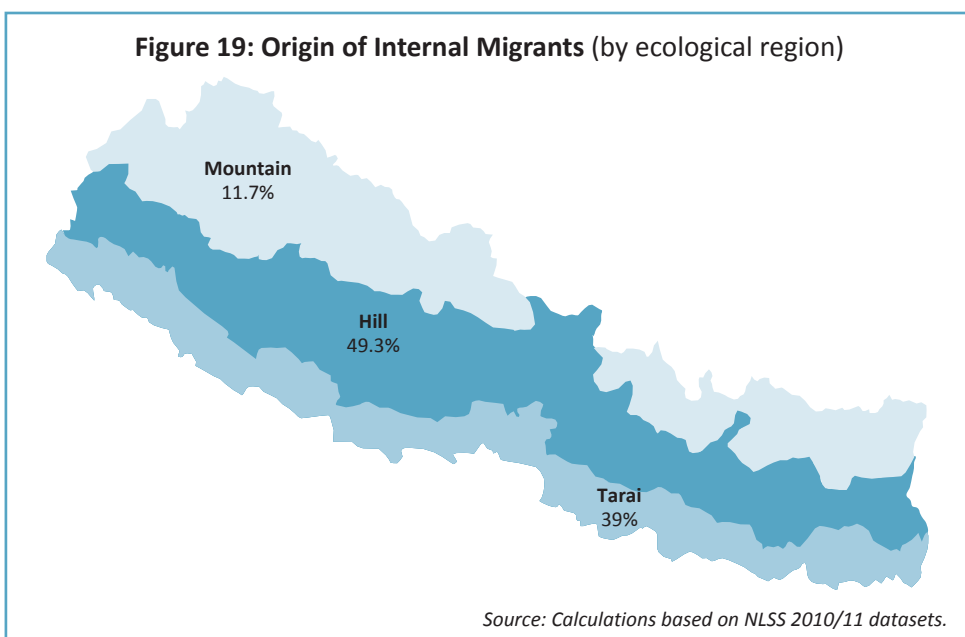
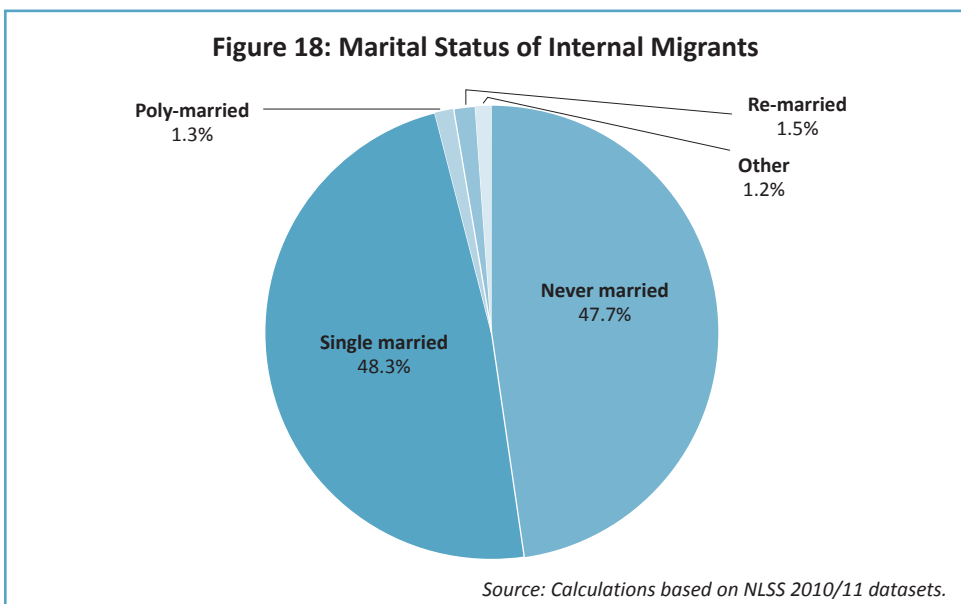


4.3 Marital Status of Internal Migrants

As shown in Figure 18, roughly equal proportions of migrants have never been married (47.7 per cent) or have been married once (48.3 per cent). Those who have married multiple times, remarried, and are in other marital arrangements together account for only 4 per cent of all internal migrants.

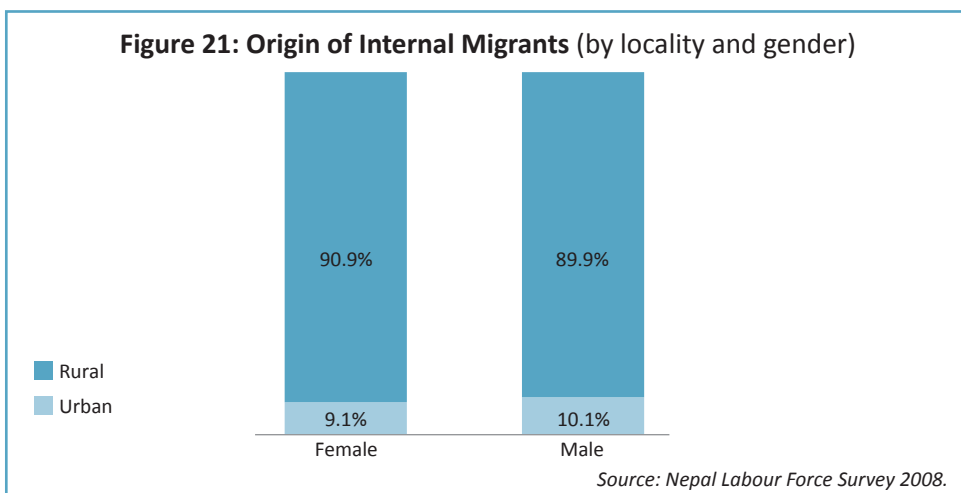
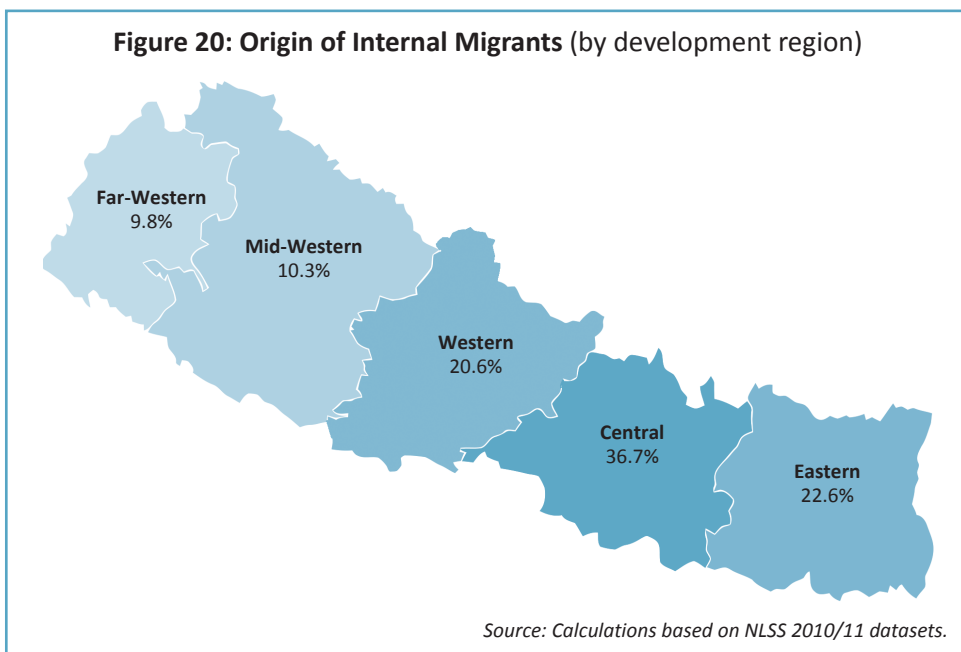
4.4 Origin of Internal Migrants

Among the three ecological zones, the Mountains contribute the smallest number of internal migrants, which is more a reflection of the small population base of the Mountain region than anything else. The population from the



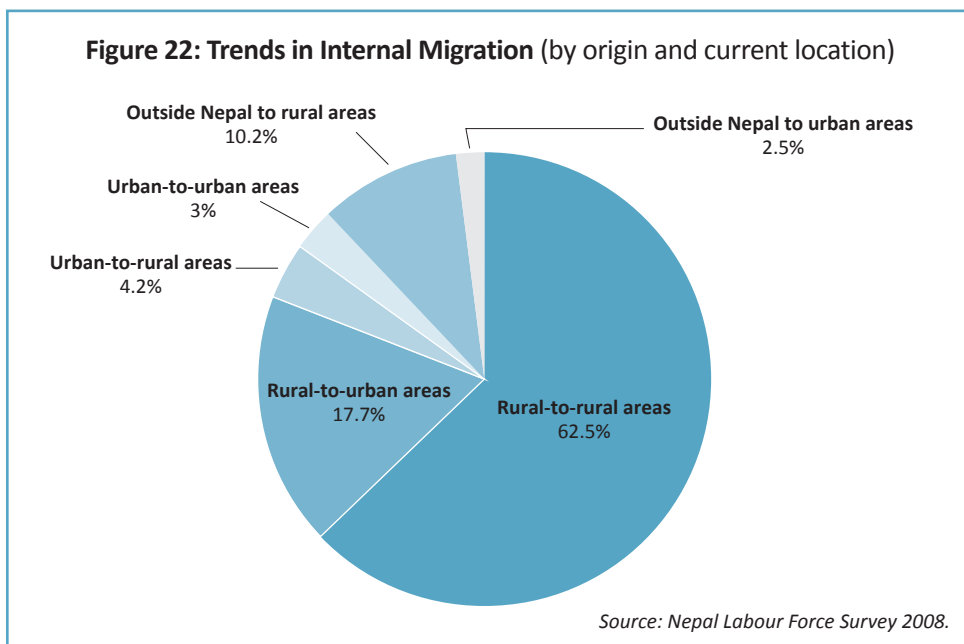
Hills is more mobile compared to those from the other two regions.

A vast majority of internal migrants, as reported by their household members, have origins in the Eastern, Central and Western regions (Figure 20). Nine out



of 10 internal migrants originate in the rural areas (Figure 21), a proportion that holds true across the gender divide as well.

Similarly, rural-to-rural migration accounts for more than 60 per cent of all internal migration (Figure 22). In fact, the volume of migration between rural areas is three times more than that of rural-to-urban migration.³⁴



4.5 Destination of Internal Migrants

According to NLSS 2010/11, over a fifth of Nepal's population consists of internal migrants, with the proportion of the migrant population being higher in urban areas than in the rural parts (Figure 23). Notably, even though survey results suggest that more than half of all urban residents are internal migrants and that the proportion of migrants in the rural areas is relatively small, since 83 per cent of Nepal's population lives in rural areas the actual number of migrants in rural areas is much larger.³⁵

As stated earlier, 57 per cent of individuals absent from their households can be found within Nepal.³⁶ The Tarai is the top recipient of internal migrants. As illustrated in Table 3, among all ecological zones, net migration³⁷ is positive only in the Tarai region while the Hill region has the highest percentage of out-migration. This indicates a continuity in the Hill-to-Tarai migration that began in the late 1950s.³⁸ Among development regions, the Central Region has the highest percentage of internal migrants, followed closely by the Eastern Region. That the Central Region is the highest recipient of internal migrants

can be explained by the fact that Kathmandu, the capital, has seen a significant rise in its population, with a decadal growth rate of 61 per cent, the highest by far for Nepal.³⁹

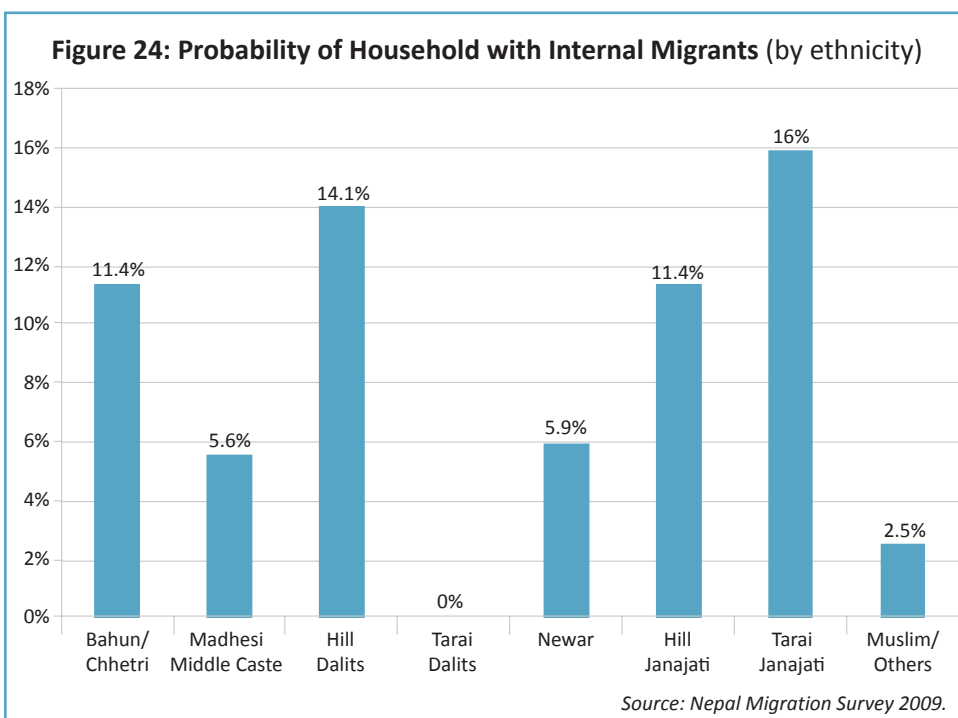
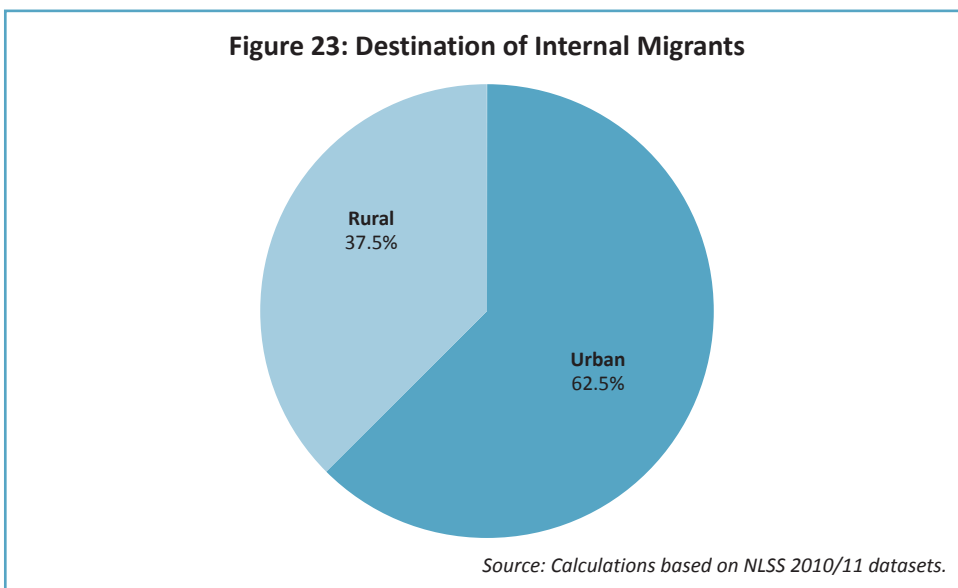
Table 3: Internal Migration (by place of origin and destination)

Origin	Destination				Percent Out-migration	Net Migration
	Mountains	Hills	Tarai	Total		
Total						
Mountains		125,597	169,825	295,422	17.1%	-255,103
Hills	33,895		1,157,035	1,190,930	68.9%	-830,759
Tarai	6,424	234,574		240,998	14.0%	1,085,862
Total	40,319	360,171	1,326,860	1,727,350	100%	
Percent In-migration	2.3%	20.9%	76.8%	100%		
Male						
Mountains		57,170	84,783	141,953	16.8%	-127,610
Hills	10,822		567,513	578,335	68.4%	-400,001
Tarai	3,521	121,164		124,685	14.8%	527,611
Total	14,343	178,334	652,296	844,973	100%	
Percent In-migration	1.7%	21.1%	77.2%	100%		
Female						
Mountains		68,428	85,040	153,468	17.4%	-127,511
Hills	23,061		589,528	612,589	69.4%	-430,746
Tarai	2,896	113,415		116,311	13.2%	558,257
Total	25,957	181,843	674,568	882,368	100%	
Percent In-migration	2.9%	20.6%	76.4%	100%		

Source: KC 2003.

Further, most migration, particularly out-migration from the Mountain areas, appears to take place to other ecological zones within the same development region. Hence, most of the individuals from the Eastern Mountains migrated to the Eastern Tarai and the Eastern Hills, those from the Central Mountains to the Central Hills and the Central Tarai, and from the Far-Western Mountains to the Far-Western Hills and the Far-Western Tarai.⁴⁰

Although the 2011 census does not provide the details as given above in the



Note: Due to unavailability of data, 'internal migrants' here refers only to those who have migrated internally for work, and ignores other reasons for internal migration. The 'zero' for Tarai Dalits could indicate the limitations of the methodology used in the survey about which the report is silent, and/or precision errors arising from rounding to the nearest one digit after the decimal.

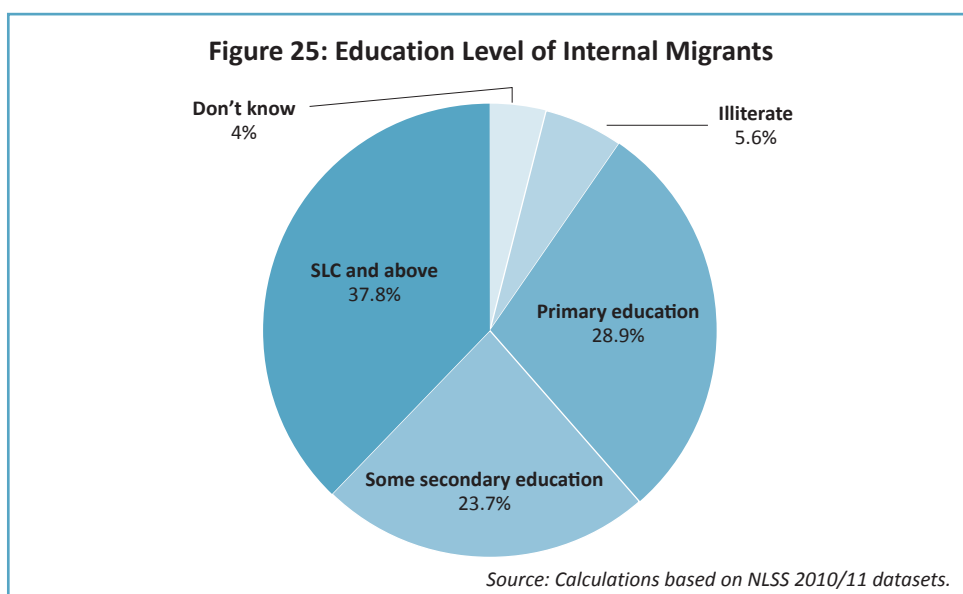
2001 census, it states that a total of 3,788,070 individuals were born in a different district than the one they were enumerated in. Among these, 57 per cent were females. Only 6 per cent of this group of people were born in urban areas, and of all those enumerated in the urban centres, 76 per cent were born in rural areas. At the district level, Kathmandu is the only district where the individuals born in other districts (at 52 per cent) outnumber the native-born population.⁴¹

4.6 Ethnicity of Internal Migrants

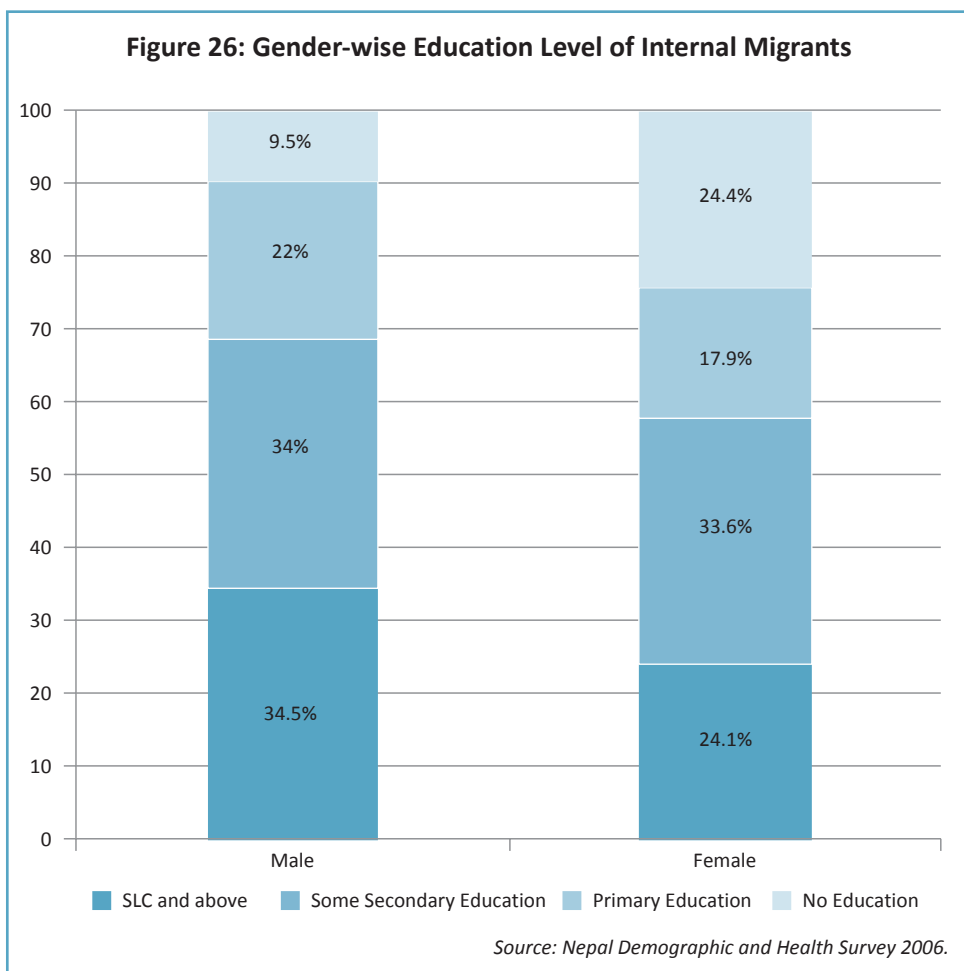
Figure 24 shows households with internal migrants across different caste and ethnic group clusters.⁴² While Tarai Janajati households have the highest likelihood of having an internal migrant, it is noteworthy that internal migration among the Tarai Dalits is virtually nil. Similarly, Madhesi Middle Castes, Muslim/Others and Newars also show a very low propensity for internal migration.⁴³

4.7 Education Level of Internal Migrants

According to NLSS 2010/11, the majority of internal migrants have received some secondary-level education while those with at least a School Leaving Certificate (SLC) account for nearly 40 per cent of this population (Figure 25).⁴⁴ The gender-wise analysis of the education level of internal migrants shows that

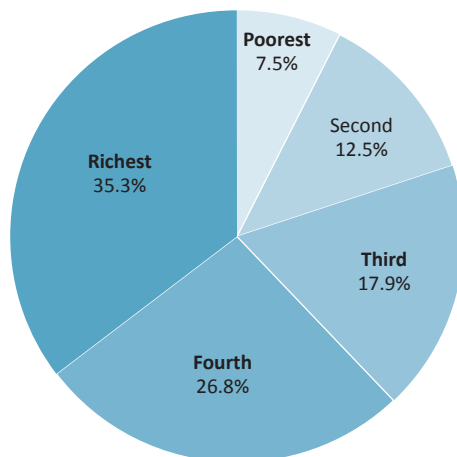


proportion of males and females have some secondary education. However, more females than males have no education and fewer females than males are educated to the level of SLC and above.



4.8 Economic Status of Internal Migrants

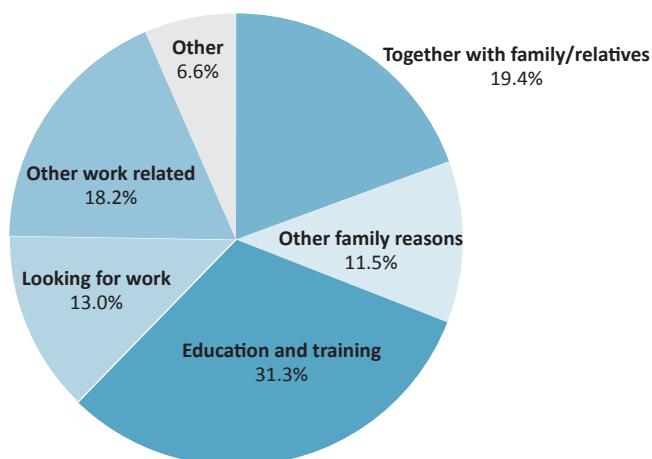
Internal migration declines sharply with decrease in economic status (Figure 27). The richer the household the higher the likelihood of its members having migrated internally; the probability of a household from the richest quintile having internal migrants is nearly five times greater than that of one from the lowest quintile.

Figure 27: Consumption Quintile of Internal Migrant Households

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 datasets.

4.9 Reasons for Internal Migration

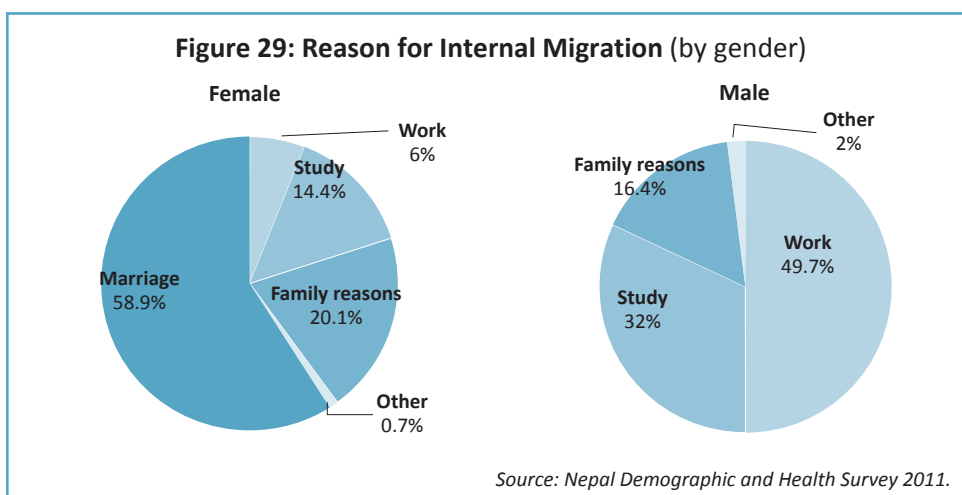
In general, education and family are commonly cited reasons for the internal migration of those aged below 15 years. It is a common practice among families living in areas without educational opportunities to send their children to study elsewhere. Migrants from older age groups typically migrate for family reasons,⁴⁵ employment and the pursuit of an easier lifestyle.

Figure 28: Reason for Internal Migration

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 datasets.

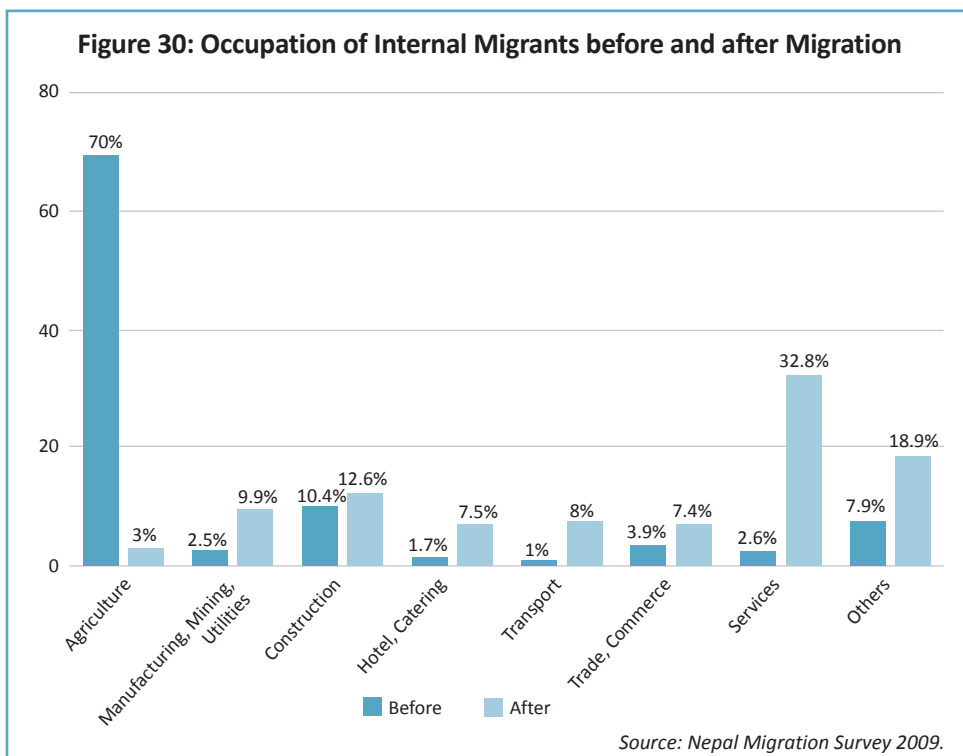
As stated earlier, work-related issues are the main reasons cited for migration. Nearly a third of the internal migration is attributed to employment (Figure 28). 'Education and training' and family reasons are other factors inducing people to migrate to other parts of the country.

There are, however, notable differences across the gender groups (Figure 29) as shown by NDHS 2011. Marriage is the main reason for female migration, which is followed by other family-related reasons, study and work. In contrast, the primary reasons for male internal migration are employment (50.6 per cent) and education (32.5 per cent).⁴⁶



4.10 Occupation of Internal Migrants

Figure 30 shows the distribution of internal migrants⁴⁷ across various sectors of employment before and after migration. Prior to migration, 70 per cent of those who had migrated internally reported being involved in agriculture, whereas the post-migration engagement in agriculture dropped to a measly 3 per cent.⁴⁸ The services sector experienced a net increase of approximately 30 per cent, indicating that this is the sector that accommodated a significant proportion of the internal migrants. Manufacturing, mining and utilities; construction; hotel and catering; transport; and trade and commerce are other key sectors that attracted internal migrants within Nepal.⁴⁹



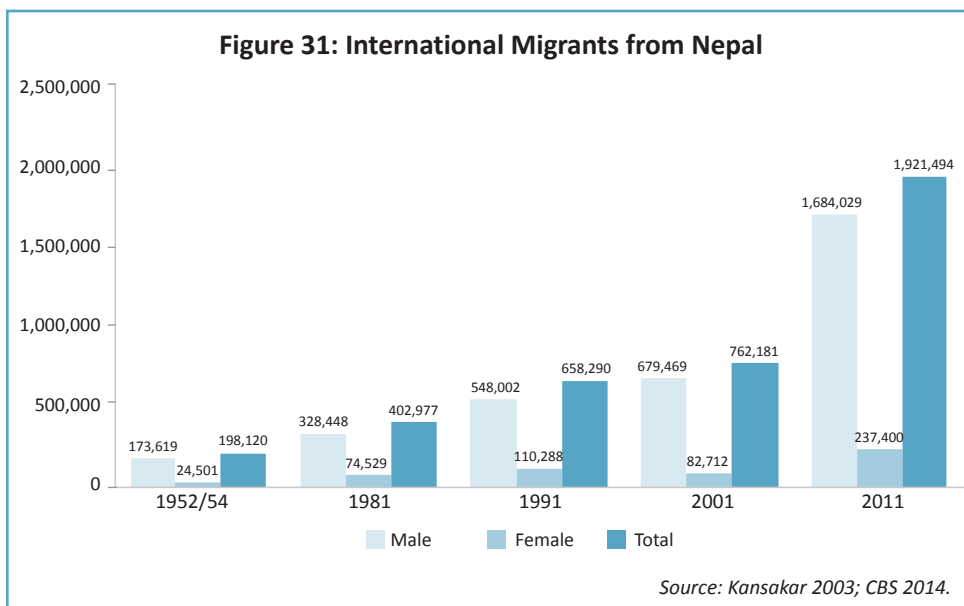
5. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

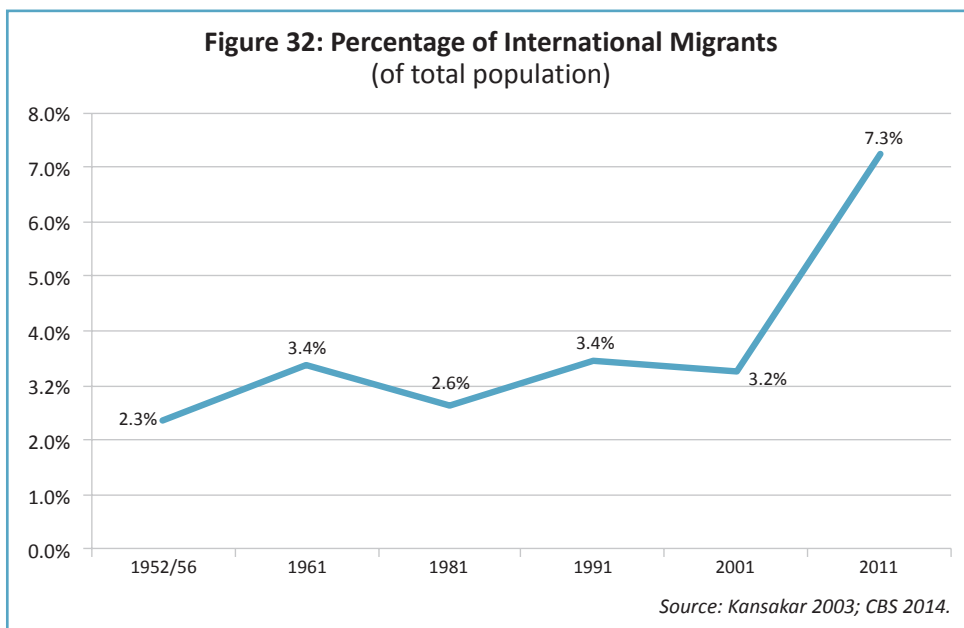
Migration to international destinations, primarily for employment, has been a defining feature of Nepali migration since the late 1990s. It is estimated that more than four million migrants are abroad and that nearly half of all households in Nepal either have at least one migrant in a foreign country or someone who has returned from a stint abroad. India, the Gulf region (primarily Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE) and Malaysia are the main international destinations for Nepali migrants.⁵⁰

5.1 Trends

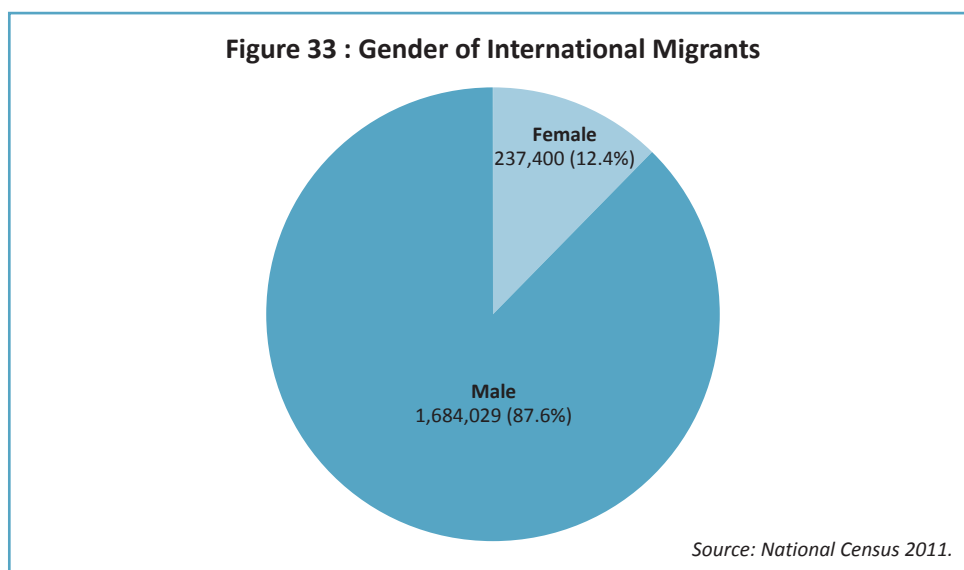
Over the past 60 years, the number of international migrants has increased significantly from about 200,000 in the 1950s to approximately two million by 2011 (Figure 31). The most visible change occurred between 2001 and 2011 when the number of Nepalis abroad more than doubled.

The data over the years suggests that the proportion of international migrants





has continuously increased over the years. The growing popularity of foreign employment and student migration has increased the proportion of international migrants from 2.3 per cent of the total population in 1952/54 census to 7.3 per cent by the year 2011 (Figure 32).

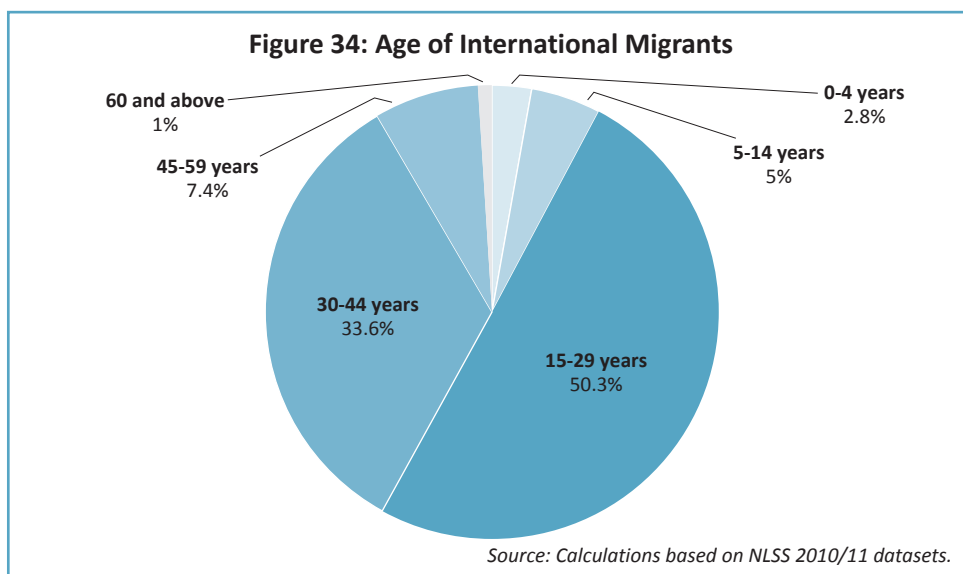


5.2 Gender of International Migrants

Females constitute a significantly lower percentage of international migrants (Figure 33), a ratio that has remained quite unchanged even in the intercensal decade between 2001 and 2011 that saw an exponential increase in international migration, registering only 12 females for every 100 males abroad in the 2011 census, a marginal increase compared to 11:100 in 2001. The smaller number of females among international migrants could also be due to various discrepancies in data,⁵¹ as will be discussed in Section 6.2: Gender of Labour Migrants.

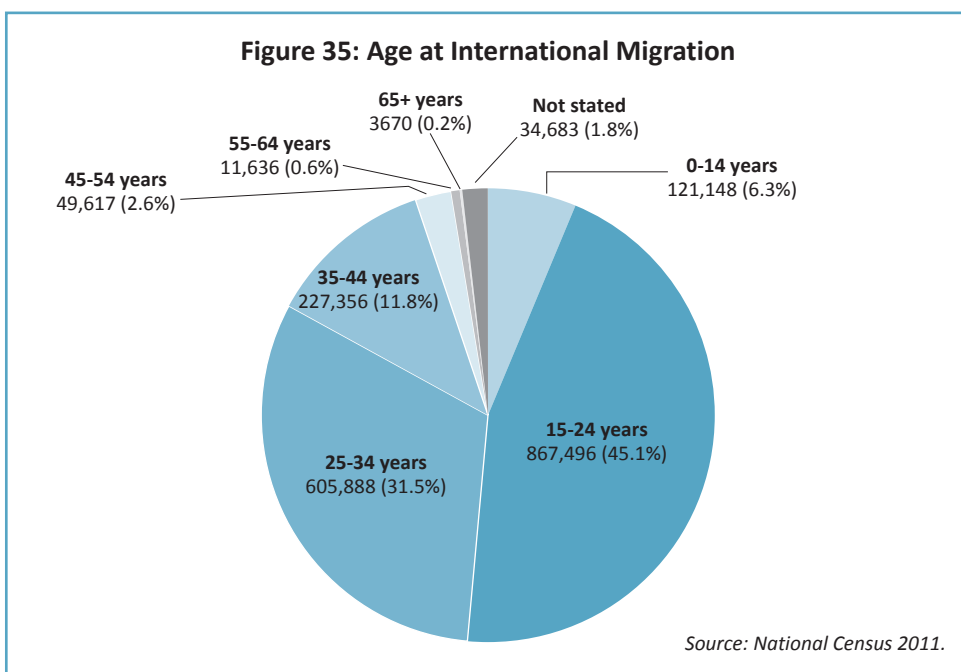
5.3 Age of International Migrants

Mirroring the trend of internal migration, the age groups 15-29 and 30-44 account for more than 80 per cent of international migrants (Figure 34), with employment and education being the key drivers of migration.

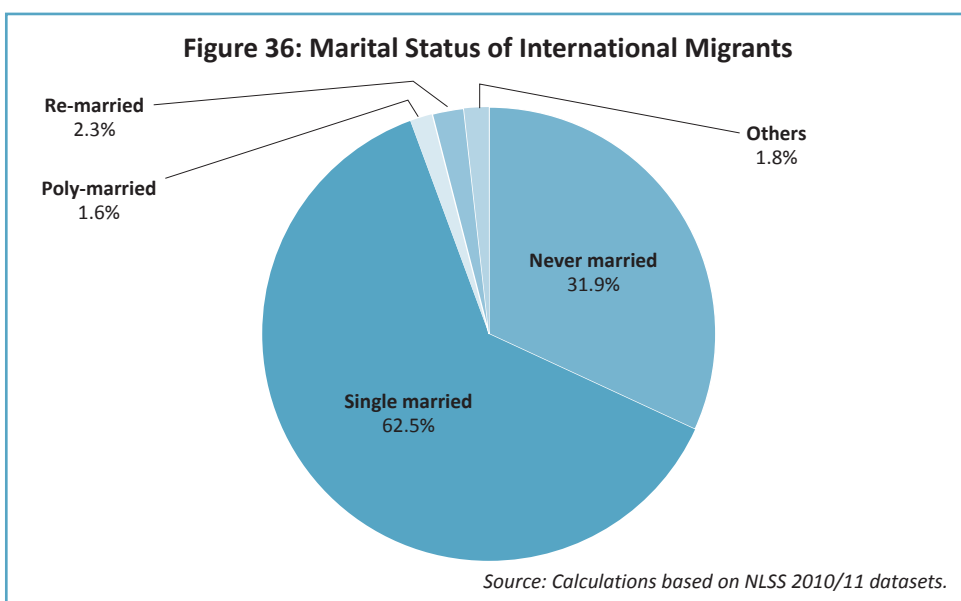


5.4 Age at Migration

Census 2011 provides the age of international migrants at the time they left the country (Figure 34). The age group 15-24 is the most mobile group, followed by



the group 25-34, and then 35-44. This is consistent with the NLSS findings that most international migrants are aged between 15 and 44, with, as mentioned above, those in the 15-24 group comprising nearly half of all international migrants.

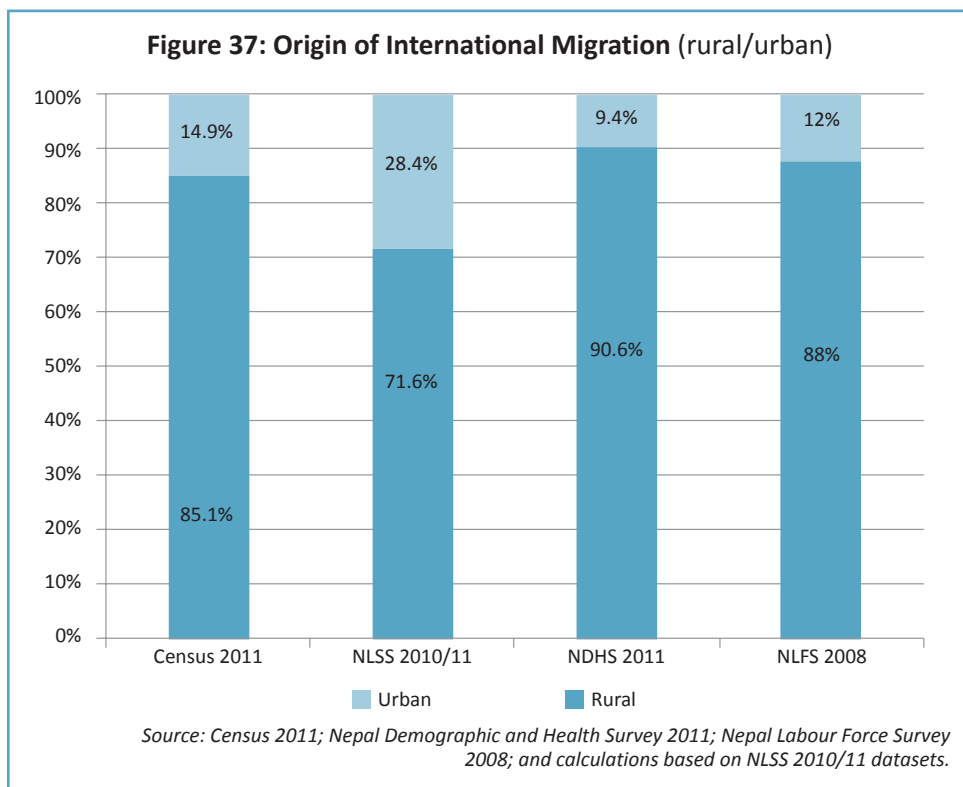


5.5 Marital Status of International Migrants

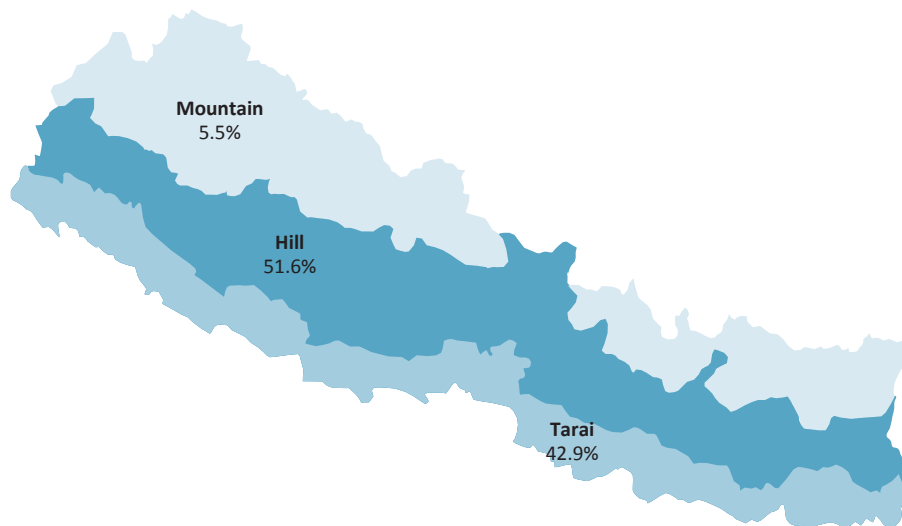
A dominant majority of international migrants are married as is the case among internal migrants.

5.6 Origin of International Migrants

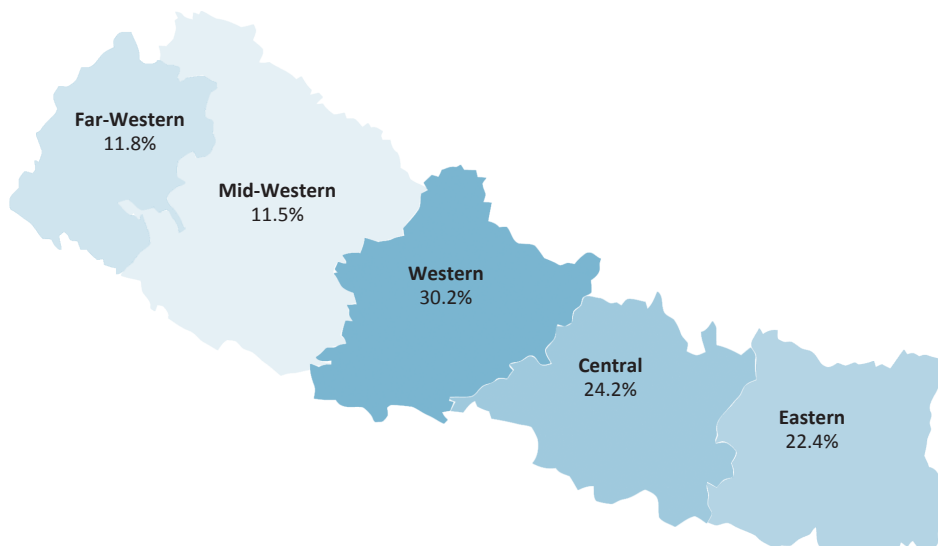
All the surveys considered in this paper show that most migrants working abroad are from rural areas. As seen in Figure 37, Census 2011, NDHS 2011 and NLFS 2008 show an overwhelming proportion of international migrants to be from rural areas while even the lower percentage in NLSS 2010/11 denotes a considerable majority.



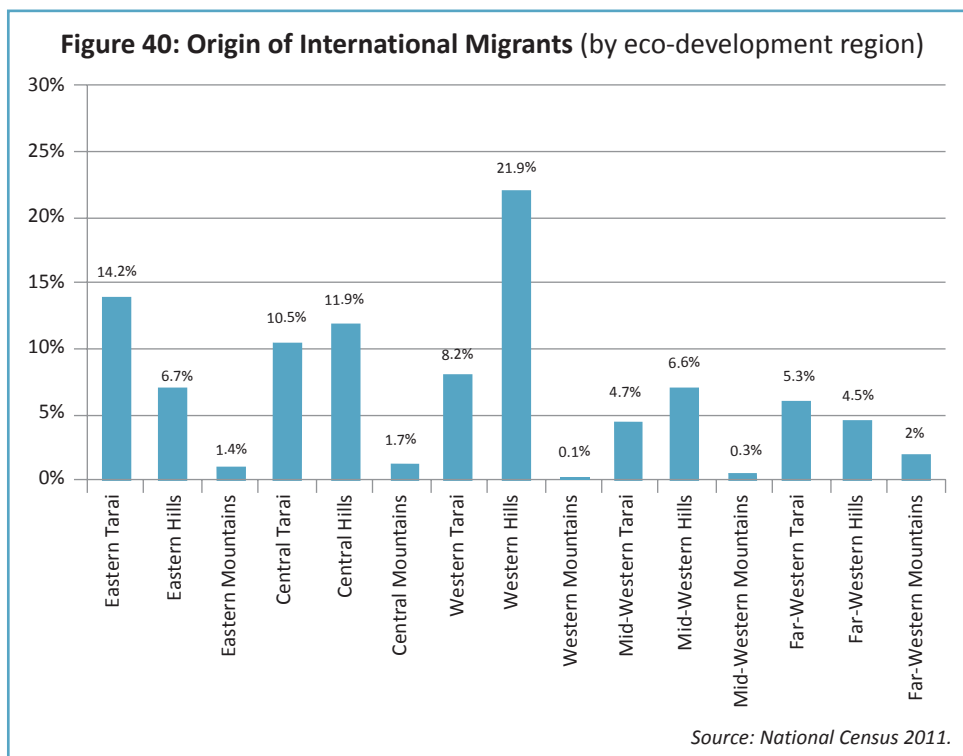
In terms of development region, the Western (30 per cent) and Central (24 per cent) regions send the most number of migrants, while a comparison of

Figure 38: Percentage of International Migrants (by ecological region)

Source: National Census 2011; the map is retrieved from www.ceslam.org/map.

Figure 39: Percentage of International Migrants (by development region)

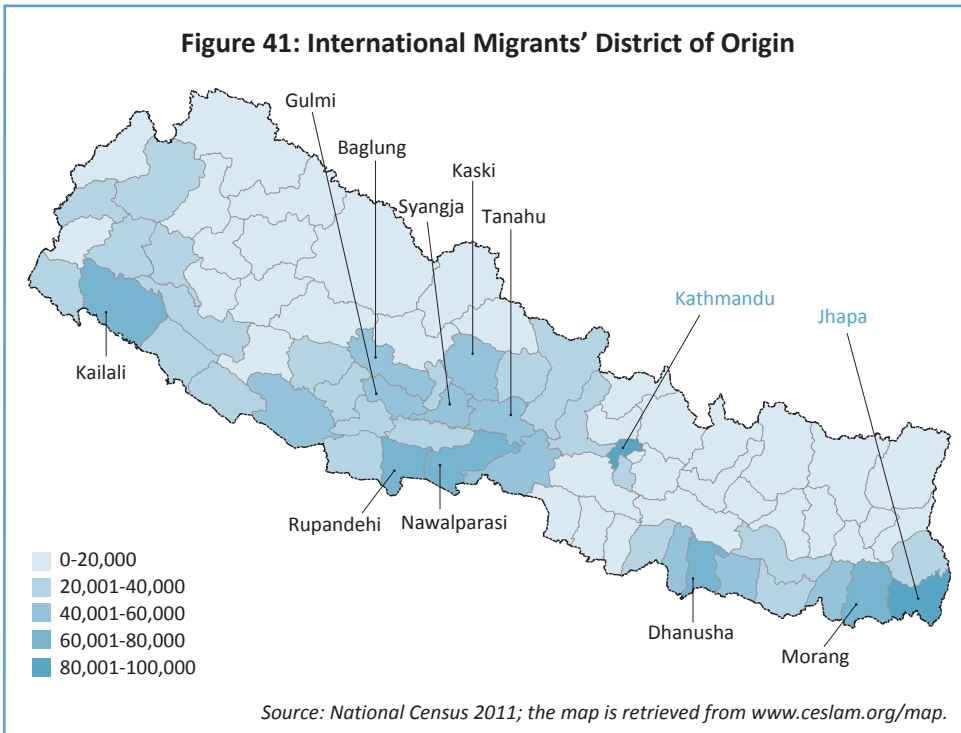
Source: National Census 2011; the map is retrieved from www.ceslam.org/map.



ecological zones shows the Hills (51.6 per cent) sending more migrants abroad than the Tarai (42.9 per cent) and the Mountains (5.5 per cent) combined.⁵²

Likewise, the eco-development region comparison of the data suggests that the Western Hill region contributes the highest number of international migrants, followed by the Eastern Tarai, Central Hills, Central Tarai, and Western Tarai. In comparison, the mountain areas of the Western and Mid-Western regions send very few migrants abroad.⁵³

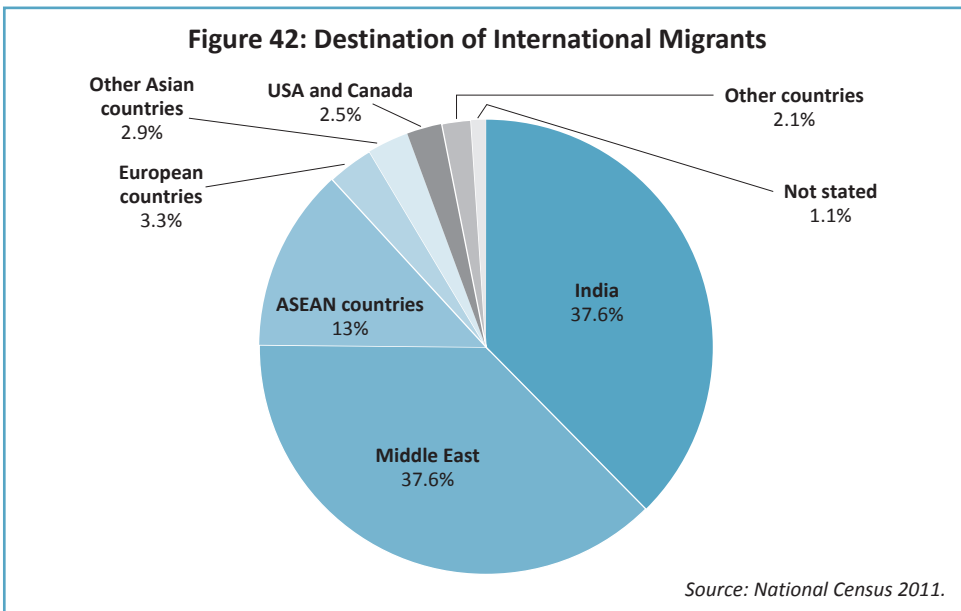
Among the districts, Kathmandu (5 per cent) and Jhapa (4 per cent) send the highest number of international migrants (Figure 41).⁵⁴ Likewise, Morang, Dhanusa, Nawalparasi, Rupandehi and Kailali among the Tarai districts, and the cluster of five contiguous hill districts of Tanahu, Kaski, Syangja, Gulmi and Baglung from the Western Region are the major international migrant-exporting districts. It is interesting to note that while international migrants



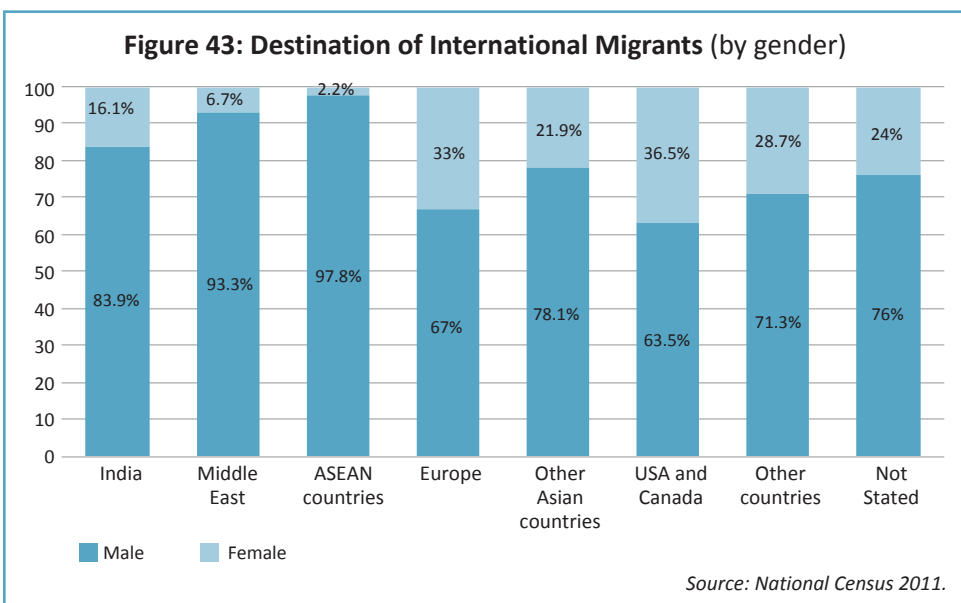
from the Tarai and the Western Hills originate in a number of districts, nearly half of those from the Central Hills have origins in Kathmandu.⁵⁵

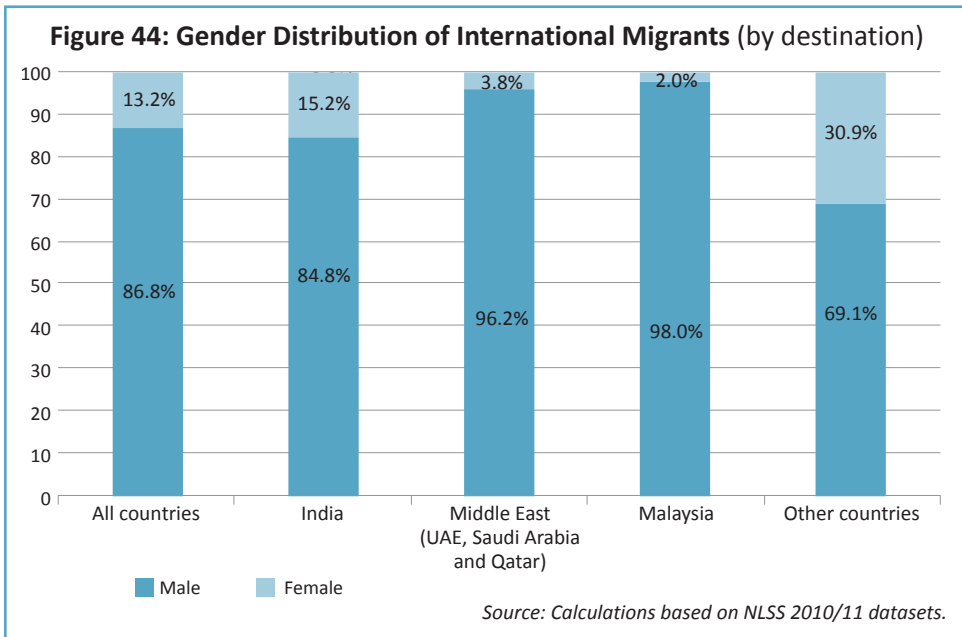
5.7 Destination of International Migrants

Given its proximity and socio-cultural affinities, and further assisted by the open border between the two countries, India has been a favourite destination for Nepalis.⁵⁶ But, now, the countries of the Middle East⁵⁷ have overtaken India as the primary destination for Nepali males. For female migrants, however, India still stands out as the top destination. In terms of proportion, the ratio of females going to the West (USA, Canada and the European Union) is higher than those going anywhere else. Of the total migrants in the 'USA and Canada', and 'European Union countries', 33 per cent and 37 per cent, respectively, are females, with those going to 'Other Asian' countries (at 21.9 per cent) a distant third (see Figure 43).⁵⁸



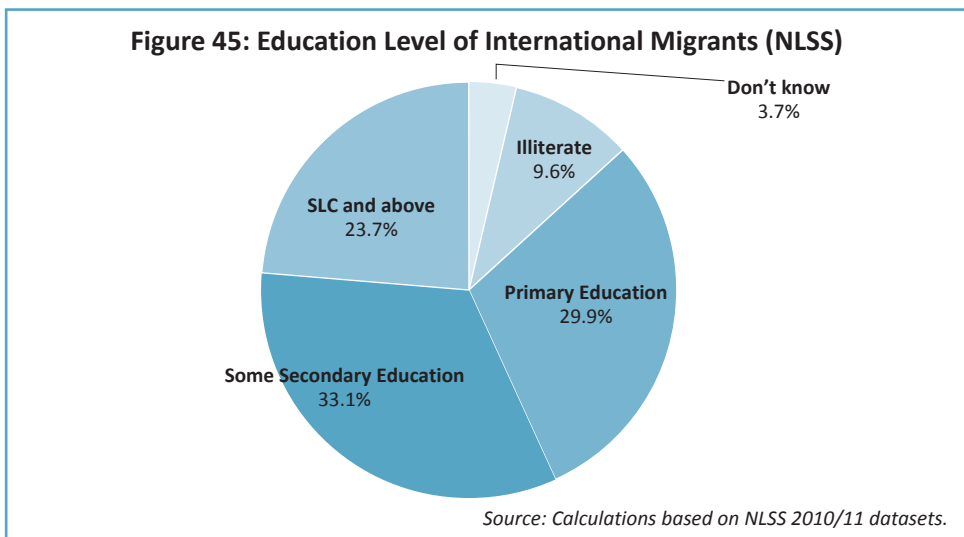
Figures 43 and 44 present the gender-wise proportionate distribution of migrants to the major destinations as provided by Census 2011 and NLSS 2010/11.

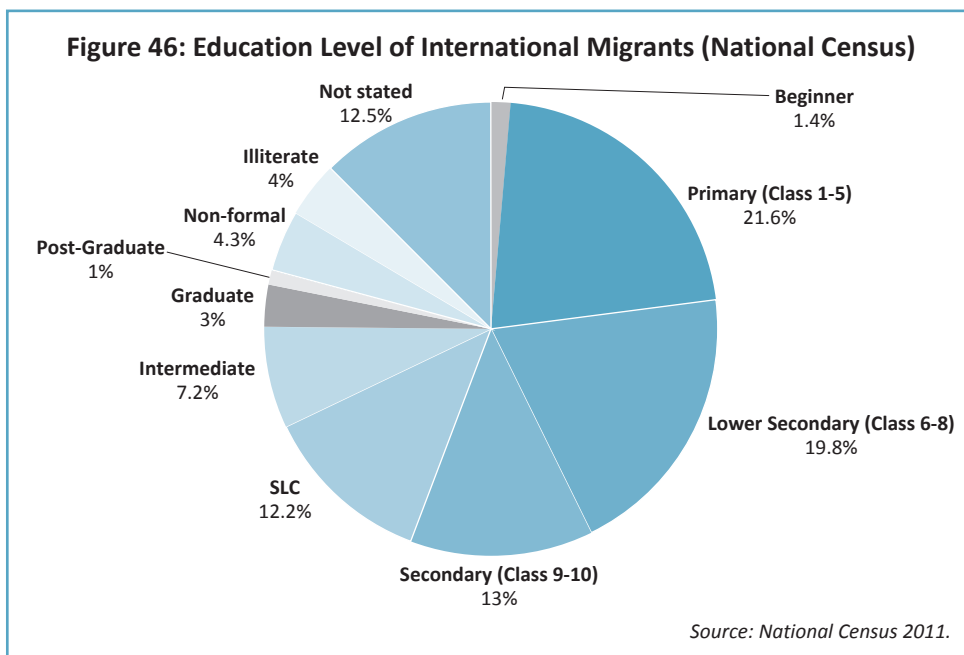




5.8 Education Level of International Migrants

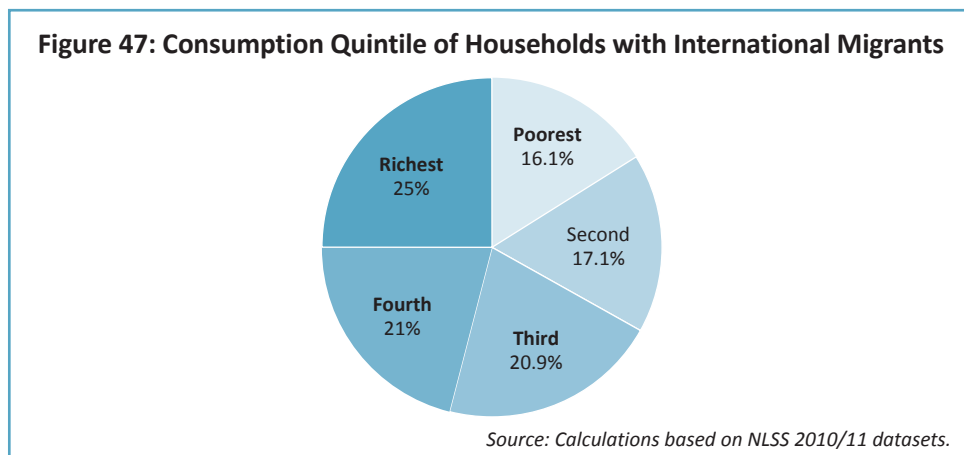
While most migrants going abroad have received some level of education, only a quarter have been educated beyond the secondary level, as both NLSS 2010/11 and Census 2011 have shown (Figures 45 and 46).⁵⁹





5.9 Economic Status of International Migrants

While individuals belonging to the whole range of consumption quintiles are found to have migrated to foreign lands, as with internal migrants, the richer the household, the higher the probability of its having international migrants (see Section 4.8: Economic Status of Internal Migrants). But, there are some notable



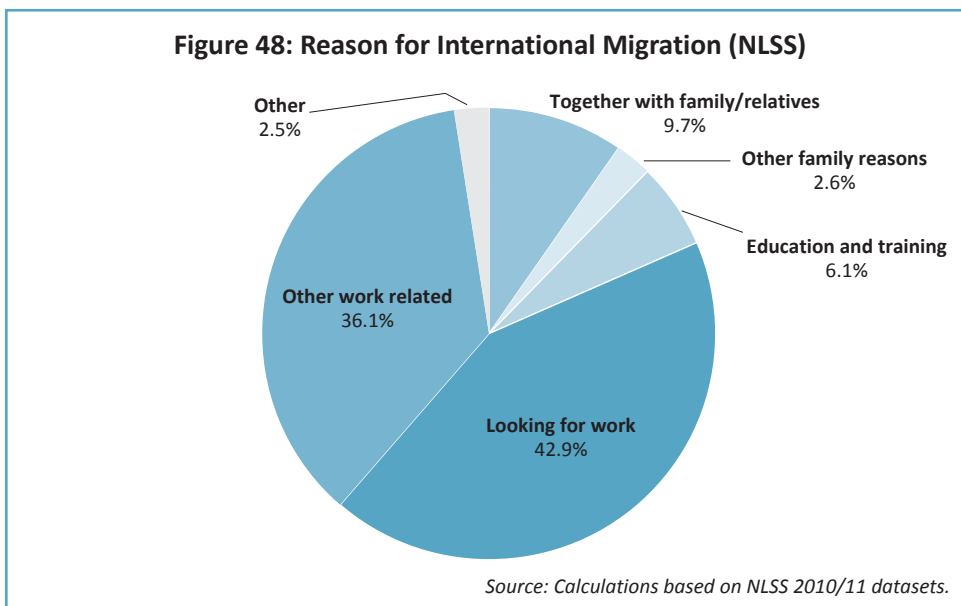
differences as well. Only 7.5 per cent of the poorest quintile figured among the internal migrants whereas that figure is 16 per cent among international migrants. More significantly, within the top two quintiles there were more migrants moving within the country than going abroad.

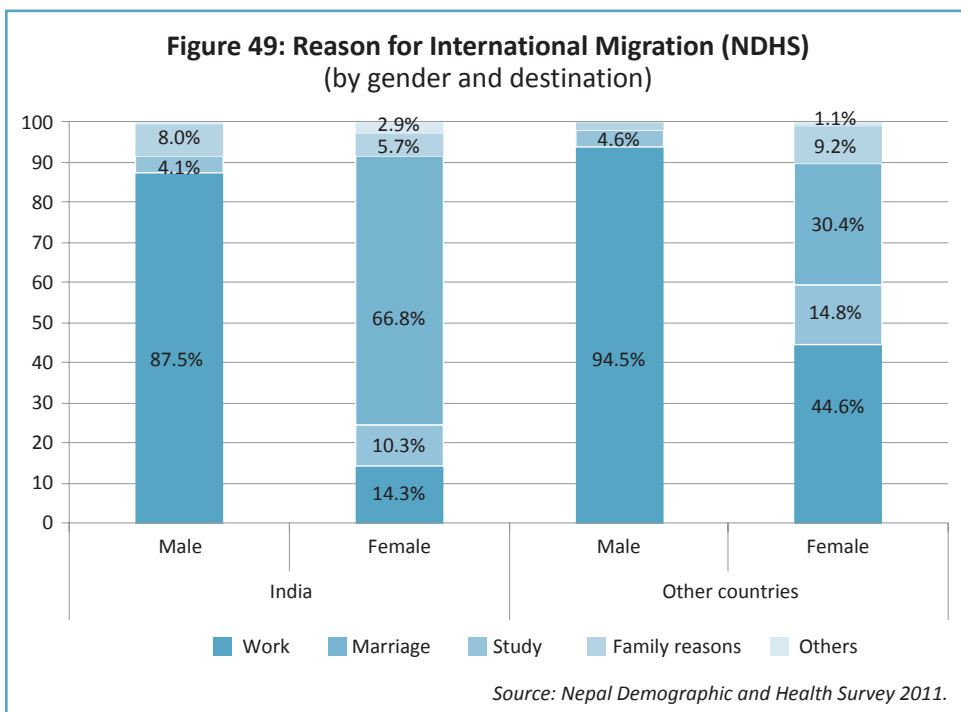
5.10 Ethnicity of International Migrants

At the time of publication, the Census 2011 data on the caste and ethnicity of international migrants had not been released by the CBS. *Social Inclusion Atlas of Nepal* (CDSA 2014) provides that information but since there are some discrepancies between the data presented in that volume and the CBS data, it has not been included in the discussion here. However, because of its significance, the data presented in *Social Inclusion Atlas* has been presented in Annex 3 of this paper.

5.11 Reasons for Migration

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

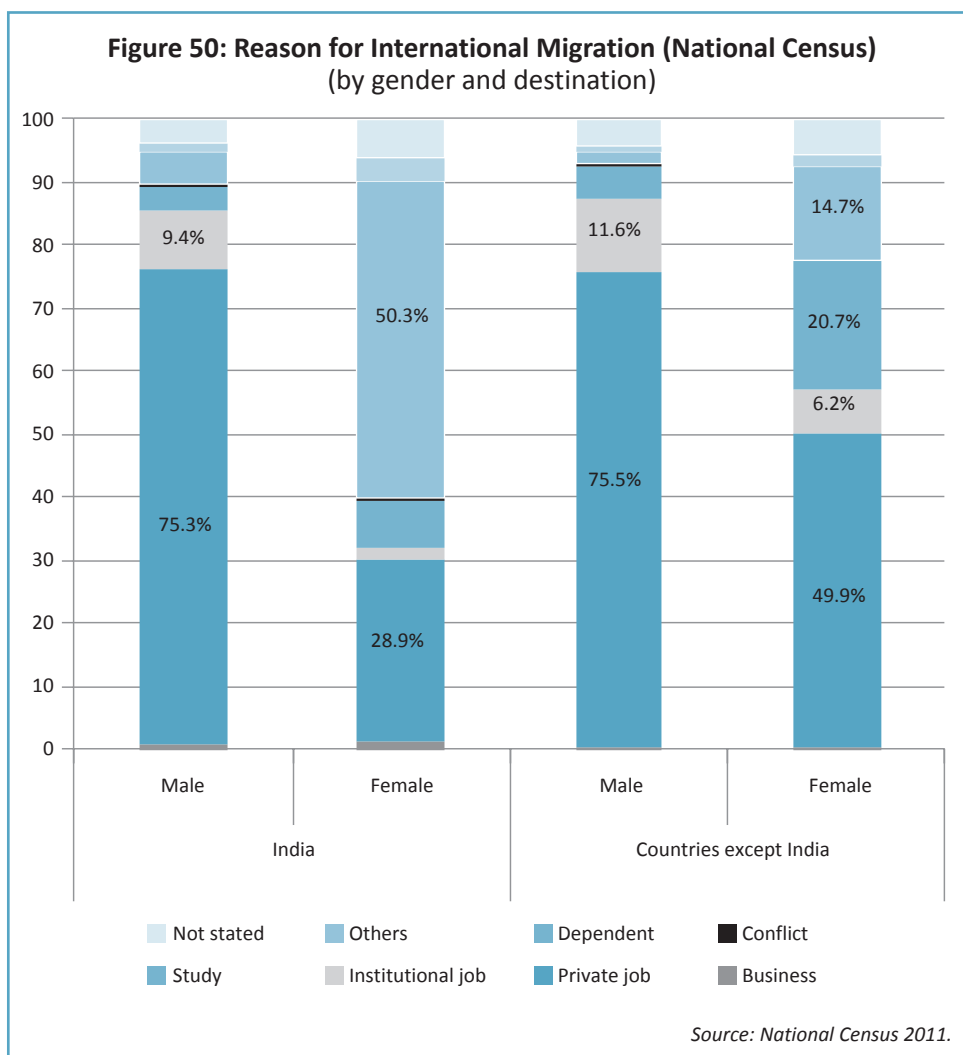




- Nepal's adoption of liberal policies on foreign employment and foreign travel;
- A general sense of insecurity arising out of the Maoist insurgency that lasted from 1996 to 2006; and
- The coincident growth in the economies of destination countries.⁶⁰

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 per cent) go abroad for work (Figure 48).⁶¹

However, as can be seen in Figures 49 and 50, the primary reasons for migration also vary across gender and destination country.⁶² A very high percentage of men migrate to India and other countries for work, but that is true for only a few female migrants going to India.⁶³ NDHS 2011 (Figure 49) and Census 2011 (Figure 50) both agree that the proportion of females migrating for work is higher in other countries. Marriage and dependence on other migrant family members were the primary reason for women migrating to India whereas of the

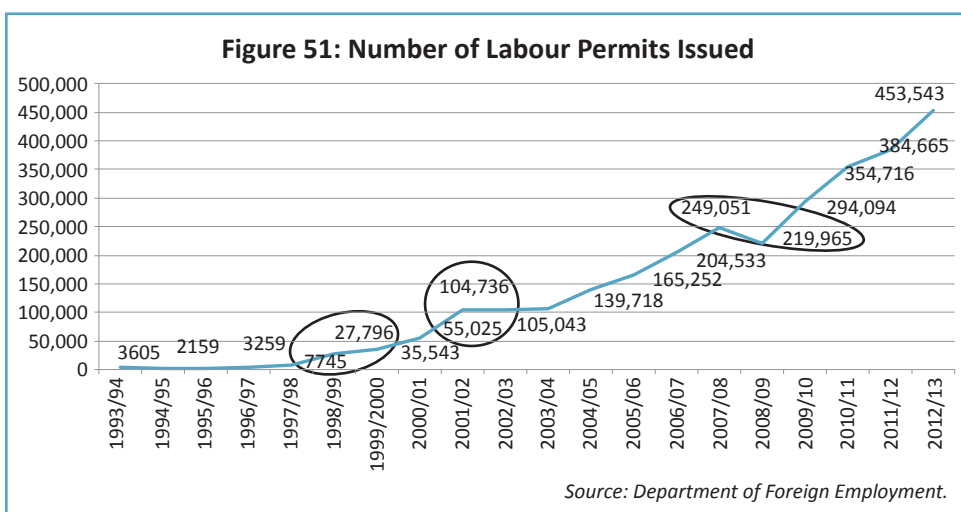


women who went to other countries, a smaller proportion cited marriage as the main reason. Both sources also show that a higher proportion of women went abroad for studies compared to men.⁶⁴ It should, however, be noted that this does not mean more women than men are studying abroad; only many more men migrate abroad for work. Census 2011 shows that a total of 76,886 males and 33,678 females abroad for studies with males numbering 21,670 in India and 55,216 in countries other than India and the corresponding figures for female students were 8,612 and 25,066.⁶⁵

6. LABOUR MIGRATION

6.1 Trends

The number of Nepalis going abroad for employment has been rising steadily, and, at times, rapidly, over the past couple of decades. Figure 51 shows the number of Nepalis who obtained labour permits from the Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE)⁶⁶ over the course of the 18 years that records have been maintained for. It is striking that the number of labour permits issued increased by more than a hundred times in that period – from 3605 in 1993/94 to 453,543 in 2012/13.

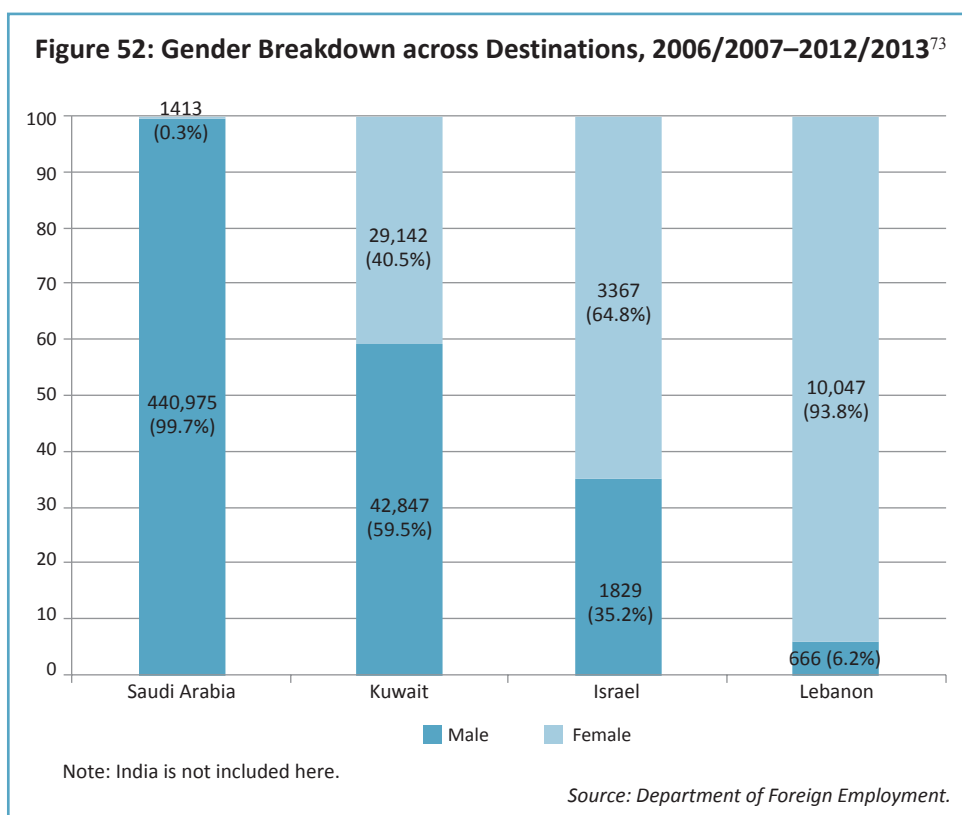


There have been noticeable surges two times and even a decrease in one year. As indicated by the circles in Figure 51, there was a sharp increase in 1998/99 and 2001/02, which could have resulted from the dearth of employment opportunities and growing insecurity in the country, both by-products of the socio-political unrest that had engulfed Nepal at that time,⁶⁷ but could have also resulted from a more liberal policy regime, especially after the enactment of the Foreign Employment Act of 2007⁶⁸ as well as international migration

being increasingly seen as a means to gainful employment. On the other hand, in 2008/09, the number of individuals going abroad for employment actually decreased. This resulted from the global financial downturn of 2008, when Malaysia, the biggest importer of Nepali labourers for some years till then (Figure 61), started giving greater priority to its citizens than to migrant workers, and also tightened its immigration policies to restrict ‘irregular’ and ‘illegal’ migration.⁶⁹

6.2 Gender of Labour Migrants

As mentioned earlier, the population of female migrant workers is much smaller than that of males. According to the 2011 Census, only 12 per cent of the total international migrants (1,921,494) were women (including those going to India).⁷⁰ Other sources estimate this figure to be 6 to 7 per cent⁷¹



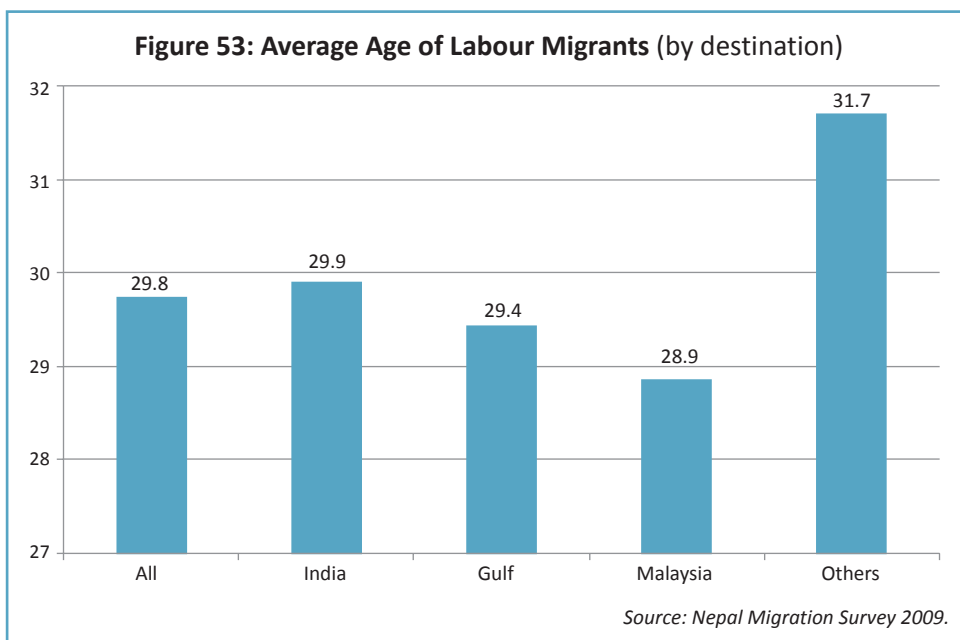
and 16 per cent.⁷² The DoFE records show fewer than 4 per cent of the labour permits issued to females in the period 2006/07 to 2012/13.⁷⁴ It should, however, be noted that a significant number of female migrants also use 'irregular' channels of migration, i.e., travelling via Indian airports which do not require migrant workers to produce their work permits or on tourist visas to circumvent the periodic government bans imposed on women's mobility to certain countries, and, hence, are not captured in the figures, and especially in the data maintained by the DoFE.⁷⁵

Despite restrictions, women have been going abroad for work in some 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 decrease in the number of labour permits issued to Nepali women going to Lebanon. In the fiscal year 2007/08, 2490 women were issued permits to work in Lebanon; this number reached 3696 in the year 2009/10, but in the year 2010/11, it decreased to 84, rising slightly to 369 in 2012/13.⁷⁶

As illustrated in Figure 52, in the period under consideration, over 90 per cent of Nepali migrants working in Lebanon were women. Kuwait and Israel are other popular destinations for women migrant workers while Saudi Arabia primarily entertains male migrant workers with females comprising only 0.3 per cent of all Nepali migrants going to Saudi Arabia between 1993/94 and 2012/13.⁷⁷ Part of this seeming variance in the choice of destinations by women and men could be a reflection of 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.⁷⁸

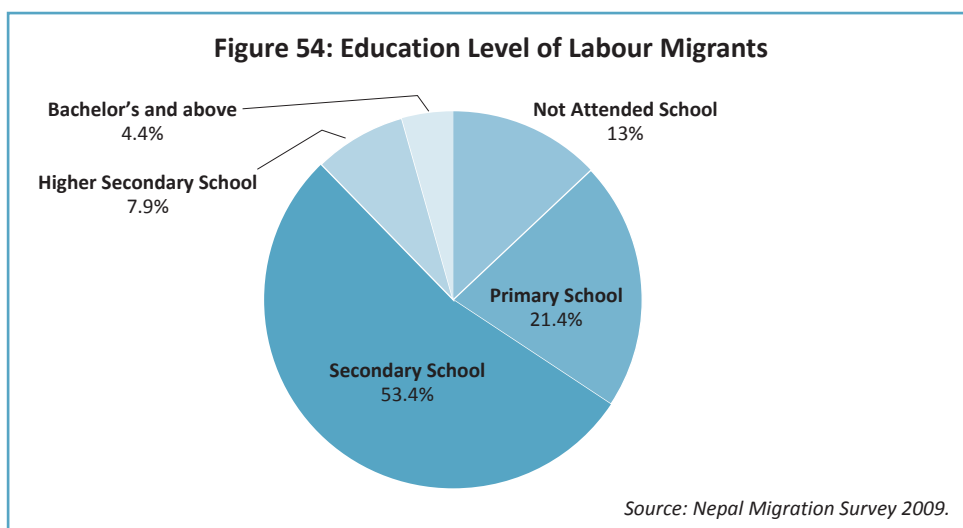
6.3 Age of Labour Migrants

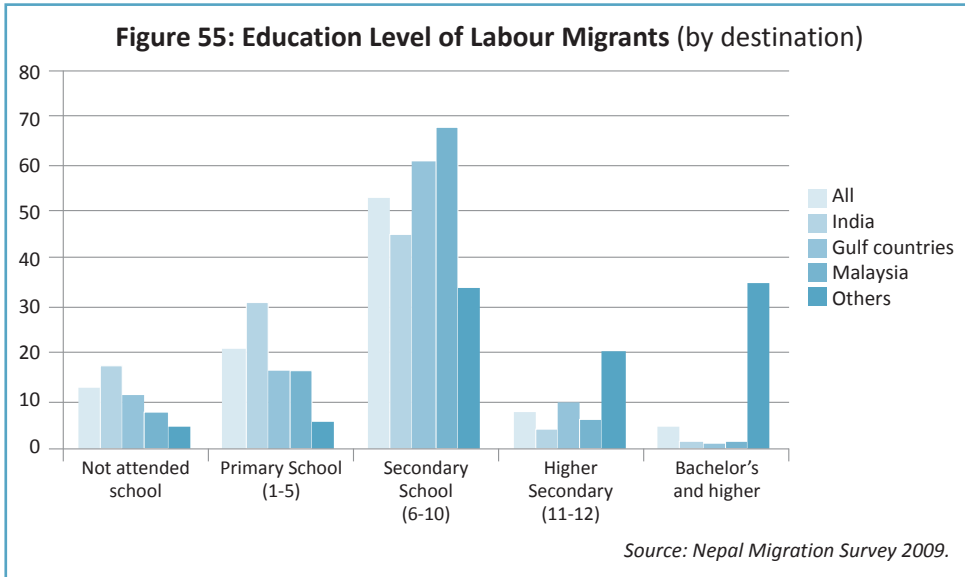
The average age of a labour migrant working abroad is 30 years.⁷⁹ But there are differences between destination countries. The age of labour migrants going to countries like India, Malaysia and the Gulf states is much lower than that of those going to other countries.



6.4 Education Level of Labour Migrants

As Figure 54 shows, most labour migrants have obtained some level of education, with those without any formal schooling consisting just 13 per cent of the total.⁸⁰

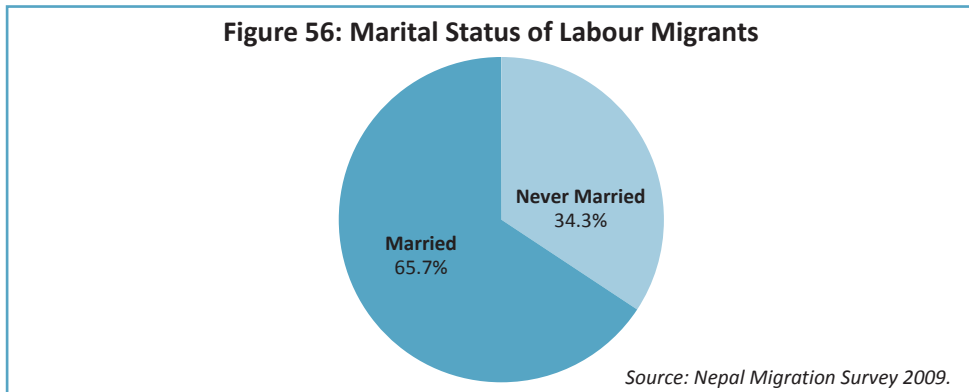




The better-educated and -skilled workers tend to opt for employment in industrialised countries in the West, while those seeking employment in India, Malaysia and the Gulf are generally less educated. More than a third of the migrants to other countries have received at least a bachelor’s degree compared to less than 2 per cent of migrants to countries such as India, Malaysia and the Gulf region.⁸¹

6.5 Marital Status of Labour Migrants

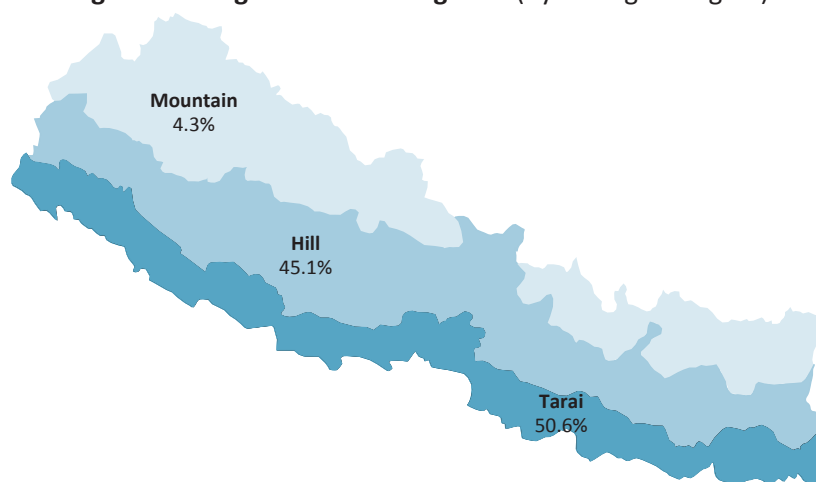
In terms of marital status a definite majority of labour migrants were married, a trend similar to the other categories discussed earlier, namely, ‘absentees’, ‘internal migrants’, and ‘international migrants’.⁸²



6.6 Origin of Labour Migrants

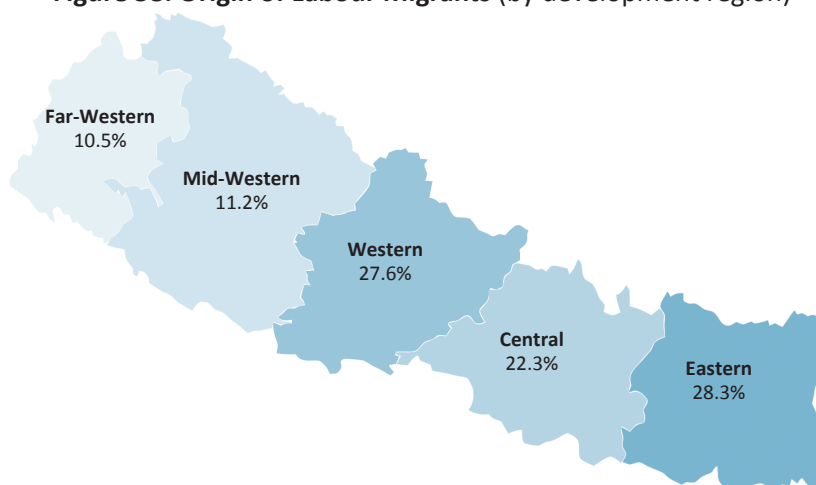
As discussed under the sections ‘Absentee Population’ and ‘International Migration’, the majority of migrants who opt for foreign employment also originate in the Tarai and the Hills, while only a small proportion migrate from the Mountain region.

Figure 57: Origin of Labour Migrants (by ecological region)



Source: Nepal Migration Survey 2009.

Figure 58: Origin of Labour Migrants (by development region)



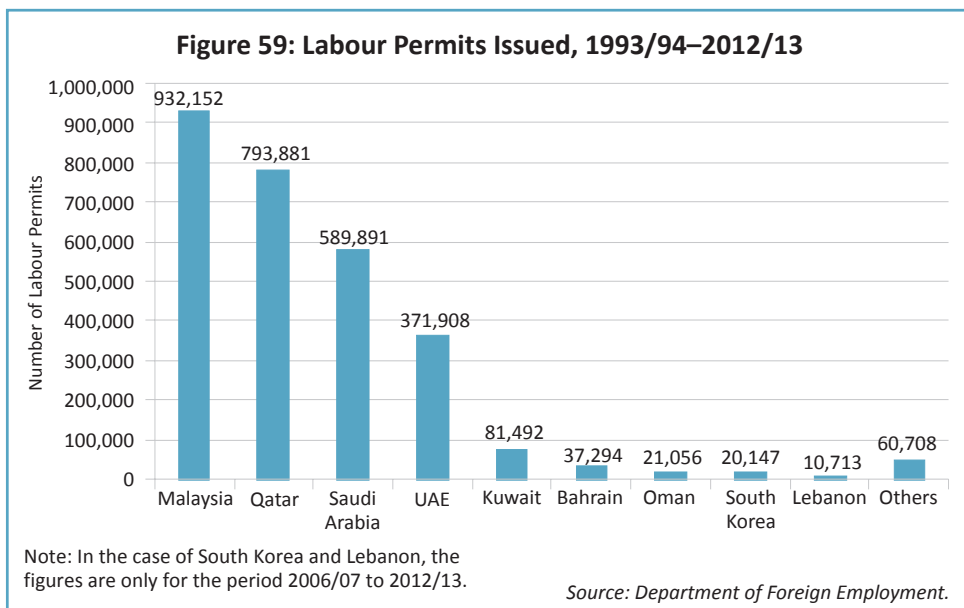
Source: Nepal Migration Survey 2009.

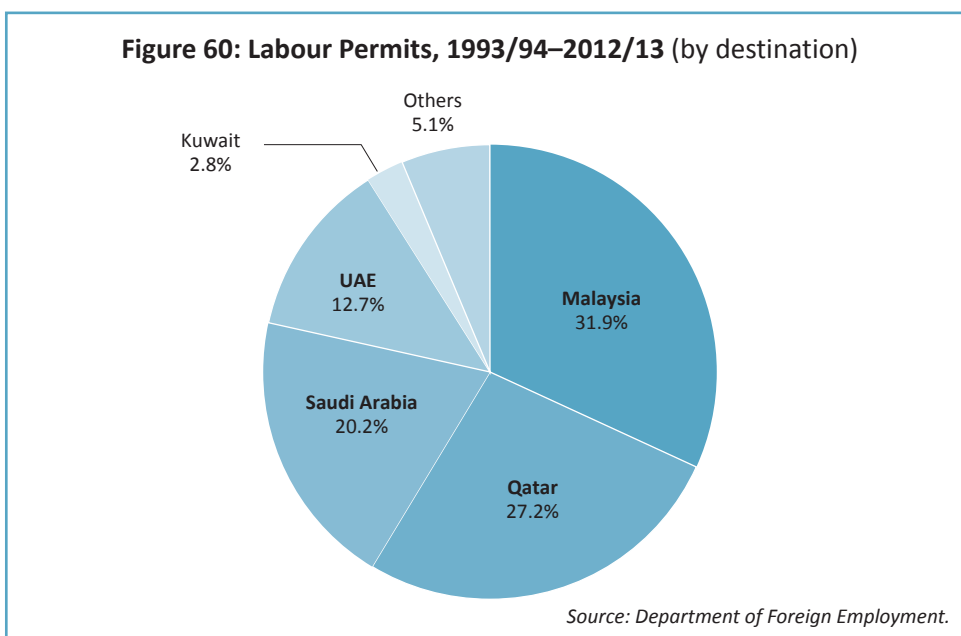
In terms of regional distribution, the Eastern, Central and Western regions contribute more than three quarters of international labour migrants.⁸³

Nearly all migrants from the Far-Western region (93 per cent) are India-bound and a very high proportion of migrants (71 per cent) from the Mid-Western region also go to India.⁸⁴ On the other hand, migrants from the Eastern, Central and Western regions constitute the largest proportion of the Nepali workforce in Malaysia and the Gulf, at 71, 57 and 49 per cent respectively.⁸⁵ The destination countries will be discussed at greater length in subsequent sections.

6.7 Destination of Labour Migrants

Information on the destination of migrant workers is available from the Department of Foreign Employment since, by law, individuals are required to obtain government approval (in the form of labour permits) before going abroad.⁸⁶ However, the absence of systematic records of labour migrants, particularly, data on migrant returnees or those who re-migrate (with another labour permit)⁸⁷ makes the data misleading. Also missing from the data is that population of workers who may have migrated through informal/illegal channels.



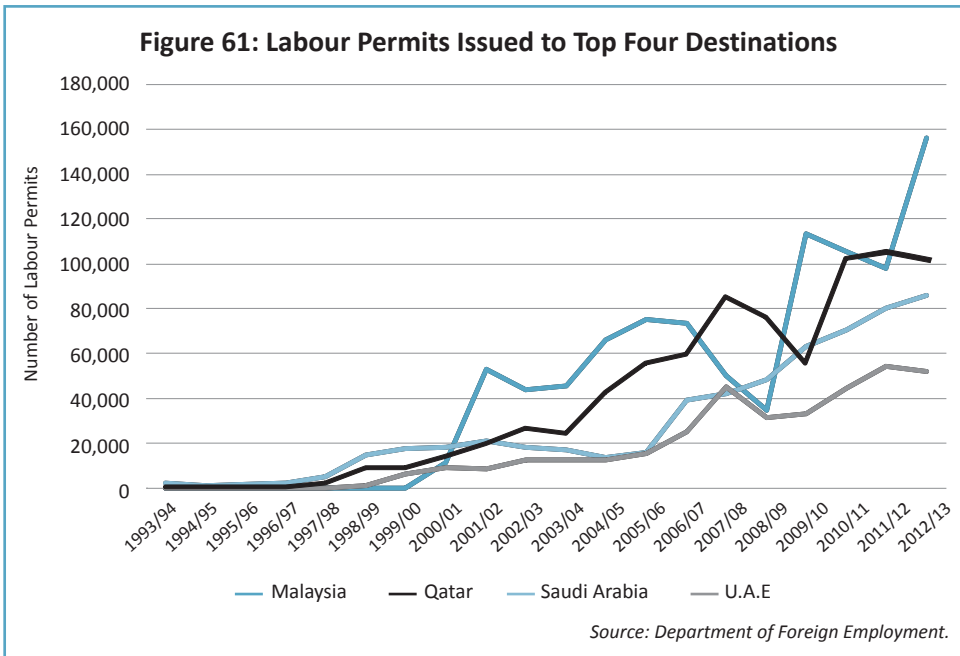


Nonetheless, the annual data from the Department of Foreign Employment does provide some indication of the number of Nepali migrant workers in different countries around the world. Since the provision for obtaining labour permits does not apply to those going to India, little is known about the number of Nepalis working there.⁸⁸

Figure 61 presents the number of labour permits issued for the four most popular destinations from 1993/94 to 2012/13. Malaysia is the most popular labour migrant destination followed by the six Gulf states. Migration to South Korea began more recently and only a few thousand have gone there so far.

Although the Government of Nepal has identified 108 international destinations for foreign employment,⁸⁹ data on labour permits issued between 1993/94 and 2012/13 reveals that more than 90 per cent of Nepali migrant workers went to just four countries: Malaysia (32 per cent), Qatar (27 per cent), Saudi Arabia (20 per cent) and the United Arab Emirates (13 per cent) (Figure 58).⁹⁰

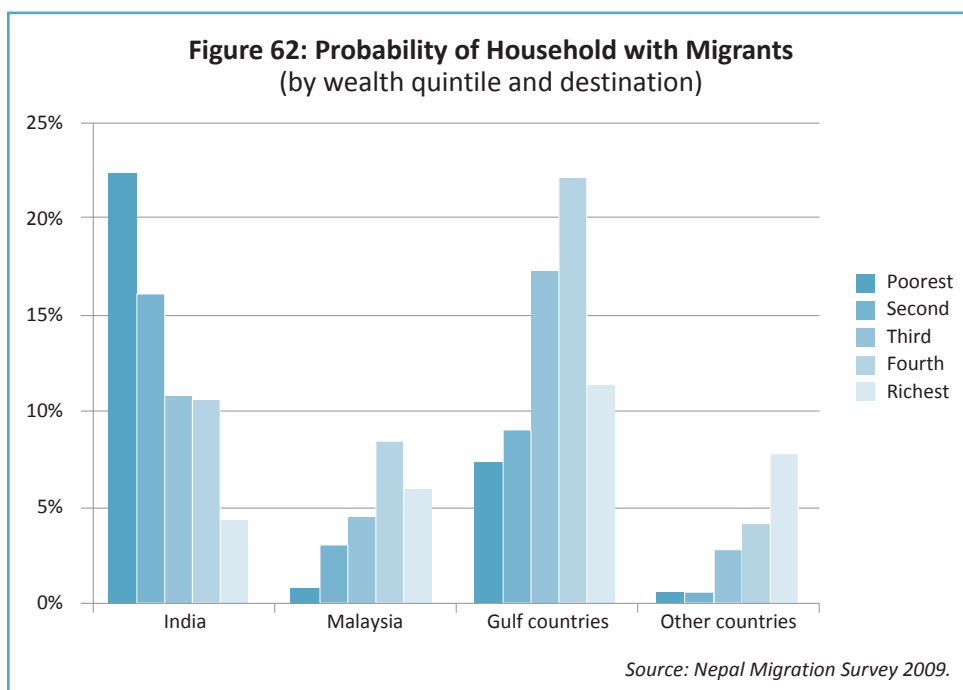
As shown in Figure 61, Saudi Arabia was the top international migrant



destination (after India, that is) 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 was contrasted by the rise of Qatar as a major migrant destination. Malaysia re-emerged as the most popular destination for Nepalis until 2010/11, after which in 2011/12 Qatar edged past it. However, in the year 2012/13, Malaysia overtook Qatar again.⁹¹

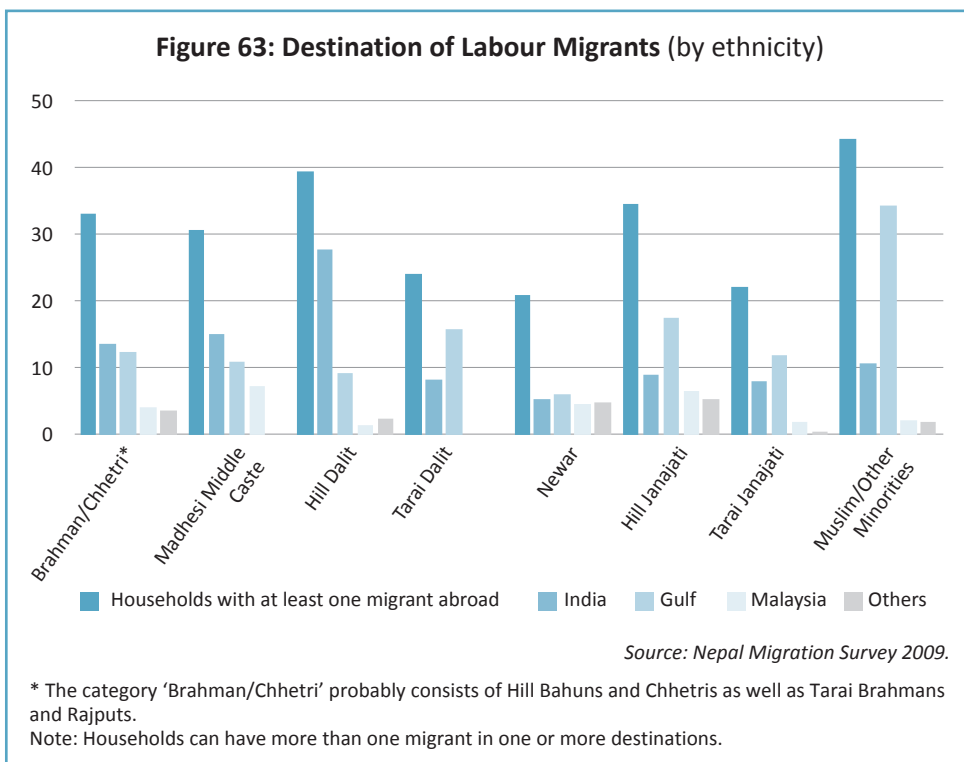
6.8 Economic Status of Labour Migrants

The destination of a migrant also varies according to wealth status. The likelihood of a household having a migrant family member in India was the highest for households with the least financial resources (22.3 per cent). This is probably due to the fact that migrating to India is significantly less expensive than to other destinations. As is evident in Figure 60, India as a migrant destination of choice declines as the wealth status of the household improves, with households from the higher wealth quintiles likely to have migrants in countries other than India.



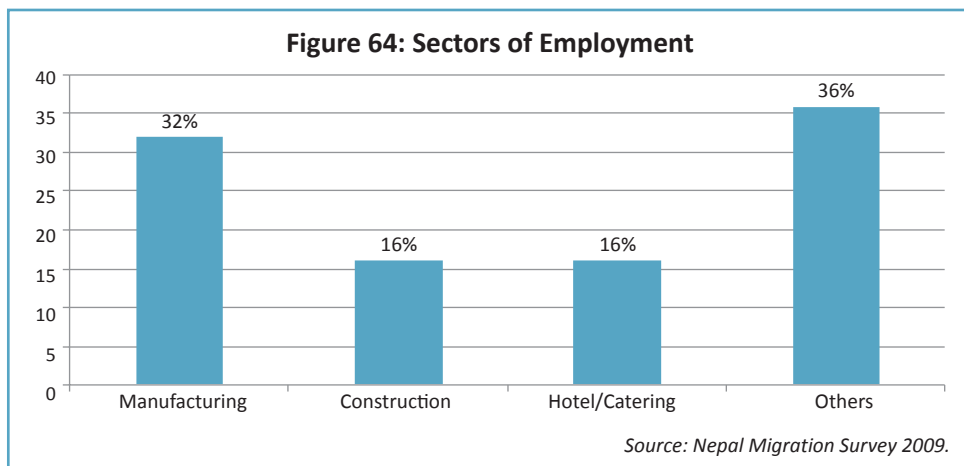
6.9 Ethnicity of Labour Migrants

The Nepal Migration Survey 2009 states that Newar, Tarai Janajati and Tarai Dalit households have the lowest probabilities of migrating abroad for work, at 20.9 per cent, 22 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively.⁹² ‘Muslims and Other Minorities’⁹³ households have the highest probability of having a migrant in the Gulf countries (34.3 per cent) than in other countries; more Hill Dalits migrate to India (27.6 per cent probability among households having migrants) than anywhere else; and Tarai Dalit households do not have migrants in countries other than India and the Gulf region. This, in a way, suggests that migration is an ‘ethnicised’ phenomenon and although people belonging to all social groups migrate, there are visible patterns in terms of destination country for different groups, indicating differences caused by factors such as their socio-economic conditions or social networks, which ultimately also determine the benefits accrued from migration as well as the differential impacts it has on the various groups.



6.10 Occupation of Labour Migrants

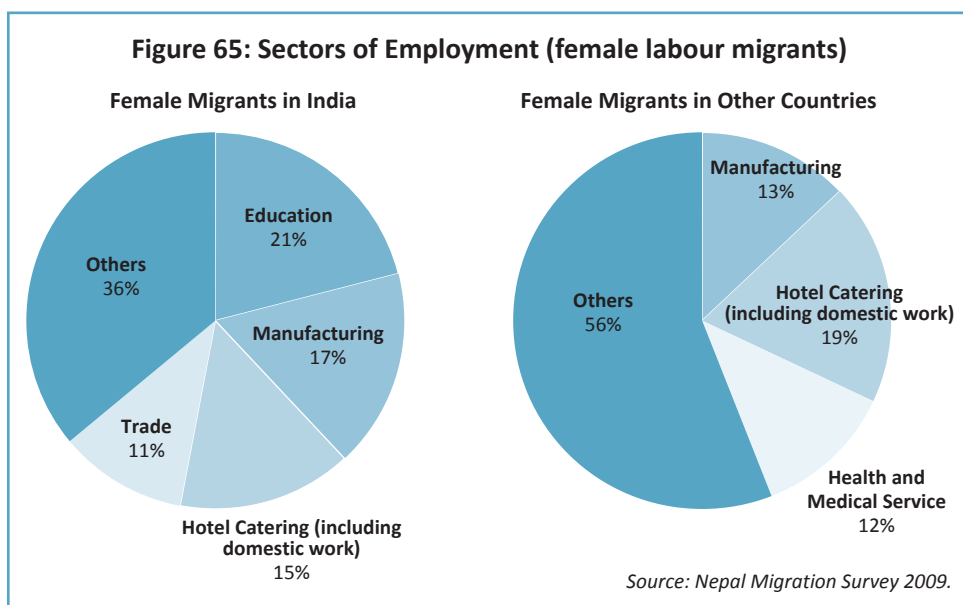
Although NLSS has information about the kind of work Nepalis are engaged in abroad, given that it identifies 98 such sectors and also includes categories such



as students (8 per cent) and a large proportion (21 per cent) reporting ‘Don’t Know’, analysis of the data is not altogether helpful in understanding what work Nepali labour migrants do in destination countries.

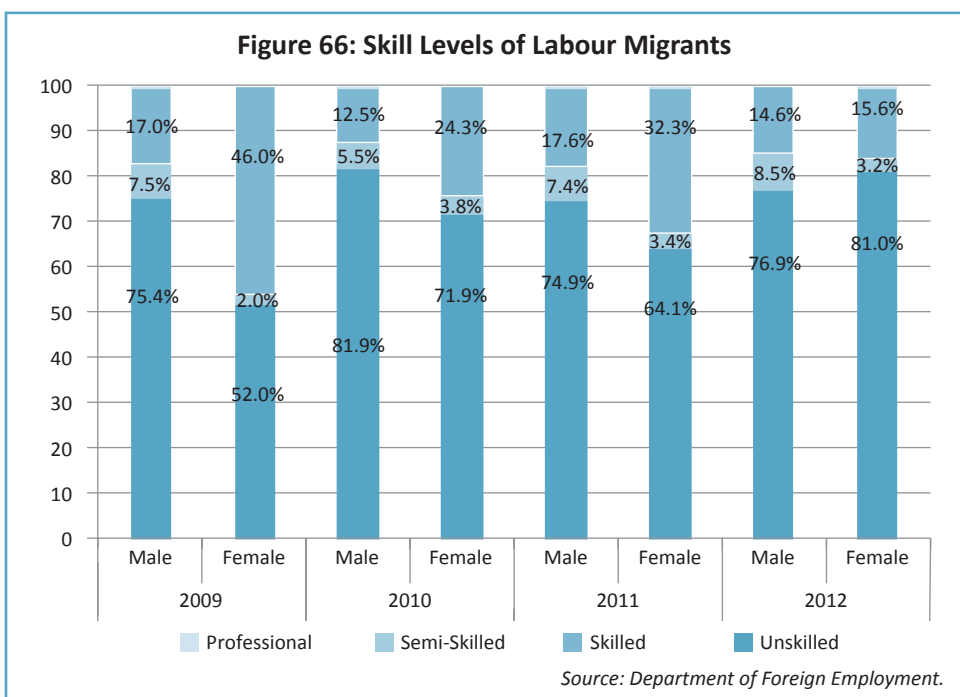
The Nepal Migration Survey 2009, on the other hand, clearly spells out the major occupations of Nepali in foreign countries. The data shows that most Nepalis seek employment in one of three main sectors: manufacturing (32 per cent), construction (16 per cent), and hotel/catering (16 per cent). Although the survey does not mention which other areas the remaining 36 per cent are engaged in, it does provide additional information on the major work destinations. For migrants in India, manufacturing (24 per cent) and hotel/catering (21 per cent) are the top two employment sectors, followed by the agricultural sector in which 12 per cent of them work.⁹⁴ In the Gulf countries, manufacturing attracts most workers (35 per cent) followed by the construction sector (21 per cent). In Malaysia, 62 per cent of the migrants go into manufacturing.⁹⁵

The sector-specific analysis of employment for female labour migrants going to India and the rest of the world in the Nepal Migration Survey 2009 suggests a wide array of employment areas they are engaged in (Figure 65). A substantial

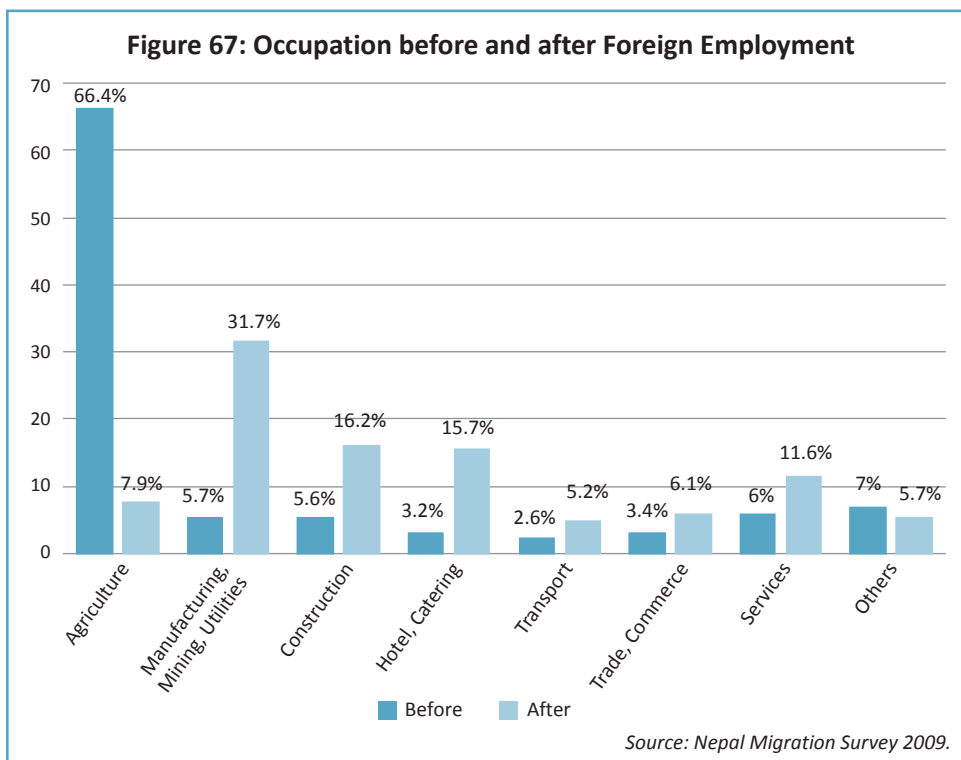


proportion of women are found working in 'education' in India. Manufacturing, domestic work, hotel and catering are the other key sectors that attract Nepali women migrants in all parts of the world.⁹⁶

Data from the Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE) suggests that a very high percentage of unskilled migrants go abroad for work compared to a negligible proportion of professionals (Figure 66).⁹⁷ Similarly, it also suggests that the proportion of skilled female migrants is higher than that of skilled males (even though female migrants are far fewer in numbers).



Most of the international migrants are found to change their profession upon their return with the most significant difference seen in agriculture (Figure 67). Almost 90 per cent of the individuals previously engaged in agriculture do not return to that profession after a stint abroad. The sector most popular among returnees is manufacturing, mining and utilities.



7. IMMIGRATION⁹⁸

7.1 Trends

Immigration in Nepal, as tracked by decennial censuses from 1961 to 2011, has been more or less steady except for fluctuations between 1971 and 1991. Immigration shot up nearly three and a half times from 1971 to 1981, peaking at 483,019 in 1981. However, it plummeted by more than five times in 1981-1991, reaching a level in 1991 less than that of 1961. A steady growth of immigration was witnessed from 1991 to 2011, but the number of immigrants recorded in 2011 was only slightly more than in 1961.⁹⁹ Except for the year 1981, it could be seen that most of the immigrants are Indian citizens.

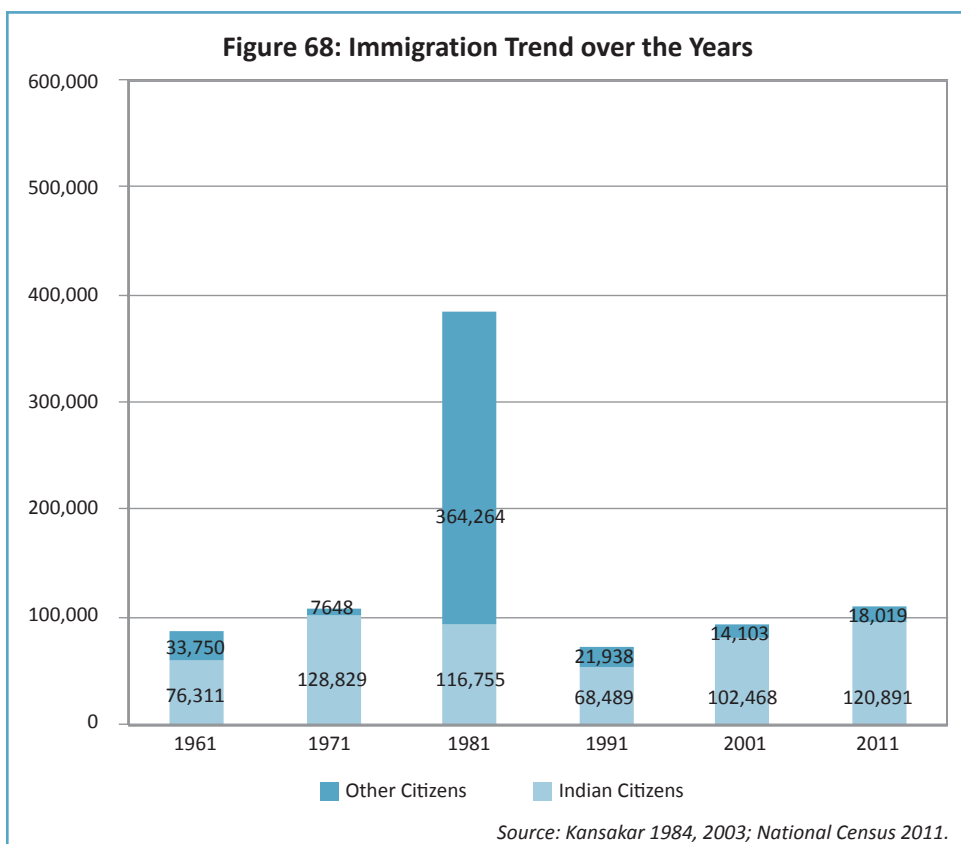
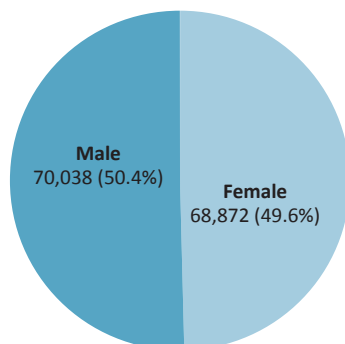


Figure 69: Gender of Immigrants

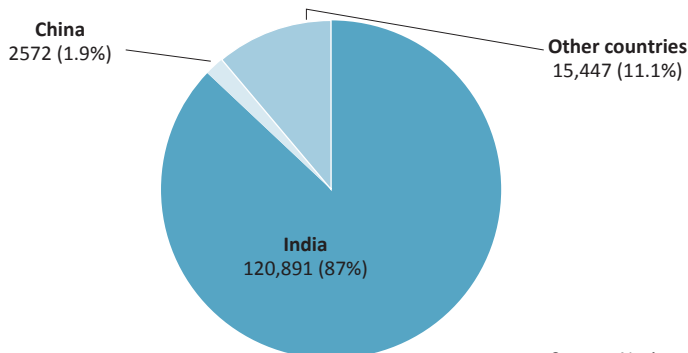
Source: National Census 2011.

7.2 Gender of Immigrants

Immigration into Nepal shows nearly equal proportions of males and females,¹⁰⁰ which is in sharp contrast to the gender dynamics of the other forms of migration discussed above, in which mobility is largely the domain of males.

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, immigrate into Nepal for various purposes. The 2011 data reveals that of the total 138,910 foreign individuals enumerated, an overwhelming 87 per cent are from India.¹⁰¹

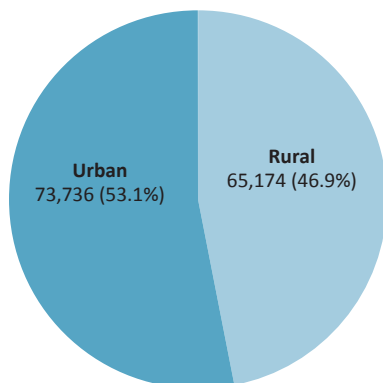
Figure 70: Origin Countries of Immigrants

Source: National Census 2011.

7.4 Destination of Immigrants

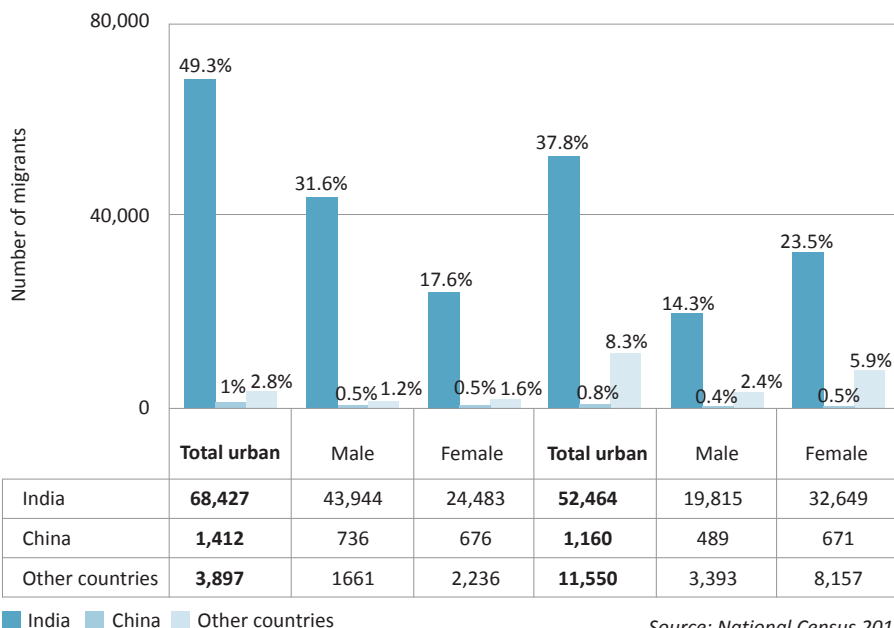
The national census shows that while more immigrants prefer urban destinations over rural ones, their percentage is only 6 per cent higher (Figure 71). In terms of gender distribution, however, there is great variation. There are more male

Figure 71: Destination of Immigrants (by location)

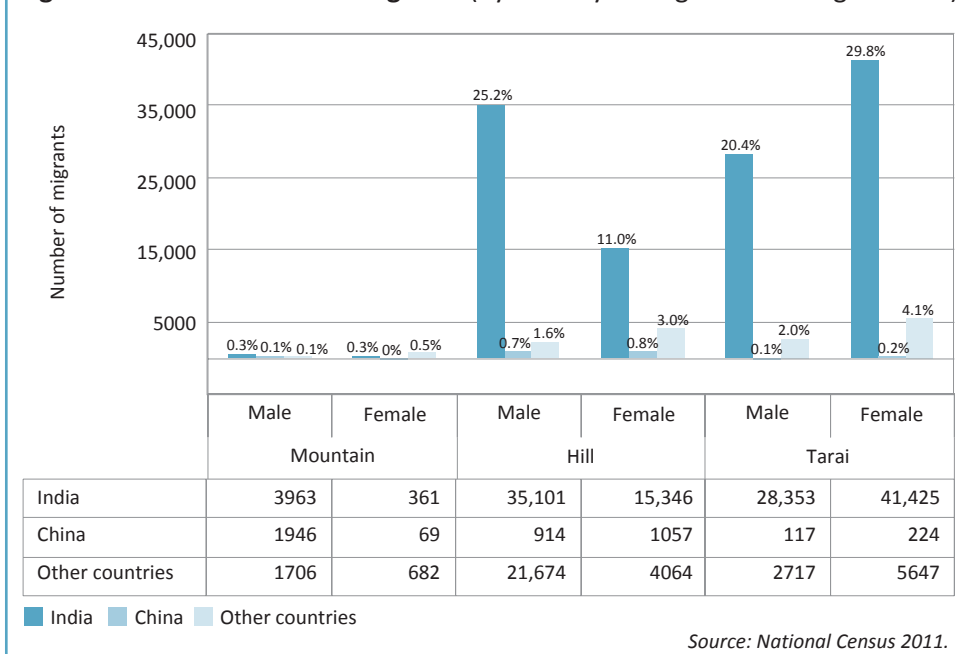


Source: National Census 2011.

Figure 72: Destination of Immigrants (by country of origin and location)



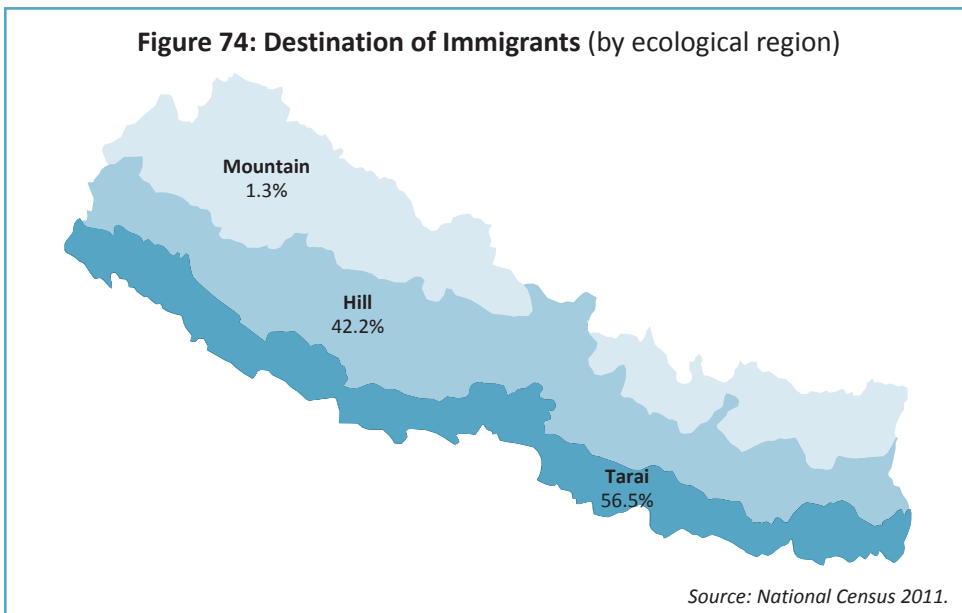
Source: National Census 2011.

Figure 73: Destination of Immigrants (by country of origin and ecological zone)

immigrants in Nepal's urban areas, reflective of the fact that male immigrants are attracted to employment opportunities in urban areas. On the other hand, female immigrants outnumber males immigrants in Nepal's rural areas, and, as previously mentioned, most of these females would have immigrated to Nepal following marriage.¹⁰²

The regional distribution of immigrants in terms of ecological region (Figure 74) shows that the Tarai region is the most preferred destination among immigrants, with 56 per cent choosing the Tarai as a destination, followed by 42 per cent going to the Hills and only about one per cent to the Mountains.¹⁰³ The proportion of female in-migrants is higher than male in-migrants in the Tarai, primarily due to the high prevalence of cross-border marriages in the region.

Figure 74: Destination of Immigrants (by ecological region)



8. REMITTANCES

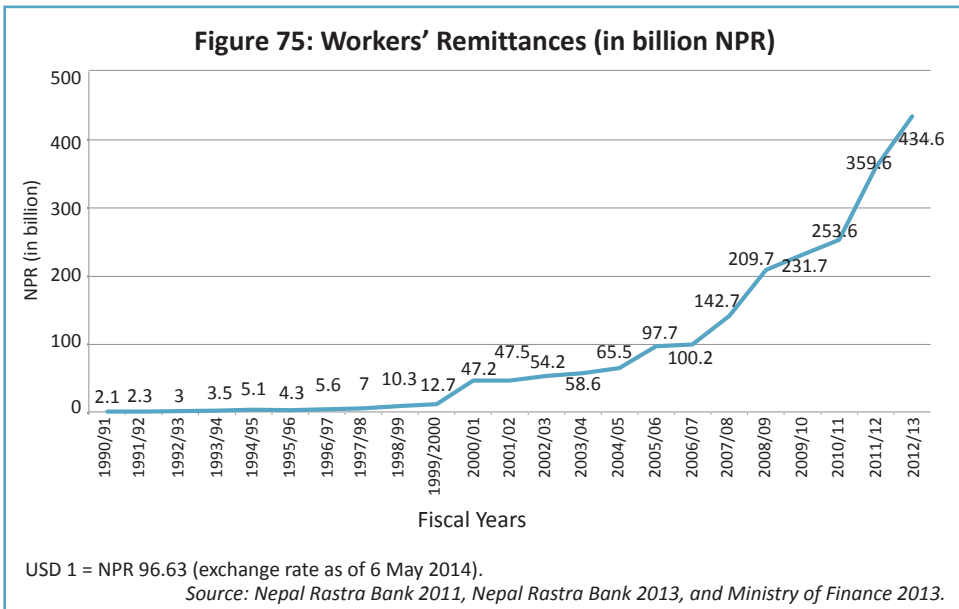
In a context where foreign labour migration and international remittances have been the focus of attention, an attempt has been made in this section to not just understand the inflow of remittance into Nepal from external sources, but also the circulation of domestic remittances in the country through an analysis of the NLSS 2010/11 datasets.

8.1 External Remittances over the Years

In 2012, Nepal ranked third globally for the remittances it received from abroad as a percentage of its gross domestic product (GDP). Accounting for 24.7 per cent equivalent of Nepal's GDP, remittance earnings were estimated at more than USD 5.2 billion, and this figure is expected to rise as labour migration to the Gulf countries and elsewhere continues to increase.¹⁰⁴

External 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.¹⁰⁵ It is estimated that 'a 10 percent increase in official per-capita remittance leads to a 3.5 percent decline in the proportion of people living in poverty'.¹⁰⁶ The first evidence of that 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.¹⁰⁷ Further, NLSS 2010/11 also attributes the reduction in poverty from 42 per cent to 25 per cent between 1995/96 and 2010/11 largely to the remittance-led economic growth.¹⁰⁸

Figure 75 shows the volume of remittances received from workers outside Nepal from 1990/91 to 2011/12, an increase by more than 150 times in that period.¹⁰⁹ 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, come via informal means like *hundi*¹¹⁰ or are brought back by individuals and as such fall below the radar of Nepal

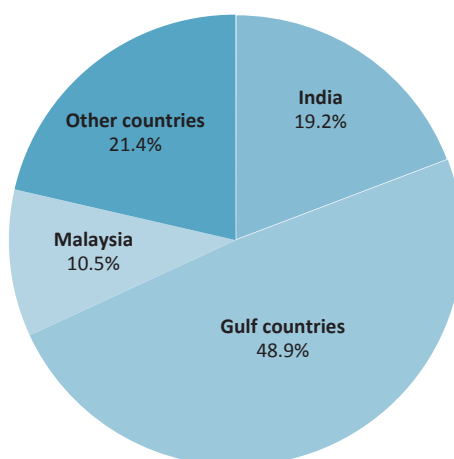


Rastra Bank. Although the government is trying to discourage the informal means of remittance transfer and is promoting the use of formal institutions like banks and money transfer agencies, it is believed that a substantial proportion of remittances continue to enter the country outside of formal channels.¹¹¹ 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.¹¹²

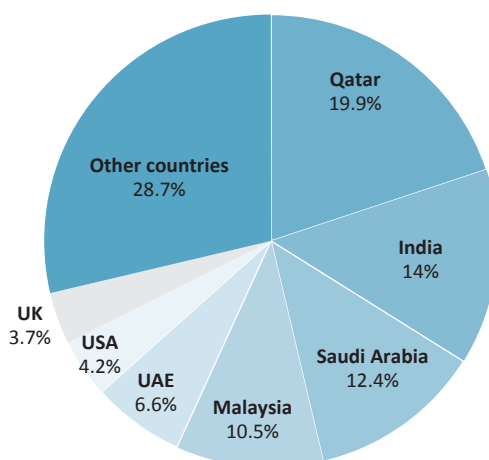
8.2 Inflow of Remittances

As shown in Figure 76, the Nepal Migration Survey 2009 reported that the bulk of the remittances come from migrants in the Gulf countries (49 per cent) followed by India (19 per cent) and Malaysia (10 per cent).¹¹³

NLSS 2010/11 also shows a comparable trend. Qatar (19.9 per cent), Saudi Arabia (12.4 per cent) and the UAE (6.6 per cent) together account for around two fifths of the total external remittances while significant proportions also come from India (14 per cent) and Malaysia (10.5 per cent).

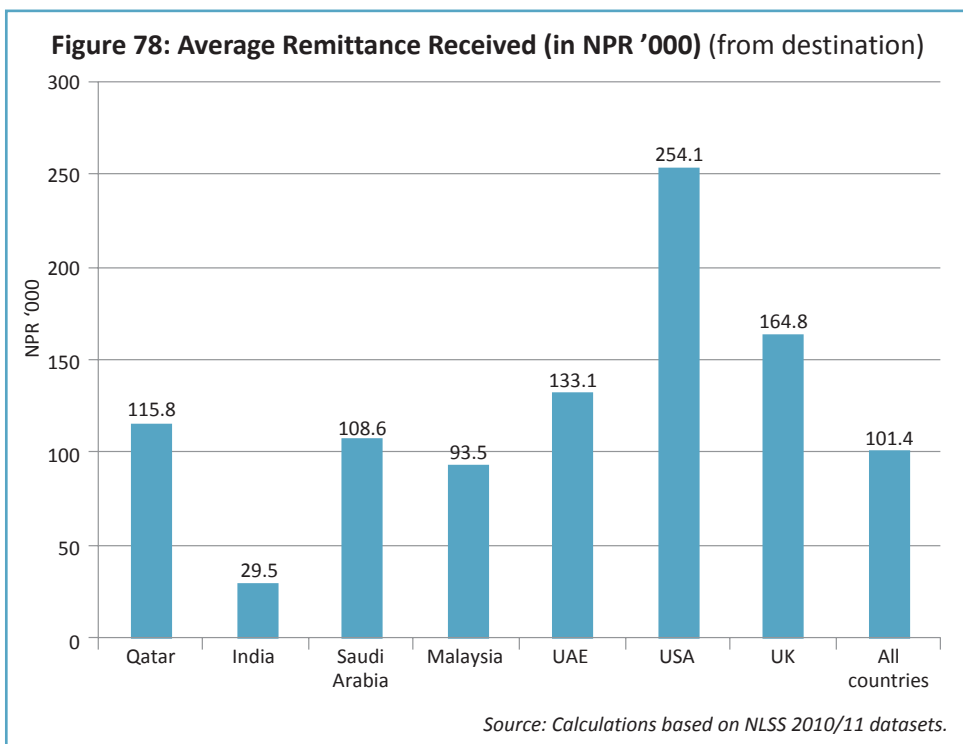
Figure 76: Share of Remittances Received (NMS) (from destination)

Source: Nepal Migration Survey 2009.

Figure 77: Share of Remittances Received (NLSS) (from destination)

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 datasets.

The average remittances received from India is much lower compared to other countries. For instance, the average remittance received from Qatar, Nepal's largest source of external remittances, is nearly four times larger than that from India, the destination believed to host the largest number of Nepalis.



8.3 Distribution of Remittances

The Eastern Tarai (20.6 per cent) and Western Hills (18.6 per cent) receive the highest shares of the external remittances even though the impact of remittance earnings is felt across the country, albeit in varying degrees.¹¹⁴ Apart from the exception of the Eastern Mountains, the Mountain region as a whole receives very little of the national remittance inflow.

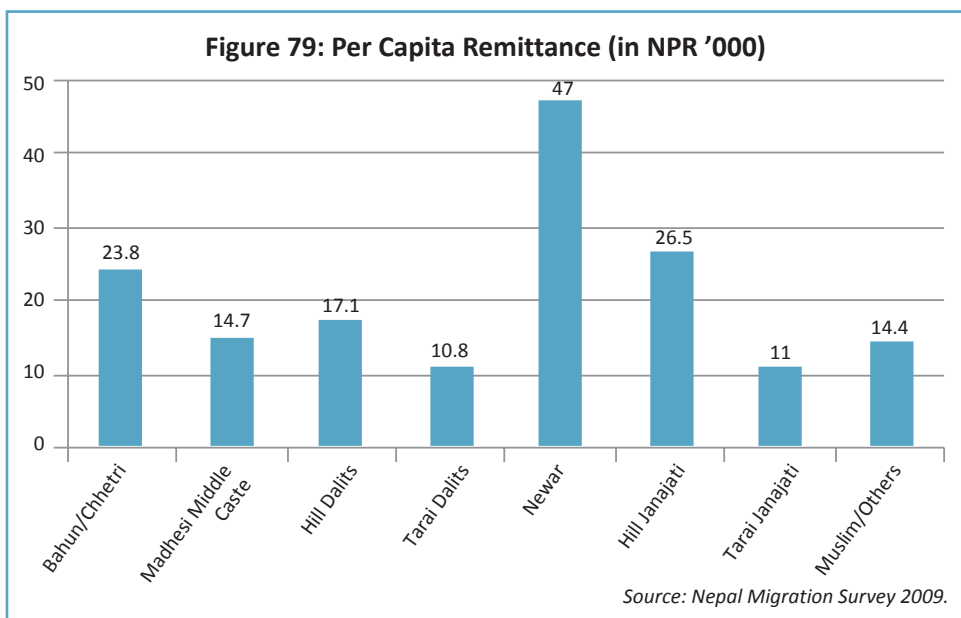
Table 4: Receipt of Remittances (by development and ecological region)

	Mountain	Hill	Tarai	Total
1 Eastern Region	5.9%	6.1%	20.6%	32.5%
2 Central Region	1.3%	8.6%	16.7%	26.6%
3 Western Region ¹¹⁵	-	18.6%	10.4%	29%
4 Mid-western Region	0.3%	1.4%	6.5%	8.2%
5 Far-western Region	0.4%	1.8%	1.6%	3.7%
Total	7.9%	36.4%	55.7%	100%

Source: Nepal Migration Survey 2009.

8.4 Ethnicity of Remittance-Receiving Households

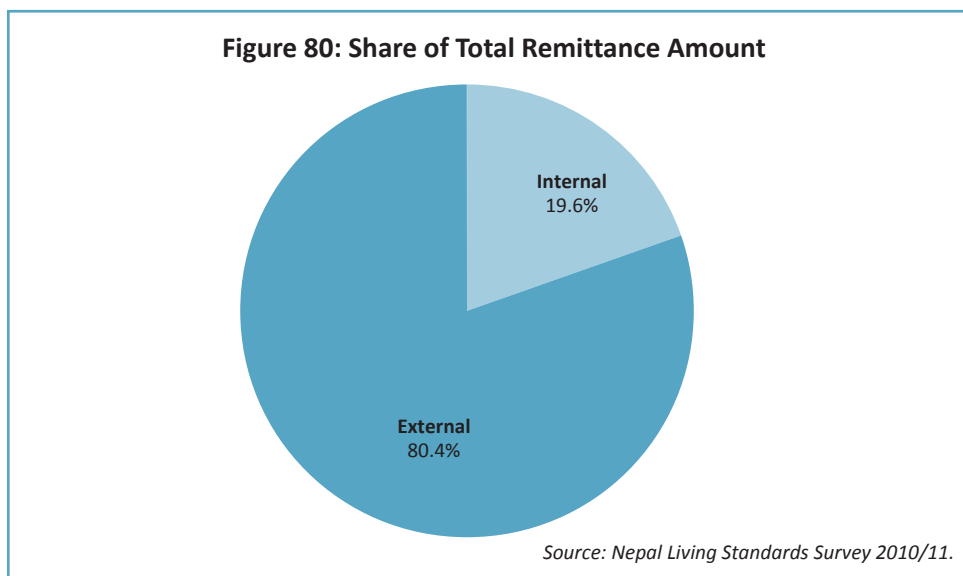
In terms of the ethnicity of remittance-receiving households, Tarai Dalits and Tarai Janajatis receive the lowest per capita remittance while Newars receive the highest. The idea that migration is ‘ethnicised’ comes into play yet again. This finding reiterates what the data on internal migrants and on labour migrants have indicated (Figures 24 and 62) – Tarai Dalits have the lowest degree of internal mobility and very limited international outreach and consequently receive smaller amounts of remittances. On the other hand, Newars, despite having the lowest probability of migration, both internal and international, are found to be receiving the highest remittance per capita. The amount Newars receive is more than four times received by Tarai Dalits and Tarai Janajatis. This coupled with the fact that the Newars have the highest probability of migration to ‘Other Countries’, i.e., other than relatively low-paying India, the Gulf and Malaysia, compared to other caste and ethnic groups is a strong indication of the fact that the migration destination has a direct bearing on the amounts remitted. Similarly, Bahun/Chhetri and Hill Janajatis both send a similar proportion of workers abroad (Figure 62) but because more Bahuns/Chhetris tend to go to India,¹¹⁶ particularly from the Far-western Region of



the country,¹¹⁷ while more of the Janajatis go to the Gulf, the latter as a group fare slightly better in terms of per capita earnings from remittances.

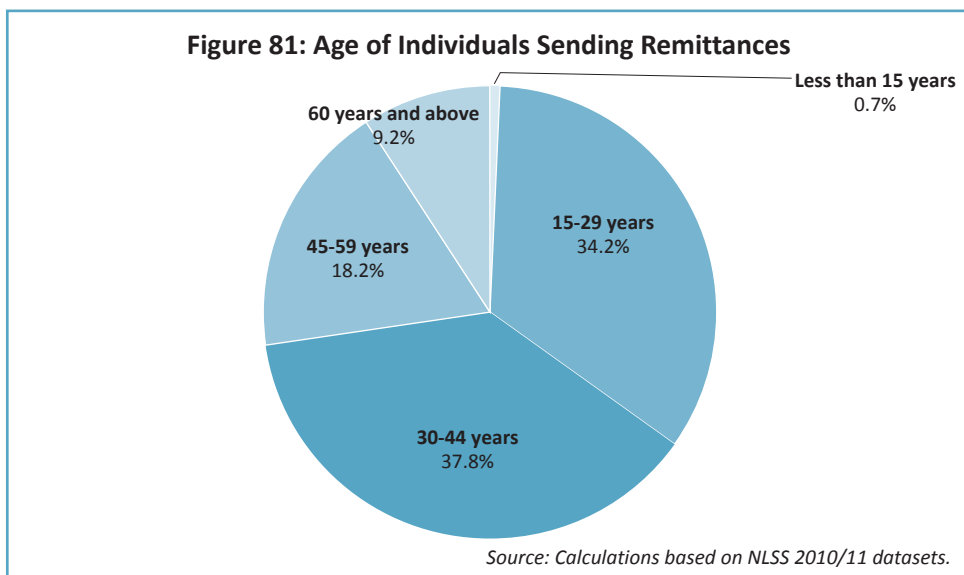
8.5 Remittances: External and Internal

According to NLSS 2010/ 2011, of the total remittance amount received by Nepali households 20 per cent comes from the internal sources.



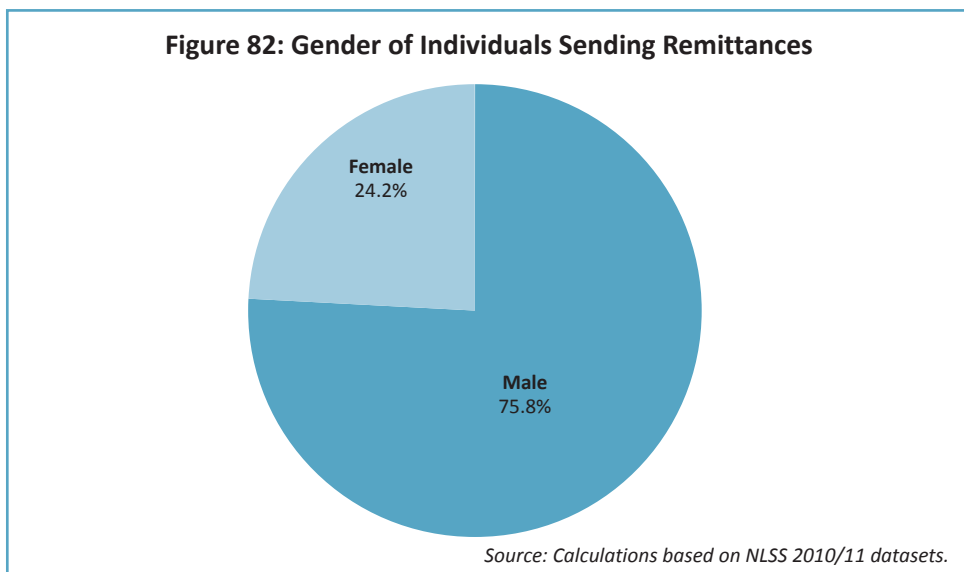
8.6 Age of Individuals Sending Remittances

More than 70 per cent of both internal and international remittance earnings is sent by individuals in the 15-44 age group, which is consistent with the higher mobility of this cohort. A further breakdown shows that the rate of remittance is slightly higher for the 30-44 group even though individuals aged 15-29 make up nearly half of all absentees (Figure 3). The age group 30-44 comprise only about a quarter of the total absentee population but contribute 38 per cent of the remittances. A reason for this could be that quite a few of the absentees aged 15-29 are students and therefore unable to remit money home. Likewise, as far as work experience goes, those in this age group tend to be less experienced compared to those in the 30-44 category, which, in turn, could mean smaller earnings.



8.7 Gender of Individuals Sending Remittances

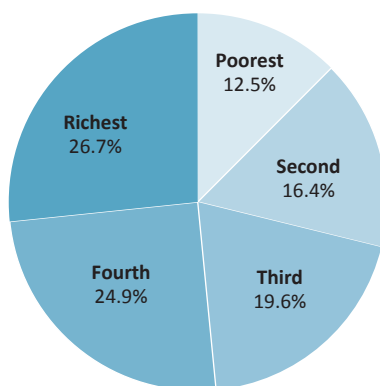
Females' contribution to the remittances at 24 per cent is only slightly smaller than their proportion in the absentee population (27 per cent).



8.8 Economic Status of Remittance-Receiving Households

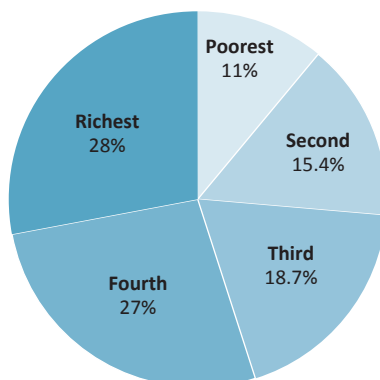
A household's economic status also has a direct impact upon the amount of remittances it receives. The wealthiest households receive the highest proportion of remittances from absentees both in-country and abroad, and the pattern remains the same even when considering remittance earnings from internal and international sources separately.¹¹⁸ 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 the household's financial background, the higher its remittance earnings.

Figure 83: Total Remittance Received (by consumption quintile)

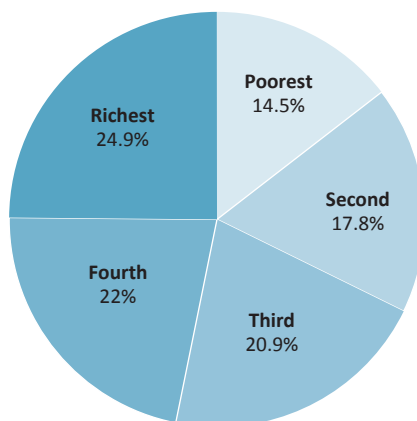


Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 datasets.

Figure 84: Internal Remittance Received (by consumption quintile)



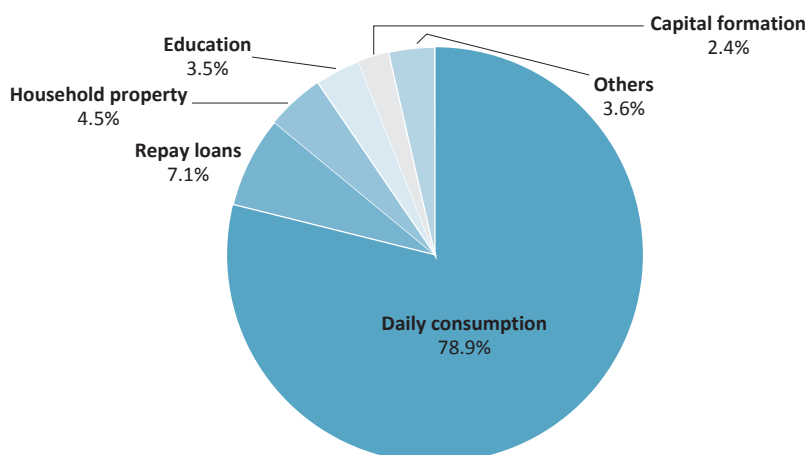
Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 datasets.

Figure 85: External Remittance Received (by consumption quintile)

Source: Calculations based on NLSS 2010/11 datasets.

8.9 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 86 illustrates the breakdown of a household's use of remittance earnings. Almost 80 per cent is spent in meeting daily consumption¹¹⁹ needs.¹²⁰ Repayment of

Figure 86: Use of Remittances

Source: Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11.

loans (7 per cent) appears to be the next common item of expenditure from remittance earnings after consumption needs have been met. 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, accounts for the smallest proportion of the listed expenditures.¹²¹

9. CONCLUSION

Nepali migration 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 foreign employment. The number of labour permits issued by the Department of Foreign Employment rose more 150 times between 1993 and 2013.

India still 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 gender, while the aforementioned countries are more favoured by men, more women than men are found going to destinations like Israel and Lebanon.

There is a lack of consensus in the surveys considered in this paper regarding the origins of the internal migrant population. But, there is congruity in the data pertaining to the origin of international migrants in relation to destinations, with migrants from the Hill districts of the Far-Western and Mid-Western regions more likely to migrate to India while those from the Western and Eastern regions, both Hill and Tarai, show a higher tendency to migrate to Malaysia and the Gulf countries.

Likewise, migration destinations were found to vary with level of affluence, with the likelihood of having a member working abroad the highest for households that belong to the richer quintiles. Poorer households were likely to have migrant family members in India while the relatively better-off migrants head out to the Gulf countries. In terms of proportion, the majority of the individuals going to the developed countries are from the richest quintile. A similar relationship exists between migrants' education levels and their destination. Well-educated migrants either migrate to urban centres, largely located in the country's Central Region or to developed countries in pursuit of high-skill 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 for various reasons, 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.¹²²

Unlike for women, employment is the primary driver of migration among male migrants, both within Nepal and those going abroad for foreign employment. Most women going to international destinations, mainly India, do so for reasons of marriage. 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 migrants, Hill Dalits have a high likelihood of migrating to India, whereas most Muslims have a propensity to migrate to the Gulf countries. Tarai Dalits and Newars are found to be much less mobile internationally compared to all other groups. Newars have the lowest tendency to migrate to any internal or international destination, yet they receive the highest amount of remittances per capita.

The Gulf countries have become the biggest source of remittances with the Nepali migrant worker base in these countries increasing more than ever. These countries 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, the data shows that remittances are used mostly for sustenance, i.e., to meet daily needs and repay loans.

Most of the migrants – internal or international – were engaged in agriculture prior to migration, but the overwhelming majority do not return to farming once they have migrated. Internal migrant returnees favour service sector jobs the most after migration, whereas international returnees prefer manufacturing and utilities; construction; and the hospitality sector.

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 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.

NOTES

1. The raw data was analysed using STATA.
2. Read wealth quintile as consumption quintile in the case of NLSS.
3. See Sharma and Sharma (2011), for a more detailed discussion on the methodologies, variables used and key findings from the major surveys in Nepal, including the ones discussed here.
4. Our analysis in STATA is based on cross-section data of 5988 households.
5. CBS 2011, 131.
6. Ibid, 131.
7. Ibid, 132.
8. 'Stepwise migration, simply defined, is 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' (Maria Reinaruth D. Carlos, 'The Stepwise International Migration of Filipino Nurses and Its Policy Implications for Their Retention in Japan,' Working Paper Series, *Studies on Multicultural Societies* No. 23, Afrasian Research Centre, Ryukoku University, 2013, 6.
9. 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' (Charles Tilly, 'Migration in Modern European History,' in *The Migration Reader: Exploring Politics and Policies*, edited by Anthony M. Messina and Gallya Lahav, 126-146, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006).
10. KC 2003, 125 and 147.
11. The first and second Demographic and Health Surveys, conducted in 1996 and 2001 respectively, did not feature anything on migration and hence been excluded here.
12. MoHP, New Era and ICF International 2012, 22.
13. NLFS 1998/99 did not collect any information on migration.
14. See footnote 8.
15. See footnote 9.
16. For the purpose of this paper, absentee population includes all those individuals who are absent from their homes at the time of enumeration, regardless of their destination (inside or outside the country), and not to be confused with how the census defines 'absentee' (see Table 2).
17. CBS 2011, 138.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid, 138.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. CBS 2012, 39. The 2011 census of Nepal reported that there are only 6.7 per

cent (1,781,792) individuals residing in the Mountain region, while 43 per cent (11,394,007) and 50.3 per cent (13,318,705) live in the Hills and Tarai respectively.

24. Ibid, 39.
25. CBS 2011.
26. More popularly known as SLC, this standardised examination is taken at the end of 10 years of schooling.
27. CBS 2011.
28. Ibid, 138.
29. Ibid, 139.
30. Ibid.
31. As mentioned in the NLSS 2010/11 report, the mentioned reasons are for individuals aged five and over.
32. CBS 2011, 140.
33. Internal migration here refers to those individuals who have moved within the country. Rather than choose 'internal migrants' as defined by NLSS, this paper analyses absentees living within Nepal. This is for two reasons: first, immigrants from abroad are also counted among 'internal migrants' by NLSS, and, second, women who migrated because of marriage are regarded as migrants by NLSS despite their being a permanent member of the household they are married into. In the absentee category, however, because the natal homes of married women do not regard them as household members, they are not regarded as migrants. Hence, 'internal migrants' in the sections below should be understood as internal absentees, as defined by NLSS. We have used 'migrants' instead of 'absentees' to reduce possible confusion between the two terms. See Table 2.
34. CBS 2009.
35. CBS 2012.
36. CBS 2011.
37. The rate of people moving into a region less the number of people moving out of the same region.
38. CBS 2002.
39. CBS 2012, 3.
40. KC 2003, 138.
41. CBS 2014.
42. This covers only the migrants who have moved internally for work and does not include other categories.
43. World Bank 2011.
44. CBS 2011.
45. NLSS does not list 'marriage' as a category under 'reason for absence'. However, as seen in Figure 29, marriage is analysed separately as a reason by NDHS.
46. MoHP, New Era and ICF International 2012.
47. Internal migrants are categorised under 'Nepal migrants' by the Nepal Migration

- Survey 2009 and denote only work migrants.
48. World Bank 2011.
 49. Ibid.
 50. CBS 2014; World Bank 2011.
 51. 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; Sharma and Sharma 2011).
 52. CBS 2012.
 53. Ibid.
 54. Ibid.
 55. Ibid.
 56. For numbers and detailed category of destination countries, see Annex I.
 57. 'Middle East' here presumably also includes Israel and Lebanon in addition to the six Gulf states, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
 58. CBS 2014.
 59. CBS 2011; CBS 2014.
 60. World Bank 2011.
 61. CBS 2014; MoHP, New ERA and ICF International 2012.
 62. Ibid.
 63. Ibid. It should be noted that the number of international women migrants is extremely small compared to their male counterparts.
 64. Ibid.
 65. A detailed description of reason for migration by destination country and gender has been presented in Annex II.
 66. Any migrant who wants to go abroad for work has to receive labour permits from the Department of Foreign Employment. To receive this permit/approval, documents such as passport, visa, contract, insurance policy, and orientation training certificate, among others, need to be presented. However, as Nepal and India share an open border, no labour permit, legal documents or visa is required to cross the Nepal-India border. Therefore, the individuals who have migrated to India have not been counted in this section.
 67. The Maoist insurgency that began in 1996 had spread from its core areas by 1998/99 and the fighting intensified after November 2001 when the army was dragged into the conflict.
 68. See Sijapati and Limbu (2012) for more details on the policies and regulations affecting foreign labour migration from Nepal.
 69. Abidin and Rasiyah 2009.
 70. CBS 2012.
 71. World Bank 2011.
 72. MoHP, New ERA and ICF International 2012.

73. The figures provided begin in the fiscal year 2006/07, which is when the DoFE started keeping gender-disaggregated data.
74. Department of Foreign Employment (www.dofe.gov.np).
75. Bans have been imposed and lifted over the years, starting in 1998 when women were prevented from working in the Gulf states. At the time of publication, women under the age of 30 were prohibited from going as domestic workers to Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.
76. Department of Foreign Employment (www.dofe.gov.np). http://dofe.gov.np/uploads/document/Chaitra%202070_20140430052407.pdf. Accessed 6 May 2014.
77. Department of Foreign Employment (www.dofe.gov.np).
78. Sijapati and Limbu 2012. There is also anecdotal evidence gathered by researchers from CESLAM in Tanahu district that under-reporting of international female migration is common due to the stigma attached to it.
79. To be precise, 29.8 years. World Bank 2011, 32.
80. World Bank 2011.
81. Ibid, 33.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. Because the data maintained by the DoFE and the study carried out by the World Bank are specific to work migrants, only those two sources have been used here. Census 2011 deals with international migrants in general and not particularly with labour migrants alone.
87. The DoFE requires labour migrants to receive permits every time they go for foreign employment.
88. For more information, see Sharma and Thapa (2013).
89. This does not include migrants going to India. http://dofe.gov.np/uploads/cmsfiles/file/regognized%20Country_20120420021555.pdf. Accessed 9 July 2013.
90. Department of Foreign Employment (www.dofe.gov.np).
91. Ibid.
92. World Bank 2011.
93. There is no indication in the report about which group or groups of individuals 'Other Minorities' refer to.
94. World Bank 2011.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
97. This data is for countries other than India.
98. Immigration into Nepal is regarded here as the migration of foreign citizenship holders into the territories of the country and not the migration of foreign-born Nepali citizens. The data for both these categories is provided in the National Census 2011.

99. Kansakar 2003; National Census 2011.
100. CBS 2012.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid.
104. Ratha et al 2014.
105. The World Bank (2011, 5; 80) reports that remittance earnings as a share of Nepal's GDP is increasing 'and it is the country's biggest source of foreign exchange.
106. Adams and Page 2006, cited in World Bank 2011, 1.
107. CBS et al. 2006.
108. CBS 2011.
109. NRB 2011.
110. *Hundi* is 'a traditional system of remittance transfer 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 2012, 17).
111. Sharma and Thapa 2013.
112. CBS 2011.
113. World Bank 2011.
114. Ibid.
115. It is not clear why there is no representation of remittance recipients in the Western Mountains. One speculation here could be that the amount is very low to be captured here, or it could be that the sample size was very small in that region.
116. World Bank 2011, 37.
117. Pfaff-Czarnecka 1995; Thieme 2006.
118. Remittances from absentees who have migrated within Nepal have been referred to as 'internal sources' and from those in foreign countries as 'external sources'.
119. NLSS does not explain what items are covered by 'daily consumption'.
120. CBS 2011.
121. Ibid.
122. At 4.7 per cent, Nepal has one of the highest urbanisation rates in the world and the highest in South Asia. <http://www.indexmundi.com/nepal/urbanization.html>. Accessed on 3 May 2013.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: Destination Countries by Gender

SN	Destination countries	Male	Female	Not stated	Total
1	India	605,869	116,364	22	722,255
2	SAARC countries (other than India)	11,009	1059	0	12,068
3	ASEAN countries	244,429	5452	8	249,889
4	Middle East countries	673,104	48,656	31	721,791
5	Other Asian countries	33,223	11,342	1	44,566
6	European Union countries	38,912	19,967	3	58,882
7	Other European countries	3016	675	0	3691
8	USA and Canada	30,519	17,558	0	48,077
9	South American and Caribbean countries	1889	426	0	2315
10	African countries	4307	817	0	5124
11	Pacific Ocean region countries	17,768	9598	0	27,366
12	Others	4537	621	0	5158
13	Not stated	15,447	4865	0	20,312

Source: CBS 2014.

ANNEX II: Destination Countries by Reason for Migration and Gender

	Total absent	India	SAARC countries (other than India)	ASEAN countries	Middle East	Other Asian countries	European Union countries	Other European countries	USA and Canada	South American/Caribbean countries	African countries	Pacific Ocean Region countries	Other countries	Not stated
Total	1,684,029	605,869	11,009	244,429	673,104	33,223	38,912	3,016	30,519	1,889	4,307	17,768	4,537	15,447
Business	9,773	5,982	61	2,211	58	595	355	56	228	9	15	57	25	121
Private job	1,270,568	456,318	7,467	189,715	557,955	20,472	13,275	1,553	7,918	948	2,528	2,768	3,129	6,522
Institutional job	181,952	57,083	1,444	30,555	79,885	3,848	3,965	286	1,821	327	774	583	508	873
Study	76,886	21,670	1,358	1,181	1,595	4,984	14,633	760	15,864	203	553	13,178	321	586
Conflict	2,249	899	24	276	721	37	74	10	79	2	15	41	21	50
Dependent	54,764	31,648	275	8,380	2,444	2,159	5,045	162	2,707	97	197	786	210	654
Others	20,230	8,509	83	2,636	6,620	345	580	24	963	28	76	76	67	223
Not Stated	67,607	23,760	297	9,475	23,826	783	985	165	939	275	149	279	256	6,418
Female														
Total	237,400	116,364	1,059	5,452	48,656	11,342	19,967	675	17,558	426	817	9,598	621	4,865
Business	1,911	1,327	9	51	3	185	124	11	112	1	3	53	2	30
Private job	93,993	33,650	294	3,030	40,988	5,427	4,518	183	3,116	154	343	1,197	256	837
Institutional job	10,529	2,513	48	519	4,383	890	994	29	684	29	74	234	21	111
Study	33,678	8,612	540	409	486	1,679	6,635	206	8,038	79	178	6,381	139	296
Conflict	394	221	2	7	41	17	34	3	42	0	2	20	1	4
Dependent	76,341	58,561	116	1,117	530	2,586	6,430	169	4,101	76	164	1,383	144	964
Others	6,451	4,154	11	99	564	187	485	11	717	4	12	110	12	85
Not Stated	14,103	7,326	39	220	1,661	371	747	63	748	83	41	220	46	2,538

Source: CBS 2014.

ANNEX III: International Migrants by Caste/Ethnicity

	Caste/ethnic Group	Population 2011	Per cent absent	Absentee population		Caste/ethnic Group	Population	Per cent absent	Absentee population
	Hill Castes				33	Teli	369,688	3.3%	12,163
1	Bahun	3,226,903	7.8%	250,085	34	Yadav	1,054,458	3.6%	37,644
2	Chhetri	4,398,053	7.5%	331,613		Hill Dalit			
3	Sanyasi/Dasnami	227,822	7.8%	17,861	1	Badi	38,603	9.9%	3,814
4	Thakuri	425,623	7.0%	29,708	2	Damai/Dholi	472,862	9.8%	46,530
	Tarai Castes				3	Gaine	6791	8.7%	591
1	Badhaee	28,932	3.6%	1,047	4	Kami	1,258,554	10.7%	134,791
2	Baraee	80,597	4.0%	3,240	5	Sarki	374,816	10.4%	38,943
3	Bin	75,195	4.1%	3,083		Tarai Dalit			
4	Brahman Tarai	134,106	3.9%	5,244	1	Bantar/Sardar	55,104	3.7%	2,039
5	Dev	2147	2.1%	46	2	Chamar/Harijan Ram	335,893	3.6%	11,958
6	Dhunia	14,846	5.8%	863	3	Chidimar	1254	0.4%	5
7	Gaderi/Bhedihar	26,375	4.5%	1,197	4	Dhandi	1982	3.9%	77
8	Hajam/Thakur	117,758	3.2%	3,733	5	Dhankar/Dharikar	2681	3.8%	101
9	Haluwai	83,869	3.8%	3,195	6	Dhobi	109,079	3.4%	3,676
10	Kahar	53,159	2.9%	1,526	7	Dom	13,268	1.2%	153
11	Kalwar	128,232	2.4%	3,065	8	Dusadh/Paswan/Pasi	208,910	3.1%	6,518
12	Kamar	1787	2.4%	42	9	Halkhor	4003	1.0%	40
13	Kanu	125,184	10.7%	13,407	10	Kalar	1077	4.4%	48
14	Kathabaniyan	138,637	2.1%	2,925	11	Khatwe	100,921	5.5%	5,561
15	Kayastha	44,304	2.5%	1,090	12	Musahar	234,490	2.3%	5,370
16	Kewat	153,772	5.6%	8,657	13	Natuwa	3062	2.6%	79
17	Koiri/Kushwaha	306,393	3.3%	9,958	14	Sarbaria	4906	2.5%	124
18	Kori	12,276	1.3%	157	15	Tatma/Tatwa	104,865	4.9%	5,117
19	Kumhar	62,399	2.8%	1,722		Mountain Janajati			
20	Kurmi	231,129	2.0%	4,507	1	Bhote	13,397	4.5%	600
21	Lodh	32,837	2.9%	959	2	Byasi/Sauka	3895	3.3%	129
22	Lohar	101,421	5.5%	5,538	3	Dolpo	4107	4.2%	173
23	Mali	14,995	3.6%	541	4	Lhomi	1614	6.8%	110
24	Mallaha	173,261	3.2%	5,458	5	Lhopa	2624	11.1%	291
25	Marwari	51,443	2.5%	1,307	6	Sherpa	112,946	8.2%	9,216
26	Nuniya	70,540	3.1%	2,215	7	Thakali	13,215	12.8%	1,689
27	Nurang	278	5.1%	14	8	Topkegola	1,523	6.9%	105
28	Rajbhar	9,542	3.3%	314	9	Walung	1,249	9.5%	119
29	Rajdhob	13,422	3.0%	401		Hill Janajati			
30	Rajput	41,972	2.4%	1,003	1	Aathpariya	5,977	9.7%	579
31	Sonar	64,335	2.7%	1,750	2	Bahing	3096	6.3%	195
32	Sudhi	93,115	5.4%	4,982	3	Bantawa	4604	7.3%	337

	Caste/ethnic Group	Population 2011	Per cent absent	Absentee population		Caste/ethnic Group	Population 2011	Per cent absent	Absentee population
4	Brahmu/Baramo	8,140	8.5%	691	2	Danuwar	84,115	5.4%	4,517
5	Chamling	6668	9.4%	625	3	Darai	16,789	8.8%	1,476
6	Chepang/Praja	68,399	1.1%	759	4	Kumal	121,196	8.2%	9,914
7	Chhantyal/Chhantel	11,810	11.8%	1,388	5	Majhi	83,727	5.2%	4,312
8	Dura	5394	11.0%	595	6	Raji	4235	6.5%	274
9	Ghale	22,881	10.3%	2,366	7	Raute	618	4.0%	25
10	Gharti/Bhujel	118,650	8.2%	9,706	Tarai Janajati				
11	Gurung	522,641	12.7%	66,271	1	Amat	3,830	4.7%	180
12	Hayu	2925	3.4%	99	2	Dhanuk	219,808	5.0%	11,078
13	H Yolmo	10,752	18.9%	2,029	3	Dhimal	26,298	10.0%	2,625
14	Jirel	5774	6.1%	352	4	Gangai	36,988	4.0%	1,494
15	Khaling	1571	7.1%	112	5	Jhangad/Dhagar	37,424	3.8%	1,426
16	Khawas	18,513	5.4%	1,003	6	Kisan	1739	8.2%	142
17	Kulung	28,613	4.3%	1,222	7	Koche	1635	4.6%	75
18	Kusunda	273	6.2%	17	8	Meche	4867	7.8%	382
19	Lepcha	3445	4.2%	144	9	Munda	2350	3.4%	80
20	Limbu	387,300	10.0%	38,691	10	Pattharkatta/Kuswadia	3182	3.9%	123
21	Loharung	1153	6.8%	78	11	Rajbanshi	115,242	4.5%	5,128
22	Magar	1,887,733	9.9%	186,130	12	Satar/Santhal	51,735	3.2%	1,661
23	Mewahang/Bala	3100	7.2%	224	13	Tajpuriya	19,213	4.8%	913
24	Nachhiring	7154	5.2%	373	14	Tharu	1,737,470	3.3%	57,510
25	Newar	1,321,933	5.4%	71,120	Others				
26	Pahari	13,615	1.6%	219	1	Bangali	26,582	3.5%	928
27	Rai	620,004	8.3%	51,212	2	Musalman	1,164,255	5.3%	61,240
28	Sampang	1681	9.6%	162	3	Punjabi/Sikh	7176	3.6%	260
29	Sunuwar	55,712	6.8%	3,788	Unspecified				
30	Tamang	1,539,830	6.4%	99,011	4	Dalit Others	155,354	12.2%	18,907
31	Thami	28,671	3.5%	989	5	Janajati Others	1228	4.6%	56
32	Thulung	3535	7.9%	277	6	Tarai Others	103,811	3.7%	3,883
33	Yakkha	24,336	8.5%	2,064	7	Undefined Others	15,277	7.6%	1,153
34	Yamphu	6933	5.6%	389	8	Foreigner	6651	2.9%	194
Inner Tarai Janajati									
1	Bote	10,397	8.4%	869	Total		2,6494,504		1,784,270

Source: Adapted from *Social Inclusion Atlas of Nepal* (CDSA 2014). The classification of the groups follows Sharma 2014.

'Absentee' here meets this paper's definition of an international migrant (see Table 2). According to Census 2011, the number of such absentees was 1,921,494 (CBS 2012). But, because calculations derived from the percentage figures given in *Social Inclusion Atlas of Nepal* add up to 1,784,270 only, the authors could not be sure about the other data given in the book, such as international migrants making up 6.76 per cent of the population, or Janajatis constituting 29 per cent of the total international migrant population, Chhetris 21.3 per cent, Hill Dalits 13, Other Madhesi Castes 6.7, Tarai Janajatis 4.5, Newars 3.9, and Madhesi Dalits 2.9.

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