

**Migration, Remittance, and Social Change in Peripheral Semi-urban
Kathmandu**

(A Study of Kirtipur Municipality)

A Dissertation

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SOCIOLOGY

By

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

We certify that this dissertation, entitled *Migration, Remittance, and Social Change in Peripheral Semi-urban Kathmandu* has been prepared by Mr. Ram Raj Pokharel under our supervision and guidance. We hereby recommend this dissertation for final examination for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this PhD dissertation, entitled *Migration, Remittance, and Social Change in Peripheral Semi-urban Kathmandu* submitted by me to the Office of Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, Nepal, is an entirely original work prepared under the supervision and guidance of supervisor Associate Professor Dr. Tika Ram Gautam and co-supervisor Professor Dr. Krishna Raj Acharya. I have made due acknowledgements to all ideas and information borrowed from different sources in the course of writing this dissertation. The result presented in this dissertation has not ever been presented or submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree or for any other purposes. No part of the content of this dissertation has ever been published in the form of any book. I am solely responsible if any evidence is found against my declaration.

Ram Raj Pokharel

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ABSTRACT

Sociological studies of migration are diverse. Labour is one of the Nepal's major exports, and most of the rural and urban households now rely on the remittances sent by at least one member of the family from foreign employment. This study attempts to answer the following three objectives: to explore the areas of remittances used in the study area, to examine the social changes caused by migration in the study area, and to find out the difference in gender roles of women before and after migration. Based on these three objectives, this study focuses on major sectors of the remittance use and examines major social changes caused by migration in the study area, by using both qualitative and quantitative approaches, both primary and secondary sources of the data collection, paper-and-pencil interviews (PAPI), nonparticipant observations, the migrants of Kirtipur Municipality as a sampling frame of the study, stratified random sampling at first to draw a sample from the sampling frame for the proportionate representation, then systemic random sampling for selecting the sample households from each stratum, and the 250 households ($n = 250$) as a sample size. This study found significant changes in the study area: The data from the field showed that the sample households' dependency on agriculture wage labour decreased and that the dependency on salary and business increased after their family members' migration. The monthly incomes of the migrants' families after migration were seen more than those before migration. As the 250 sample respondents in the study area expressed their views, the gender roles of families receiving remittances were found changing before and after migration: Women's responsibilities, autonomy, and power were observed rising in the absence of their husbands some of the important impacts of migration for bringing about real changes in the male and female roles in household affairs, radical changes in women's daily activities, and discernible changes in male attitudes towards the female capabilities to bring home money from financial institutions.

The migrant households seem to be using remittances mainly in daily consumption, including food, followed by education, health, purchasing housing plot, land, and repaying the loans. Remittances appear to be used primarily in food items, the expenditure that is almost half of the remittance received by the

households. The second priority area of remittance use seems to be given to education, which holds one third of the remittances. Similarly, health is seen as the third important area for the remittance use. The health expenditure includes the money spent in general check-up and purchasing of medicine, basically on the health of children and elderly people. Very low amount saved from the total remittances tends to be invested by the households in purchasing housing plot and land, and very limited amount of money received by households to be used in repaying loans, because the remittances received by the households at the beginning of foreign labour migration (about one-year period) seems to be used in paying back the loans they incurred for moving out of the country.

The migration from the peripheral urban settlement is also contributing in bringing a change in gender roles. Major changes in gender roles were observed in both domestic and public spheres. Because of the absence of their male members, women are found empowered in various dimensions. Primary observations have showed that gender roles are changing with regard to a decision making role. All of the women heads of the migrants' households seem to be taking decisions about domestic affairs, including their children's education. Some women are also seen running their own businesses, such as tailoring shops, beauty parlour, meat shops, and grocery/kirana shop with the help of remittances to further support their male members. Another interesting change is on mobilizing the remittances received. Females are taking decisions over where to use and how to use.

In the context of the study area, the changes taking place in relation to migration, major changes seem to be observed in the field of language, dress, ornaments, food habits, celebrating festivals, rituals, other occasions, children's education, and importantly the views towards women. Due to the contact with the members of community with different languages, religions, and cultures, the migrants appear to have learned and brought in new ideas on modern consumption cultures, such as food, dress, education, and health.

Keywords: dependency, foreign employment, gender roles, qualitative and quantitative approaches, social changes

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BS	Bikram Sambat
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Production
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	Institute of Migration
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MoLESS	Ministry of Labor, Employment, Social Security
NELM	New Economic Theory of Labor Migration
NHRC	Nepal Health Research Council
NLMR	Nepal Labor Migration Report
NLSS	Nepal Living Standards Survey
NRB	Nepal Rastra Bank
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States