

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Place: Tribhuvan International Airport Premises, Kathmandu

Date: Almost Daily

Scene: Crowded airport premises, a part of the crowd is due to the huge flow of Nepalese flock to fly to different abroad destinations. Another part of airport's crowd consists of the kith and kin of the migrants' sobbing while seeing them off, putting them *tika* and garlands.

Migration is one of the earliest Nepali links with the outside world (Sharma, 2003). From a historical perspective, the origins of labor migration lie in the Trans Himalayan trade between Nepal, Tibet, china, and India in ancient and medieval times (Thieme, 2006: 33). Apart from trade, in the early 19th century, the first Nepalese men migrated to Lahore (in today's Pakistan) to join the army of the Sikh ruler, Ranjit Singh, as 'Lahure" (Seddon et al. 2001). Besides this, the migration phenomenon of Nepalese soldiers as "Gurkhas" in British and Indian regiments and workers in tea states of Sikkim and Darjeeling and forest of Assam has been highlighted by various texts (for example in Mishra, 2007; Seddon et al. 2001; Thieme, 2006).

After 1950 the Nepalese began to move to industrializing areas like Delhi, Mumbai, or Banglore, where employment was easier to find (Upreti, 2002). After the democratic movement of Nepal in 1990, it became easier to obtain travel documents and passports. The economic emergence of the South East Asian and Gulf States, combined with increased information flow and trade liberalization in Nepal, caused a rapid increase in labor migration and diversification of destinations. (Thieme, 2006:13)

The 2001 census data presents Nepal's absentee population - people who have been abroad for at least 6 months prior to the survey - at 762,181 people. This accounted for about 3.2% of the country's total population or 6% of the working population. For these absentee population, India is shown in the top position among several destinations wherein 77% of migrants were working in and presents Gulf states as second largest destinations for Nepalese migrants. Though another census report is yet

to be published, going through the daily news papers of Nepal and the television channels, at the risk of overgeneralization, it could be estimated that the number of Nepalese people leaving for Gulf States is ever increasing.

A scene in the beginning of this chapter is the reflection of my observation at the main gate of an international airport in Nepal, which aroused series of curiosities about an issue related to migration where almost daily a huge flow of Nepalese flock to fly to destinations like Middle East and Gulf States. The crowded premises of the airport by the kith and kin of the migrants' putting them *tika*, garlands and sobbing scenes worked as another stimulus for my curiosity. I wondered what could be the perceived reason behind this migration by those left behind primary kin members. What could be the relations of those reasons with the various socio-cultural and household aspects? I also wondered what could be the possible consequences back at home after the plane takes off. In the context mentioned above and with those curiosities in mind this study endeavors to explore the causes and consequences of the out-migration taking household as a unit of analysis.

1.2 Problem Statement

The process of migration begins long before the migrant actually leaves home. It starts the moment a family member decides to try to migrate and starts seriously preparing for it. He has to mobilize various social networks- both at home and abroad- and this he does with the support and involvement of the adult members men and women of his immediate family, including not only his wife and parents but also siblings, as well as other relatives; friends and neighbors to get involved (Gulati, 1987). In this process the assumption here is that members involved share the perceived reason behind the migration among each other, and primary kin members are the ones who have well internalized the reasons behind the migration. While leaving for the destination, with the provision for compulsory return, out-migrants leave all those members, involved in the process, back home (Thieme, 2006). This static part of migration is largely ignored by research works on migration (Kasper, 2005). With the focus on this sedentary part, this study explores the reasons behind the migration phenomena as perceived and shared by the kin members of the out

migrants. And it also describes the process taking place for the preparation to leave within the household level before the actual migration takes place.

2001 census indicates that 90 percent of Nepali citizens, who are absent from their households working in foreign countries, are male. The movement of people to new places, whether single women or men or entire families, invariably has a profound effect upon the more intimate relationships within households. The ways in which household relations, and more generally gender relations, are destabilized through migration have, however, only received a small amount of attention, at least in South Asia (see Chant, 1992; Gardner, 1995, 1998; Patel, 2001; Wills and Yeoh, 2000). Migration of any male member of a household seems to have a major impact on the members left behind. This seems to be the case irrespective of marital status, age, relation or caste of the male migrant (Gulati, 1987). Among the left behind members, with especial focus to the female members, this study explains the consequences of the absence of male member at the household members, guided by the assumption that the absence is not just related to the emotional attachment with family members but it is also an absence of a labor force.

Labor migration and remittances are major economic mainstays for Nepal's economy (Kollmair et al, 2006). Various literatures discussing the issue of migration with focus on aspect of remittances related to this phenomena have highlighted its contribution to GDP, the trends, and similar other economic issues. However, there is still insufficient documentation on the significance of remittances at the household level. Sociologists and anthropologists have still to contribute to the study of remittances, as a social phenomenon linked to family and migration (Singh, 2006). This study describes the significance of the remittances at the household level with special focus on the changes on the family members.

In this context, the following research questions become pertinent to the research problem:

How do family members of out-migrants explain the reasons behind the migration of their family members? What are the particular social issues that they highlight with this explanation?

What are the processes of decision involved in migration? What are the roles and contributions made by different family members in this process?

What are the processes of remittance and how does the money form part of the household economy?

What are the socio-economic changes occurring at household-level with regards to the influx of remittances and the simultaneous loss of a male member?

Are there any changes in the in the role of women in the household level division of labor after the migration of the male members?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the above research questions, the objectives of this study are to explore the social causes and consequences of the migration and following this general objective, the specific objectives of this study are:

- A) To explore the causes of migration as perceived by the household members (primary kin) of the out migrants in the Gwaldaha.
- B) To describe the process taking place in the household level before actual migration takes place in Gwaldaha.
- C) To explain the consequences on household unit and gender relations after the migration of the male members in Gwaldaha.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Studies on the issue of migration are predominantly done by economists, human geographers, and population experts. Several studies exist on transnational, Diaspora, structural and macro aspects of migration. In this context, the significance of this study is its focus on the household as a unit of analysis. Similarly, studies on migration have focused on the mobile aspects of migration but in the process have ignored the sedentary aspects of migration. We know that people are on the move, but there are few detailed ethnographies concerning the

effects this have had on local areas or individual lives. Indeed, there has been a startlingly northern bias in much research which, whilst focusing largely upon the places which 'receive' overseas migrants and where diasporic communities are constituted (in Europe and North America in particular), generally has little to say about the places which they leave behind (Gardener and Osella, 2003). This study claims its significance as it focuses on the family members who are left behind at home by out-migrants. Even among left behind family members, because it explores consequences of migration with especial focus on female members of the household, it claims its significance on the field of gender studies in Nepal too.

Susan Thieme in her book 'Social Networks and Migration: Far west Nepalese labor migrants in Delhi' have effectively foresighted that "the socio-economic and political situation in Nepal does not seem as if it will change in the near future, migration will remain a livelihood strategy. Therefore, the decisive development issue seems to be not how to reduce migration, but how to reduce its social and economic costs and increase its returns." (Thieme, 2006:XIII). I could see the validity of her indication and believe that the intensity of migration as a potential topic for research is ever increasing and it still is a relevant one. In this context, I believe this study contributes in establishing a tradition in the field of Nepalese Anthropology towards studying various aspects of this relevant issue.

Because the claim of migration as an important aspect of Nepal is ever increasing, this study, I believe, shall bear significance for policy makers, planners, researchers, development practioners, government bureaucrats, and other stakeholders in Nepal towards dealing with the various issues of migration effectively and efficiently.

1.5 Theoretical Position

The discipline of migration studies is presently fragmented into a diverse set of semi- autonomous research traditions with little intercommunication among them. This fragmentation reflects fundamental disagreements among analysts about how migration should be studied, modeled, and conceptualized (Massey, 1990). For

details on theoretical approaches on migration see Massey, 1990 and Thieme, 2000:35-62.

Theories and approaches to migration that have been inspired by neo-classical economics, as well as political economical thinking, are mainly concerned with either the economic and structural explanation or the dynamics at micro level, looking at the individual as either rational decision maker or as an individual constrained by his (seldom her) income or class position (Halfacree and Boyle 1993, Goss and Lindquist 1995, agergaard 1998, Lawson 1998). Hence, considerations of households/families (there is seldom a clear definition of the concept used) as contexts of migration and settlement processes, have been left out of much the theory about the process of migration and settlement.

In the year 1980s anthropologists criticized the atomistic focus of individual models of migration behavior and argued that households or families are the principal agents of decision-making and that migration should be viewed as part of broader group strategies for sustenance and socioeconomic improvement. Empirical models of migrant behavior should therefore be specified and estimated using households or families as units of analysis (see Massey, 1990). Theoretical approaches that have gradually emerged after 1980s have acknowledged that households are important agents to consider when explaining the reasons for migration and settlement trajectories. It is also acknowledged that the decision making process on economic strategies (ie migration and settlement) in developing countries is less individual question than a process where household members negotiate on a joint strategy.

The theoretical positions for this study have been developed following the same trend mentioned above and have explained reasons behind migration as perceived by the left behind household members. The term household has been interchangeably used with the term 'family' throughout the text. Also, following the acknowledgement of the theoretical approaches, that migration decisions are made jointly by family members, this study has explored the decision making processes. However, this study also pays little attention to local as well as national and international socio-economic conditions that have a relation or are affecting household level perceptions and decisions.

This study also acknowledges, Haan's stress on the need to understand migration as a social process, part of active livelihoods strategies, a phenomena determined by social contexts and social norms and structures. Household composition, gendered ideologies, and social contacts and networks determine` who migrate, and who can reap profit from opportunities arising elsewhere.

Noticing Pries' sharing that traditional categories of migration such as immigration, return migration, or Diaspora are not explanatory enough (Pries 2001), this study also have attempted to explore and provide an additional category/concept of migration.

This study has also borrowed from Heidi Kasper's book "I am the household head now" (2005) wherein she has examined out-migration in Nepal as a highly gendered process: man go away in work to foreign countries and women stay in the villages managing agricultural work, doing household works and taking care of children and elders. When husbands migrate, work routine must be reorganized among the remaining household members and decision making competency shift. Her study concentrates on changes in women and men's workloads and participation in decision making induced by out-migration for labor. Similar to her this study has also described the changes in the life styles of women members induced by the out-migration of the male members.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Migrant worker is a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a national.” (UN, 1990)

At the beginning of the 21st century, migration has emerged as one of the key issues of the age. Within academic circles, too, the last decade has seen a proliferation of research projects, conferences and publications dedicated to the study of human movement. Yet despite this upsurge of interest, our knowledge of particular aspects of migration remains patchy (Gardner & Osella. 2003).

Borrowing a view from Michael Kearney “Migrations’ academic home is in a back room of demography, where it does not receive much attention from anthropologists. Instead, most anthropological work on migration takes the form of “migration and ____.” The topics that fill the blank encompass many fields.” (Kearney. 1986: PP. 331).

In this chapter an attempt has been made towards providing glimpses of issues, raised by various literatures on migration. An effort to draw a line of relation with the issues dealt through this study and the issues dealt by other studies is made in this chapter but the detailed discussions on literatures will be provided in chapters 5, 6,7, 8, and 9, where in the findings of the study have been presented discussing with pertinent literatures.

2.1 On Reasons of migration

There are numerous studies devoted to discussing the reasons behind the migration and these discussions vary on the basis of various factors like the lenses that they are using while explaining the phenomena, the unit of analysis, the study area etc.

Migration is often seen as consequences ruptures, of environmental disaster, economic exploitation, or political or civil tensions and violence. (Haan, 2002)

Scholarly accounts have largely viewed male labor migration as: (a) a result of extreme poverty both within Nepal (Blaikie et al. 1980, 2002; Shrestha 1990) and (b)

an element in the wider context of labor migration with different patterns, 'seasonal' or otherwise (Breman 1985; 1996).

Jeevan Raj Sharma in his article 'Practices of male labour migration' (2008) shares, an escape from a difficult socio-economic, cultural and familial situation and an opportunity for young men to experience a distant place, experiment with the pleasures and possibilities of consumption and earn and remit money home to fulfill their obligations as responsible men with the hope for upward socio-economic mobility of their families as the reasons explained by many others behind the migration to work in India. His article provides a critique of authoritative development discourses on the migration of men from Nepal to India. Drawing on his ethnographic fieldwork at multiple sites, he illustrates how migration is not perceived as a problem by migrants themselves but as an integral practice in people's livelihoods.

Prakash Bhattarai in a report Migration of Nepalese Youth for Foreign employment: Problems and Prospects, discusses three key factors drive and continuously fuel migration. They are:

- The "pull" of changing demographics and labour market needs in many industrialized countries.
- The "push" of population, unemployment and crisis pressures in less developed countries.
- Established inter-country networks based on family, culture and history. (see Bhattarai,)

Susan Thieme in her book "social networks of migration"(2006) shares:

'Because of poverty, unemployment, declining natural resources, and lately, the Maoist insurgency, out-migration to other countries has become an increasingly important livelihood strategy in Nepal'(2006:X).

Previously, the labour migrants from the various districts of Nepal primarily used to migrate to India in search of jobs. After 1990 this migration trend altered to Middle East and Gulf States. This period, I believe, can be marked as an era of "new

mobility” in Nepal. Among the several reasons behind this new mobility is the easy access of the travel documents and passport, gradual flourishing of labour recruiting agencies popularly known as man power companies and possibilities of earning more in new destinations than in India and Nepal.

Seddon et al in the 2001 book, *The New Lahures* shares:

“The attractions of working abroad are usually the lure of higher incomes than are available in Nepal”.

Rather than focusing on larger structural factors that influence migrations decisions, this study explores the social dynamics of decisions within the households of the would-be migrants. This way, the unit of analysis is shifted from the sociological question of understanding migration trends to the more anthropological one of the complex notion of human decisions.

2.2 On the Process

Leela Gulati in her article coping with male migration, based on a study of thirty-seven households of Kerala from villages on the outskirts of Trivandrum from which migrant workers have gone to the Middle East, shares:

The decision to migrate is a decision in which family members including women are actively involved. Women of the migrant's immediate family play an active part in both motivating and facilitating male migration.' Dependence on immediate family members, other relatives, friends and neighbors of the households is considerable in preparing for migration and after the, migration actually materializes.

The focus of this study, similarly, directs attention to the collective processes involved in preparing for migration.

2.3 On Consequences

Migration is often perceived to be a cause of problems, like environmental degradation, health problems, brain drain, political or social instability, declining law and order, and unraveling social fabric and support systems (Haan, 2000).

Heda Kasper in her 2005 book "I am the household head now", discusses the effects of male migration on the gender relations in *Kalabang*. She concludes that the workloads of women increase due to the out-migration of the male member. Out-migration of labour has ambivalent effects on women's participation in decision making. Women living in nuclear households on the one hand gain scope of action because they become de facto household heads, decide about operational decisions and attend community meetings. On the other hand, women become more dependent on men's income and simultaneously lose control over it. For women living in extended households the dynamics are clearer. Their scope of action decreases, as husbands, who used to function as intercessors between them and their in-laws, are not available any more to represent their interest and needs.

Osella and Osella (2006) show how the migration of young men from Kerala to the Gulf countries has become incorporated into the local styles of masculinity. This presents them with opportunities to win status as wise and secure men, yet threatens male identity if money and resources are not well managed.

In her work in China, Song (1996) concludes that male out-migration virtually causes the feminization of agriculture. It connotes that women have to bear an additional burden of household work as well as farm work in the absence of men. She further argues, "It is the women who are playing key roles in sustaining the small-scale subsistence farming and food security at both farmers' household level and national level" (Song 1996: 169).

The labour out-migration has both positive and negative consequences for their elderly parents and children. On one hand, parents can be benefited from remittances or derive pride from their child's occupational or social success in the new setting. On the other hand, departure of a young and able bodied child could reduce availability to provide routine personal care or household help (Knodel and Saengtienchai 2007).

A research in Mali showed, effects of young men being absent may be particularly harassed on the smallest households, and the received of remittances is considered a poor substitute for the young men's contribution to feeding the family granary. (See, Haan 2000)

This study also examines the consequences of the absence of out-migrant in the lifestyles back home with especial focus on the changes in the daily routines of life of women members and the perceived sharing of women members.

2.4 On Significance of Remittances

Ayako Kageyama (2008), in the article 'Extent of poverty alleviation by migrant remittances in Sri Lanka' demonstrates that workers' remittances may have both positive and negative consequences in home communities in Sri Lanka. This article is based on the review of empirical literature on current trends of remittances and their economic impact on welfare of migrating countries. The conclusion of the article is:

“Economically, remittances will benefit migrant households, particularly poorer ones, by increased income in the short term. However, they may sometimes cause negative social effects, particularly through disruption in family relations and also by creating a sense of relative deprivation in non-migrant communities. Therefore, migration and remittances are not the sole solution of poverty alleviation and appropriate policies also need to address unexpected adverse effects”. (Kageyama 2008: 89)

Remittances are mainly spent on consumption, example, for food and clothes, to repay debts, and also to provide cash for livestock and fertilizers. Large amounts are also spent on marriages, rituals, religious festivals, and funerals for the closest family members. (Thieme, 2006:170)

Koc and Onan (2004), in the article 'International migrants remittances and welfare status', examines micro implications of remittances based on the data from the 1996 Turkish International Migration Survey. The article implies that migrant savings are generally used for satisfying basic consumption needs. Shared observation in the article, considering the variation by regions, is that households in less-developed regions spent more on daily expenses than those in developed regions. The article also suggests that daily expenses of households in less developed regions depend significantly on remittances received by households. Moreover, the article shares, remittances have a positive impact on household welfare; households receiving remittances are found to be better off than non-remitting households. This suggests

that migration and remittances have positive indirect effects on incomes of emigrant households.

With the focus on the perceived changes in the lifestyles of the left behind family members of the out-migrants this study also describes the significance of the remittances sent by the out-migrants in their own voices and experiences.

CHAPTER III

FIELD WORK

3.1 Being Familiar with *Gwaldaha* and the Initial Hang Around

The first time I visited *Gwaldaha* was when I joined MA in Tribhuvan University majoring in Sociology/Anthropology. It was with one of my class mates, a native of *Gwaldaha*. Since then I have visited *Gwaldaha* several times with my friend. As a fresher to the field of sociology and anthropology, I used to inquire upon and discuss with my friends about social and cultural landscapes of *Gwaldaha* during my visits. Though being close to capital city of Nepal, I was always fascinated by rural like features shared by *Gwaldaha* village. All of my visits were also escapes from the crowded, din, dust, noise, and smoke of Kathmandu City and it was all due to the green physical environment of *Gwaldaha*. Ethnographic description of *Gwaldaha* and the pattern of migration in *Gwaldaha* is offered in chapter 4.

When I decided to inquire upon the issue of migration to write my thesis for MA, several places stood in front of me as a potential research site. A number of factors made it attractive to pursue my study at *Gwaldaha*. Important among them are my familiarities with *Gwaldaha* and with the aspects of migration taking place there, during my discussions with my friend and my several visits to the *Gwaldaha*. I perceived a conglomeration of different caste and class groups inhabiting in *Gwaldaha* that provide an opportunity to get a broader and distinct insight about the field of inquiry I chose. The selection of *Gwaldaha* was also due to the financial factor, I perceived the cost incurred to study in an area proximate to Kathmandu city would be much lesser than anywhere else.

After completing all the pre- field work works, it was in the middle of September 2009; I headed towards *Gwaldaha* with lots of zeal, curiosity, and excitement and stayed there for three discontinuous months, for the study purpose. Lodging and food was offered by my friend and his family. The early days of my field visit were busy grasping the ethnographic account of *Gwaldaha* and creating an ethnographic map of

Gwaldaha. It was facilitated by my walks around the village and my informal conversations with the people. During walks I could gaze upon the settlement patterns, infrastructures, agricultural practices, and lifestyles of the people. Through the informal conversations I obtained information about historical specificity of the place and several socio-cultural insights of the place. Besides these my early field days were busy playing football with local youths of *Gwaldaha* and engaging in *Chiya Guffs* (Conversation over tea) in the local tea shops where I succeeded in identifying many many key informants for my research. These two things, I believe, were helpful in creating my good rapport with the locals of *Gwaldaha* I maintained a field diary from the very first day of my field visit, wherein I recorded my observations, reflections, experiences, encounters, and conversations I was engaged in.

3.2 Identifying the Informants

After gathering preliminary general information about *Gwaldaha* village, I started gathering information towards moving the end which I wanted to reach through this study. This process started with identification of the respondents. For this study purpose, the family members of the out-migrants (especially spouse of the out-migrants), knowledgeable person about the historical, social, and cultural aspects of the village, and returnee migrant workers (if any) were the primary respondents. In the beginning my friend showed me two houses of out-migrants, and with the help of the family members of those out-migrants I identified other similar respondents.

3.3 Obtaining Information: Technique, Challenges and Experience

Winning the heart of the respondent and making a trustworthy relation with them was the toughest and crucial part for me during this study. Apart from the normal challenges in establishing local rapport, I faced two additional hurdles due to the nature of this research. First, as a man trying to study women's personal life experiences in the absence of their husband, I encountered the local gender propriety

that discourages women's contact with strangers. I found the absence of the husband makes it quite uncomfortable for the women-- especially recently married young women- to talk candidly to the male strangers like me. Second, a stranger enquiring about the financial issues, like "how much?" encountered several raised eyebrows communicating insecurity. Fortunately, for me, the initial wall was overcome with persistence with honest introduction of the purpose of research; the goodwill of local people; and of course some good luck as well. The processes of overcoming both the walls were also due to the help of some of the respondents with whom I successfully developed a good rapport. I received full access and sincere cooperation from the family members of out-migrants whom I had begun to address as *didi* or *bahini*, *dai* or *bhai*, *aama* or *ba*, depending upon our age and creed.

Observations, semi-structured interviews, case studies, and narratives were the primary anthropological tools used during this research. I observed daily activities of the household members of out- migrants and people of *Gwaldaha* and obtained information about patterns of their life styles. Hustle and bustle of wives of out-migrants to send their children to school after morning household work, the styles with which photos of out-migrants hung on the wall, the diasporic songs as ringtones of the cell phones of out-migrants' family members are the few situations I observed, which I believe were containing some relevant information on the issue I was inquiring during my field stay. I conducted semi-structured interviews with family members of out-migrants. During the interview, I tried exploring the reasons perceived by the family members of the out-migrants behind the phenomena of migration of their absentee. I also explored the changes in the household's level division of labor due to the migration of the male members of the family. Some aspects of the interviews also focused on the significances of the remittances sent by the migrant. With the personal consent of the informants, I recorded interviews on a voice recorder. I was also engaged in semi- structured interview with the elder village people with the focus on the socio-cultural and historical aspects of the village. Just like other village members the elderly had subjective views on the issue of migration but their longer historical gaze allowed me to contrast their views with those of the out-migrant households as my primary informants were with younger generations in the village. I conducted case studies of few households and few spouse of the male

out-migrants. The case study of households focused on the structural causes and consequences of the migration phenomena. It also focused on the process that took place within the household before the actual migration took place. While focusing on the consequences special attentions were paid on the changes in the workloads of women. The case study of spouse of male out-migrants focused on how the absences of the male migrants have been perceived by them. Special attention was also paid on the emotional aspects of the spouse of the migrant members.

I explored and collected several narratives mixed in the social constructions of the village which had direct connection with the issues of migration and gender. Some of them popped up during informal conversations while the rest were caught by my ear while hanging around in the village.

3.4 Managing and Making Sense out of Information

As I mentioned earlier I maintained a field diary throughout my field stay. It was in a spiral note copy wherein I recorded my observations, reflections, experiences, encounters, and conversations I was engaged in. I maintained another diary too while transcribing all the recordings of interview. Towards managing the information, first thing I did was to bring and keep together information dealt with similar issues. For example, information indicating causes of migration were kept together and information dealing with emotions of family members in the absence of the out-migrants was kept together differently.

Making sense out of the field notes-- observations, reflections, conversations, and interviews with and from many people-- into an authoritative text with a single authorial voice was a humbling and frustrating exercise for me. To do this I went through the field notes again and again and simultaneously I started exploring and going through pertinent literatures explaining various aspects of the issue I was dealing with. I applied descriptive method in dealing with my write-ups.

3.5 Being Ethically Conscious

As an ethical requirement, I got the consent of each and every informant before I conducted interviews and before recording them. The village is small in size, every people knows each other here. Many of my respondents felt insecure and requested me not to share what they said with other villagers. Therefore taking all these into considerations I used pseudonyms of the informants I have interviewed in my write ups to maintain confidentiality. This is due to my perception, stimulated by my informants' constant query: "*Yo lagera tapaille k ma chhapne* (where do you get it published)"? I felt that my informants wanted me to maintain the confidentiality. I was aware that my actions and behavior shall not bear any negative consequences to the place and on the people I studied. Therefore the issue being very personal and sensitive, I used pseudo names of the informants.

CHAPTER IV

THE SETTING: THE PLACE, PEOPLE AND THE ISSUES

“Gwaldaha Ko Jindagi sukha dukha ma gujradai cha, kaile baan ko sikhar ta kaile besi! Kaile khet godai ta kaile baan godai, Kukhra bakhra palan tesma pani ghatai ghata. Bazaar bhau khaskadai jancha ani hami kishan harulai kaile pani rahat chaina. Gwaldaha ko prabriti nai yei ho”

(A local informant from *Gwaldaha*)

Gwaldaha, ward no 8 of *Chalnakhel* VDC, is a small geographical setting, located at the southern part of the Kathmandu city. This place is located in an altitude about 4500 to 5000 feet from the sea level. The village is surrounded by Bagmati river from the Northern side, Setidevi VDC from the East side, the dense *Hattiban* forest (community forest) from the South and *Hattidhara* Village, ward no 7 of *Chalnakhel* VDC from West side. To reach *Gwaldaha*, one needs to take bus drive of around one hour from *Ratnapark* (*Kathmandu downtown*) and of around the 10 to 15 minutes' walk from the *Chalnakhel* bus stop over a gravel road. Another option is from bus ride to Khokana or Bungamati of Lalitpur district and 20 to 25 minutes walk from Khokana or Bungamati, as a bridge over Bagmati built under Rana regime connects the village with Lalitpur district.

Gwaldaha got its name from a lake called *Gwalindaha* located in the village, *Gwalindaha* due course of time got altered to *Gwaldaha*. As shared by locals, in the ancient time the geographical set up where the village is located was covered by a lake and *Gwalas* along with lord Krishana used to come and take bath in that lake to get rid from the tiredness of whole day cow grazing works. Gradually the lake dried up and people started settling there and the settlement was named after the lake and gradually became *Gwaldaha*. At the time of my field visit I could see a very small left over moisture portion of the lake converted as a grazing ground for the villagers. I also heard that villagers are planning to preserve the lake and are asking for budgets from various sectors.

As per the village profile recently maintained by the Chalnakhel VDC, the total population of *Gwaldaha* is 516 settled in 106 households (VP, 2067BS). The settlement pattern of *Gwaldaha* is both road line and scattered. Houses in *Gwaldaha* are mostly cemented and some of the houses are of Nepali pagoda style with a tile and tinned roof. The nature of family structure at *Gwaldaha* is both nuclear and extended. The average family size is around seven. People in *Gwaldaha* belong to different caste groups. *Tamangs*, *Chettris*, *Nagarkotis*, *Magar*, *Bishwokarma*, *Damai* and *Bahun* are the different caste categories inhabiting in this village. Among these caste groups *Chettris* have outnumbered other population (VP, 2067BS). According to the knowledgeable locals, the earliest people to settle in *Gwaldaha* village were *Nagarkoti*. Other caste groups have a recent history of around hundred years of settlement (through in-migration from nearby places) in *Gwaldaha*. The abundance of water, virgin forest, fertile land and a moderate weather for most of the year have acted as a magnet for different waves of settlers. The effective magnetism of *Gwaldaha* could still be felt through newly bought land and recently built houses by the new settlers. Though people here belong to different caste groups, Nepali is the only lingua franca of communication in the market and the public domain.

In terms of religion, various forms and admixtures of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and animism are practiced by people in *Gwaldaha*. There is a famous *Durga* temple located at the topmost height of the village. Besides this small Hindu temples are scattered throughout the village and a sacred *peepal chautari* could also be found in the village. Though I could not see any separate Buddhist monastery in *Gwaldaha*, there are two recently built churches in this village. The major festivals celebrated by Hindus and Buddhists here is *Dashain*, *Tihar* along with other local Hindu and Buddhist festivals. Villagers who are Christian celebrate Christmas.

The road linking *Gwaldaha* to the *Chalnakhel* bus stop is gradually converting into a terraced road, though, as per the knowledgeable locals, the road was constructed under the prime minister ship of *Chandra Shamsher Rana*. New roads have also been constructed within village linking different nooks and corners of the village to the main road. Due to this phenomenon local people have felt the ever rocketing price of their land. Every house is facilitated with electricity. The village has also afforded

cable facility recently. There is no availability of wire telephone in *Gwaldaha*, people here use wireless telephones like CDMA, UTL and almost every house contains a member having cell phone. There does not exist any internet facility. For this and for STD/ISD facility, they have to visit *Khahare or Khokana*, nearby suburbs at a distance of around 25 to 30 minutes walk. As mentioned earlier there is an abundance source of water in the village and private as well as public taps are densely available linked to the water source in a nearby village. There is a secondary school run by the state nearby the village at around five to ten minutes walk. Earlier this was the only school wherein children of *Gwaldaha* studied. I could see two to three buses carrying English brand names coming every morning to pick children of *Gwaldaha*. For higher education *Gwaldaha* is largely dependent on Kathmandu valley. As per the village profile, the number of illiterate people in *Gwaldaha* is 127, and among them 102 are female and 25 are male. Similarly, among 34 literate people in *Gwaldaha* 15 are female and 19 male. Furthermore, 15 people (6 female, 9 male) went to school and studied up to fifth grade, 56 people (female, male) have passed SLC level education, 46 (19 female, 27 male) people have completed higher secondary level education, and 66 (19 female, 47 male) people have completed graduate level education (VP, 2067BS). A primary health care center is situated at the distance of 20 minutes' walk from *Gwaldaha*. To deal with health related problems people here refer to this center as well as other health facilities in the Kathmandu valley. Recently people of *Gwaldaha* through a fund raised through public *Saptaha*, have bought an ambulance. People, especially women here do refer to traditional healers like *janne Jhakri, mata* etc.

People of *Gwaldaha* are engaged in various occupations in areas like agriculture, service, daily wage, abroad employment, and business. In agriculture people here are engaged in vegetable farming, livestock and poultry farming and regular crop farming. Besides several kinds of vegetables people here grow rice, wheat, millet, maize, mustard, potato as a regular crop. Similarly I could see fruits like guava, oranges, lemon, *vogate*, peers, *haluwabed* etc. also cultivated by the villagers. Lands of *Gwaldaha* are well facilitated by irrigation. The systems of labour exchange like *mela/parma* also exist towards facilitating agricultural practices. In service people here are employed by various governmental and private organizations in Kathmandu

valley and two recently opened nearby factories of mineral water and tissue paper. As a daily wage labor people here works as construction workers, manual labors, farm workers and so on. People here also are the owners of various kinds of small businesses like tea shops, grocery shops, vegetable shops, stone carving, poultry farm, pig farm etc. People in *Gwaldaha* belong to various community based organizations like community forestry user groups such as *Guthi*, *Mahila Samuha (Women's Group)*, co operatives, and youth clubs.

Evidently, *Gwaldaha* is integrated well into the urban economy of Kathmandu and villagers depend on it for educational purposes and professional work as well. All this may have an influence both on patterns of migration, and perceptions and reactions to it.

Out-migration in *Gwaldaha* is not a new phenomenon. Male members of the *Nagarkoti* households used to migrate to India in search of work several years before. I even met a *Nagarkoti* family whose head was born in India while his father was working there. The elderly people of *Nagarkoti* caste group still holds their memories of India. The intensification of out-migration from *Gwaldaha* gradually increased following the general trend of the country after the 1990s. Few youths from *Gwaldaha* migrated to Gulf States for work purposes, in the very beginning of the 1990s. From a family, a male member even migrated to America. According to the knowledgeable person, this process also got augmented in the beginning of this century. I found twenty five households in *Gwaldaha* from where at least one male member has undergone experiences of migration and among them were a few returnees. I found seventeen households from where one male member was absent during my field visit. This study has incorporated both-- one consisting of returnee migrants and another consisting of absentee male members-- type of households. I also found households whose members are absent for more than twelve years. From two households in *Gwaldaha* female members are also absent. I even found some youths who are planning and are also in a process of migrating. From this material, it seems that-migration in *Gwaldaha* occurs not only among lower class people but also among the middle and upper middle class families. I could not find any household in *Gwaldaha*

whom I could level as an upper class household. Migration also occurs among all the castes and religious groups residing in *Gwaldaha*.

CHAPTER V

THE NOTION OF *KAMAUNE*

Including other things most of the literatures in migration regard it as a “livelihood strategy”, according to Susan Thieme “It is cross-cultural and historical phenomenon that people migrate to contribute to their livelihoods” (Thieme, 2006:1). Migration in Nepal is highly a gendered process. As Heidi Kaspar mentions “Migration is a common solution for making a living in an area with scarce opportunities for waged employment and for improving the livelihood assets fundamentally. Furthermore, migration in Nepal is a highly gendered process: migrants are predominantly male.” (Kaspar, 2005: 1).

My research on out-migrants family members in the outskirts of Kathmandu clicked me with multiple conceptual complexities unlike the concept of livelihood. As I asked to the family members of the out-migrant’s; “*waha kina bidesinu vako?* (Why did- he go abroad)” ? From majority of them I got a common answer “*Kamauna--To earn*”. And second answer was ‘*Des ko isthiti yesto cha—the situation of the country is like this*’.

The second answer is more relevant to the social and political condition which means the socio-politico-economical problems and chaos that impacted them is so much taken for granted in the conflict ridden country like Nepal that even they thought that they did not have to explain it.

The theme of daily Nepal’s news papers and media and many published academic and non-academic literatures have provided lot of things regarding the second answer. Therefore, here I stress only on the term ‘*Kamaune*’.

Kamaune is a local notion that falls within a tradition of anthropology for stressing-local expressions as it carries distinct meanings which can only be understood in the local cultural context. Therefore, I am using the terminology *Kamaune* instead of livelihoods and try to elaborate in the local context of Gwaldaha. *Kamaune* is something associated not only with ‘livelihood’ but also with **Likelihood**. This likelihood is culturally rooted which is highly shaped by patriarchal norms and values.

The economic urge is not shaped by economic determinants alone but also structured in cultural norms and values.

The term 'livelihood' has been widely used among academics and development's practitioners. Livelihoods thinking dates back to the work of Robert Chambers in the 1980's and was elaborated together with Conway in the 1990's (DFID 2001: 2.2). Later on the concept of Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) has been widespread. The SLF was mainly developed by the British state-run development organization DFID, based on research of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) (Bohle 2001: 119). The aim of the framework is to "understand and analyse the livelihoods of the poor" (DFID 2001:1.1). Later on many other organizations like Care International, Oxfam, World Bank adopted this framework. There is a consensus that livelihood is about the ways and means of 'making a living'. According to Carney "livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living' (Carney, 1998:4). The term livelihood has become the general perspective and has been used extensively to understand the migration amongst the development agencies, academics and policy makers after 1990s. Various literatures have defined Nepali out migration as a part of "livelihood strategy".

Both the migration and its causes are utmost to study under different pattern. There are various types of migration, as the typology vary so are the causes. It is true what Susan Thieme has mentioned in her book 'Social Networks and Migration' that "although every migrant has his or her own story, they share common experiences". In this type of labour migration which I have studied their stories reach to one common end i.e. '*Kamauna-- (to earn)*'. The notion of *Kamune* is highly driven by social value. Therefore the concept livelihood cannot be confined within the pro-poor people strategy alone as has been made use in "developmentalist" thought. In my research area I have found many migrants who might not be considered poor rather than the family which is better off than subsistence level.

Here, *kamaune* comprises a multiple meaning in my research context which symbolizes the manifold layers of social, cultural, and economic structure of Nepali society. Furthermore, social and cultural reflection of the Nepali society is embedded

in the notion of *Kamaune*. Two types of *Kamaune* world view is instituted in Nepali society. 1. *Naam Kamaune* (earning the name) and 2. *Daam Kamaune* (earning the money). In his one of the best autobiographical verses, nineteenth century Nepali poet *Bhanubhakta Acharya* was highly inspired by the charitable deeds of a fellow grass cutter. The amicable grass cutter has stored money to build a public well so that future generations would remember him for his socially inspired deed. *Bhanubhakta*, an educated man from a Brahmin well-to-do family, felt disappointed as he could have done nothing for the village whereas the poor and ignorant grass cutter was already set out to achieve his name by his socially admirable action. Along with this *Bhanubhakta* also aspires to do something by translating a well known Hindu Sanskrit text *Ramayana* into Nepali so that he could also scale the same height than that of the grass cutter did.

Like his other verses, *Bhanubhakta's* autobiographical poems have become compulsory reading in school textbooks in Nepal (Onta 1999). The name keeping value is prevalent in Nepali society. On the one hand *Paropakar*--philanthropy is there but at the same time the new market economy, the modern education system and the imported occupation variation has created the high inequality between haves and have not, which forced to make an attachment with *Daam Kamaune*. After 1980s as Nepali society enrolled into the new kind of market economy where the new set of belief like liberalization and privatization became dominant, the transcendental value of name keeping started being eroded by the capitalistic value day by day.

Regarding to gender Mark Leichty suggests that “the public/private divide becomes more unstable- in schools, work places, “public” spaces, etc. __ so does the placement of gender within these domains” (Leichty2010:310). *Kamaune* notion is highly gendered in nature, and contextually, culturally and structurally rooted in the Nepali social structure. *Kamaune* is layered with the various symbolic meanings. Those who are involved in *kamaune* reflect their responsibility in the public sphere as a male member of the community to sustain the family. In the Nepali society-- as any patriarchal society-- male members are engaged in the market and earning leaving the legacy of how male member's subjectivity has been constructed by the society.

Men's duty, role, and status are designated by the property and earnings he possesses. As the male's class position is higher, so is the position of his other family members.

Therefore a wife is identifiable by her husband's position. Nepal has long history of out-migrations of male members, specifically in India and beyond. Out migration has become one of the major strategies of *kamaune* and it gained social and cultural meaning in Nepali society, specifically to the male subjectivity. As my respondent's *Gyatri* and *Maya* told me, "all the family members told my husband not to go *Bides* but his only answer was, "*Choro hu! Kita kamayera aaye, kita des ghumera aaye* (I am the son! I will return back either by earning or just visiting the foreign land)". This statement suggested how male member of the household perceived his role to out-migrate for earning. The phrase 'do or die' reflects the history of Nepali out-migration rooted in our culture.

Similarly, *Geeta* opined 'It is me who pressurized my husband to go to *Bides* because as a son one has to do something in his life'. It is not only the male, who perceives his responsibility to earning but same is the case perceived by other family members. Hence males are regarded as the breadwinners of the family.

Secondly, *Kamaune* is associated with the "*samajik izzat* (social prestige)", which is determined by consumption and accessibility to market. Post 1990's Nepal witnessed the com modification of the basic needs of the people like health and education due to the impacts of neo-liberal policy. As a result, it was not only the luxury items but also the education and health facilities became the subject of buying and selling. For this, male members of the house started hoarding large amount of money to maintain their social status.

Four out of all respondents' husbands used to earn 8 to 10 thousand rupees per month during their stay in Nepal. 'Why did husbands of yours go outside though they used to earn a good amount of money here?' when I asked them this question, their common answer was; "*chora chori lai padaunu parcha, ra dherai kaam banne ta paisalenai ho. Jati paisa badi hudai gayo teti teti aabasekta pura huncha. Ani paisa kamayema tol, chimek aafanta ra gau ma izzat badcha* (It is necessary to educate offspring and all work can be possible only through money. As you earn more, you can fulfill your

requirements, and people start respecting you and money maintains your status around your family and neighbors)”. This is another layer of Nepali social structure; how a prestige can be derived, gained and regained. An individual or family can be recognized on the basis of how much they earn and what they consume. Majority of the Nepalese are engaged in subsistence activities. People are struggling for basic things.

It can be easily perceived from the various spheres where people express their frustration and wrath towards politicians, political parties and state. A group of young generation likes to display the modern equipments from motorbikes to electronic gadgets. The value of the money is increasing day by day to maintain the *izzat* (*respect*). Festivals are celebrated lavishly if one can spend a lot of money. Trust and reciprocity is built up in a society by the property one posses. *Bidesinu*--to out migrate is a good opportunity to maintain or to increase the social prestige in a society which is not possible by staying in Nepal for this kind of class groups. *Ram Gopal* case makes clear this research.

Ram Gopal is a migrant worker who died in Malaysia at the age of 24. His father, 64, who is living alone and a leprosy victim told me, ‘He was well educated. He completed his BA at his early age. Before going to Malaysia, he used to teach at *Bungmati* School, his salary was sufficient for us. Being a teacher he had a very high social status. Villagers used to respect him. One day he asked me that he wanted to go to Malaysia where he could earn more than he was earning here. I argued with him and finally he was convinced not to go. But it is his wife who forced him to leave the country. Through her cousin’s manpower agency, he flew to Malaysia. After seven months, he sent sixty five thousand rupees. But the condition reversed as after some months he died there. His unprecedented demise surprised us. Some of his friends say he committed suicide’.

Thirdly *Kamaune* also substitutes the notion of being idle which is something linked with dynamism rather than static. For the household wives, this represents the passage to progression. It always remained an issue of household conflict heralding many unnecessary fuss within the house when a husbands are unemployed and idle. As Geeta mentioned ‘*chora Manche le khi ta garnai paryo ni*--son has to do something’.

This is also clear from *Gyatri's* case. Her husband used to do nothing when he was here. He used to drink all the time, spent idly gossiping with friends, playing cards; his life used to get run on leisure activities. Finally he got frustrated with all this and decided to go to Bides. To send him out his wife sold her ornaments and he took a loan and flew to Malaysia for *Kamauna*. In the developing countries like Nepal where employment rate is very low, it is evident semi-urban area like *Gwaldaha* has been undergoing high scarcity of unemployment. As a result, migration has become a major earning source. In the past Nepal emerged as a commercial-state where it exported its labor to generate state's income. It suggested that Nepal has long history of returnee migrations. It is embedded in social and cultural practices of Nepal and also reflected in *Gwaldaha* community.

Hence Bides turns out to be migrants' dreamland and they start dreaming it as a place where they can earn a lot and have a good life back in their own country. Like western tourists consider Nepal as a Sangri-la paradise, on the flip side, Nepali migrants' sole concern is confined with leaving their homeland and earning.

Fourth, *Kamaune* is not only the medium for present consumption and expenditure but also for the future investment. The stronger parental property is transferred to their clan members, the more secure will be the future life of both the children and parents. The more property is transferred to the son, the more secure the old age life of the parents would be. Many of my respondents also mentioned that they would build cemented houses in *Gwaldaha*, buy more lands both in *Gwaldaha* and Kathmandu and do byapar (business) from the money that their husband or son brought from the *Bides*.

The reciprocity between their earning and social dignity remains parallel. The respondents' view can be generalized as they went abroad not to earn for themselves, but for others. When I interviewed returnees, they told me that they went outside not for themselves but for their children's future security so that their children could get good education. It is also found that before migrating, their children used to read in government schools, now they are studying in boarding or private schools.

After 1990 obtaining travel documents and passports became much easier than before. The economic emergence of the South East Asian and Gulf States combined with an increased information flow and trade liberalization in Nepal, caused a rapid increase in labour migration and diversification of destinations (Thieme Susan:13). The manpower companies or recruiting agencies have played a significant role in promoting and arranging work permits. Similarly these recruiting agencies have channelized their brokers to many districts where their sole task is to collect the passports who want to go middle-east and submit them to manpower offices.

Migration takes place whenever a person is motivated to move rather than stay and whenever the expected benefits of moving outweighs the difficulties the move incurs. Remittances have become the good turnover in *Gwaldaha*. The migrants generally save and remit a significant part of their earnings to their dependents. Migrants dreamt about going Middle East before they moved, and visited different temples to improve and increase their health and wealth in foreign land. Before, India used to be the sole destination for labor migrating communities but now this trend has shifted to South East -Asian and Gulf states because the migrants now choose for those countries where they are paid well. Therefore they are attracted by the higher salaries than they were earning here.

CHAPTER VI

COMES AND IF ASPIRES GOES: BACK AND FORTH

MIGRANTS

Migration is the mobility of people for a certain period of time. According to Ismel Kok and Isiloman “It is defined as a move from one place in order to live in another place for a continuous period of at least one year. (Koc and Oman: 81:04). In this study I tried to specify the migrants from the vantage point of their primary kin. The pattern of migration needs to be studied categorically. Here, my focus is only on the contract labour migrants. My field work at *Gwaldaha* shows that the Nepali migrants who flock for the Gulf States and Malaysia have distinct features than arrays of other types of migration from Nepal. David Shadon, et al study on migration in the middle-east termed this kind of migrant as “New *Lahures*” but the “New *Lahures*” has not been elaborated. Whereas, *Sudhindra Sharma* called these migrants as “economic migrants”. I think this mobility holds certain characteristics which need to be conceptually defined separately. Some mention these kinds of migrants as “return migrants” while other termed them as “circular migrants”.

These kinds of migrants don’t enjoy the privilege like diasporic community, who has much advantage to maintain cultural identity and social life in their migrated place. In an oped article at Kathmandu Post entitled “sweat and blood” Lim Mun Fah writes “They earn only a monthly income of 420 ringgit (US \$ 130) each, but have to pay the foreign worker levis, and are allowed to claim a maximum of two-hour overtime pay even though they actually worked 12 hours. Two workers- one on morning shift and the other on night shifts- take turn to share a bed, and 70 workers are squeezed into a unit that is meant to accommodate 30 people. (Lim: Aug 22). Therefore these migrants’ cultural, national or religious identity and socio-cultural life are erased and work space turned them into “modern day slave”. Alienated from their socio-cultural life their sole purpose is *kamaunu* (to earn) and save hardly as much money as possible in a certain period of time to improve their life and their family back home. The strain and stress is always locked in their head about their family who are left behind because they can’t bring their family with them. The agreement has been

stringently made that they even cannot return to their homes if their family members fell ill or died. If they come back to their home country the company doesn't provide them a single penny. They have been deprived of socio-political rights as a result lot of migrants face exploitation, as *Kantipur* reporter *Devendra Bhattarai* stated that he has to face cruel and painful news everyday when he used to be a reporter in the Qatar. For such a migrant, I coined the term **back and forth migrants**. The "back and forth" migrants are the contract workers who spent certain years in their destination and return to their origin. If they wish again, they can participate in leaving their origin for other another circle of years overseas. Most of these kinds of migrants could not leverage enough money to invest in their origin country and they also do not learn and import new skill as a result they end up again into the construction company of gulf or any such low paid unskilled jobs.

However, it doesn't mean that this kind of migration is worthless, the money they earn or remit plays a significant role to sustain their family and the day to day expenses of household. On the macro level, Nepalese economy has been floated by the remittances sent by these migrants where the economy itself is at the bottleneck. I would like to substantiate my arguments on the basis of some cases which I derived from my field.

47 years old *Radha's* husband is from *Solukhambu* who doesn't have formal education but he is not illiterate. Currently he is working in Qatar. Before in-migrating permanently from *Solu* to *Gwaldaha* both the spouses used to live in *Vhaisipati* in a rented house. Her husband used to work as a gardener in a Germans' apartment here. Thirteen years ago he knew about a job in Qatar from his village neighbor. He then paid thirty thousand rupees to a *Man- Power* Company and flew to Qatar. At that time his daughter was five years old. He worked there as a Gardner for three years and his salary was 500 Rial per month. Then he returned and learned driving. After 8 months through a *man- power* company again he went to Qatar but, he went this time to another company as a labour for 6 months. After that his position changed to a driver of the same company.

Paradoxically, his wife doesn't know in which company he works. Till now he is working in that same company. After he went he came to his house twice for two months holiday.

His wife told me the boss is very happy with his work and relies on him a lot. I knew from his wife when he started working as a driver, the money was increased which he used to remit. From that money her wife bought a land in *Gwaldaha* and made one storied- cemented- house of five rooms. Infront of their house they own small farm where she grows vegetables. He used to send Rs 20,000 every two months. His food and accommodation is taken responsibility by the company.

Similarly, seven years ago *Maya's* husband went to Dubai for three years as a worker in a hotel. At that time his age was 24 years. After 3 years his contract was over, he returned. Again staying 6 months back in Nepal, through a *man power* company, he went to Dubai again for three years. He is now working in a five star hotel. His wife told me that he worked at the hotel's swimming pool and earned Rs. 25,000 per month. His food and accommodation was provided by the hotel.

Geeta, 34, and her husband's age is 40. After completing the *SLC* her husband migrated from *Okhaldhunga* to *Kathmandu* 20 years ago. He didn't continue his study after his *SLC*. He worked as a peon in of of the boarding school in Kathmandu. *Geeta's* husband left to Saudi Arabia when she was pregnant. After spending three years in Saudi Arabia, he returned to Nepal. At that time he wasn't earning much because the company provided him a meager salary. He opened a grocery shop in *Kalimati* for 8 months from the money he had saved. From a man-power company he heard of a job in Hongkong. The man power Company demanded him 4 lakh Rs for this. He sold his shop and managed to pay 4 lakh Rs somehow. But, that man power cheated him and returned his partial amount that he paid earlier. Instead of sending him to Hong Kong they sent him to Qatar. Spending two years in Qatar as a labour in a factory he returned to Nepal. Again after 4 months he flew to Kuwait. He has been working as store keeper in a company for 5 years. He used to send money to his house on and off. It's just been four times ever since he left home. After six months he sent Rs 70,000. After 3 months he sent Rs. 25,000. Then again after five months he sent 50,000 Rs. The last time the amount of money he sent was thirty eight thousand

rupees. This is how the process has continued of sending money in different time period.

Anthropologist Nancie L. Solien De Gonzalez categorized 5 types of migratory wage labor:

- I. Seasonal migration
- II. Temporary, non seasonal migration
- III. Recurrent migration
- IV. Continuous migration
- V. Permanent removal.

1. **Seasonal Migration:** Seasonal migrants are those who travel once a year, either as complete or partial families or as single adult individuals, to areas in which great numbers of workers are needed temporarily in such occupations as harvesting or processing of raw food items.

2. **Temporary non seasonal migration:** The migrants rarely travel in family groups, and most often consist of young unmarried adults... Temporary, non seasonal migration, however, cannot completely support the home society. Traditional economic pursuits must continue as before. From the point of view of the home village, the labor migration brings in added luxuries and new ideas. To the migrant, his period away from home takes on the character of a personal adventure. He sees new peoples, places, and cultures and has new experiences, all of which he can recount to his friends and kinsmen back home. In addition, he will acquire many new objects for personal adornment, or to be used as gifts when he returns home, or he may use his wages or goods purchased with these wages to secure a bride. The important point here is that the migrant's experiences take on meaning primarily in relation to his own village or the socio cultural system in which he was born and brought up. Margaret Mead, in regard to Manus, points out that, "Away from home they [i.e., the migrant workers] were essentially in the custody of some individual enterprise, as an employee of a firm, a mission or of a government department. Their

social or ethnic identity, as opposed to their work identity, remained tied firmly to their own village" (1956: 516).

3. **Recurrent Migration:** In recurrent migration men make irregular journeys, of varying lengths of time, to obtain wage labor throughout their productive years. The social effects of this type of migration are quite different from those noted in the previous section, especially in regard to family organization. In most cases the migrants have wives and families who are left behind in the native villages. The men may return at frequent intervals throughout the year, or they may be absent for several years without returning. The frequency of return hinges upon several factors, including the distance which must be traveled to obtain work, the amount of job security offered to the migrant, and the amount of economic return.

Recurrent migrants tend to return home as often as possible, and especially for important native rituals and ceremonies, family crises, etc. From the point of view of management, a worker who frequently leaves the job to return home on visits is a less desirable employee than one who works steadily for longer periods of time. For this reason, workers are often encouraged to travel farther away than the nearest labor center to obtain work. They may be lured by the promise of higher wages, free one-way transportation, and other supposed benefits. Obviously, the farther away a man is from his home, the less often he will be able to return there. Sometimes the labor market in a particular area may be so flooded by the importation of large numbers of workers from a distant area that local residents may be unable to secure any job, and they too will be forced to travel to obtain work. Regardless of how long the recurrent migrant laborer is away from home, the outstanding fact about this category is that the men are absent not only during their youth but for periods of varying lengths after they have reached maturity. They remain linked to their home villages in various ways, but primarily by the fact that their wives and children continue to reside there.

4. **Continuous Migration:** In this, families, usually nuclear, travel together from job to job, living in temporary quarters of some type or another at each location. It should be noted at the outset that this class

must be considered somewhat differently from those above since, by the very nature of the migration, no home village is involved. Thus, the effects noted concern solely the migrants themselves. In all of the other classes we have been primarily concerned with the interrelationships between migration and social organization in the home villages.

5. **Permanent Removal:** Permanent removal includes all those patterns in which workers move from their home areas to other specific locations which offer more opportunities for employment and in which they settle more or less permanently. Sometimes such workers are accompanied by their wives and families, in other cases they go alone.

There are also a number of dichotomies i.e. in-/out-, rural/urban, temporary/permanent, internal/international, voluntary/ forced migration. This sometimes creates difficulties to operationalize the concept. After the people's movement of 1990, there was a high and alarming increment of Nepalese leaving to seek foreign employment in Middle East and south East Asia. The Middle East became the major destination for Nepali migrant workers. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Isrel, Qatar, Jordan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Oman, Lebanon, Yeamen, and UAE were the main destination countries in the Middle East. Similarly the East Asian countries represent Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Cambodia, Hong kong, and Brunei. Within these the the high rate of labour flow is Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Malaysia. Every year the rate is dramatically mounting to go to these countries. Semi-skilled and un-skilled Nepali workers are highly demanded by these countries. (I will define below the concept of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled).

Another term used for the Nepales migrants working abroad is the *Gurkhas*: particularly known as the Nepalese who work in *Gurkha* Regiment for British or Indian forces. The Sughauli treaty of 1816 empowered the British to set up three *Gurkha* regiments in their army (Shrestha 1990; Seddon et al. 2001). After a war in the Gurkha area with the British East India Company (1814/1816), an increasing number of Gurkhas (mostly, but not exclusively from present-day Nepal) also joined the British Army in India, initiating a tradition that continues until today (cf. Seddon 2005). During the World War I and II, Gurkhas were sent as courtesy from Nepalese government to support allied force where they fought courageously and established an

image of "Gurkha". Even to date Gurkhas as Nepal Armies and Police are popularly recognized as good peace keeping force worldwide, some examples are their involvement in UN peace keeping task force in Kosovo, Lebanon, Congo etc. In other words, Nepalese out-migration started from the history of Nepali soldiers who joined forces of other countries though it was not well accounted.

Relying on the article entitled, 'International migration and labour development in Nepal', "Nepal's international border with India and China remained almost open for the movement of people from both of her neighbors. With China, it became closed one after 1950, while it has remained open with India to date with no restriction on the movement of people of both countries. Hence, because of open border, cultural similarities, and no need of documentary evidence to show migration to and from India is pre-historic and even unaccounted. Throughout the 19th century and well into the 20th, Nepalese men served in India, often accompanied by their wives and other family members.

The Government of Nepal officially opened its door for citizens to go abroad for work in late 1980s. Before that people used to work only in India because of the open border and people did not have access to other countries. After having labour agreements with a number of Gulf States the number of migrant workers has increased substantially since 1996 with an increasing demand every year. According to the population census in 2001, India remains to be the main recipient of Nepalese migrant workers with about 600,000 migrants living there. India is followed by the Gulf countries in aggregate (111,000) such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and so on. Other countries account for about 62,000 Nepalese migrants" (Gartaula 2009).

A study carried out by Seddon et al. (2002) gives a good account of Nepalese workers living abroad especially in the West. They illustrate that there are few Nepalese living and working in 'the West' and they send remittances back home. Many, particularly in North America, are professionals who live with their families. These are predominantly of urban origin. According to their estimate for 1997, a total of 12,500 Nepali migrants were working in Europe and might be 2,500 in North America--

making a total of around 15,000 in the West as a whole. The largest number of Nepalese in any one country is in Britain, with 3,600 (mainly Gurkhas) officially registered and 8,000 unofficial workers. Likewise, in Japan, most of the estimated 10,000-plus Nepali migrant workers are illegal (Seddon et al. 2002: 24-25).

If we take out India from the picture, Gulf becomes the prime destination of Nepalese migrant workers. According to DLEP (Department of Labour and Employment Promotion), Malaysia (36%) remains to be the largest recipient as per the country-wise calculation till now (2007), which is followed by Qatar (29%), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (19%), and United Arab Emirates (12%) and so on. The trend of migration to Malaysia has been reduced since 2005/2006 while this trend of the Gulf countries has increased. This is because of the relatively low wage rate in Malaysia as compared to the Gulf countries. This plethora has been interpreted by Hom Nath Gartaula in his article entitled "International Migration and local development in Nepal" it is because "the demand from Malaysia seems to be only working class labourers with the name "Production Workers" or "Production Operators" while in the Gulf countries the demand is more disaggregated. Furthermore, the demand of skilled and semi-skilled labourers like mason, mechanic, salesman/girls, security guards, and engineers is increasing from Gulf States. It is also important to note that many workers returned from Malaysia because of the work they had to engage in are found different from the work they were told they would get during the process. Another important de-motivating factor to Malaysia is the levy charged by the Government of Malaysia from workers" (Gartaula 2009). Migration to India has a long standing history, while migration to the Gulf countries, Europe, or USA commenced about 15 years ago (Kollmair et al. 2006). In 1981 about 93 percent of out-migrants went to India while only 7 percent found their destination to other countries. The tendency of migrating to outside India kept on increasing and reached 23 percent in 2001 while going to India has been reduced to 77 percent in the same year (Gartaula 2009). It is due to the the money the migrant earns i.e the migrants earning in India doesn't earn as much as high the migrants used to earn in Gulf States. Remittances from abroad constituted 76 percent of the total amount of remittances received in Nepal in 2004. As migration to India is decreasing the remittance thereof is also decreasing. Using the data from Nepal Living Standard Survey 2003/04 (Lokshin et al 2007) shows the

largest share of international remittances came from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (35 percent), followed by 30 percent from India, 17 percent from other Asian countries, and the remainder from United Kingdom, United States, and other countries.

Even though some of the characteristics of the migrants are similar but these kinds of typology sanitize the everyday reality of migrants and could not encompass the local, social, political, and economical reality. Migrant's conditions and status as a labor is determined by his local social status to as far as his own home country negotiation currency in global labor market. Other major factors which determine his working place, job condition and status are networks of recruiting agencies. These different practices and power equations determine the condition of migrants, which is not encompassed by general categorization. Structural and local context has to take into consideration while understanding these kinds of migrants. Larger issues like globalization and economical transformation play as vital role as the country's political conditions.

Globalization of technology such as media and other communication means plays huge role in shaping the imagination of migrant and helping migrant to connect with the agencies of recruiting. Every day if we take a glimpse on the daily Nepali newspapers one can find the advertisement regarding to the work in Middle East and Gulf States. After 1990 huge expansion of transportation infrastructure, communication technology and print media plays mediating role to influx of the labors into the trap international migration trade and network.

Decade of perilous conflict between political parties and Maoists, day to day political *Bandh* and *Hadtal* every day strikes, Middle East is emerging as a new economical hub because of the increasing consumption of oil are the reasons that play an important role in increasing the back and forth migration.

Therefore, among the above mentioned five types of migrants category, some characteristics of 1, 2 and 3 can be found in the "back and forth migrants" as well, but these migrants are quite different in nature. There are hundreds of labor recruiting agencies in Kathmandu which are known as Man -Power Company .These agencies

hired the labors for the foreign companies where they play the role of a mediator for those companies and earn a huge amount of money. Every day there is a flood of advertisement in leading daily news papers even in television channels about the jobs mainly in Middle East and Malaysia. Apart from these agencies migrants' kinsmen, friends, neighbors, peer groups, villagers play a crucial role in diffusing the information. Neither many of these migrants can not browse the internet nor can read the demands sent from the foreign companies. Therefore they never have access to the original deal happened between the foreign company and *man-power* agencies. They highly rely and absolutely bestow themselves either to man- power Company or the *Dalal* (Middle Man) associated with man power companies.

The natures of jobs were categorized into three classifications: 1. Skilled, 2. Semi-skilled and 3. Un-skilled. Large numbers of demands are for semi-skilled and unskilled labours. It has been found that skilled represents the professionals with high education backgrounds like doctors, engineers, designers, chartered accountants, construction supervisors, computer experts, teachers etc. Semi-skilled represents masons, scaffolders, carpenters, cook, drivers, foreman, plant operators, electricians, plumbers, fixers, welders, pump operators, tailors etc. And unskilled represents laborers working in factory, hotels and construction sites, cleaners, sweepers, watchmen, guards, peons, airport loaders, gardeners, farmers etc. Skilled workers are recruited for a long time period. Once their contract is finished most of them manage to find another job consequently lengthening their visa. But unskilled and semiskilled can't do this. After the contract agreement of the company they have to return to their native countries. Someone even stay there illegally. Once they come back they don't have any option for good earning and again they apply for the out-migration to these countries. Therefore I refer to these unskilled and semiskilled workers as "back and forth migrants". In my research area I found many migrants after returning back to Nepal they again approach man-power Company and migrate to these destinations for the new job. Back and forth migrants return is compulsory. An article entitled "Compulsory Return: A means of migration control in East Asia" by Jiang Biao mentions how stressful a Chinese workers become to Japanese employers after their contract is over and send back to China. He used the term **compulsory return**. "Compulsory Return is central to most programmes of transnational unskilled labour

migration in East Asia. Migrants have to go home not only when their contracts expire, but also whenever they fall ill, become pregnant, or have disputes with employers. Compulsory Return places migrants in a perpetually liminal, disposable and transient position, and thus render the migration flows controllable". (Newsletter: spring 2009). Similar is the situation of Back and forth migrants whom I have studied. They have to return compulsorily after their contract expires. They cannot lengthen their work permit.

These migrants migrate either for two or three year's period of time. If they were contracted for three years then after two years they will be given a leave for two months. At this time many return to their homes but those who want to work they continue even at this time as well. They stay for *Kamauna* where cost benefit analysis plays a dominant role. All the cost of the airfare is managed by the company. The life is not easy for these migrants. They toil in the scorching heats. I heard from many of the returnee migrants that many of the Nepali workers toiled from early morning to late evening. Friday is the holiday for the workers but instead of enjoying the weekend they struggle for the over time-- they work for all seven days. During the period of earning if they were cheated and couldn't earn and send money to their families and further felt themselves alienated, some of them might have committed suicide.

Back and forth migration is not an automatic result of particular policies, nor is executed by the government alone. It is, instead, implemented through complex collaboration between the state, the employer, the migrant and various private and semi-private institutions. There are many manpower companies registered in Kathmandu alone and other towns of Nepal which are collaboratively working on behalf of many factories, hotels and construction companies to Middle East. In this kind of migration personal network plays a crucial role. Individuals rely on personal contacts in seeking job opportunities. People devote themselves to the cultivation of personal bonds. Network building here is determined by cultural strategy and country people (regional) perception. Therefore family, kinship, friend, neighbors and *gaule* (*villager*) plays a significant role for those individuals who seek to migrate for different works. Here network affects decisions about major changes in life events, such as a decision to out migrate. Network can also be considered as a form of capital.

A vast majority of these migrants perform difficult and menial tasks in the Middle East and Malaysia. Many toil in the scorching heat for *Kamauna*. However, given the conditions in Nepal, even such employment in low salaries are better than being unemployed at home where even a bare survival can be a struggle. According to Rehman Sobhan “The process of globalization may be universal the extent of country’s exposure to globalization depends on its history, geography and economic structure. More mature developing countries such as China, India or the Republic of Korea participate in the process in quite different terms from Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan or Cambodia. Similarly, a person with a degree in computer science in a developing country will face a quite different set of opportunities in a globalised world from those available to a subsistence farmer or garment industry worker”. (Sobhan, “Terms of Engagement”: 53). There is no discontinuity in the mobility of back and forth migrants because they are always ready to take various kinds of physical and mental risks for *Kamauna*.

CHAPTER VII

LEAVING HOME: NEGOTIATION AND RENEGOTIATION WITHIN A FAMILY

“The tradesman who does not delight in his family will never long delight in his business”- D. Defoe

Even though family being a major social and universal institution, it itself is a contested terminology in the discipline of sociology and anthropology. Who to include of family members and who not to varies according to the individual world view, culture and society. Simply, borrowing the concept from Anthony Giddens ,“family is a group of persons directly linked by kin connections, the adult members of which assume responsibility for caring for children” (Giddens, 2008:206). In this study I am referring “family” only for those who are primary kin, living in the same house and somewhere.

Leaving a home is one of the final rites de passage in the migration process which is an amalgamation of sorrow, fear, excitement and new confidence. Before leaving, a *Sallah-- dialogue takes* place within family members. This is a family discussion where pros and cons of the male absence opens up, every member participates but finally the male members reach to the decisions. In this process each and every member cooperates with the migrants in their own way. In my study area I found both kinds of family structure-- nuclear and extended. The head of the household especially father plays a key role in decision making weather to allow his son to leave the home or not. But, at the same time, it is the son who resists father’s decision and persuades, pleads and negotiates and convinces his father to nod. The process of negotiation and renegotiation might continue for many days. After a member is permitted by the household head, the family members work out searching for loan. Here a household head might be the migrants himself as well.

There is a debate in migration studies regarding the household and individual in decision making process. Any one of this can be dominant according to time and space, but the role of household cannot be overlooked in migration studies. The role

of household is significant in this kind of back and forth labor migration studies and also to the micro level approaches to migration studies. According to Jytte Agergaard “Households are important agents to consider when explaining the reasons for migration and settlement, and when developing the analyses of the specific migration and settlement trajectories. It is assumed that the decision making process in economic matters (ie migration and settlement) in developing countries is less an individual question than a process where household members negotiate on a joint strategy. Household may tentatively be defined as identifiable groupings based on some form of kinship relations within which people live.” (Agergaard,1999:101). In this study I would like to prefer family rather than a household because the family and kin attachment is very high in Nepalese society. The family attachment and values are inseparable in migration studies. In the following, will use to the two terms family and kin interchangeably.

Two contradictory views might occur in the beginning economic versus cultural determinism. Finally the family values are negotiated and decision to migration is allowed. The migrant assures the family members by stressing on the values and the role that the son has to play. Here a patriarchal value system overcomes everything and notion of *Kamaune* plays a dominant role. The dominant family values are replaced by the economic opportunities and exigencies. Foreign job or the migration itself is taken as a great opportunity for *Kamauna*.

Migration has long been a central concern in both the anthropology and history of the family, but its role has shifted in the context of globalization. Historians often see migration as an unhappy destination of family members who could not support with family resources. Anthropologists traditionally focus on how migrant families adapt to their new environment, or how the departure of individuals usually men shape the structure of the families left behind (Brettell 1988, Gailey 1992).

The houses of the migrants are either transferred by the generational family property or built by the father himself and the heir of the property will be transmitted or divided to the sons. In the Nepali society sons are accultured the value of *Kmaune*. The division of labor is divided between the male and female members of the house

hold where men partake in *Kamaune* activities and women in household activities and child rearing.

Decision of work takes place within the family. Migrants and non-migrants jointly decide about leaving a house. Regarding to the article by Leela Gutali “coping with male migration” based on the Kerala one of the state of India mentions “The impact of migration to the Middle East begins to be felt long before the migrant actually leaves home. It starts the moment a husband or son decides to try to migrate to the Middle East and starts seriously preparing for it. He has to mobilize various social networks both at home and abroad and this he does with the support and involvement of the adult members, men and women, of his immediate family, including not only his wife and parents but also siblings, as well as other relatives; friends and neighbors too get involved”. (Gulati,1987: 41). Regarding to the question how supportive the family members were for the male out migrants. The evidence shows that women are more than merely passive supporters. Wife, mother, father and brothers played a vital role in many sense. In the beginning they found the matter quite serious and insisted to not to leave but finally came to an agreement and supported in their own way to the migrants in leaving the home. The wife is more actively supportive; she favors the decision of her husband to migrate. I found many women both mothers and wives have either sold their jewelry or mortgaged to manage money for their husband. Similarly the old mothers had worked actively for their sons’ migration by making their personal contributions and also by raising funds from other sources. Fathers also raised funds from other sources and I found many of the migrants’ father sold their sole property “land” to manage to pay the required expenses while sending the migrants. Assurance and agreement takes place in the family meeting which finally leads to the acceptance of the family members to agree to send a person. Therefore the domestic unit is an important component in social network- based migration. Households and families are common representations of this domestic unit.

In my study area, there were only two out-migrant women. Both of them were married and out-migrated to Israel. It was really challenging for me to approach their family. When I went to take an interview with one of the migrant’s husband, he misbehaved with me and tore my checklist. Then he insisted another migrant’s family

member not to give interview with me as he felt humiliated by being a male member who is depending on his wife's income. I asked him how much money she used to send him and at what time interval, at the risk of over generalization, I think my question might have infuriated him or he felt humiliated as if he is being dependent on his wife's income. Suddenly he showed his angst towards me which really surprised me. This was one of the most bitter experiences of my field research. I frequently followed him but my entire attempt went futile. All the time he rejected me.

I asked the questions to the women members of the house; don't you desire to go to bides like your husband? Amidst, I received answer in a shy tone,"*khai*". Later on when I reiterated the same question in my entire field period, they said no. Majority of my respondents said no to this question.

Very few of them said if they get an opportunity and if their husband allowed them then they are ready to go. As *Kamaune* being a male's role, migration has been a male's movement in Nepal. However, figures suggest that women have migrated in almost the same numbers as men; for example in the year 2000, there were 85 million female migrants as compared to the 90 million male migrants (Zlotnik, quoted in Jolly et al 2003:6). Women account for 46 percent of overall international migration from developing countries (ibid).

Table: 1.

Proportion of Female Migrants as a percentage of Total International Migrants by the Region:

	1990	2000
South Asia	44.4	44.4
East and South East Asia	48.5	50.1
West Asia	47.9	48.3

Source: Zlotnik, in Jolly, Bell and NarayanSwamy, 2003

CHAPTER VIII

REMITTANCE TRANSFER AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Remittance is always considered the main motivation for labor migration (Stark and Bloom 1985; Stark 1991) and the strongest link in transnational migration processes. In this kind of Back and Forth migration the earnings in destination pulls and push from the origin. In this kind of migration “migration” and “remittance” are mutually inclusive. According to Rajaram Panda “Remittances may be defined as transfer of money by members of immigrant communities or foreign nationals from the country where they live and work back to relatives or other individuals in their country of origin.” (Panda 2009: 172). In simple terms remittance is the money that the migrants remit to their home. Migrants who settle abroad and have their families join them are less likely to contribute to development through remittances (International Organisation for Migration 2005). But these migrants are temporary migrants and they remit money on various alternative periods. Therefore the money they remit has evidently played a significant role in both micro and macro level or national and household economy in the remittance receiving countries. According to figures from the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2006: 143), migrant remittances rose 17.3 percent worldwide in 2002, reaching US \$149.4 billion, and they continued to grow.

Labor migration and remittance is major economic mainstay for Nepal’s economy. However, there is still insufficient documentation on scale and significance of this process (Kollmair et al). The data from the 2001 population census shows that 3.3% (762,181) of the total population was absent from Nepal, the majority of them were male (89 percent). Of these, more than 77.6 percent are living in the South Asian regions, especially in India, while the Middle East has the second most largest population of living outside Nepal (14.5%), followed by East and South- East Asia (4.5%), where a significant number of Nepalese are living in Hongkong under the legal provisions known as ID holders for which applies to those people born during their parents service in Hongkong as part of the Gurkha army at the time of British

rule (before 1997). The official statistics shows there are 110,000 migrants in Gulf state (HMG et al., 2002) in 2001, and the Ministry of Labour and Transport registered only slightly less than 104,000 migrants (Graner and Gurung, 2003; Subedi 2003). Estimates however suggest that between 200,000 and 400,000 persons are working in Gulf countries (Garner and Gurung, 2003). Considering the estimation of India and Gulf states, the percentage of the total population absent from Nepal would be between 6.5 and 14.7%, compared to the officially recorded 3.3%. Officially the total value of international remittances was according to the NLSS 2003/2004 (CBS et al., 2004) 35.6 Billion NRs. However informal remittances are estimated for 2001 between 40 and 42 Billion NRs (Graner and Seddon, 2004).

An article entitled “New figures for old Stories: Migration and Remittances in Nepal” by Kollmair et al. has assumed the major differences between official and estimated numbers are as follows:

-) Migration between India and Nepal is mostly not documented due to migration across the open boarder especially since there is no need of passport and visa for cross- border movement.
-) Migration to India is often seasonal. Therefore, depending on the season of the year during which enumeration takes place the number of people at home or absent varies.
-) A large section of foreign employment to countries other than India, such as Gulf and Tiger states, is often illegally and undocumented.
-) Remittances are mainly sent informally with friends and kin, hampering statistical documentation of migration.
-) Another undocumented dimension of employment is trafficking. It is estimated that about 5,000 to 7,000 girls are trafficked from Nepal to India and other neighboring countries every year.

Before 1980s it was only the India which used to be the only destination for the labor migrants. After 1980 slowly Nepalese started heading towards the Middle East. But after post 1990 when the accessibility of passport became even wider and easy for

every Nepali, Middle East and East Asia became the top destination for Nepali migrant workers. Day by day the number of Nepali Migrant labours heading towards the countries of Middle East and East Asia is rising. In 2008, these countries hosted a total of 206,572 documented Nepali migrant workers. This was followed by East Asia which received a total of 53,739 Nepali migrant workers. In East Asia it was the Malaysia which demanded a large number of Nepali workers and the flow of Nepali workers heading towards Malaysia is significant. Compared to the male migrants the number of female migrants is very very low but at the same time the number of female migrants heading for these countries is highly increasing- “The official number of female Nepali migrant workers has increased in comparison to data for 2007. The figure reached 11,007 out of the total 266,666 in 2008 while it was only 316 in 2007.

As this kind of labor migration is increasing incessantly every fiscal year so is the remittances in Nepal. In 2007 Nepal Rastra Bank has compiled data on remittances received from Nepalis engaged in foreign employment through 17 commercial banks. There are numerous financial institutions in the private sector involved in transferring money from Nepalis working in foreign countries to their families in Nepal but the data lacks in informing the name of a countries remittances coming from and also the money coming from informal and non-banking channels. Relying on the source of Rastra Banks data in 2007 Nepal received a total amount of NPR 92,437 million as a remittance through formal banking channels. Similarly in 2008 it received a total amount of NPR 173, 844 million. Various research data and media has revealed that Nepalese economy has been maintained and floated by foreign remittance in a various critical periods. It has been said remittance has also contributed significantly in reducing the poverty. In Nepal one-fifth of the poverty reduction occurring between 1995 and 2004 was claimed to be due to out-migration (Lokshin et al 2007). Nepal Living standard Survey of 2003/2004 revealed that poverty was reduced from 42 percent in the beginning of the Ninth Plan Period (1997) to 31 percent in 2003/2004. Remittance in Nepal has remained an important source in foreign exchange and sustaining their balance of payments. Print Media has also reported that a decline in remittance would reduce spending on basic necessities such as food, electricity,

medicine, school fees, oil products and others (The Himalayan Times, 16 Dec, 2008). It has been said that remittance contributes between 18 to 20 percent in GNP.

As shown above the statistics and data compiled by the Nepal government or relevant organizations are not comprehensive and fully trustworthy. To avoid this, I think more household survey needs to be conducted in a micro level which will aid in figuring out the absent population. Rather than plunging into the broader part of the remittance, I am interested in household or family unit as an analytical category in this study.

I found the significance of the remittance is very high among the family members in *Gwaldaha*. This significance is basically based on two folds. First to quote what the majority of the respondent said “ *Yetro paribar sabailai chodera tyo birano thau ma hamro lagi janu vako cha, khai nakhai pasina kadera pathako paisako dherai nai mahatto cha*”. Emotionally remittance has maintained and encouraged the intimate relationship between wife and husband and this emotional bond motivates to remit. Secondly, remittances are mainly spent on regular and basic household activities like food and clothes and repaying debts, children’s school fees, marriages, rituals, religious festivals, funerals, agricultural activities and so on. At the same time they have been also used for purchase of land and maintenance of the house like construction and reconstruction of the house. It is also spent on and medics and health expenses of the family members. Remittance has also created a new opportunity for some migrants to open a small grocery shop in the village.

CHAPTER IX

IMPACT OVER GENDER RELATIONS

My aim in this study is to find out the pattern of out migration from the perspective of the household family members who are left behind. This study not only explores the mobile part of the migrants but also mentions the static part of migration. Or in another word it is the study about those household members who stay back home taking care of their household, children and elderly people looking after their fields and tolerating the agony of their absent members. Migration in Nepal is a highly gendered process: migrants are predominantly male (Kaspar 2005: 1). There are very few studies that have been done on the static part of the migration. In this study I am much more centered on the out migrants female family members especially wife and mother who are left behind because the absence of their husband and son is not only emotionally attached with them but it is also the absence of one labour force within the household. The work burden of the wife increases after the migration of her husband. As indicated in previous chapters, it is the men who primarily perform out-migration for labor in Nepal. Rodenburg stresses in her study of migration in North Sumatra that “migration is not only about the people who move, but also about social and economic arrangements that permits certain household members to leave the village” (Rodenburg 2000:243). If a woman is not ready to take the responsibility like looking children and elderly people, look after the house, maintain social relations in the village, work the fields and so on, a man could not go *Bides*. Hence, labor migration is not a strategy of one household member alone. Rodenburg (2000:245) found out that most women in the studied village in North Sumatra “took on full responsibility in the village without hesitation, because this was their share in the migration project (...). They saw migration as a joint strategy aiming at the long term enhancement of the status of their family, and this also implied their own personal status.” It can be assumed that the day to day life in the village is affected by changes after the male absence in the household. Jolly et al. (2003:3-4) assumes that male migration generally leads to an increased workload for women. Concerning the Gurungs, Macfarlane and Gurung (1992:122) affirm that due to the absence of men,

who have migrated to foreign countries for work, “a majority of women shoulder the main burden of responsibility for subsistence and care of the young and the elder”. Pignede (1993: 249-252) also emphasized in the increment responsibilities for Gurung wives when their husbands migrated. He even concludes that migration raises women’s status: “... She has taken authority by having to face the heavy tasks and responsibilities of the life of the family alone. (...). Thus mercenary soldering has a consequence raised the status of women by giving them incontestable authority, not only within their own household but also in the village community” (Pignede 1993: 251). I also found the changes in the women’s roles and responsibilities in two layers i.e. the stage of pre-migration of their husband and the post- migration of their husband. The work load of the women in the household augments after their husband’s migration. Rodenburg (2000:258) mentions that on the one hand, female workers manage the farm, they are “protectors of ancestral land and maintainers of social networks, the women provide a safety-net to retired migrants”. Though the women play the pivotal role in the village and the household but she lacks the authority because everything is functioned and the major decisions are only given by the husband or by the male members which limit the women’s scope.

The position of a woman in a household is determined by her status. In the household level, the women’s position demarcates her workload and decision-making power. Within the household, a woman can be a daughter, wife, daughter- in- law, granddaughter and sister of the household head or the male out-migrants. The role and position of a woman in a Nepali society is highly socially and culturally rooted and structured that this is largely shaped by “Patrilocality”. Patrilocality is a form of marriage where the girl leaves her *maiti* (a married woman’s natal home; her consanguineal relatives) and moves to her parents-in-laws or husband’s *ghar* (house). Within that particular space she has to cope with new faces, new people and new environment. *Gwaldaha* having a typical village trait I didn’t find the Durkheim’s concept of “Organic Solidarity”. Though the village is small but the people here interact less among each other and within village members, rather every village member has formed their own groupings for day to day interaction. Similarly women here have very little friends even after having been living here for several years. There is no doubt that the absence of the husband has created isolation among the women

within the village and the household but at the same time they are happy with their husband's remits. It is the money through which everything in the house is functioned. When the husbands get back from Bides the level of the excitement takes place when they see each other after a long gap. Labor out-migration has become a major "likelihood" for the young men of *Gwaldaha* and this migration rate is continuing. One of the reasons behind this is they are attracted by the fellow village migrant members, when these migrants return to their village; they were highly respected in the village. Most of the labor migrants are young married men.

This research tries to carry out the issues of the households of *Gwaldaha* from where the male members have been out migrated. One of the main aims of this study was to assess the impacts of male migration on those members of the household, especially women, who are left behind. The supportive role of the women in the males' migration functions in both pre-migration and post-migration level. The supportive role of women in pre-migration has already been mentioned in previous chapters. Wives, mothers and sisters were extremely supportive in male's migration. Therefore women are highly involved in the preparation of their men to migrate but the issue of their participation doesn't end here; they equally have to burden great responsibilities even after the absence of their male household members.

The impacts of men's absence towards women are manifold but some of them are as follows:

- a. Young wives having no children: This includes the young brides whose husbands migrate shortly after the year of their marriage and who do not have time to bear children. The other category is girls who are married off to the migrated men, who were in their short visit to home usually for four to eight weeks. These girls hardly have time to know their men because they disappear for long periods. The social interaction between them is only through cell phones. If the husband's income is good, they communicate with them twice in a single week or once a day. If the husband's income is meager they communicate with each other in an alternative period of fifteen days or by a month. If both the husbands and wives are literate they exchange text

messages via cell phone. Most of the migrant's wives mentioned they exchanged miss calls at least once a day.

As their husband's are not at home these recently married wives have to face absolutely a new environment. The wives consistently have to play different roles to make her in-laws happy. These newly married women usually stay in their houses. Among the family members, their regular movement outside the house is not considered socially sound within their home and village.

- b. Wives having children: This includes the women who are older in age having children. Many things seem relevant with the issue discussed earlier but these women seem quite comfortable in adapting the situation of the separation of their husband then the former one. But at the same time these women undertake tremendous amount of responsibilities within a particular context both within and outside the household. Within the household the burden of the work is added up to them after the migration of their husband. Similarly they have to take care of their siblings as well. Because of all this I felt they are less emotionally detached to their husband's absence. Within a village they have to maintain and manifest themselves that they are not doing anything wrong in the absence of their husbands. The outside movement of the older wives whose children are already grown up is not so much constrained as the previous one. In my observation I found women who have their children more than twelve years of age seem more confident. Their children also support them in many of their household activities. Therefore the wives having children feel more secure and uninhibited in their actions than that of the women having no children.
- c. Other women members: Unlike the women having their migrant husbands there are other female primary kin members in the house as well. They are mothers, unmarried sisters, and the migrant daughters. These female members also share the stress and strain of the absent household male members. If the migrant is unmarried, it is the mother and sister who bear the burden of the household activities. It is solely the mother's responsibility to search a suitable bride for the migrant's son. Sisters who are unmarried are highly dependent

upon the migrants. It is her brother's job to manage the dowry. Those who are studying rely on migrants. It is the job of the migrants to manage the finance for the sister's marriage.

Therefore migration of any one male member of a household to the Middle East leaves tremendous impact on the members left behind. All the members have to engage and support in the migration activity before the migrants leave the home and those staying behind members adapt and make a new arrangement in their day to day life after a migration of a male member.

All the interviewed women of *Gwaldaha* shared that the degree of their workload has increased significantly after the outmigration of their male members. During their cohabitation they divided the division of work between each other and even the male members shared some of the household works. But now all those works have been looked after by women members.)

As many women expressed "*aileta sabai kura aafai hearna parcha*-- these days all the responsibilities come upon my shoulder". Now the women have to look after the family members, household chores, the children and the fields. Heidi Kaspar mentions "To look after everything includes not only the work load but also the responsibility. This can be perceived as an additional burden to the increased workload but also as an avail of freedom." (Kaspar 2005: 65).

Before the migration took place it is the husband who solely worked in the field. Women and other family members also joined in helping them. Now all the works in the field have to be done by women. Besides ploughing the fields, all the works related to field are now done by the women like planting seedlings, watering fields, weeding crops, digging fields, harvesting crops, grazing cattle's, cleaning cowsheds, and collecting crops. After their husbands' migration, their support in the day to day management of the household stopped to exist. The majority of interviewed women stressed the increase of their workload since their husbands had departed. Now women have to look after everything. Any unexpected incidents could result in serious problems. "What would happen if any of our household members seriously fall ill?" Some women posed a question to me.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

Migration is a social phenomenon, and to understand this phenomenon perception held by and the changes in the lifestyles of the left behind household members could be an important arena of this investigation. Because in the process of migration all the family members, with different roles to perform, get involved, they internalize the reasons behind migration. Though the reasons shared by them could have multiple layers of relationships with socioeconomic conditions in the national and international level; it holds a distinct meaning in the local household and socio-cultural context as well. ‘*Kamaune*’ is the reason behind the out-migration of the members of the household members. The notion of *kamaune* has multiple meanings in light with the local household and socio-cultural context.

The process of migration begins long before the migration actually takes place. Under the coercion of various socio-cultural factors assimilated with the notion of *kamaune*, once a member of a family decides to migrate the actual process of migration begins. In this process several rounds of negotiation and renegotiation take place within the household. During the process of negotiation and renegotiation, members of household perform multiple roles. Migration actually is the result or outcome of this negotiation. Actually it is not just the migration but also the non- migration, which is the result of the negotiation and renegotiation within the household.

Migration of the male member of the household is not just the absence of a member but also an absence of a labor force. Within the family structure every member has a role to perform guided by the household level division of labor. In the absence of a member the role performed by him or her gets transferred among left behind members. In the absence of the male member of family left behinds, female members share the role performed by the male members, the consequence of which is the increase in the workloads of the women and also the changes in the historically constructed gender roles within the household. The degree of increased workloads varies among wives who are recently married with no children, wives with children

and other female members of the household. Along with the changes in the household level gender relation comes with the challenges posed by the male out migration.

Once member of a family migrates, the household starts receiving the remittances sent by the out migrant. The frequency and amount of remittance sent by them varies with the destination of out migrant and the opportunity grabbed by the out migrant in the destination. Remittance sent by out migrants holds greater significance both on the national economy and household economy. Basically, at the household level, remittance hold significance for the planned future activities assimilated in the notion of *kamaune*. Daily consumption goods, better off education for children, spending during festivals and rituals, buying lands, construction and reconstruction of house, paying debt, and spending on agricultural works are a few grounds wherein remittance holds greater significance. Spending on these grounds has a greater socio-cultural contexts and meanings.

Migration structures the everyday practices of the migrants and the people who remain in Nepal, their social positions, and employment trajectories. The absence of certain types of social capital and poor human capital and knowledge about the places limit the extent to which migration is an option. Thus, even if migrants succeed in keeping their family above the poverty line, they do it at considerable social cost or at the cost of depleting other assets.

Migration is explained and understood under traditional categories such as immigration, return migration, or Diaspora. Because of the current tendency, to visit more than once, of the current out migrants, all these categories are not explanatory enough and do not incorporate the current tendency. Thus, an additional category 'back and forth migrants' is suitable and incorporates current trends and tendencies of migration.

The flow of out-migrating Nepalese youth in the airport premises and the crowd of their family members to bid farewell to them, the cries, the *tika* and the garlands is ever increasing rather than decreasing. Observation continues...

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