Foreign Employment: Enhancing Productivity, Safety, Dignity and Socio-Economic Impacts in Nepal

National Seminar

Institute of Foreign Affairs

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), Nepal
Foreign Employment: Enhancing Productivity, Safety, Dignity and Socio-Economic Impacts in Nepal

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Edited by
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# Contents

Abbreviations .................................................................................................................. II  
Preface............................................................................................................................. III  
1. Concept of the Seminar............................................................................................... 1  
2. Welcome Remarks by Mr. Yadav Khanal  
   Resource Person, Institute of Foreign Affair ......................................................... 6  
3. Opening Remarks by Mr. Leela Mani Paudyal, Chief Secretary,  
   Government of Nepal ............................................................................................... 8  
4. Keynote Address by the Chief Guest, Hon. Mr. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey,  
   Foreign Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs ....................................................... 11  
5. Closing remarks by Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director  
   Institute of Foreign Affairs ....................................................................................... 16  
6. Paper presentation on "Impact of Foreign Employment on  
   Nepalese Society and Economy." by Dr. Ganesh Gurung,  
   Former Member, National Planning Commission ................................................. 20  
7. Comments by Mr. Gopal Bahadur Thapa, Former Chief of Protocol  
   (MoFA), on Dr. Ganesh Gurung’s Paper .............................................................. 29  
8. Remarks by Chairperson Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, Acting Foreign  
   Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs ..................................................................... 31  
9. Paper presentation by Mr. Raghu Raj Kaphle, Executive Director. Foreign  
   Employment Promotion Board, on "Foreign Employment: Enhancing  
   Productivity, Safety and Dignity" ........................................................................... 33  
10. Comments by Mr. Prakash Kumar Suvedi, Joint Secretary, MoFA, on  
    Mr. Raghu Raj Kafle’s Paper ............................................................................... 47  
11. Remarks by Chairperson Mr. Bhola Prasad Shiwickoti, Secretary, Ministry  
    of Labour and Employment .................................................................................. 49  
12. Summary of the Seminar by Mr. Chandra Shekhar Adhikari, Senior  
    Diplomatic Correspondent, Kantipur Daily ......................................................... 51  
13. List of Participants in the Seminar ........................................................................ 61
Abbreviations

MoFA          Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoLE          Ministry of Labor and Employment
NPC           National Planning Commission
MoU           Memorandum of Understanding
SAARC         South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation
IFA           Institute of Foreign Affairs
MoHA          Ministry of Home Affairs
NGOs          Non Government Organizations
ILO           International Labour Organization
IOM           International Organization for Migration
UN Women      United Nations Entity for Gender and Empowerment of Women
ED            Executive Director
FEPB          Foreign Employment Promotion Board
NIDS          National Institute of Development Society
UNDP          United Nation Development Programme
GDP           Gross Domestic Products
CBS           Central Bureau of Statistics
MoHP          Ministry of Health and Population
USAID         United States Agency for International Development
FE            Foreign Employment
BLA           Bilateral Agreement
DoFE          Department of Foreign Employment
MWs           Migrant Workers
WTO           World Trade Organization
U.S.          United State
IPL           Indian Panel Code
GFMD          Global Forum on Migration and Development
ASEAN         Association of Southeast Asian Nations
IC            International Conventions
NRNA          Non Resident Nepalese Association
Preface

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries have approximately 36 million South Asians currently living outside the region of their birth, and that migrant workers contribute to the growing economies of the region as well as to the curtailment of unemployment, reduction of poverty, and earning US$ 118 billion in foreign exchange per annum.

It is very much felt that the SAARC countries need to work together in setting labor standards, minimum salary and ensuring minimum labor rights in destination countries as set out by the ILO. Working together will give the member states a collective voice in any negotiation with labor receiving countries in order to better manage this particular sector. SAARC may also develop a mechanism for sharing of experiences among its members so as to better manage remittances and ‘brain gains’. Government, on its part, should allocate sufficient resources to strengthen the work of the missions in the destination countries and enhance the delivery of their programmes and services to migrant workers.

Deeper consultation with civil societies will assist governments to be more responsive to the concerns and priorities of migrants. Conveners of the SAARC Summit should increase opportunities for meaningful and regular social dialogue with migrants and migrants’ groups.

A large number of people from Nepal work in different labor destinations. Close to 2000 Nepalese youth leave the country each day. In the paucity of labor standards and respect for human rights in the destination countries as well as lack of policy coherence in our own country, they are forced to work in pathetic conditions with a very low salary and other benefits.

They undergo myriads problem in-country, in-transit and destinations. They are duped by recruitment agencies and the employers and sent to destinations without proper preparations and health tests. It is worth to pursue Bilateral Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding to strengthen regulation and coordination of labour migration. These documents should be transparent and made public. Statistics on movement of workers from sending and
receiving countries should be made available. This process should involve Parliamentary Standing Committees at the national level.

Nepal government has been trying to minimize the adversaries being faced by her people who bring back very much needed resources (remittance, 25% of GDP, skills and knowledge) and who are critical actors saving the country from being a failure state. However, the remittances need to be managed properly in productive sectors as nearly 80% of remittance is expended in household consumption.

Despite successes by government in key areas, challenges remain, especially surrounding implementation of policies and acts. There is often a gap between the stated aims of policy measures and their application on the ground, particularly in four key areas: dissemination of information, the recruitment process, and welfare support to migrants (at all stages of the migration cycle) and maximizing the benefits of labour migration.

Proper data related to Nepalese migration from early days to modern time is lacking. There is a severe need to work on updating the data, controlling the recruitment process and management at the destination.

Safety at workplace is one of the major concerns. Dignified and sound working environment for them is also another big challenge to be tackled. There is a serious need of successful and productive reintegration program of returnees in the country. Myriad of social problems are arising due to migration such as family disintegration, children’s education, diseases, divorce, even suicidal cases that has worsened our economic as well as social fabrics of our country that we have built up for centuries.

The objective of the proposed seminar was to dig out the crux of the problem and recommend proper ways and means to deliver justice and dignity to migrant workers and to utilize their earnings and skill at the best interest of our next generation and the nation as a whole.

There were two papers presented during the seminar ‘Impact of Foreign Employment on Nepalese Society and Economy’ and 'Foreign Employment: Enhancing Productivity, Safety and Dignity;
I extend my hearty appreciation to the Chief Guest Hon. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, Foreign Affairs Minister for his effective participation and for delivering the key note speech that set the tone of the technical presentations that followed. Similarly, I thank the Special Guest Mr. Leela Mani Paudyal, Chief Secretary, Government of Nepal and Invitees Mr. Bhola Prasad Shiwakoti, Secretary, Ministry of Labor and Employment, and Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, Acting Foreign Secretary for their comprehensive and effective presentations.

The paper presenters Dr. Ganesh Gurung, Former Member, National Planning Commission and Raghu Raj Kaphle, Executive Director, Foreign Employment Promotion Board are very much appreciated for their comprehensive content and eloquent presentations. The commentators, Mr. Gopal Thapa, Former Chief of Protocol, and Mr. Prakash Kumar Suvedi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs are thanked for their candid comments that I hope enriched the information and view points on the objectives of the seminar. I thank all participants for their active engagement and raising valid and enriching concerns on the topics. My colleagues at IFA, including Mr. Yadav Khanal, Resource Person, Mr. Sanu Raja Puri, are thanked for their untiring support during the seminar.

IFA welcomes comments and suggestions from the readers for further improvements in our future endeavors including publications.

Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari
Executive Director
1. Concept of the Seminar

"Foreign Employment: Enhancing Productivity, Safety, Dignity and Socio-Economic Impacts in Nepal"

Labor migration is a burgeoning sector in South Asia contributing to poverty reduction particularly in low and middle income countries.

A large number of people from South Asia work in different labor destinations. In the paucity of labor standards and respect for human rights in the destination countries as well as lack of policy coherence in our own region, they are forced to work in pathetic conditions with a very low salary and other facilities. While dealing with receiving states all SAARC countries have to formulate common positions in setting labor standards, minimum salary and labor rights in destination countries in line to the rules and principles of the ILO. Working together will give the member states a collective voice in any negotiation with labor receiving countries in order to better manage this particular sector. SAARC may also develop a mechanism for sharing of experiences among its members so as to better manage remittances and 'brain gains' and also seek ways to fend our economies from any impending backlash from over dependence on remittances.

Remittance has remained one of the major sources of foreign exchange for South Asia; wheeling the economy of low income countries. Remittance flows to South Asia are projected to increase progressively. The member countries are required to enhance collaboration and sharing experiences on the best use of remittances in the productive sector of economy.

However, there is no systematic evidence based policies, plans and legal framework to protect the rights and interest of the migrants. SAARC level collaboration is crucial for the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers. Collaborative exercises are equally useful to eliminate the negative competition among the South Asian countries which works against the collective interest.
Freeing of the movement of labor across national boundaries is not discussed either at the WTO or the SAARC fora. In the WTO the SAARC countries come together to support the inclusion of the movement of natural persons in any discussion on trade in services. It is preposterous for the U.S. and the Europeans to include such issues in contrast to South Asia’s strong position on the subject in international fora. The truth is that the issue of labor flows across borders, whether at the WTO or in South Asia, is discussed as an issue of immigration, usually illegal, by ministries in charge of internal security rather than those responsible for trade and economic affairs.

To the extent that SAARC governments may remain inhibited about discussing the problem of labor flows it is suggested that at the level of civil society serious discussion of the issue should take place. These dialogues would need to be backed by major research on the underlying economics, the social implications in the receiving and sending countries and the political fallout from this process. It is hoped that out of such research and consultation, a realistic and humanitarian policy will emerge which can serve to formalize the process of labor flows and integrate this into the process of economic cooperation in South Asia. In the case of emergence of South Asia as an Economic Union, labor market integration will have to be a central component of the process.

Focusing our discussion on Nepal, it has a long history of more than 200 years of migration for employment starting from joining British-Indian armies. A large numbers of people have been forced to migrate to India for a long time due to extreme poverty. However, the data related to Nepalese migration is lacking and the whole migration process is not properly controlled and managed.

Foreign employment has been the premier base of national economy in recent years that shares about 25% of national GDP. Nearly 80% of such hard remittance is expended in household consumption. Social remittance or “Brain Gains” in terms of skill and knowledge is equally instrumental for national development. The remittance has significantly contributed to the reduction of poverty and up scaling the livelihoods of rural people in the country. Sources state that about three million workers have been working in countries like Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Qatar and UAE alone. In addition equal number of people are working in India and elsewhere.

The current Foreign Employment Act entrusts the Ministry of Labour and Employment, with a central role in the management of foreign labour migration. Under the act the Government has instituted departments, embassies and employment promotion board and has co-worked with private
institutions for training, health tests and other aspects of recruitment process focusing on the interest of migrant workers. The policy implementation aspect however, is not up to the desirable level towards strengthening the whole paradigm of foreign migration to protect the rights and interest of our migrant workers.

Private agencies are the main actors to recruit (more than 90 %) the migrant workers. These agencies are supposed to be responsible to take care of entire genuine concerns of workers while working abroad. On the contrary these agencies have been observed to ignore the workers once they depart from Nepal for the destination country. Cheating their money, false health tests and pre-departure orientations, luring them by false attractions of work and salary has become the norm of the day.

Many migrant workers end up with accidents, mental disorder and committing suicide. Despite having enough legal provision, these despotic actors ordinarily escape the law and the plight of these victims is still limited to the newspaper headline without proper heeding. This has been a big challenge for authorities concerned to control these fraudulent activities.

Most of our migrant workers are from rural areas having poor financial background. They are often exploited by brokers and recruiting agents. These people struggle to obtain required amount, either by selling whatever assets they have or by taking high interest loans.

More than 75% of Nepalese migrant workers are unskilled and are engaged in four Ds (difficult, dirty, dangerous and dignity less) type of works. It is obvious that they could double their earning and command more respect if they could be upgraded to semi skilled or skilled level.

**Safety** at the workplace is one of the major concerns. It is estimated that nearly ten percent of our workers suffer by injuries due to accident at work places and they suffer from death and disability mainly owing to lack of proper and adequate training and orientation before departure. There is no proper provision for insurance coverage and compensation in many destinations.

Recently, many women are going for foreign jobs many through illegal channels. **Dignified** and indiscriminate working condition for them is also another concern to be tackled. There are several cases of trafficking of women and deployment in unethical jobs in many countries. Even in the case of legal migration, there are cases of sexual or other types of harassment against them. It has been increasingly difficult to provide proper working environment to protect their dignity and rights.
Successful and productive reintegaration of the returnees has not been planned in the country as there is no system in place to provide services to help reintegrate or to offer advice and facilitate for the safe investment of their earning. Instead of engaging themselves in economic activities in the country many migrants wish to return to the same or next country for further employment.

Myriads social problems due to migration such as family disintegration, problems of children’s education, diseases, divorce, even suicidal cases that has worsened our economic as well as social fabrics that we have build up for centuries.

Based on the observation and responses of the migrant workers, our future discourse must concentrate both at the domestic front and the destination. Both fronts are interrelated and must be dealt jointly.

Controlling recruitment fraud, proper coordination among stake holders, proper management of data, stopping discrimination and social exclusion providing proper orientation and training, returnee management, proper documentation, reliable medical examination, application of law and providing justice etc. are some of the issues we need to seriously consider while dealing with the domestic concerns of migration.

In addition, at broader level, formal understanding or agreements with receiving states on wages, working conditions, human rights, forced labour, trafficking in women and children, freedom of association, right to collective bargaining, medical treatment and health services, insurance, freedom of travel and selection of jobs, etc. are some of the issues to be properly considered at the best interest of Nepalese migrant workers. We also must ensure to adhere to the provision of international protocols and conventions in order to protect the rights of our migrant workers.

In view of the volume of women from SAARC countries to the destination countries most of these concerns and interests of our migrant workers can be addressed through collective approach.

**Organization of the Seminar**

Objective of the proposed seminar was to dig out the crux of the problem and recommend proper ways and means to deliver justice and dignity to migrant workers and to utilize their earnings and skill at the best interest of our next generation and the nation as a whole.
The seminar was half day long beginning at 1300 PM and ending at 1700 PM in a star hotel. The programme was divided into two sessions, first titling, “Impact of Foreign Employment on Nepalese Society and Economy” and second, “Foreign Employment: Enhancing Productivity, Safety and Dignity”. The papers were presented by two different eminent experts and commented by two persons specializing in the theme and the subject. The majority of participants were invited from the relevant Government agencies (MoFA, MoLE, MoHA etc.), business, academia, relevant parliament committee, Labor associations, returnee migrant workers, human rights workers, NGOs, SAARC countries and destination countries' embassies, and relevant organizations, manpower agencies and individuals including significant number of media representatives.
Mr. Chairman,  
Hon’ble Foreign Minister  
Respected Chief Secretary  
Secretaries from the Ministry Labour & Employment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Distinguished Guests  
Media representatives  
Ladies and Gentleman,

On behalf of the Institute of Foreign Affairs, I wish to extend my sincere welcome to Hon’ble Foreign Minister, Chief Secretary and Secretaries from both the ministries, paper presenters, commentators, media representatives and all distinguished Guests for accepting our invitation in this important discussion program.

Migration, indeed, has become a global issue today. Be it a humble villager or a city dweller, migration has touched everyone’s lives. A 2013 data shows that over 232 million people from all over the world have been residing outside the country of their origin. Over 30% of this figure belongs to Asia alone. Regarding South Asia, majority of migrated population is concentrated in Middle-Eastern countries. Current figure of migrated people from south Asian countries namely India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan combined to the GCC countries alone stands at around three Million.

Over 1500 Nepalese on average are leaving the country for employment every day. They have been forced to accept this tough choice mainly due to lack of employment opportunities at home. In view of the vague domestic situation and political transition, this trend is likely to continue for more years to come.

It is well-known that remittance has become a major contributor for Nepal’s GDP & one of the major sources for development activities. It is also considered as a backbone for poverty alleviation in the country. At the same time,
migration has also become one of the major causes of social apprehensions. Children’s education is hampered; it has created labor shortages at home, rampant cases of families' separation and discord is on the rise, cases of suicide and mental tribulations. These are some of the serious issues to be considered.

Over 75 percent of Nepalese migrant workers are unskilled. Lack of skill has compelled them to earn many times lower than their skilled counterparts. Together, lack of training has endangered their safety at work places. Problem related to the compensation to workers in the case of injury, disability or death at work places has become a daily phenomenon. Sending money home is still a big hassle in many countries. Illegal trafficking of man and women also is on the rise. In these situations migrant worker are forced to work with low morale causing serious mental stresses.

There is a rapid commercialization of recruitment industry and the exploitation of aspiring migrants is ever-increasing. Despite having adequate rules and regulations, we have been unable to regulate the industry and make these recruiting groups fully accountable. At the receiving ends, there are several restrictive policies in most of GCC countries including KAFALA system that has hindered the right and dignity of our migrant workers.

Destination countries on the other hand, are immensely benefitting from the work of the migrant workers and that has been a major cause for their prosperity. But the judicious remedy and protection of rights and dignity of these migrants is always lacking at sending as well as receiving ends. An immediate initiative must be taken to reform the situation on both the sides. Signing formal understanding between sending and receiving governments is most essential to protect the right and dignity of workers. Talking about "brain gain", there is still a lot to do with the judicious utilization of resources, skills and technologies brought by migrant workers.

This time, we have gathered here to discuss on the whole range of issues of migration. We have a good panel of experts today and I believe that the interaction will be really fruitful & productive. IFA is very thankful to everyone for accepting our invitation and I look forward to have an extensive participation in both the sessions.

Once again, I extend sincere welcome to Hon'ble Foreign Minister, Chief Secretary and both the secretaries and all distinguishes guests.

Thank you.
Respected Chair,
Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Participants

First of all I would like to thank the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) for organizing the seminar on a very important issue. I believe and confide this as an important central theme of the government. I believe, today’s programme will enhance making plan and policies for migrant workers in coming days to secure their rights to life, protection, rights to health and safety with secure employment. I think this august gathering relatively knows the calamity on migration and foreign employment, remittance income and socio-economic difficulties and impacts from this. Problems are identified but we are not prioritizing them. There are government’s efforts to resolve but not fully gratifying. We all agree on this.

I want to take on three issues here. As the first, let’s take the story of adolescent/teenagers in their late teens, let us say a 16/17 year old teenager with vigorous energy, a phase of dream for living, a time to make future plans and an intensity to implement them for their future. Out of them about four million, who fail to clear SLC finding hard to study are being demoralized. They will be dehumanized and demoralized in different ways. Their creativity, passion and attention decrease substantially and ultimately die. Those four million youth with ensuing energetic years are being discarded as failed from livelihood from our society giving attributes and names ridiculing them and from then their only option will be a search for destinations like Arab and Malaysia.

I want to share an example here. 9 KM away from Dhulikhel, there is a farm in the village started by a resident villager. The owner of the farm searching work for his bright future walked away from his home carrying 25 paisa in his pocket about 35 years ago. After arriving Banepa, he was dropped from the bus due to lack of enough fare to reach his destination, Kathmandu. Then
he arrived Kathmandu walking. There was no means of living so that night he slept in a common shelter on the road side. He started to carry loads of sand from the next day for living. Simultaneously, he became dishwasher in a restaurant, and then cook of a resident foreigner and got an opportunity to go to Europe and through his struggle, started his own business and become millionaire in 35 years.

He was a successful person now and thought of starting an agricultural farm considering opportunities here to ensure that youths of his village don't need to go abroad for employment as he had to. So, he started to buy 500 Ropanis of land with a clearly designed plan. It was okay in the beginning; even he paid NPR 3 - 4 thousand more than market price of land for the villagers to start with. After sometime the local political cadres and hooligans of the village started to ask money and threatened him of his life. Although, he constructed a road up to his farm, he was threatened to make him pay the compensation for local drunkards tripping over and falling because of construction. He alone struggled and did not give up though he did not receive any help from the government. The District CDO denied his request for security telling him that it couldn't be possible to grant for personal reasons and suggested him to write an application. Despite the barriers, he struggled and made his farm operational. For this, he needed workers and he managed to pay Rs. 15,000 each per month as salary with food and accommodation facilities for two recruited villagers. The locals started to demotivate the workers by saying that the youths employed in his farm are shame for them to watch cleaning cows in the farm of a migrated villager. Instead, they should have gone to Kathmandu to be a dishwasher of ‘Maade’ (business people of Indian origin) community rather to work in that farm making them ashamed to watch.

Yes, here lies the root cause. The unskilled migrant workers can earn more here than in Malaysia without bearing associated risks. We need a movement to correct the "certificate culture" that demoralizes such type of labour motivation. Awareness campaign is required there. The support services from government should have been able to address this. We fail to deliver that service. We are not able to run any campaign to identify and root out wrong values that are prominent in the society. We have a concept that labouring is degradation and a taboo in our conception. We educated are also continuing with the same thought.

Now a Round Table discussion is essential to identify problems directing for their solutions. From where to bring the recourses? What are the lapses? Where we missed? And How to organize them? These are today's burning issues that have to be timely answered. After that we need to recruit the
responsible departments for the task. Opportunities are here too. Even Kathmandu has labour scarcity.

Nepalese Ambassador to Malaysia some months ago wrote a letter to the government on this matter. Foreign Secretary is here to take notice. In the contract document, the wage averaged about 900 Ringgit per month. But 400-500 Ringgits will be chopped off with and without reasons like levy, undefined recruiting charges, etc. But, we did not understand this hidden motive of the employer. This happens because the youths seeking employment in foreign countries are not aware about their rights and that is why they are easily cheated and recruited. So, in order to ensure their rights, we need to change the cultural values system and our campaign should start from here. Before this, however, we have to work towards ensuring the rights of those workers who are already in foreign countries. This continuing flow should be simultaneously reduced. Otherwise, things won't change themselves.

I see here the representatives from Manpower companies and Business communities and also know that you put your interest first, before the interests of the workers and that should be changed. Our governance policies should work towards that. It should be understood by the people in the Manpower companies that their interests will be secured only when the interests and rights of the workers are secured. Another issue is with members of our business community, who are responsible citizens with deepened responsibility in industrializing own nation. On the other side, it also should be taken into consideration by our authorities holding talks for resolving such matters with authorized counterparts. But unfortunately, we haven't been able to work towards that.

It has been found out in the recent research that the foremost reason behind the increasing number of suicides is the migration of labours to foreign shores for employment. So, it is the need of the hour to find the solution to the problems like these. So, environmental oriented business should be focused. Today's programme helps to converse problems faced by migrant workers and their families and be attentive to solve with dignified determination so that the additional workers going those destinations should not have to face such problems in the future.

Thank you.
4. Keynote Address by
the Chief Guest, Hon. Mr. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey
Foreign Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Chairman, Chief Secretary,
Secretaries and officials from various authorities
Distinguished Paper Presenters, Commentators, Scholar-analysts
Friends from Media and other participants of the Seminar,

I am delighted to participate in the Seminar entitled "Foreign Employment: Enhancing Productivity, Safety, Dignity, and Socio-economic Impacts in Nepal" organized by the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). I would like to thank the organizer for providing me the opportunity to express a few words on such an extremely important topic of foreign employment in the present context of Nepal.

Whilst the Institute of Foreign Affairs has been organizing different relevant programmes on various contemporary issues, it has chosen a topic which is not only very germane like in other times but also very suitable for this time. Foreign employment is the present reality of Nepal, which we cannot deny. The need of the time is to move ahead along improvements by making subjects, issues and problems of this reality more comprehensible through the strength of discussions and debates.

Even though foreign employment was not a fresh idea for Nepal, the trend of Nepalese going aboard accelerated with the rising impacts of globalization and liberalization, especially after Nepal officially issued permissions for foreign employment few decades ago. While just 2051 Nepalese had gone abroad for employment in the year 2051 BS, the number since then has increased by 200 times. The main reasons why the number rose in such a trend are lack of employment opportunities in the country and various political and economic factors. Majority of Nepalese youths are attracted to the Gulf Countries and Malaysia because of the job opportunities created out of their achievement of high growth rate and the adherence of rapid development policy. It is clear before us that foreign employments, as a reliable means of the livelihood of
Foreign Employment: Enhancing Productivity, Safety, Dignity and Socio-Economic Impacts in Nepal

millions of Nepalese people, has generated good remittance which has come to be a major share of the national GDP of Nepal. Similarly, best utilization of knowledge, experience, skills and technology of the returnees has been necessary for the development of Nepal.

Many problems in the foreign employment sector have appeared with the increase of Nepalese national going for the foreign employment. So, the Government of Nepal has laid different efforts for the improvement in this sector. The Government by setting the slogan of "Safe Foreign Employment Our Concern" has made different institutional and legal provisions to make foreign employment safe and dignified. Nonetheless, fraudulence has thrived with the loop holes in regulations and legal punishment system. The problems such as the lack of quality in orientation training and pre-departure health check-ups; charging a very high amount in an unauthorized way; making people stranded in foreign lands or in transit; sending workers to unsafe or restricted countries; sending workers to a different job other than the one contracted before; creating dual contracts for sending and receiving ends; increase in sexual exploitation, suicide, death and injuries; difficulty in rescuing those facing problem; and legal and administrative hassles relating to compensation claim have appeared. Likewise, the protection and consular services to Nepalese people involved in incidents such as theft, terror and murder in foreign land has been an extremely serious issue. It has now been necessary to arrange for a uniform approach to respond to the requests and pressures for clemency or deferment by the families and people concerned of those involved in grave crimes in foreign lands.

I would like to mention a few steps to be taken to minimize and solve problems seen in the sector:

A. Labour agreements and other legal aspects

In view of the fact that Nepal lacks labour agreements with some major destination countries, legal solutions of the issues such as low salaries, benefits and facilities of workers, and management in case of any unforeseen problem have remained very weak. The process to sign labour agreements with major destination countries like Malaysia was initiated but could not complete due to various factors. These agreements should be signed during high-level engagements by completing their due internal processes. Similarly, a fast and effective coordination mechanism should be established between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nepalese missions abroad, Labour and Employment Ministry and manpower agencies by fixing fault seen in the Foreign Employment Act, 2064 and other concerned laws and by making their necessary and timely modification.
B. Enhancement of skills, capacity and expertise

In view of the fact that majority of people who leave the country for foreign employment are unskilled or semi-skilled, we have realized that we should send more skilled people for better efficiency in work and better earning. Suitable policies should be formulated and implemented to arrange for learning, teaching and training with a view to enhance skills and capacities of those who wish to go for foreign employment. The challenge today is to produce skilled and professional human resources as per the demand of the competitive markets by adjusting the national education policy. Skilled and professional manpower earn more but face fewer problems abroad on the one hand, and elevate the image of Nepal always high on the other. Such manpower is also useful after their return. Similarly, the orientation course prepared in the year 2060 BS needs to be modified as per the time and context to make it more effective.

C. Demand Letter Attestation

As most of the problems in the foreign employment stem from the phase of creating and attesting demand letters, the process of the demand letter verification should be made both scientific and transparent by utilizing recent IT solutions. The role of Embassies in solving job related problems would be effective if the Embassies were given mandatory space in the process of demand letter attestation. Current legal provisions also need to be amended for such an arrangement. The effective launching of orientation and pre-departure trainings by including legal, administrative, social and cultural aspects as well as geographical, climatic and other matters of destination countries will help minimize problems that are likely to appear later.

D. Capacity and the skill development of the embassies

The manpower in the Embassies needs to be more efficient and active, and their morale should be very high in order to work for the protection of rights and welfare of Nepalese nationals in the destination countries. While paying attention to the effective and productive mobilization of labour attachés, necessary arrangements need to be made towards making the knowledge of local languages and legal system compulsory for all the Embassy staffs. For this we need to identify interests as per their age; make the transfer manual of the Ministry more scientific; increase salaries and other facilities as well as transform the traditionally run Embassies into small but fast and effective ones as per the new management theories.
E. Rescue and welfare services

Rescue and other welfare services need to be effectively carried out in real time. By taking the efficient workmanship displayed by Nepal in rescuing Nepalese nationals from Libya and recently from Iraq as a model for rescue operations, it is felt that a rescue mechanism of a permanent nature needs to be set up to address problems in a preemptive manner. By studying the technologies, knowledge and skills utilized by India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, Nepal should stay standby for effective rescue and other welfare services.

F. Social values, utilization of knowledge, skills and capital and change management

It is quite essential to study and carry out research works for the management of changes such as social and cultural deviations lately seen in the social pattern and structure as by-product of the foreign employment. It will be useful to devise necessary programme as to how to integrate experience, skills and capital of the returnees from the foreign employment into the plan of the Government to graduate into a developing economy by 2022 AD through utilizing vast resources, promoting investment, generating job opportunities etc. The capital earned out of toil, sweat and blood of Nepalese national needs to be used in productive sectors, not in unproductive ones as seen now. Similarly, Nepal should more effectively exhibit creativity and activity in the local, national, regional and international level for the dignity of labour. As per the demand of time, IT based solutions should also be prioritized.

Dear friends,

As per the perspective to generate job opportunities in Nepal, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has given top priority to economic diplomacy to promote mega investments and export trade. Keeping in mind the short- and mid-term need of the country, labour diplomacy is also implemented with priority. But it is obvious for the Ministry that the long-term need of the country is the promotion of investment and trade alone, and there is perhaps no other view, as it is seen that the progress gained in these sectors would make all problems associated with the foreign employment vanish on their own.

Likewise, the Ministry through the Departments of Passport and Consular Services, and the Embassies abroad is active in its commitment for the protection of rights and welfare of the Nepalese nationals. Attempts with the concerned governments for signing labour agreements and implementing
them, and with the employers for the rights and welfare as well as handling of various grievances are being made. I call upon the manpower agencies through this programme to actively cooperate and participate in making worksites safe and the jobs dignified for the protection of the rights of Nepalese workers.

We are committed to addressing the interests of the demand side inherent in the international labour market and solve the existing problems. Nepal has been making efforts to protect rights and promote welfare of the foreign workers in the destination countries by being a member of the United Nations (UN), International Labour Organization (ILO) etc. and by being a party to concerned international law. Collective efforts of the countries with similar interests will be more effective than a single country effort. In view of this fact, the issue of migrant workers has been included for the first time as a regional initiative during recently held Eighteenth SAARC Summit. As a result, the commitment of the member countries for the protection and welfare of the migrant workers has been recognized through the SAARC Declaration. The concept of such a regional cooperation on this issue was taken up at the initiation of Nepal.

I am confident that such a discussion and interaction programme organized at the time when we need further precision on foreign employment and similar other issues will guide the Government and all the stakeholders in the field. I hope that this discussion and the exchange of views on foreign employment will generate creative and useful suggestions for the Government.

Lastly, I would like to thank the IFA team once again for organizing this seminar. Similarly, I would like to thank both the paper presenters, commentators and all the participants for the thought-provoking presentations and meaningful comments.

Thank you!
A very good afternoon to all of you.

Hon. Foreign Minister and Chairperson of IFA Board, Mr. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey

Hon. Chief Secretary, Nepal Government, Mr. Leela Mani Paudyal

Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Mr. Bhola Prasad Shiwakoti,

Acting Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi

Today’s Paper presenters, Dr. Ganesh Gurung of NIDS and Mr. Raghuraj Kafle, ED of FEPB

Today’s Commentators, Mr. Gopal Thapa, former Chief of Protocol and Prakash Kumar Suvedi, Joint secretary, MoFA

Eminent personalities in the field of foreign employment, foreign relations, security, economy, business, diplomacy, academy, international organizations (ILO, IOM, UNWomen etc.)

Friends from media

Colleagues from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other Ministries, All other invited guests and my co-workers from the Institute of Foreign Affairs

A very warm welcome to all of you!

I thank Hon. Ministers and Chief Secretary for their eloquent and thought provoking ideas on the theme of the seminar and for setting the tone for the following sessions.

I am thankful to all of you to have come to participate in this important seminar on our request in spite of your busy schedule.

It is indeed our great pleasure to organize this important seminar in collaboration with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung(FES)-Nepal.
Due to lack of job opportunities as a result of slow economic growth and never ending so called transition phase in the country it is natural for people to look for alternatives. Therefore, hordes of unskilled Nepalese try to find better prospects in foreign country’s job market and as a result around 1700 individuals go abroad every day in search of better income.

In Nepal foreign employment has been the premier base of national economy in recent years that shares about 25% of national GDP. Nearly 80% of such hard remittance is expended in household consumption. Social remittance or “Brain Gains” in terms of skill and knowledge is equally instrumental for national development. The remittance has significantly contributed to the reduction of poverty and up scaling the livelihoods of rural people in the country.

More than 75% of Nepalese migrant workers are unskilled and are engaged in four Ds (difficult, dirty, dangerous and dignity less) type of works. It is obvious that they could increase their earning many folds and command more respect if they could be upgraded to semi-skilled or skilled level.

Safety at the workplace is one of the major concerns. It is estimated that nearly ten percent of our workers suffer by injuries at work places and they suffer from death and disability mainly owing to lack of proper and adequate training and orientation before departure in addition to worst working conditions abroad.

Successful and productive reintegration of the returnees has not been planned in the country as there is no system in place to provide services to help reintegrate or to offer advice and facilitate for the safe investment of their earning.

Myriads social problems have cropped up nationally due to migration such as family disintegration, diseases, divorces, even suicidal cases that has worsened our economic as well as social fabrics that we have built up for centuries.

Women are increasingly attracted to foreign employment and majority of them serve in domestic sector. However, we have been hearing about the severe challenges they face to their dignity, safety, security, welfare, sexual exploitation, trafficking and deployment in unethical jobs in many countries. It has been increasingly difficult to provide proper working environment to protect their dignity and rights.

There are complaints that the private agencies who handle more than 90 % of the migration process have mostly been observed to ignore the workers once they depart from Nepal for the destination country. Cheating their
money, false health tests and pre-departure orientations, luring them by false attractions of work and salary has become the norm of the day. Nepal government may research and consider the whole process of migration on government to government level or find out other better alternative system.

To talk of regional scenario, formal understanding or agreements with receiving states on wages, working conditions, human rights, forced labour, trafficking in women and children, freedom of association, right to collective bargaining, medical treatment and health services, insurance, freedom of travel and selection of jobs, etc. are some of the issues to be properly considered at the best interest of the workers from South Asian countries including those from Nepal.

In the paucity of labor standards and respect for human rights in the destination countries as well as lack of policy coherence in our own region, the people from SAARC countries are forced to work in pathetic conditions with a very low salary and other facilities.

Most of these concerns and interests of our migrant workers can best be addressed through collective approach at the regional level. While dealing with receiving states all SAARC countries have to formulate common positions in setting labor standards, minimum salary and labor rights in destination countries in line to the rules and principles of the ILO.

Let all SAARC countries realize that human resource is a great strength that we have. Working together will give the member states a collective voice and strength in any negotiation with labor receiving countries. Collaborative exercises are equally useful to eliminate the negative competition among the South Asian countries which works against the collective interest.

SAARC may also develop a mechanism for sharing of experiences among its members so as to better manage remittances and ‘brain gains’ and also seek ways to fend our economies from any impending backlash from over dependence of remittances. Equally important aspect is the proper planning for managing the migrants returning in large numbers in case of any economic, political or other fallout in the receiving countries.

The international migration process is win: win for sending countries, receiving countries and the migrant workers. But migrant workers get the least of it with all the sufferings. Establishing a fairer system is urgent need of the hour.

Encouraging attempts have been taken by the government recently and there is enhanced realizations amongst all the stakeholders including recruiting agencies for better, dignified and productive migration with the believe that it
will provide justified dividends for all. However, action planning the commitments, or putting words in action or walking the talking should be taken seriously.

It is encouraging that during recently held 18th SAARC summit in Kathmandu, the leaders of SAARC countries agreed for better management of migration in SAARC region. They have also given great attention to the connectivity, hopefully connectivity, of the people.

However, freeing of the movement of labor across national boundaries is not discussed at the SAARC forum. If it is discussed at all it is discussed as an immigration and illegal issue to be tackled by ministries in charge of internal security rather than those responsible for human resources, trade and economic affairs.

I believe this seminar will certainly shed light on the future of foreign employment including suggestions for policy level changes to bring about improvement in the dignity and welfare of migrant workers and productive use of the remittances.

Thank you very much and I expect your active participation in the following sessions.

Thank You!
Background

Foreign employment or popularly called migration in Nepal is a worldwide phenomenon. The main reason for migration is the difference in wage in destination country and country of origin of migrants. In addition, increasingly transnational transport systems which have been developed in last few decades as well as global communication systems have also facilitated increased migration. It is estimated that in the year 2013 alone international human migrants now total 232 million, which is an increase of almost 70 percent in just the last two decades. To provide more contextualization to this exponential increase, in 1990 that number of international migrants was estimated to be at 154 million and by the year 2000 it had jumped to 175 million (UNDP 2013).

Globalization has made the world smaller and increased inter dependence among nations. Naturally this has paved ways for human movement as people migrate from one place to the other in search of better opportunities. Countless reports, empirical studies, and historical and contemporary observations aggregate evidence that people largely migrate from needs that arise out of economic, social, political and environmental conditions. The more challenging conditions within a country, the more desperate people become to migrate elsewhere. It is this social fact—that people seek lives free of conflict—that migration, especially of unskilled workers is pervasive in countries with high poverty and limited economic opportunities.

Nepal ranks 157th out of 187 countries in the most recent UNDP Human Development Index with 25 percent living below the national poverty (an earning of less than $US 0.6 per day). With ever increasing expenses and reduction in earnings, it is no wonder that thousands are leaving the country seeking to earn a livelihood elsewhere. At an average, 1500 Nepali migrant
workers are estimated to leave the country on a daily basis with a hope of making better lives for themselves and their families.

**Migration and Remittance Trend**

The rate of migration for Nepal has increased exponentially in recent years, far exceeding the global average of 70 percent. Department of Foreign Employment recorded that between 1996/97 and 2006/07, the annual number of foreign labor migrants went up from 3,259 to 204,533 and by 2011/12 the numbers had reached 384,665. That is an increase of approximately 118 percent in less than two decades; migration has therefore had a major impact on the development of the country’s economy in many ways. Most immediate is the inflow of remittances, amounting to 25.5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) according to 2013 report published by the World Bank.

Given such startling statistics as above, the boom of revenue through remittance has in recent years drawn increased attention in the national policy framework. However, this has not always been the case. Before remittances, the tourism industry was for the longest time one of the highest income generators for the country. The importance and potential of tourism was realized after Nepal opened its door to tourist industry in the 1950’s. Tourism continues to play a vital role in the growth of the country, primarily through employment generation and inflow of foreign revenue. In just the past decade total revenue from tourism has more than doubled, amounting to over $350,000 per year. With such rapid growth, policies to support the development of this industry have been a national priority. Prior to the increase in tourism the agricultural sector preceded any other industry. As a landlocked country with agriculture employing more than 70 percent of the country’s population, Nepal relied heavily on the income generated through this industry which provided 37 percent of the country’s GDP. Nepal is still a country relying heavily on the agriculture industry and income generated from the agricultural sector as well as the heavy reliance of much of the populous on subsistence agriculture ensures that agriculture remains central to the economic well being of Nepal.

Globalization and climate changes in recent years have adversely impacted both the tourism and the agricultural economies in Nepal. Land degradation, deforestation, natural disasters, global warming, political unrest and other challenges in the country endanger sustainability. As a result of social and environmental upheaval, the ones who suffer and experience the most hardship are among the poorest and the most marginalized. It is, therefore, no surprise that many low income Nepalis seek alternative sources of livelihood.
Internal and external migration has increasingly become a way out, especially for those who are unskilled. Finding labor employment in foreign countries has quickly become a survival strategy as people have left the country by the thousands annually in an attempt to escape various socio-economic, political and environmental problems.

**Number of Nepalese Migrant Workers at Various Destinations Around the World (Excluding India)**

![Graph showing number of migrants over fiscal years](Image)

**Source:** DOFE (2014) (Graph prepared by Anjan Parajuli-NIDS)

**Note:** 2013/14 data is for the first eight months of the fiscal year

### C. Impact on Society and Economy

Because of large number of youths going abroad for employment and 23-25 percent of GDP is contributed by remittance every year, there is impact on Nepali society and economy which are described below. The impacts described below are based on facts and figures if available, some are based on quotes by others which are given as footnote and some are the observation of the author.

#### 1. Poverty Reduction

In present day Nepal, approximately 56 percent of households received some form of remittance income (NLSS 2011). Translated into cash value...
this amounts to approximately NRs 543.29 billion in remittances received annually, which surpasses the annual national budget by over NRs 26 billion. Simply put Nepal receives an average of NRs 1.48 billion per day.

In a very short time, migration and money received through remittances has grown by leaps and bounds, increasing six fold in just the past decade. According to the Nepal Migrants Survey conducted in 2009 by NIDS, there were at least five districts in the country that received remittances in excess of NRs 10 billion, making up a total of 30 percent of the Nepal’s total remittances. Such facts indicate an ever-increasing phenomenon of entire districts that are heavily reliant on migration and subsequent remittances as the sole income generator.

Migration of individuals in such large numbers clearly has consequences for the migrants, their households, their communities and the country. Remittances that migrant workers send back to their families have an increasingly wider impact on the economic growth of the country. In Nepal, for example, this is evidenced in the recent real estate boom as more and more families are able to invest in buying land and property, build new homes thereby boosting jobs in the construction sector and engendering a chain of other economic implications.


Poverty level in Nepal has decreased from 42 percent to 31 percent in 2003/04 and further to 25 percent in 2011 as per Nepal Living Standard Survey (CBS 2003/4 and 2011)
Poverty Reduction in Nepal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003/04</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of all HH receiving remittance(%)</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average amount per HH (nominal NRs.)</td>
<td>34,698</td>
<td>80,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution by women (%)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Reduction (%)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CBS 2011 and NLSS III

It is true that there are various contributors that played to reduce Nepal’s poverty including infrastructure such as road, communication but remittance is the major contributor of the poverty reduction. Lokshin M of the World Bank concludes that if there was no remittance, poverty would not have reduced at this rate (CBS Poverty Trends 2005).

2. Livelihood Pattern

Initially more than 80 percent of the Nepali households were dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. But this has been gradually changing. Even though, households maintain their farms through the support from remittance, major income has been from remittance. Out of the total households of Nepal, 56 percent of the households receive remittance one way or another (NMS 2009). Approximately 1500 Nepali youth migrate for employment mostly to Gulf countries and Malaysia in a daily basis. They remit almost 148 Crore Nepali rupees everyday. Thus, there is no household that is not impacted by foreign employment or remittance in Nepal especially in rural villages. Furthermore, with rare exception no agriculture graduates of Nepal have ventured to be farmer and shown an example how agriculture can be a profitable enterprising business in Nepal. Thus, agriculture has lost its attraction to Nepali youths who rather go for foreign employment which is a major livelihood of Nepali households in rural Nepal. So, it can be argued that livelihood pattern in rural Nepal is gradually changing.

3. Fertility Trend

One of the objectives of Nepal’s development is to reduce fertility rate in Nepal (National Planning Commission 2007). Accordingly, Nepal has been investing large resources since last three decades on family planning. However, the fertility rate was not decreasing as expected. But since 2001, fertility rate decrease has been at faster rate than earlier. Table below shows the fertility
decline in Nepal.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFR</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age-specific and total fertility rates, the general fertility rate, and the crude birth rate for the three years preceding the survey, by residence, Nepal 2011

**Residence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age-group</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFR(15-49)</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFR</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBR</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MoHP, USAID and New ERA-DHS 2011

Notes: Age-specific fertility rates are per 1,000 women. Rates for age group 45-49 may be slightly biased due to truncation. Rates are for the period 1-36 months prior to interview.

TFR: Total fertility rate expressed per women
GFR: General fertility rate expressed per 1,000 women age 15-44
CBR: Crude birth rate expressed per 1,000 population

Interestingly, after 2001 fertility rate started to decline much faster than earlier e.g. 4.1 to 3.1 and 2.6. One may argue that contraceptive prevalence rate may have increased. But that is not the case rather it has decreased from 44.2 (2006) to 43.2 (2011) as reported in MoHP, USAID and NEW ERA Demographic and Health Survey 2012.

This dramatic decline should be due to large number of youths leaving for employment and their length of stay is at least more than two year which forced them to be away with their spouses. Thus, automatically child interval is longer than earlier. Thus, foreign employment has helped to reduce the total fertility rate (TFR) in Nepal and this may continue if foreign employment trend remains as of now.

4. HIV/AIDS Debate

In Nepal, there is general understanding that there is correlation between HIV and mobile population.

When Dr. Zimba of JICA first did HIV test in Doti, he found that 10 percent of the migrant population were HIV positive but he also warned that the sample size was only 10 which was statistically not acceptable, so he suggested for a larger survey.

The first HIV survey among migrant in 11 districts in the West to Far-Western Terai region found that 1.1 percent of the migrant workers in the Western region and 2.8 percent in the Far Western region were HIV positive (New ERA, SACTS and FHI, 2006). Likewise, the second survey showed a 1.4 percent HIV prevalence among labor migrants in the Western region, and 0.8 percent in the Far-Western region (New ERA, SACTS and FHI, 2008).

Another survey in 2010 among 600 wives of migrants in Kailali, Kanchanpur, Doti and Achham found 0.8 percent HIV prevalence. District-wise, the respondents in Doti had a slightly higher prevalence of HIV (2.6%) than those in Achham (0.7%) and Kailali (0.4%). None of the sampled wives of migrants in Kanchanpur district tested HIV positive. The HIV prevalence among the wives of migrants in this second round (0.8%) is much lower than the first round of the IBBS conducted in 2008 (3.3%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Sites</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>HIV Positive n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achham</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>1 (0.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kailali</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>1 (0.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although, there is general understanding among the Nepali people that there is correlation between migrant population and HIV, above data show only 0.8 percent are HIV positive. This is, thus, a debatable issue.

5. Labour

As discussed above, approximately 1500 youth migrate to the Gulf and Malaysia on a daily basis, which has created shortage of labour in Nepal. Furthermore, general tendency among youths who do not prefer to work in Nepal rather prefer to work in foreign countries even in same salary, has brought shortage of labour in Nepal. It has been observed and construction contractors have reported that there is shortage of labour in Nepal which has forced them to bring some workers from neighbouring countries in order to complete the task in given deadline.

On the other hand, wage of the labour has increased formally and informally.

6. Internal Migration

Due to the conflict (1996-2006) in the country, many households migrated specially from rural areas to urban centres in search of security. Even after peace agreement between two parties rural population found urban centres safer than rural areas in terms of security and even for livelihood.

Furthermore, those who have migrated abroad have been sending money to their families which helped them to migrate in urban areas for the education of their children. Today, there is general tendency among migrant families to migrate from rural areas to urban areas depending on their size of the remittance.

Thus, international migration has accelerated the internal migration.

7. Other Impacts

There are also other socio-economic impacts which are being discussed in Nepali society such as divorce rate, barren land which caused larger import of food item, consumption behaviour, dutch disease symptom, education behaviour, violence against women increased. Nepali beliefs and traditions are challenged, but they are yet to be proved through facts and figures.
D. Conclusion

Large number of youth migrating to gulf and Malaysia has larger impact to Nepali society and economy which are discussed in above paragraphs. It has changed livelihood pattern, poverty has been reduced but having said this, other side of the impacts which are to be carefully addressed for Nepali society, if not, it will have negative impacts in the near future.

References

Dorje Gurung, Costs of Leaving Home, Kathmandu Post, January 5, 2014
Rameshore Prasad Khanal, Other Side of Remittance, Republica, Thursday, September 8, 2011
Chandan Sapkota, Costs and Benefits of Remittances, Republica, Saturday, August 13, 2011
Hari Bansha Jha, Stories of Pain, Republica, Wednesday, October, 22, 2014
Mukesh Khanal, Dr. Vikas Raj Satyal, Socio-economic Impact of Remittance, Republica, July 12, 2011.
Thank You Chair and IFA for organizing seminar on migrant issues and also giving me this opportunity to participate and comment on but infact, I am not an expert to comment on the paper from the person who have very vast experience in migration issues and this is the opportunity to learn more from him making this seminar more productive.

Back on the paper, there is a saying that "It is very difficult to construct as well as to deconstruct". I have to deconstruct it but then I must admire him for the force he has put in for the preparation of this presentation. It is not that easy. I do sometimes write in the papers but what I am citing is when it comes to the paper it seems so simple but while writing, indeed, a huge concentration on the subject is required. Preparation is most important for the deliberation. Having said, this paper has basically developed on to social and economic aspects of migration and remittance.

As in the paper, poverty has been significantly reduced as a result of the remittance which is true and he has given imperial researched evidences to prove that and also to some extent, the decrease in population rate is also responsible from our young and productive youths, the new generation, living abroad as per his paper and that part is relatively true.

Let us concentrate on impact of remittance. As per his paper, government has induced lots of surpluses. What I have observed is about 80% of the remittance is used for the consumption largely goes to importing things and of remaining 20% - about 10% on education, 7% on loan payment and only 2% on capital formation. That’s why consumption does not create the growth same as employment does.

As in his paper, remittance from informal sector is not known and also how much revenues does government make, like manpower taxes, other taxes, passport requirement, VAT and other informal procedures to fulfill. How much does the government get? Paper should have focused on these also.
He talked about HIV/AIDS. I fully support him. Where there is a problem, there will be a solution. On this context, I would like to express my views. On migration issues, a multi-dimensional issue where a collective effort is needed to resolve. In my view, social cost and the economic benefit should be equally needed to be seen. As like his example, the productive agricultural sector is being demoralized – lack of workers. And another, our educated productivities consider it fricative. They know their dignity to work but fail to recognize the values of work. This is the deficit of our education system. We need to reform our education system and another, the returned workers are also being demoralized to invest in agriculture from the community and from the government as well through ever lasting procedures. The remittance should be invested in tourism sectors. Skill, knowledge and experience of returned migrant workers should be prioritized by government. Government intervention is drastically required in this sector. Public-Private enterprises should be focused on migration.

On migration, as a whole, I see three dimensions – domestic, regional and international. Much effort is required to make domestic dimension more effective making strong policies. As per 18th SAARC, for safe, secure and dignified migration, we have to go through cooperation and collaboration but for that our domestic strength and capabilities should be increased. I would like to ask Foreign Secretary a query on this perspective. Is MoFA making policies and moving further in these issues? Less effort and policies are being implemented in our Missions abroad where our migrant workers are high in numbers. An articulated Ambassador on terms of labour issue to go with counterparts is required in these destinations. We need to make regional migrants rights secure, we have to constantly monitor the advancement. Accountable regional migration should be prioritized. Diplomatic assessments should be made more attractive and destinations should be identified to prioritize giving larger concentration on migrant workers. I would like to request Foreign Secretary from here to focus on this issue. Another, I think, SAARC doesn’t have its international exit. Why should not SAARC be in common position in international arena like other organizations? We could have stand in WTO. Real application of the word collaboration and cooperation needs to be implemented. We have opened working destination for 105 countries but have agreement with only 5. We have to have very competent, committed to the issue comprehensibly and informed Ambassadors. I see need to capacity building to diplomats and Labour Attaches’ and sensitize them. They have to perform very sensitively.

Thank You!
The discussions were very fruitful. Presentation from Dr. Gurung on 'Socio-Economic Impacts of Foreign Employment', comment on his paper by Gopal Thapa and queries, discussions and questioning from the floor shows understanding of this august gathering on foreign employment, its problems, and socio-economic impacts of this burning issue, and need to enhancing more knowledge on the subject. I recommend IFA to organize such programmes in future as well, our wishes is with them. I believe, IFA, making a calendar on such current burning issues, should continue to organize programmes on such topics which definitely gives somehow a contribution on the subjects.

The nexus being seen now between migration and development should be strongly strengthened. Migration is a global phenomenon, an unstoppable phenomena, which cannot be stopped. This is a global fact. This is seen in the context of developed countries too. Americans are migrating to Africa, Afghanistan and other countries for investment purposes. We have to see from this aspect too.

Definitely migration and foreign employment have improved living standard of general Nepalese people. Poverty has been reduced. There are improvements on social indicators. Balancing foreign exchange, trade deficits, which comes from trade imbalance pressuring foreign currency has been little offset. Migrant worker returns with skill, knowledge and resources. This is a positive aspect. Remittance is a private part. There is no direct control of the government on it. How to manage it? How to channelize them in development sectors? For that, establishment of Counter Funds from government, bachatpatras (bonds), can be released, taking special incentives on small and medium scale industries, can be encouraged to implement.

There was discussion before too that 'we fly the subject but do not try to find the solution'. That is why I would like this session to go forward on solution oriented mode. It's time to identify owns responsibilities to fulfill. A concrete action plan on the subject is desirable to move forward.
I would not like to go on any positive or negative aspects on this issue but only what I would like to say is that talking on migration, a part is undermined – externalism. The vulnerable impacts it has brought on economy as dependency syndrome; a possible negative incentive needs to be familiarized. By this, are we negatively incentivizing trade, investments and industrialization? How to turn them in productive resources are also there. Past issues should be studied socially, economically, culturally, politically and democratically and burning selected issues should be studied comprehensively in this emerging global trade keeping migration and development on that context can give answers.

Having said so, from behalf of all participants, I would like to thank organizer IFA, creative and comprehensive paper presenter Dr. Gurung and commentator, Gopal Thapa and announce end of this first session.

Thank You!
Assessment of Foreign Employment (FE)

Foreign employment is assumed as lifeline of Nepalese economy. The trend of employment is increasing very rapidly. In the past 2 decades, it has increased by 20 times. Its contribution in national economy is increasing. The society is divided into two parts regarding foreign employment. Some argue that this is panacea and others argue that this is really havoc. To assess the reality of foreign employment, we have to go through the productivity, safety, dignity of Foreign Employment. In this paper, we are trying to assess the situation of FE relating it with these three main areas.

A. Productivity in foreign employment

Productivity of foreign employment indicates the rate of return from foreign employment. This has two dimensions—one is their earning and saving during working period and another is how their earning (including skills) is used for productive activities and for generating employment within the country. The paper also tries to explain the contribution of FE in overall economic development and the way to enhancing productivity of FE.

1. Earning from FE

Nepal earns about 500 billion rupees from foreign employment annually. This is the top earner from foreign employment in term of GDP. When we are assuming that about 3.5 million people are in foreign employment, their earning is about 500 billion from which we may calculate the per head daily earning, which is hardly 400 Rupees per person/per day. If we explain superficially, financial return in comparison to cost is about 7 times higher. However, if we analyze in depth, this ratio is hardly about 3 to 4. Different research shows that our earning is comparatively lower in the region. Our labor force concentrates on Middle East and Malaysia (about 96%). Even...
in that destination, Nepalese workers have the lowest average earning in comparison with Indian, Sri Lankan and Philipino workers.

**Why do Nepalese people earn less in FE?**

Nepalese people earn less in foreign employment. There are many reasons behind the low income of Nepalese people in FE. Some are mentioned below:

- Nepal is supplying mainly unskilled human resource. We are sending 1% skilled, 24% semi-skilled labor force. Remaining 75% of the work force is going abroad without any kind of skill. This reality obviously reduces the earning from FE. There is a mandatory provision in FEA-2007 (article 30) to have skill training related to work nature. But it is yet to be implemented. There are many institutions (governmental/non-governmental) to provide skill training to youth. Nevertheless, due to the lack of integrated national skill development policy and defined responsibility, this sector is depressing. To address the issue, we need a national skill development policy, defined implementation modality and decentralization of facility to local level.

- Nepal government has opened 110 countries though the major destination is Middle East and Malaysia. Nepal is successful to sign BLA only with Qatar and MoU with other 4 countries. Such poor arrangement is also responsible for the low return from FE. The provision of BLA/MoU ensures minimum salary and help to claim facility to the worker. The workers feel safe and can work more efficiently.

- Our destinations are with adverse environment and with distinct culture. It is difficult for the workers to adjust with the prevailing cultural values and norms of the destination. Similarly, some destinations have distinct position (natural and cultural) which reduces the efficiency of worker.

- Because of different reasons, workers become undocumented (illegal) that leads to the increase in their exploitation and reduction in their earning.

- Our workers are involved in low graded works, which are difficult, dangerous, and low paid.

- People do not have sufficient information about market. That is why, they do not look after good job at destination.

- Unfair competition among recruiting agencies puts workers into different problems, which reduce their earning.

- Skill mismatch, unpaid, over work, torture, etc. are common factors to reduce earning.
• Migration cost is very high that they even have to pay levy at the destination.
• High transfer cost (remit cost) of earning. There are different hurdles faced by the worker at destination. This is very high in India and some in all destinations.
• There is no clear road map to increase earning from FE (policy, plan, program, etc).

2. Use of earning in productive sector

Volume of earning from FE is high in Nepal. This exceeds any other single sector to contribute in GDP. Though workers' productivity and earning is low, if we see in terms of contribution in GDP, this is the third largest in the world. Here, at first, is a need to access the use of earning in national production.

• Different survey shows that about 80% of their earning is used for consumption and remaining also does not directly go to productive sector.
• Some of the income is used in health, sanitation, education that eventually supports to increase productivity.
• There is large number of returnee migrant workers in Nepal. It is claimed that number of returnee migrant workers is hundred thousand. There is no clear policy and program intervention to reintegrate them and to utilize their earning in national development. Research shows that only 10% returnees have active involvement in economic activities. It means that 90% returnees remain idle (authentic data/research is not available regarding the issue). FEPB and some other nongovernmental national/international organizations are working in this field but these interventions are insufficient in comparison to requirement.
• When the same person again and again goes abroad leaving the family, it indicates that the income is not used for production and self-employment generation.
• NRB introduced Foreign Employment Bond in 2006. However, it is not purchased by worker.
• Shrinking employment in industrial sector, less participation in agriculture, growing size of FE indicates the low use of FE earning in production.
• There is no clear mechanism to mobilize earning in productive sector.
• There is no clear policy and plan to link earning to national production system.
Remittance and its use

Remittance is the lifeline of Nepalese economy. Contribution of remittance is gradually increasing. In terms of contribution on GDP, this sector has surpassed the contribution of agriculture. If we are able to collect the whole earning through formal channel, contribution of this sector will be higher. To utilize foreign earning in productive sector, Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) issued Foreign Employment Bond from 2006, but this has no effectiveness at all. Until now, there is no defined mechanism to mobilize remittance in productive sector. Different researches reveal that more than 80% of income is used for consumption and remaining is for health and education and some to purchase unproductive property.

Income from Remittance (NPR Billions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Income (NPR Billions)</th>
<th>% in GDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>209.7</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>231.73</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>253.55</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>259.55</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>434.6</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>356.7</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suggestions to link FE income to national production

People in foreign employment make two types of earning: one includes skill, experience, language, culture, working culture, technology, etc. and the other includes foreign currency as remittance. If we succeed to link these earnings to production at home country, that will naturally increase productivity. Here are some suggestions to increase the productivity of foreign employment at destination and within the country.

- Link migrant worker to national economy before leaving abroad providing different training, awareness package (economic literacy class),
- Raise their confidence that either family or government would use their earning in productive area,
- Provide skill training to all aspirant migrant workers so that they could earn more. Different research shows that skill increases earnings by 10 times. For this propose, we need to develop foreign employment skill enhancing policy guideline and give authority to particular organization to conduct skill training throughout the country and make skilling mandatory to get labor permit,
• Carry out research and make required preparation to shift our recent concentration to more secured, productive and advanced country,
• Introduce such an incentive scheme which would help Migrant Workers to invest their earning by themselves or via government in national priority project which would help to make them entrepreneur before getting back to Nepal,
• Bring a comprehensive policy, plan and program to utilize the migrant worker's earning, skill, experience in national development,

B. Safety in FE

Safety is the foremost concern of foreign employment. Migrant workers are one of the most vulnerable groups. Protection of their right is possible only when both source and receiving country work together in close coordination with international community.

The number of outgoing workers is increasing annually. Because of unavailability of returnee's data, we could not confirm the number of workers abroad. There are various factors affecting the safety of migrant worker. This paper categorizes the issue in two parts: safety within the country and safety at destination.

Situation Analysis
• Nepal government has opened 110 countries for foreign employment (the last one is Ujbakistan, which was opened in 2071 Aswin 28). Nepal government makes decision on it. However, there is not even a simple defined set of criteria and process to open the new nation. Once it is open, we have no mechanism to reassess it.
• Skill is a major supporting factor to protect migrant's right. There is provision of skill training but we are not able to make it mandatory. Consequently, about 75 percent people are going abroad without receiving defined skill.
• Pre-departure orientation is another component to safeguard migrant worker. Though it is mandatory (article-28, Foreign Employment Act-2064) different studies show that people often do not take this training. They receive certificate without participating and learning defined course. One monitoring report (self-analysis of monitoring report) shows that only 16% people are participating in training. It means that remaining 84% people are receiving certificate without joining training classes.
• Insurance is another means of protection in which people get compensation at the time of accident. Only those people who go abroad with labor permit can claim this. Sometimes middleman produces fake
document and that creates problem in getting compensation. Still there is no provision of safety nets for unhappy returnees.

- Foreign Employment Act, 2007, made health check-up mandatory (article 72) provision to ensure the safety of migrant worker at destination. There are some issues related to health facility: insufficient and outdated equipment, no defined health practitioner, production of fake medical report, medical failure in destination country, fake reporting, and delay in providing compensation to the victim.

- Bilateral Labor Agreement (BLA): This is a major tool to protect the right of migrant worker. Provision of BLA gives migrant worker a ground to protect their right legally. Nepal has Bilateral Labor Agreement only with Qatar and MoU with 4 countries till this date, though we are trying to have BLA with other destination countries.

- High-level visit is also supportive to protect the right of migrant worker. This will help to open the door of new opportunity, to forge bilateral labor agreement, and to provide amnesty to the worker. Nepal is increasing such types of mutual visits in these days.

- Service decentralization and expansion: Foreign employment related services are solely centralized in the capital. It creates different problems in this industry. Decentralization of service will play an important role for effective service delivery.

- Diplomatic mission: Missions are true guardian of migrant workers. Our diplomatic missions are working actively in destination countries but they do not have sufficient human resource and logistic support to perform their duty. To support Nepalese migrant worker, our diplomatic mission needs legal, health, counseling experts. We are yet to make such provision.

- Partnership with international community: To protect the right of migrant worker we need to work together with international community. Being a responsible member of international community, Nepal is working actively with international community, to protect the rights of migrant worker. Colombo Process, Geneva Conference and Abudhabi Dialogue are some key international forums discussing about migrant worker's right. In this concern, the good news is that 18th SAARC summit hosted by Nepal endorsed the agenda of migrant's worker. This initiative obviously increases the strength of South Asian countries to work collectively to protect fundamental rights of migrant worker.

- Death record: Nepalese youths are compelled to engage on low graded work at destination countries. This makes their life riskier. In addition, other facilities like accommodation, fooding, recreation, hygiene are very poor. These poor facilities sometimes spoil their life. FEPB data shows that the death rate is about 0.18 and it is increasing in absolute number
and constant in percentage.

- Unhappy return and complains: The gloomy return, medical failure, severe complaints, legal problem, long stay on detention centre are some examples of troubles faced by Nepalese migrant worker at destination. There is more than one authority where complaints can be registered. Weak coordination between the agencies makes difficult to identify the exact cases registered by victims or by their well-wishers. According to FEPB information, about 0.36 percent are facing these kind of problem. If we focus onto normal complains (relating to double contract, low or no pay, work difference etc.) the percentage will augment to 5%.

- The numbers of complaints are increasing these days. The death and complain reporting is high in Malaysia; this is followed by Saudi Arabia and Qatar, other two major destinations.

- Reintegration is the mainstreaming of returnees in the socio-economic and political life of society. It is an integral part of the migration phenomenon. It is a critical phase, which deserves much more attention than it has got. Economic reintegration is especially difficult for the forcibly repatriated or prematurely terminated migrants.

- Foreign employment is the largest industry in Nepal to protect the right of migrant workers. There is a need to link this business with information technology. There is no comprehensive information management system in foreign employment. Nepal is keeping data of the outgoing workers who get labor permit. But there is no management of the information of the returnees. Some efforts are going on to link it with modern IT system. Everyone needs exact data of migrant workers including their family even to prepare National periodic plan.

- Access to information: Worker needs detail and in-depth information about foreign employment to take right decision. Similarly, all information should be made available at local level to know the process and to make required preparation before taking key decisions on country selection, work selection, etc. for foreign employment. To make information available to needy people, we need to disseminate information at local level via community orientation/social mobilization. Our target groups (who are victim in real sense) are so complex that we cannot transfer knowledge and information through prevailing media (Radio, TV, Press etc). It is only possible through face-to-face interaction.
Non-derogable rights (MW convention 1990)
The right to life (Article-9)
Protection from torture or cruel inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment (A-10)
Freedom from slavery, servitude or forced or compulsory labor (A-11)
Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (A-12)
The right to liberty and personal security & protection against arbitrary detention (A-16)
The right to procedural guarantees (A-18)

Brief Assessment of Safety Mechanism in Nepal: Its Strength and Weakness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Weakness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FEA Regulation, 2064; FE Policy, 2068</td>
<td>No skill/low skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional arrangement: MoLE, DoFE, FEPB, Tribunal, Missions etc.</td>
<td>Skill mismatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment through registered institutions</td>
<td>No informed choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training, health checkup compulsory</td>
<td>Double contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of legal challenge, compensation etc.</td>
<td>No strong BLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information sharing, counseling, Defined: salary, work, facility etc</td>
<td>Significant number of undocumented workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoU/BLA</td>
<td>No record who are going to India &amp; via India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International conventions and networking with IC</td>
<td>Weak ethical recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRNA, strong community</td>
<td>No facility to unhappy returnees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe house</td>
<td>Unfair competition between PS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration policy/plan</td>
<td>Weak regulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insurance, financial support etc.</td>
<td>No record system</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Less effective rescue mechanism</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Porous border regulation (many are in banned country)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Weak international influence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Weak negotiation skill</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insufficient support/safety mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4D work</td>
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Way to enhance safety

To increase safety, we need to make corrections within the country and convince labor-receiving country to make such kind of arrangements, which will help to enhance safety in foreign employment. Some key issues that demands intervention are mentioned below:

Enhance skill/make it compulsory: Skilling to migrant worker is really different from normal skill because their skill should be compatible to the requirement
of receiving country. As labor-receiving countries are obviously more advanced, they demand higher and distinct skill.

Introduce different safety nets: To increase labor safety there is a need to introduce different safety schemes like insurance, health facility, soft loan, rehabilitation, training support, etc. These safety nets make them confident and increase their self-respect and they can bargain with employer. This makes their life safer.

Make Nepalese mission more effective: Nepalese missions are ultimate agencies of Nepalese workers to depend upon and have faith in Mission reflects the whole strength of a nation. Our missions have no sufficient human and financial resources. This curtails their efficiency. Therefore, labors are not getting even the required support on time. Nepal needs to restructure embassy and make them affluent to make foreign posts effective.

Make BLA compulsory to send labor: BLA opens legal protection of MW. The provisions mentioned in the agreement are mandatory and legally binding to both of the parties. This means that Nepal must launch a policy to send labor only to those countries, which are ready to sign an agreement.

Explore more secured destinations: Nepal need to look after new and secured destinations, identify their labor deficit and skill requirement, and initiate to have intervention to produce required resource.

Introduce comprehensive reintegration project: This is very crucial to make foreign employment safe. Those citizen who know that her/his country would give them sufficient support after their return they would not be ready to work with pressure, bear torture, and stay illegally putting their life at risk. Nepal needs to introduce comprehensive reintegration package to make her citizens safe and utilize their earning in productive sectors.

Check illegal stay/mobility: Workers become undocumented willingly or unwillingly in destination. Unethical recruitment increase illegal stay. Sometimes misuse of open boarder is also responsible to increase it. To mitigate this issue, we need to manage open border, raise awareness of worker, and capacitate Nepalese mission abroad.

Capacitate FE related institutions: To increase safety of MW, we need to capacitate foreign employment related institutions like MoLE, DoFE, FEPB, MoFA, FE Tribunal, Missions, RAs, training institutions, health institutions, etc.

Ensure ethical recruitment: This is the key element to enhance safety. There should be strong regulation of RAs. However, we need to support them to enhance their capacity and make them more responsible.
Ensure governance in this sector: Good governance in this area would help to make this sector more secured.

Ratifying the ILO convention related to foreign employment will help to build pressure on labor-receiving country for following the same.

Launch support package to the family of migrant workers to mobilize their earning in productive sector.

Introduce different contribution based welfare package (safety nets) targeting the migrant workers (provident fund, share of national importance project, etc.)

Decentralizing the foreign employment related services to the local level would reduce fraud and other kind of cheating

C. Dignity of worker in FE

The role of government is to make foreign employment more decent and matter of dignity. In this regard, government should work in various areas. There is no comprehensive study about the social dignity of migrant worker. However, prevailing scenario, incidents, situation analysis, and case studies throw some light on it.

Different research shows that Nepalese people specially working in 4D areas (difficult, dangerous, dirty and derogative). This means that these works have less dignity. Similarly, the workers do not learn specific skills from such works.

In our country, income or earning plays an important role to determine social status. Those who earn more from foreign employment gain relatively higher status in comparison to those who do not earn more.

On the other hand members of back ward community, poorest of the poor, suppressed segment of the society are basically working in Middle East and Malaysia. When they have to struggle for their dignity at home land how could they work with dignity in destination.

Similarly, when a person has no skill, education, international exposure, financial strength, it is very difficult to gain prestige. Even more than that when someone is suppressed in their own country how can they deserve prestige in others’ land?

Requirements of decent work

Following factors play vital part in making the work decent:

Opportunities for work

Equity in work
Security at work
Productive work
Dignity at work
Freedom of choice of employment

Some are doing well in foreign employment. Nepalese diaspora community is helping to enhance their dignity and strength at destination. Sometimes, the labor-receiving countries very positively comment that Nepalese are more laborious, honest and loyal. These expressions have only diplomatic meaning; we have to assess from the behavior. Nepalese are less paid and are facing different problems. Such problems are relatively less in other source countries.

**Determinants of dignity**

There are many factors which are taken as indicator of dignity of worker. These factors help us to identify the situation of Nepalese worker.

Earning/saving: Sometimes earning of an individual determines dignity of a worker. High income generally has positive relation with high dignity. It is also believed that higher income leads to higher saving.

Work type (responsibility given to them): Role and responsibility given by the employer to the worker is next indicator. Nepalese workers are mainly involved in low graded work, which eventually reduce their self-esteem.

Protection of basic labor/human right: If labor right is protected that naturally increases workers' dignity. Destination which ratified the basic ILO convention would have more worker friendly environment. Our major destinations do not follow even a basic labor right.

Contact with family/relatives/friends: Job which has leisure and provides an opportunity to make regular contact with family, relative and friends is taken as dignified work.

Provision of safety nets (insurance, health facility, soft loan etc) behind worker would play an important role in making the work dignified.

Presence of government and other institution from home country at host country: Facilities and the safety mechanisms offered and arranged by the home country will also determine the safety of the workers.

Possibility of alternative opportunity/option: If worker has choice, the rate of exploitation will decline.
Prospect after return: If workers feel that they will get support from the government after their return, that feeling will increase workers' dignity.

**Way to increase dignity**

To enhance dignity in foreign employment, we should improve on various issues. Training should be made compulsory to the aspiring migrant workers. Their income should be increased and invested in productive areas before their return, and their family should be supported to involve in sustainable economic activities. To enhance dignity of the workers, we need to implement following interventions in Nepal as well at destinations:

- Make recruitment system more ethical,
- Train aspirant worker sufficiently,
- Generate internal employment opportunity,
- Develop sufficient safety nets,
- Strengthen presence of government abroad,
- Ratify the international convention (basic labor right),
- Sufficient support mechanism to the needy labor at work place,
- Mobilizing international community to protect migrant right,
- Increase earning/saving,
- Provide facility to remain in touch to family,
- Need to do BLA with sufficient safety provision,
- Try to link their capacity on productive sector that will enhance their dignity in society.

If we are able to increase productivity and safety, obviously the dignity of MWs will increase,

**D. India as a major destination**

Nepal-India relation is very long, deep and important. 1950's treaty ensures the free mobility of citizens, thereby tightening the friendly relation between the countries. There is no exact data how many Nepalese workers are in India. It is assumed that there is large number of workers who have no access to overseas employment. There are many problems and prospects faced by Nepalese workers in India.

Because of the absence of record, Government of Nepal does not know how many people are working in India. Nepalese workers are facing different problems while sending money from India. Sometimes it is also argued that
smugglers send Nepalese women to overseas via India. To mitigate this, it is better to start to keep record of the workers going to India, start high level dialogue to make money transfer easier and safer, and make an understanding with Indian government for the mobility of Nepalese workers using Indian international airport.

E. South Asian Perspective to enhance productivity, safety, dignity of foreign employment

Almost all countries in South Asia are migrant-sending countries, and while India is both a traditional and emerging destination, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka also serve as transit countries. Further, India and Pakistan are simultaneously countries of origin, transit and destination. The Maldives and Bhutan are primarily migrant-receiving countries with migration from Bangladesh to Bhutan figuring as one of the top South–South migration corridors; and Afghanistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka, are primarily migrant-sending countries—the former, primarily due to the outflow of its population following the political and security crises in the country. (WMR2013).

Regional/multilateral frameworks on labour migration include: Puebla Process that came out of the Central American and North American Regional Conference on Migration; ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers; African Union Migration Policy Framework; Colombo Process which serves as a forum for Asian labour-sending countries; the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, a state-led voluntary, non-binding and informal consultative process between the 11 Colombo Process countries and 9 other Asian countries; the Asia-EU Dialogue; and the Bali Process, established in 2002 aimed at addressing practical issues related to smuggling, trafficking and transnational crime.

The migration-development nexus has received significant attention in multilateral as well as regional forums. For instance, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) is an initiative of the UN Member states to address the growing importance of the linkages between migration and development. Similarly, other regional consultation processes such as the Colombo Process and Abu Dhabi Dialogue have similarly incorporated the issues of migration and development with the aims of maximizing the benefits of migration while at the same time ensuring the rights and protection of the workers.

South Asia is home to the second largest number of internationally trafficked persons and that trafficking in human beings occurs in the majority of the

Some of the recent initiatives at the national level include the enactment of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act 2012 in Bangladesh, Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act, 2007 in Nepal, Amendment of Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in April 2013, passing of a bill on anti-human trafficking in the Maldives in 2013, etc.

The Government of the Philippines has been able to negotiate a standard contract for domestic workers going to Saudi Arabia. In the region, Sri Lanka has developed a model employment contract for Sri Lankan domestic workers headed for overseas employment. The Sri Lankan model standard contract for housekeepers recruited to work in Singapore specifies, among others, the following: (i) the number of people in the household; (ii) duties to be performed during the contract period; (iii) details on the place of work; (iv) remuneration and benefits; (v) food and accommodation; (vi) rest period and days off; and (vii) conditions for contract termination.

The event for our great concern is that 18th SAARC summit hosted by Nepal introduced the agenda of Migrant workers and announced a clear vision to work jointly to protect the right of migrant workers.

SAARC Declaration on Migration:

"Agreed to collaborate and cooperate on safe, orderly and responsible management of labour migration from South Asia to ensure safety, security and wellbeing of their migrant workers in the destination countries outside the region."
Thank you Chairman, paper presenter Kaphle sir and participants,

I would like to congratulate paper presenter Mr. Kaphle for a very comprehensive presentation. Personally his involvement on the context of foreign employment is short but his understanding on the subject and conceptualizing it is appreciable. I have been given an opportunity to comment where I am touched upon.

As I always request my colleagues not to mix migration and foreign employment in the same context. Foreign employment is a part of migration. They have different prospects. So I humbly request to see on that conception.

And, on part of productivity, as in the paper, due to their illegal course of action, their income is less. Yes, it definitely makes negative impacts on safety, dignity but examples shows higher income of illegal migrant workers due to their developed skill and easily available resources. Companies use their illegal existence for their purposes requiting them further. But, it is definitely hampering on the part of safety and dignity of the workers. And another, the unfair competition between Manpower companies is also responsible for the lower earning of our human resources.

He has raised two issues that I would like to touch upon. One is the Bilateral Agreements, which is true. We, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Labour and Employment are combinedly trying to promote but Bilateral Labour Agreements somehow contributes receiving countries. The experts of this field in this gathering know that it does not address concurrent problems. It falls into a type of Declaration of Statement, in more astringent definition. Beside Korea, other bilateral agreements did not fall on that category.

This is desirable inter-national structure where our migrant workers are working beyond a infinite boundaries but as Mr. Kafle suggested, Bilateral Agreements should be focused making us strong in our part.
There are countries demanding Nepalese domestic workers but not agreeable to do Labour Agreement. We have to accept less productivity from our unskilled workers. Though unskilled workers are making negative impacts on productivity, dignity and security, this is globally structural. There is more demand of unskilled workers in those destinations. Now, it is time to predict that demand takes off. We are living in a structural constrains. We have to see from this aspect too.

Mr. Kaphle suggested ways to enhance productivity and with ideas which Nepal Government has to look upon on keeping this present situation in the global context. But on present context, on foreign employment an exiting policies should be adopted. Thailand is an example. Dependency should be reduced simultaneously but strategies should be implemented. I think, contribution of foreign workers in Foreign Employment Promotion Board should be invested in productive sectors enhancing the livelihood of their families.

Paper has raised a political intervention for rescue of workers in 2011 from Kenya but in 2014 too, we tried such interventions in Libya and Iraq. Though we were successful in Iraq but partially succeeded in Libya. I think we need comprehensive integrated approach.

We have to see foreign employment above from the sectoral perspectives. There is difference in tendency. We need national scenario than sectoral to face the popular culture. They are becoming compulsive phenomenon. A credible national discourse as we studied in political science – we are not able to form that discourse. We are very less in number to conceptualize them. There is a vacuum in credible national discourse. This vacuum creates sufficient structure/ purgatorial views. Sectoral paraxial interest is on national discourse and we are equipped for it. Our Government policies are manpower oriented and there is narrative incentives of manpower companies on it. To rise above from this, a national discourse should be built, so such an intellectual discourse is necessary.

Thank You
Thank you presenter Mr. Kafle, Commentator Mr. Subedi and participants for questioning, and for queries and feedbacks which is very welcoming discourse. I believe this conversation will help to induce the Nepal Government forming future policies, changes in laws and amendments keeping this context globally.

Actually, foreign employment should not be our long-term standing destination. We have to move forward towards originating employment here. After establishment of Ministry of Labour in 2069 B.S, we are focused on creating internal employments and exercising a lot. Employment Policy 2071, as an umbrella policy, is in the final stage of approval from the Cabinet. Labour Policy 2048 failed to create investment oriented environment and was not able to form lawful relationship between employer and employee. We are now going ahead towards forming a Labour Bank to ensure lawful environment for national and international investments. In addition, Social Protection Policy is on implementing phase and I hope these efforts will enhance to create national employment on a milestone. The problematic situation for us is that our five millions youths with ensuing energetic years are flowing towards it annually. The policies and recommendations forwarded should be accepted by Manpower agencies and the Government has to look on it. Other countries like South Korea, we are on a process to do Bilateral Agreements with Japan and Israel which is in the pipeline. Manpower companies are also appreciated on their part of making available employments to 3.5 to 4 million youths. But unfortunately, this business is becoming more and more challenging. There is no guaranteed safety and dignities of the workers. This is due to unfair competition amongst them.

We are definitely involved in this matter. We have Labour Agreement with five countries and on final phase with Malaysia and with Saudi Arabia for Domestic Workers. We have sent a final draft to Foreign Ministry on this. Without Bilateral Agreement or MoU, our workers rights will not be safe. All the stakeholders should be more responsible for this. Foreign Employment Labour Act 2064 was not assertive so a Task Force was formed to study and
recommend necessary changes, which is on process. We want stakeholders’ feedback on this and will discuss on a Round Table focusing this matter. We are waiting Nepal Government’s approval keeping globally on this context. Now an institutionalized way to send workers making employment companies responsible with different proposition on safety is mandatory.

Out of 110 countries, Malaysia is more attractive destination nowadays and a Study Group is formed to search destinations keeping global migration on the context. The establishment of Labour Bank is very essential for different purposes like making friendly environment for investment for returned migrant workers in productive sectors. We are conceptualizing on it. Labour Bank approval is on a final phase in the Ministry of Finance. Nepal and development partners have agreed to improve this sector. We have no Law on rescue and compassion seems to lack. We need improvement on it. These are on implementing process.

We have no skill development policy. We can fulfill skilled and semi-skilled demanded manpower. With the help of Swiss Government, Ministry of Labour is coordinating on Safer Migration Project. How to be safe from entire circle of management? We have very few numbers of Missions with Labour Attaches’. We have to strengthen cooperation and develop comprehensive policies for this.

Awareness and skill development is its response. We, the Labour Ministry, under Nepal Government are destined in this direction. I thank IFA for this opportunity and announce closure of this session.

Thank You.
Foreign Employment: Enhancing Productivity, Safety, Dignity and Socio-Economic Impacts in Nepal

12. Summary of the Seminar

Mr. Chandra Shekhar Adhikari, Senior Diplomatic Correspondent, Kantipur Daily

Labor Migration has become one of the most prominent issues in South Asia as more and more people are travelling outside of the region to make their livelihood. Labour migration can also contribute in poverty reduction in many of the poor and middle income countries of the South Asia and beyond. There are many pros and cons attached with the issue of migration and one of them is the lack of self-respect towards the migrant workers. This issue of self-respect can be linked with so many other areas such as setting the labor standards and gaps in policy coherence. As a result large numbers of people are compelled to work outside the country under the dismal conditions.

Based-on the rules, regulations and principles of ILO, SAARC Countries must formulate common positions in setting labor standards, minimum wage and facilities and also labor rights in the destination countries. There is a need to have a collective voice of the member states which can yield positive impact for the migrant workers while negotiating with labor receiving countries. SAARC as an institution can play positive role to develop a mechanism by sharing the experiences of its member countries and this can also have twin effect on our economy. On the one hand it will improve the conditions of those who are directly involved in the overseas job and on the other – the sending countries exchequer will have greater share of remittance pie. Therefore, it is important that countries are required to enhance collaboration among them when it comes to the issue of migrant workers. More importantly, they should also develop mechanism for the proper utilization of the remittances. As of now it has been largely spent on consumer goods. If the same can be diverted towards productive sector, this can certainly enhance the sending country's economies and will ultimately reduce the trend of outward movement for the livelihood.

Nonetheless, there are no sufficient evidence based policies, plans and legal framework to protect the rights and interest of the migrants. SAARC
level collaboration is crucial for the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers. Collaborative exercises are equally useful to eliminate the negative competition among the South Asian countries which works against the collective interest. Therefore, SAARC must provide high importance in this area.

Against this backdrop, Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) in collaboration with the German foundation Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (FES) organized a seminar program, 'Enhancing Productivity, Safety, Dignity and Socio-Economic Impacts of Foreign Employment on 28 December, 2014 at Hotel Radisson, Kathmandu.

The program was separated in two sessions: Inaugural and the Working Sessions, Hon. Foreign Minister Mahendra Bahadur Panday inaugurated the seminar and delivered keynote speech. Leelamani Paudel, Chief Secretary, Government of Nepal, Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director IFA and Yadav Khanal, Resource Person, IFA spoke at the inaugural session. While in the second working session, two experts presented their working papers on the very theme and quite a number of participants commented on the papers. The participants, by and large, concurred that political stability, economic growth can create a positive environment in this sector.

Inaugurating the seminar, Chief Guest Hon. Minister Pandey focused on the importance to manage the workers abroad by empowering embassies. Besides, his main focus was on systematic way to develop workers' rights. "The program is more relevant in the present situation, he added; "Issues and problems should be solved through necessary discussions and thoughtful debate."

He further said,"it’s not a new topic. The fact is that it has taken momentum with the increasing tide of economic globalization, that too, particularly when many countries failed to adjust their economies with such tides owing to several factors.

The workers are taken abroad for various types of work. It is easy to take them out but difficult to address the problems that arises in the destination countries. For example, it has become very difficult to bring the dead bodies of the workers who die in the destination countries. Delayed process in labour agreement has also created problem in the legal process of workers. It seems very necessary to provide the rights to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Embassies) for the verification process of workers demand.

Mr. Leela Mani Paudyal, Chief Secretary said that the problems are discussed that society takes initiative to demoralise the youth who want to work inside Nepal. He further adds that the youngsters of age 16-17 years are forced to go
abroad on working visa. Almost four lakhs people who failed in School Leaving Certificate examination have no other options other than to go abroad for livelihood. They are demoralised and dehumanized in society in many ways. Only the SLC exam determines their fate. It kills their initiatives and energy. The cream period of their age is judged only by the examination.

He recalls the incident of a farmer of Dhulikhel. With lots of struggle, the farmer started his own business in Agricultural Farm. Investing huge amount of money, he expands his farm and provides jobs to others. However, nobody could reognise his labour. He even provided jobs to the youths who could not go abroad. His story has not even got attention by the government agencies and we are glued in attending different workshops and seminars. In rural areas, however we never prepare to involve in field work where such success stories have taken place. He further adds that we do not pay much attention towards major problem faced by the migrant workers in various parts of the country.

Only a rich person cannot contribute in state building efforts. Every citizen must play the role. Nobody raises the problems being faced by the workers. Many manpower agencies are also exploiting the migrant workers but nobody is taking seriously into this case. It was widely advised that government agencies needs to be more vigilant to address these problems. It is largely believed that we need to establish various types of industries in the country and generate employment in the country itself. But, in contrast, the Nepali state and its agencies have not taken any concrete steps towards this end. This programme is directed to explore mechanisms by engaging various stakeholders to addresses the challenges brought about by the migration per se factors in our society.

Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director of IFA said that Nepal has a long history of migration for employment. A large number of people have been forced to migrate to India and third countries for a long time due to extreme poverty. However, the data related to Nepalese migration is lacking and the whole migration process is not properly controlled and managed.

He further added that, the foreign employment has been the premier base of national economy in recent years that shares about 25 percent of national GDP. Nearly 80 percent of such hard remittance is expanded in household consumption. Social remittance or “Brain Gains” in terms of skill and knowledge is equally instrumental for national development. The remittance has significantly contributed to the reduction of poverty and up scaling the livelihoods of rural people in the country. Sources state that about three million workers have been working in countries like Saudi Arabia, Malaysia,
Qatar and UAE alone. In addition equal number of people is working in India and elsewhere.

The current Foreign Employment Act entrusts the Ministry of Labour and Employment, with a central role in the management of foreign labour migration. Under the act the Government has instituted departments and employment promotion aboard and has co-worked with private institutions for training, health tests and other aspects of recruitment process focusing on the interest of migrant workers. The policy implementation aspect however, is not up to the desirable level towards strengthening the whole paradigm of foreign migration to protect the rights and interest of our migrant workers."

Mr. Yadav Prasad Khanal, Resource Person at IFA said that lack of employment opportunities in the country has compelled youngsters to work in foreign land. It has directly impacted on their families in various forms. Those less skilled workers who are in different countries have not really benefitted from the remittances.

**Paper presentation session -I**

Dr. Ganesh Gurung, Former Member of National Planning Commission presented a working paper on socio-economic impacts of foreign employment. He added that the impact of foreign employment is clearly visible in our society. The large share of Nepal’s budget today comes from the remittances from the people who nearly remit 148 core rupees daily to Nepal. Almost 56 percent Nepalese families receive remittance in one way or the other. This has certainly changed the rural lifestyle in the current Nepal. However, there are various problems also coming with it. The low agri-production is the case in point. The non-availability of workforce in this sector has resulted in serious food deficit in the country. Today Nepalese are migrating for various purposes and it has hampered badly our family structure and societal values.

**Commentator:**

Gopal Bahadur Thapa, Former Chief of Protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, commenting on Dr. Gurung’s paper said that the money remitted by the workers has not been utilized in the productive sector. He also pointed out various problems found in this sector and pointed out that the problem starts right from the very beginning wherein the manpower agencies, government bureaucracy involved in the whole process to manipulate those who intend to go abroad for employment.

He further pointed out that we also need to look into their well-being as they also get infected with some diseases. In the race of getting remittances, we
have ignored agriculture which is the lifeline of our economy. He suggested that we need to make agriculture more lucrative so that we can contain even the educated manpower within the country. Equally important is to make investment on agriculture so that the returnees can be employed within the country.

Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, Acting Foreign Secretary who had chaired the program pointed out that many good suggestion have come up from the discussion and it would certainly help to improve the conditions of Foreign Employment. He underlined that the importance of migration has increased and if utilized properly it can play crucial role in the overall development of the country. Having said this, he also pointed out that migration cannot be stopped so quickly even if the country becomes rich but we certainly need to look into the factors that beset this sector. The role of Foreign Ministry and other line ministries is important in this sector. He also said that there are many positive aspects of foreign employment as well but the need of the hour is to strike a right balance between positive and negative side of the foreign employment.

In the Second Session Mr. Raghu Raj Kaphle, Executive Director, Foreign Employment Promotion Board presented a paper on 'Foreign Employment: Enhancing Productivity, Safety, Dignity.'

The major theme of his paper was that we need to make foreign employment more dignified and every endeavour needs to be put into that purpose. Effort should be made to analyse the trend at the global level rather than looking into the country specific cases primarily because the whole issue is interconnected. One hundred ten countries are legally opened for the Nepalese migrant workers. We do have bilateral agreements and understandings with few countries. Nonetheless, 75% workers are in low skill categories. The data shows that even those who go abroad on student visa do have purpose of work there. Therefore, the issue of dignity is important.

Productivity: The main purpose of workers is to earn money and to learn and explore new skills. It is also to know how the skills and resources are being utilized. The part of encouragement is necessary to the workers. Though there is negative and positive part of every sector, the negative part has been highly centralized in this topic. While connecting the topic globally, we should remember the success model of South Korea migration. The workers have low skills and also earn low wage. Some of them are semi-skilled. The situation is very difficult to adjust in this context. It is not an easy task to adjust in different culture and society of different countries. The concerned authority does not seem interested to enhance productivity. New areas for employment need to
be identified to increase the productivity and equally important is to fix the salary of workers before going abroad.

The migrant worker face multiple problems which even costs their lives. Lack of education and proper information is held responsible to a great extent to this end. The attention should be given by the concern authorities for the safety of migrant workers. The fund collected in Foreign Employment Promotion Board must be properly utilized for productive purposes. Proper planning and commitments are necessary to achieve the goals not only putting these issues into discussion and debates.

Prakash Kumar Subedi, Joint Secretary, MoFA, commented on Mr. Kafle’s paper which allowed space for further clarification. He said that migration and foreign employment were two different topics and cannot be merged into one. Foreign Employment is one part of the migration. We must be aware about bilateral agreement with some countries like Qatar and S. Korea and need to do such agreements with other countries. Signing agreements with receiving countries can ensure security of the workers. The greatest challenge for us is how to reduce the rate of people travelling abroad for foreign employment. Sri Lanka has already reduced the rate of women citizen as migrant workers and Thailand has totally discouraged. People have different concepts in foreign employment. Our policy papers only talk about the role of manpower agencies but not that of the workers who are directly engaged in the trade.

Chairperson, Mr. Bhola Prasad Shiwakoti, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment

Making his remark as chair person on the paper Mr. Bhola Prasad Shiwakoti, Secretary, MoLE said that the day’s discussion had provided many ideas that could contribute to make foreign employment more dignified and safe. Conducive environment must be created for the investment in foreign employment and implementation of labour law. The employment would be created if the security fund act and policy could be passed. The government is in the process to create employment for all. The government is in the process of doing agreement with 4-5 countries. Foreign Employment Act (2064) is already in force but it has not really helped to lessen the existing problems of this sector. Therefore, the government is already in the process of amending it. The chair also pointed out that there is a need to open labor bank and government has been working on it. Skilled manpower is to be developed. There must be an awareness program for those who wish to go outsides for
employment. The initiative taken by IFA is noble. Embassy without Labour Attaché and even if it has, with less manpower has created many problems.

**Comment from the floor**

Hiranya Lal Shrestha, Former Ambassador pointed out that not only Nepalese but most of the South Asian citizens have become victim of ‘migration’ and there are many reasons of victimization. He also argued that those who are going abroad through India must be controlled. Labor expert should be dispatched where there is no embassy, said Mr. Shrestha. He also stressed that SAARC must take responsible role in this sector.

Umesh Upadhaya of GEFONT said that human resource has to be developed in our society. About 4 Lakh people are going abroad. We also need to focus on the conditions of the in bound youths.

Nirmal Kafle, Joint Secretary, MoFA said that remittance has covered one fourth of our whole economy.

Dilli Ram Banskota, Department of Foreign Employment, asked: are there studies done on the migrant workers who have returned? It appears that some of them are in good business while others are not. He also warned that given the current trend of migration – Nepal might become a country left over by children and oldies.

Lhamo Sherpa, at the Oslo University said that although migration is playing crucial role in Poverty Alleviation, the major share of the remittances collected from migrant workers have been spent on consumers goods. The situation remains same in Nepal, Bangladesh and India. If that is the case what is the positive aspect of remittance asked Sherpa?

Dr. Khadka K.C, Reader and chair of the International Department, TU said that the topic of safety and dignity has not been properly discussed. We have also not discussed the social aspect of migration which appears pathetic. There are no exact data available but social condition is going worse day by day. It has also negatively affected our family structure.

Toyanath Bhattarai, former bureaucrat, said that it is very necessary to prepare a road map to get back the fruitful result after investing money in different sector that have come from remittance. There is necessity of policy to move on. The amount from remittance has been spent without any purpose. The government must show its concern as how to the manages this situation.
Dhan Bahadur Oli, Director SAARC: First of all, we must find the areas through which the remittance has been increased and then the investment of it. There is no transparency in Foreign Employment. Once, Prime Minister himself had taken initiatives in it.

Santosh Pariyar, FES-Nepal: Remittance have not been properly utilized. He also talked about the tax on remittance. Nobody can predict the future of our country if the youth go abroad in a big number.

Ram Prasad Bhandari, Manpower company: We people never try to solve the problem, however, we just scold the concern people. Youth would not go abroad if they had proper environment back at home. Government is not seriously concerned about the challenges brought about by the mass exodus of young people from the country. We do not have exact data as how many people leave the country and how many people die during the course of their stay in the foreign country as migrant workers. There is also lack of coordination among the concerned line ministries of the government.

Keshab Poudel, Journalist said that it is very important to know whether being a migrant worker and remittances attached with this is our need or want. He said that we need to reflect on this properly.

Ram Prasad Bhantana of Manpower company said that Promotion Board must keep the data of migrant workers. The number of returned and current migrant workers must be in the record. It is necessary to provide the employment to the workers in our own country. The situation is very worse here and many people are left with no options other than going abroad as migrant workers. We need to educate our people right from the school as how to become self-sustained from various aspects.

Lyamo Yangchhing Sherpa, Social Activist, said that 25 percent heart attack and 15 percent natural death is mentioned in the data, which is unbelievable. It is an important to know as what are the factors causing death of many Nepalese migrant workers. Government here is least bothered.

Nabin Giri, Student, said that those who have problem to fulfill basic needs are forced to go for Foreign Employment. Remittance has become major source of development but there are many problems attached with this. We need to look into it seriously.

Sanat Basnet, Former IGP, APF said that remittance has become the inevitable part of our economy in the present situation. We are planting 100% whereas producing only 50%. It is also our duty to suggest as how best to produce
fully. The major concern is how to manage reverse migration. The situation of security might come as challenging factor primarily because every month 40 to 50 dead bodies are coming from abroad. We need to focus as how best to provide security for the migrant workers.

Khimananda Bhusal, Section Officer, MoFA: Productivity must be increased in the country. The proper utilization of remitted amount is under serious question. Only 5 to 7 countries are there for the migrant workers, however, the major duty of foreign employment Promotion Board is also to think about other countries too. Likewise, security level is another part to be discussed.

Mr. Krishna Prasad Regmi, Immigration Airport, said that the government should stop sending workers abroad. Networking is necessary for those who go in an institutional way. Contract papers are different than what they have. Manpower companies deceive them. Workers even cannot fill up the arrival form. Such issues must be looked after by the concerned authorities.

Yadav Prasad Khanal, IFA, remarked that all recruiting agencies must not be kept in the same basket. What about the word 'Management' instead of Promotion for the FEPB.

Ashwin Pudasaini, Advisor to Foreign Minister: I had talked with the migrant workers in Malaysia, Dubai, USA, Qatar and many other countries as well. They have suggested to send workers only through G to G. Women workers must be stopped. Entry should be stopped to those who do not have return ticket. Workers must have insurance which can provide them security. Migrant workers should be paid as per the agreement which has not been the case in many occasions. Manpower agencies could be held responsible for such a state of affairs.

Toyanath Bhattarai, Former Secretary, Parliament: Foreign Employment has created such a worse situation in the country and we must reflect on the various aspects of it. Parliament has passed the act for NRN. Law is in favour of those who can raise the voice. How can one lobby on behalf of migrant and foreign workers?

Abdul Satar, Manpower Company: I just saw the slide of Employment Promotion Board. The board has done nothing to the request of Manpower Company. It provides money to the family of dead person reducing the government tax. It has to make more responsible policies for the Manpower Companies.
Conclusion

The issue of migration has become most pertinent not only in Nepal but also in the most of the South Asian countries. Most of the South Asian countries receive major share of their GDP from the remittances. Nepal, for its part, has been receiving more than 25 percent from it to its GDP. But there are many problems seen in this sectors. There has to be collective effort to address the problems as an endeavour to make this profession dignified. Equally important is the utilization of the money that comes from the remittances. As of now, most of the money coming from the remittances has been spent on consumer products as a result it is not really providing any long-term solution to the countries problem of unemployment. At last, but not least, it should be taken into the consideration that money coming from the remittances cannot provide any permanent solution to the economic problem of any countries. Countries should focus more on developing internal job market that can also strengthen the state and society and enhance dignity of the country and its people from every perspectives.
13. List of Participants in the Seminar

1. Hon’ble Mr. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey
   Minister of Foreign Affairs

2. Mr. Leela Mani Paudyal
   Chief Secretary
   Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Minister

3. Mr. Shanker D. Bairagi
   Acting Foreign Secretary
   Ministry of Foreign Affairs

4. Mr. Buddhi Narayan Shrestha
   Board Member, IFA, Boarder Expert

5. Dr. Chandra Kanta Gyawali
   Board Member, IFA, Lawyer

6. Prof. Dr. Meena Vaidya Mall
   Board Member, IFA, Academician

7. Dr. Khadga K.C.
   Board Member, IFA, Academician(Foreign Relation)

8. Mr. Kush Kumar Joshi
   Board Member, IFA, Business Sector

9. Dr. Ganesh Gurung
   Board Member, IFA, Migration Expert

10. Mr. Bhola Prasad Shiwakoti
    Secretary
    Ministry of Labour and Employment

11. Prof. Dr. Mohan P. Lohani
    Former Executive Director of IFA
Dr. Anjan Shakya
Former Deputy Executive Director, IFA

Mr. Gopal Bahadur Thapa
Former Chief of Protocol
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Prakash Subedi
Joint Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa
Director General
Department of Passport
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Raghu Raj Kafle
Executive Chief
Foreign Employment Promotion Board

Mr. Nirmal Raj Kafle
Joint Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Dhan Bahadur Oli
Director
SAARC Secretariat

Mr. Tara Prasad Pokharel
Joint Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Ghanashyam Bhandari
Under Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Rita Dhital
Under Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Arjun Kanta Mainali
Chief of Protocol
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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<th>No.</th>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Mr. Ananda Prasad Sharma</td>
<td>Under Secretary</td>
<td>Foreign Employment</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Mr. Deepak Adhikari</td>
<td>Acting DG</td>
<td>Enhancing Productivity, Safety, Dignity and Socio-Economic Impacts in Nepal</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Mr. Rameshwor Paudel</td>
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<td>Mr. Rebati Raman Paudel</td>
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<td>Department of Consular</td>
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<td>Mr. Ashbin Pudasaini</td>
<td>Public Relation Adviser</td>
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<td>Manhari Dangal</td>
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<td>Mr. Gayetri Paudel</td>
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<td>Mr. Dadhiram Bhandari</td>
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<td>Mr. Prem Raj Gautam</td>
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<td>Mr. Khaga Raj Pandey</td>
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Dr. Kulchandra Gautam
Former Asst-Secretary General UN

Mr. Sundar Nath Bhattarai
Former Ambassador to Thailand

Mr. Hiranya Lal Shrestha
Former Ambassador to Russia

Mr. Madhavjee Shrestha
Former Joint Secretary, MoFA

Mr. Toya Nath Bhattarai
Parliament Secretary

Mrs. Girija Sharma
Under-Secretary, MoLE

Mr. Devraj Dhakal
Under-Secretary, MoLE

Mr. Ambika Prasad Adhikari
Under-Secretary, MoLE

Mr. Lal Bahadur Thapa
Under-Secretary (Account), MoLE

Mr. Jeewan Kumar Rai
Under-secretary, MoLE

Mr. Tirtharaj K.C.
Under-Secretary (Law), MoLE

Mr. Bhash Bahadur Karki
Under-Secretary, MoLE

Dilli Ram Banstola
Director, EPS Korea Section

Mr. Rakesh Hamal
Member, Foreign Relation Department Nepali Congress

Mr. Pramod Ram Misra
Member, Foreign Relation Department
Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum (Nepal)
49 Dr. Lhamo Sherpa
Social Activist

50 Dr. Dev Raj Dahal
Resident Director
FES-Nepal

51 Mr. Santosh Pariyar
FES-Nepal

52 Dr. Govinda Prasad Kusum
Former Secretary
Ministry of Home affairs

53 Dr. Bishnu Uprety
Nepal Center for Contemporary Research

54 Mr. Sanat Basnet
Former IGP
Nepal Armed Police Force

55 Mr. Dilli Ram Bastola
DOFA / EPS-Korea

56 Mr. Kamal Bhattarai
Director
Immigration

57 Mr. Rajendra Raj Adhikarki
Under Secretary
Airport Immigration

58 Mr. Ambika Prasad Adhikari
Undersecretary
Ministry of Labour and Employment

59 Mr. Rabindra Mohan Bhattarai
Director General
Department of Labour

60 Mr. Som Prasad Lamichhane
General Secretary
Pravasi Nepali Coordination Committee
Mrs. Yuba Raj Nepal
Legal section
Pravasi Nepali Coordination Council

Ms. Tara Devi Subedi
Secretary
Pravasi Nepali Coordination Council

Mr. Chandreshwar Acharya
Former Labour Attache, Saudi Arabia

Ms. Bijaya Rai,
Founder Chairman Person
POURAKHI, NGO

Ms. Manju Gurung
Chairperson
POURAKHI, NGO

Mr. Rajesh Rana
Non Residential Nepalese Association

Mr. Tenji Sherpa
Non Residential Nepalese Association

Mr. Man Bahadur Thapa
Asian Human Rights and Culture Development Forum

Mr. Nilambar Badal
Asian Human Rights and Culture Development Forum

Mr. Keshav Bashyal
Centre for Migration and International Relations

Mr. Dipendra Pradhananga
Centre for Migration and International Relations

Mr. T.N. Pun
National College of Accountancy

Ms. Moheindu Chemjong
International Organization for Migration

Mr. Anil Giri
The Kathmandu Post
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<tr>
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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Mr. Chandra Shekhar Adhikari</td>
<td>Kantipur Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Ms. Sita Sharma</td>
<td>Gorkhapatra National Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Mr. Kosh Raj Koirala</td>
<td>The Republica</td>
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<td>79</td>
<td>Ms. Shreejana Shrestha</td>
<td>The Republica</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>Mr. Parshuram Kaphle</td>
<td>Naya Patrika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Mr. Sharad Chandra Bhandari</td>
<td>Senior Reporter National News Agency (RSS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Mr. Ramesh Lamsal</td>
<td>National News Agency RSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Mr. Pramila Devkota</td>
<td>Nayapatrika, Journalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Mr. Narayan Amrit</td>
<td>Kantipur Publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Mr. Radhesh Shyam Malla</td>
<td>Program Presenter Himalayan TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Mr. Tika Bandan</td>
<td>Nepal Samachar Patra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Mr. Santosh Ghimire</td>
<td>Nagarik News Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>Mr. Rupesh Acharya</td>
<td>Annapurna Post Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Mr. C.K. Khanal</td>
<td>Tha Rising Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Mr. Ramesh Lamsal</td>
<td>Nepal News Agency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mr. Keshab Paudel
Spotlight Magazine

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Inspector UN Division
Nepal Police HQ

Mr. Laxman Ayer
Nepal Police HQ

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Dil Prasad Pokharel
Torenlge Employment
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Kantipur Daily

Mr. Prabhakar Pokharel
Gorkha Channel

Mr. Yogesh Jung Kunwar
Gorkha Channel

Ms. Seema Pandey
Intern, IFA
Participant at the Seminar (From left to Mr. Shankar Das Bairagi, Mr. Leela Mani Paudyal, Hon’able Mr. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Mr. Bhola Shivakoti and Mr. Yadav Khanal)

Lighting the Lamp to inaugurate the seminar Hon’ble Mr. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Welcome remarks by Mr. Yadav Khanal, Resource Person, IFA.

Delivering Closing remarks at the inaugural session by Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director, IFA
Participants in the seminar

From Left Commentator Mr. Gopal Bahadur Thapa Chair, Mr. Shankar Das Bairagi and paper presenter Dr. Ganesh Gurung
Foreign Employment: Enhancing Productivity, Safety, Dignity and Socio-Economic Impacts in Nepal

From Left Commentator Mr. Prakash Kumar Suvedi, Chair, Mr. Bhola Shiwakoti and paper presenter Mr. Raghu Raj Kafle.

Participant in the Seminar
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Report on the National Seminar on Nepal’s Foreign Policy</td>
<td>1993</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Policy Study Series II (Security in South Asia)</td>
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<td>8.</td>
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<td>11.</td>
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<td>2005</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Continue
18. New Life within SAARC in Cooperation with FES – 2005
22. Report on Special Orientation Programme for Nepalese Foreign Service Officials (Deputed) working in different missions abroad – 2007
25. A Report on Briefing-Cum-Interaction Programme for the Nepalese Ambassadors (Designate) to Different Missions Abroad. – 2007
27. Expansion of SAARC: Challenges and Opportunities – 2008
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31. Foreign Policy of Nepal: “Challenges and Opportunities” – 2009
<table>
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>38.</td>
<td>Institutionalization of Nepal’s Foreign Policy</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>Foreign Policy of Nepal: Enhancing Effective Participation of Nepal in Regional and International Systems &amp; Risk of Climate Change in South Asia</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>2013</td>
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<td>41.</td>
<td>Role of NRN in Effective Mobilization of Economic Diplomacy in Nepal</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>International Cooperation in Commercialization &amp; Industrialization of Nepalese Agriculture: From Policy to Practice</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td>43.</td>
<td>Principles and Strategies of Nepal’s Foreign Policy and Protocol</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td>44.</td>
<td>Bringing SAARC Closer to the People: A Nepalese Perspective</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td>46.</td>
<td>200 Years of Nepal-Britain Relations: A Way Forward</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td>47.</td>
<td>Institutional Report 2012-2014</td>
<td>2014</td>
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