

# STATUS OF NEPALI MIGRANT WORKERS IN RELATION TO COVID-19



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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ADB	:	Asian Development Bank
BFI	:	Bank and Financial Institutions
CBS	:	Central Bureau of Statistics
CCMC	:	COVID-19 Crisis Management Centre
DoFE	:	Department of Foreign Employment
GCC	:	Gulf Cooperation Council
FY	:	Fiscal Year
ILO	:	International Labour Organization
IOM	:	International Organization for Migration
MoLESS	:	Ministry of Labour Employment and Social Security
NGO	:	Non-Government Organization
NNSM	:	National Network for Safe Migration
NPC	:	National Planning Commission
NRB	:	Nepal Rastra Bank
PNCC	:	Pravasi Nepali Coordination Committee
PPE	:	Personal Protection Equipment



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## STUDY OUTSET

This study examined the status of, and challenges and vulnerabilities faced by, Nepali migrant workers in the context of Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19). The objective of this study was to undertake an assessment of migrant workers, especially in relation to their return intention, labour rights and social protection mechanism and changes in social perception. Such an understanding was made for three groups of migrants: current migrants,<sup>1</sup> returnee migrants<sup>2</sup> and aspirant migrants.<sup>3</sup> The study was based on phone interviews with 3,000 migrant workers. Among the respondents, a total of 501 were current migrants in different countries of destination, 500 aspirant migrants and remaining 1,999 returnees.

COVID-19 has had an enormous impact on Nepali migrant workers. By 15 September 2020, altogether 63,347 people returned home via rescue flights coordinated by the Government of Nepal. It is estimated that about 200,000 Nepalis are waiting to be repatriated. This does not reflect the actual number of layoffs in major countries of destination. Initially, reports came out that nearly 20 per cent of the total Nepali migrant workers were at risk of losing their jobs because of the pandemic. The immediate return of Nepalis from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries is not only limited to the COVID-19 pandemic but also economic shocks and disruption in supplies of goods and services. Many migrant workers from India have returned home, but there is paucity of data. Taking concerns for the safety and security of migrant workers, the Government of Nepal has developed a number of guidelines for the repatriation of migrants in vulnerable conditions and for their reintegration.

These issues are the priorities of the Government as set out in the periodic plans and labour policies. The Government has also announced the creation of 700,000 jobs in its annual budget of FY 2020/21, and allocated NPR 4.34 billion to provide training to support the returnee migrants.

## FINDINGS

Key findings of this study

1. Most of the migrant workers had low educational backgrounds, and in this pandemic, migrants with higher education were found to stay in jobs as compared to migrants with low education. Therefore, education and skills were important for relative security of work in countries of destination.

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<sup>1</sup> Current migrants are the migrants who were working in the countries of destination during this survey period.

<sup>2</sup> Returnee migrants are the migrants who had returned to Nepal from the countries of destination at the time of this survey.

<sup>3</sup> Aspirant migrants are the migrants who had received labour permits to go abroad and were waiting for the resumption of international flights from Nepal that were halted due to COVID-19.

2. The majority of returnee migrant workers from India were residents of Karnali and Sudur Paschim provinces. There is also desperation in their livelihoods as the economic conditions in these regions are generally precarious.
3. Employment in the service sector was more vulnerable than in the manufacturing sector. As the manufacturing sector seems secured even in the pandemic, the returnee migrants were mostly involved in the service sector.
4. Agriculture and domestic work were noted as the main employment options for the migrants returned due to COVID-19. However, they reported many challenges to get involved in these sectors in which they have interest and aspirations. These challenges include availability and access to inputs, credit, training and marketing opportunities.
5. Most of the respondents in this study were affected by COVID-19 both in countries of destination and at home. The current migrants experienced job losses and were laid off and on unpaid leave. Many migrants who are still at work have faced a reduction in work hours or pay or both. Some of the respondents from countries of destination also reported that their contracts were not renewed. Many of those unemployed still had to support themselves or received supports from friends, relatives or welfare agencies.
6. Although different occupational health safety measures were followed in the workplace, personal hygiene and social safety was insufficient.
7. The local population in countries of destination was unwelcoming and often blamed the migrants for COVID-19 infections.
8. Despite staying in the Government-managed quarantine facilities, these migrants complained of poor safety measures and management.

### **Return and reintegration plan**

9. The majority of the migrants in countries of destination had intended to return to Nepal because of risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The main reasons included the end of contracts, unemployment and fear of COVID-19.
10. The returnee migrant workers were found to be largely engaged in self-employment/entrepreneurship.
11. These migrants further expected a supportive environment and supply-chain network development from the Government for entrepreneurship development. They also wanted facilitation from the Government, non-government and private sector actors to further flourish their business.
12. Overall, half of the migrants desired to return to the countries of work, especially in safer countries. The main reasons were a lack of livelihood opportunities at home, poverty, low income and family pressure.
13. Most of the aspirant migrants were found to have received loans to pay for migration costs and fees for work in foreign countries with exorbitant interest rates.
14. The aspirant migrants also expressed their willingness to cancel their plan for foreign jobs if “they find employment” and “financial assistance” in the country.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Coordination and Cooperation**

- i. As many migrants have expressed interest to return in the wake of COVID-19, the Government should coordinate among the related ministries and institutions to repatriate these workers. The Government is also expected to manage gender-responsive holding centres.
- ii. Both returnees and current migrants have faced various problems such as layoff, irregular payments and reduced working hours. Diplomatic facilitation and labour tribunals are required to ensure the full payment of wages and other entitlements, the exercising of labour rights and appropriate occupational health and safety measures.

### **Loan easement, need-based production and income generation**

- iii. For the reintegration of migrants, it is observed that they have keen interests in farming, so support for farming is required. Supports with loans, improved seeds, fertilizers, insurance and marketing can increase livelihood options in the homeland, thereby making migration a choice not a compulsion.
- iv. Migrant skills-mapping is imperative to best utilize their skills and reintegrate them.
- v. As loans are a major challenge for the migrants, collateral-free loans with low-interest rate should be provided so that both returned and aspirant migrants can repay their existing high interest loans. Other support for business creation would require loans and support for upskilling.
- vi. Since most of the migrants were found unemployed, they need support in income generation in agriculture, livestock and industrial areas for their retention.

### **Retaining the returnees**

- vii. As most of the migrant workers returning from India are from Karnali and Sudur Paschim provinces, special income-generation programmes are needed in these regions to be coordinated by authorities of local level, province level and federal level. In general, need-based trainings for modern farming and new enterprises are needed.
- viii. As migration is seen in many cases a result of an economic problem, an investment in skills and jobs creation at the local level could help to make migration a choice rather than a necessity. Skill enhancement of returnees can play a pivotal role to meet the demand for skilled human resources.

### **Awareness and sensitization on health behaviour**

- ix. Awareness raising in communities in Nepal is needed to help sustainable reintegration. The return of migrant workers job can be done safely if quarantine measures are practised for the required minimum of 14 days. The quarantine facilities need to be improved with due consideration of gender and people in special need and care.



## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

COVID-19 has brought about unprecedented crises in the field of human mobility and foreign labour migration, which has become one of the key global economic and social activities supporting livelihoods of millions of families. The estimated number of international migrants in the world is 272 million, which equates to 3.5 per cent of the global population (IOM, 2019).

Migration in Nepal, which has been a main pillar of national and household economy, has also been severely affected. Depending upon the estimates, the number of migrant workers currently at work in foreign countries ranges from 2.4 million to 3 million.<sup>4</sup> In 2018/19, major countries of destination of Nepali migrants are Qatar (31.8%), United Arab Emirates (26.5%), Saudi Arabia (19.5%) and Kuwait (6.8%) (MoLESS, 2020). These are also the countries where job cuts have been witnessed because of COVID-19, based on which the Foreign Employment Board of Nepal estimated that about half a million migrant workers would return from GCC and Malaysia soon after the lockdown is lifted. The Government has decided to repatriate about 25,000 Nepali migrants living in vulnerable condition in various countries based on priorities. About 200,000 Nepali migrant workers in India are reported to have returned to Nepal just before the national lockdown. The Ministry of Home Affairs has reported that 700,000 migrants returned home from India during the lockdown, with thousands stranded at the Nepal-India border. It will further exacerbate the unemployment situation of Nepal which is already unable to provide job opportunities to approximately 500,000 youth that enter the labour force every year.

COVID-19 also put a halt in the process of migration of aspirant migrants. There are about 115,000 aspirant migrants who have taken labour permits from the Government but have not been able to fly out. All the migration process of 328,681 aspirant migrants who had taken pre-approvals has also been halted. Similarly, the pandemic coronavirus infection has severely affected the migrants in countries of destination as well. COVID-19 has created serious problems on those migrants who are undocumented, domestic workers, workers whose contractual period is finished and those who were already in exploitative situation during migration process (NHRC, 2020).

The crisis in labour migration has consequences on remittance inflow — the main economic lifeline for Nepal's national and household economy. Nepal received NPR 879 billion, which

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<sup>4</sup> The 2011 census in Nepal had reported 1,921,494 absentee populations in the country (namely, 7.3% of total population, which is considered as proxy for foreign labour migrants). If the same trend were assumed for the estimated 30 million population of the country in 2020, the absentee population would be approximately 3 million. However, with the increased rate of mobility, the absentee population can be expected to have crossed the 3 million mark. In the year 2019/20 alone, DOFE had issued 508,825 (476,705 males, 32,123 females) labour permits.

is equivalent to about 25.4 per cent contribution to the GDP (IOM, 2019). There are still uncertainties as to the magnitude of decline in remittance inflow, but it is certain that remittance will decline. For example, ADB has estimated that Nepal may see 28.7 per cent contraction in remittance in 2020, highest in the developing Asia.<sup>5</sup> But Nepal's central bank, Nepal Rastra Bank, estimates that remittance inflow may not contract by such a large rate. It estimates that this could drop by about 15 per cent. This estimate is comparatively less than the World Bank's estimate of 20 per cent decline.<sup>6</sup> Despite these differing estimates, the global pandemic has pushed the already vulnerable migrants and their families further into deeper poverty. Most of them are returning empty-handed due to wage theft with nothing but a few personal belongings and the prospects of falling further into debt and poverty (Migrant Forum in Asia, 2020). Other problems they are facing include discrimination in treatment, inadequate quarantine facility, non-payment of salary, wage cut, layoff, job loss and being stranded. The major reasons of return of migrant workers can range from completion of contract period, job loss, voluntary return, amnesty granted by countries of destination to the undocumented migrants, among others.

Taking concerns for the safety and security of migrant workers, the Government of Nepal has developed guidelines for the repatriation of migrants in vulnerable conditions and the reintegration of returnee migrants. These issues are also the priorities of the Government as set out in the periodic plans and labour policies. For example, Nepal's Fifteenth Periodic Plan (2019/20-2023/24) has aimed at making foreign employment safe, respectable, free from exploitation at every stage of migration and resulting into maximum benefits. For this, bilateral agreements between countries, labour diplomacy and coordination of all stakeholders, including non-resident Nepali associations, have been emphasized. Even for the protection of migrants going to India, local governments are required to register them for the facilities of insurance and welfare funds.<sup>7</sup> The Government has two main policies to deal with migrant workers – National Labour Policy 2014 and Foreign Employment Policy 2012. These policies aim at promotion of employment opportunities within the country and an end to compulsion to migrate overseas for work, protection of labour in countries of destination and reducing their risks and vulnerabilities.

The Government's repatriation policy, as highlighted in the "repatriation guidelines", is focused on providing financial support to stranded Nepali workers abroad. As per the guidelines, workers who have not received air tickets to return home and other expenses from their host country, employer or recruiting agency shall be entitled to receive financial support.<sup>8</sup> The Government will use the Foreign Employment Welfare Fund for this purpose.

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<sup>5</sup> [www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/622796/covid-19-impact-migration-remittances-asia.pdf](http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/622796/covid-19-impact-migration-remittances-asia.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> [www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/22/world-bank-predicts-sharpest-decline-of-remittances-in-recent-history](http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/22/world-bank-predicts-sharpest-decline-of-remittances-in-recent-history).

<sup>7</sup> Fifteenth Periodic Plan (2019/20–2023/24), NPC, Government of Nepal (pp. 331–332).

<sup>8</sup> Nepali workers who lost their jobs within a year of departure and have to return to Nepal will receive the Government support equivalent to their ticket fare. Similarly, for those who migrated more than a year ago



As of 30 July 2020, 5,000 Nepali workers applied for support to return home. The process has also been initiated to repatriate 413 Nepali workers in detention centres in Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.<sup>9</sup> Nepali missions abroad are verifying applicants' statuses before recommending their names to the Government to provide them with airfares. Despite this policy, the Government has not yet set the timeline for repatriation. There is a worry that the process could take a long time with suggestion for fast tracking the process. The Government has allocated NPR 750 million for repatriating Nepali migrant workers who migrated through legal channels after contributing to the welfare fund. Employers of nearly 20,000 Nepali workers in various countries have agreed to pay for their air ticket after they were laid off amid the COVID-19 crisis. The Government has emphasized that the companies who lay off the workers should pay the airfare for their return. In such circumstances, the Government can play a pivotal role to provide support and guidance to migrant workers (IOM, 2020).

Until the third week of August 2020, a total of 52,251 people returned to the country on flights, even though it was estimated that over 200,000 Nepalis needed to be rescued and repatriated immediately.<sup>10</sup> There is also no actual record of major layoffs in many countries as it was reported. Initially, reports came out that nearly 20 per cent or 280,000 of the Nepali migrant workers abroad were at risk of losing their jobs because of the pandemic and will return home in the coming months.

Paying attention to the need for reintegration of returnee migrants, the Government announced in its annual budget of FY 2020/21 to create 700,000 jobs. Likewise, the Government has allocated NPR 4.34 billion to provide trainings to support the returnee migrants, job losers from the informal sector and the new labour force that enter in the market. These returnees and those who would not be able to migrate for work need support so that they can find or create employment. In this context, it is important to understand their current status, their plans if they return home and their expectations from the Government. It is for such an understanding that this survey has been conducted so that the support to be provided by the Government and other agencies matches the interests and expectations of migrant workers affected by the pandemic, helping eventually in their effective recovery and reintegration.

## **1.2 OBJECTIVES**

The overall objective of the assignment is to undertake a rapid assessment of the conditions of the migrant workers, especially in relation to their vulnerabilities, return intention, labour rights and social protection mechanism, changes in social perception, priority work sector

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will receive the Government support equivalent to 75 per cent of their ticket fares. Those who went abroad on re-entry permits will only get 50 per cent of their airfare covered.

<sup>9</sup> <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/08/07/nearly-5-000-nepali-workers-apply-to-return-home-on-government-support>.

<sup>10</sup> [https://ccmc.gov.np/ccmc\\_update/No.of%20Nepali%20Repatriated%202077.05.08.pdf](https://ccmc.gov.np/ccmc_update/No.of%20Nepali%20Repatriated%202077.05.08.pdf).

upon return, reintegration plan and the sector of work migrants are/were engaged in. Such understanding is to be made for three groups of migrants: current migrants (the migrants who are still in countries of destination, including India, GCC countries and Malaysia); returnee migrants; and aspirant migrants (the migrants who have received final labour approval but are waiting for lockdown to be lifted to migrate upon the confirmation of their respective employers).

## **1.3 METHODOLOGY**

### **Research design and approach**

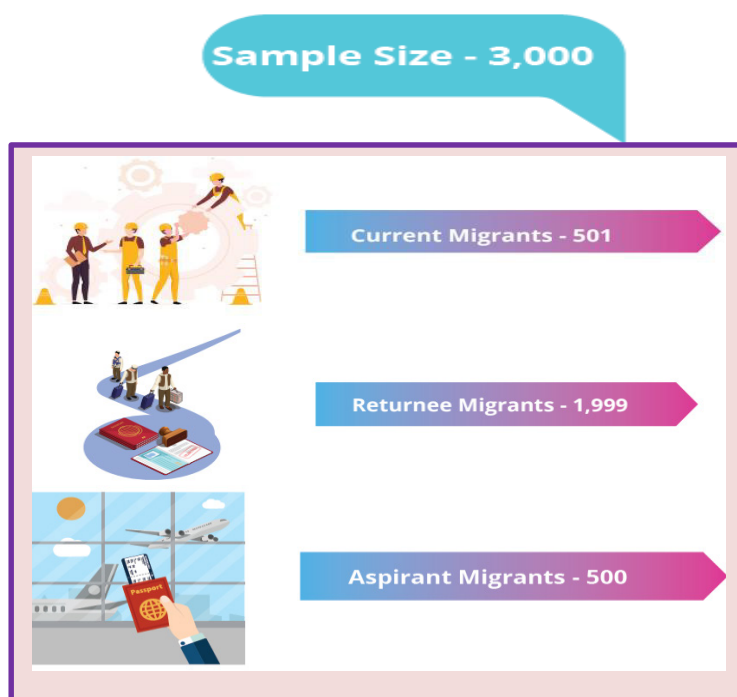
This survey was completed over a two week period, which commenced on 30 June 2020 and was completed on 15 July 2020. The survey mainly used a quantitative approach for generating reliable and valid data, which were cross-verified through desk reviews. Two methods – purposive sampling at the first stage, and randomization among the selected population – were employed to ensure the representation of respondents from different backgrounds. Before determining the sample size, consultations were held with relevant stakeholders such as NPC and IOM officials and sociologists, particularly on matters related to their expertise and the existing situation regarding the impact of COVID-19 on migrants. This discussion led to a conclusion that the size of 3,000 respondents was enough to make an understanding about the objectives of the study. Interviewees' data are as per the IOM Data Protection Principles.

### **Sampling effort**

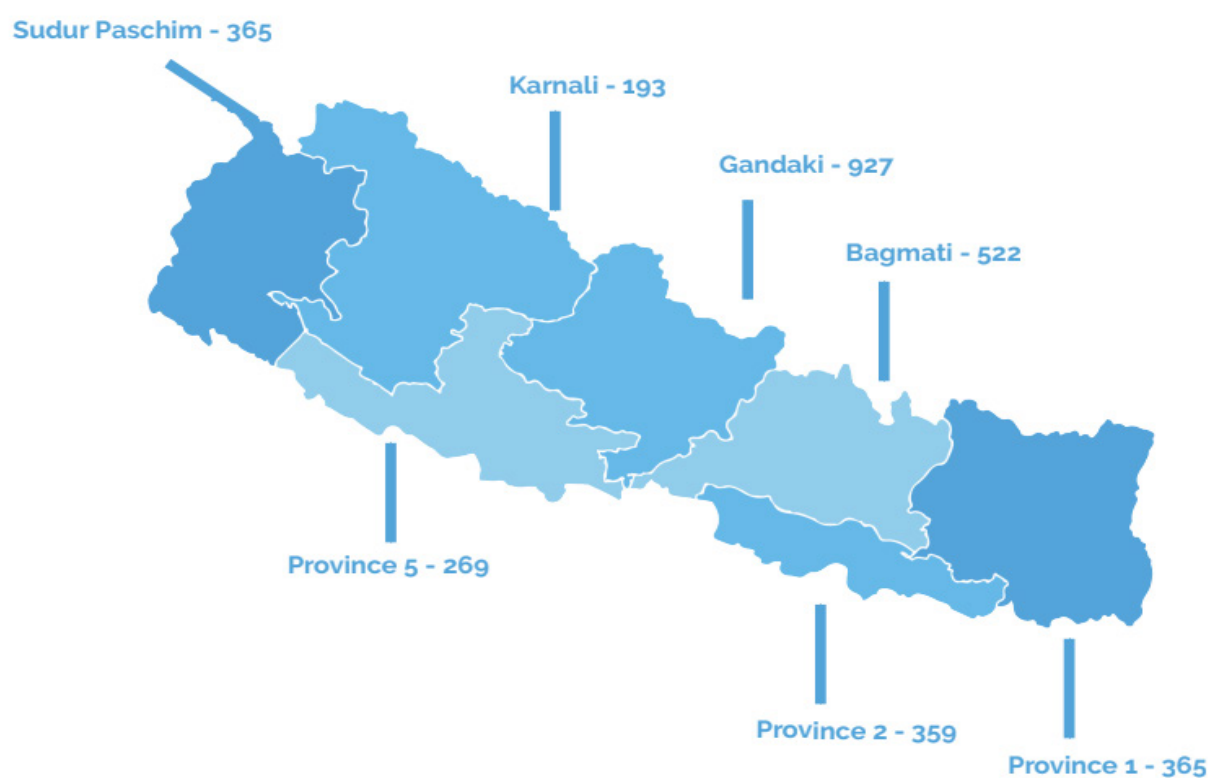
To select the sample size, Nepal Institute of Development Studies (NIDS) first obtained data from Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security and reviewed the data received from Central Bureau of Statistics. The total sample size was maintained at 3,000. Of those interviewed, 501 were current migrants residing in GCC countries, Malaysia, India and other countries; 500 were from among the aspirant group who had already taken final approvals from the Department of Foreign Employment and the remaining 1,999 were selected from a group of returnees, who had been back home from GCC countries, Malaysia, India and other countries. The respondents in each group were selected purposively.

A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted for selecting the required sample size. At the first stage, the records of the aspirant migrants with their contact numbers were accessed from the Department of Foreign Employment. Similarly, current migrants in the targeted countries were listed with their phone numbers or Viber based on records of Embassy of Nepal in the host countries and from migrants' associations formed in countries of destination. Snowball sampling was also applied to meet the required sample size.

## Sample size and survey participants



## Respondents by province



*Note:* This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by International Organization for Migration.

In the case of returnees, their names were prepared based on records of Holding Centres in Kathmandu, immigration office, concerned provincial offices, district administration offices, concerned local governments and from different networks and organizations, namely National Network for Safe migration, NEEDS Nepal (for the case of returnees in Sudur Paschim), Pravasi Nepali Coordination Committee, Pourakhi Nepal and Non-Resident Nepali Association.

### **Study tools**

Structured questionnaires (separate for each group) were prepared. Then, the questionnaires were administered by experienced interviewers after a pre-test. The questionnaires covered current situation of jobs, benefits, health care and safety measures and the issues of their human rights. Likewise, expectations of migrants in terms of their reintegration through support for employment and income generation were also covered.

### **Data collection and analysis**

Experienced telephone interviewers were assigned for this purpose so that the migrants would feel comfortable to respond to the questions and share their experiences. The survey was based on phone conversation with the returnees, aspirant and current migrants (mostly living in GCC, Malaysia and India). However, some current migrant workers are also from Japan, the Republic of Korea and Macao Special Administrative Region, China.

The collected data were cleaned and edited and again converted into SPSS and STATA for analysis. The required tables, charts and graphs were generated in line with the objective by adopting bivariate and multivariate analysis approaches.

### **Ethics and data protections principles**

The anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of respondents were maintained under IOM Data Protection Principles. The ethical issues were upheld and cultural aspects of respondents as well as society were strictly maintained.

## SECTION 2: KEY FINDINGS

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### 2.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS

#### Demographic characteristics of migrants in the sample

In the sample, about 10 per cent of the interviewees were females and 90 per cent were males. The proportion of female in the sample ranged from 8 per cent (current migrants) to 15 per cent (aspirant migrants). Among the returned migrants, about 10 per cent were females. This gender ratio in the sample is consistent with the whole population of migrants in Nepal. Nepal has witnessed an increase in the number of female migrants and they are gradually being recognized as important economic actors. However, the proportion of females in total migrant population is still quite low, close to 9 per cent (IOM, 2019).

This study shows that most of the migrants were youth. About 82 per cent of sample respondents (92% aspirant migrants, 80% returned migrants, 78% current migrants) were between the ages of 20 and 40 (see Annex I). Most of the migrants (70%) were married. A total of 83 per cent of the current migrants and 67 per cent of both the returnee migrants and the aspirant migrants were married. The proportion of migrants in other marital groups (divorced, separated, widowed) was nominal.

Among the sampled migrants overall, 38 per cent were Brahmins and Chettris, 32 per cent Janajatis, 21 per cent Dalits, 7 per cent Madhesis/Muslims and 2 per cent Tharus. Among the current migrants, 45 per cent were Brahmins and Chettris, 36 per cent Janajatis, 10 per cent Dalits, 6 per cent Madhesis/Muslims and 2 per cent Tharus. Among the returnee migrants, 38 per cent were Brahmins and Chettris, 28 per cent Janajatis, 25 per cent Dalits, 6 per cent Madhesis/Muslims and 1 per cent Tharus. A comparison between current and returnees of migrants shows that proportionately more Dalit migrants had to return to Nepal as compared to other groups.

Among the aspirant migrants, 42 per cent were Janajatis, 31 per cent Brahmins and Chettris, 12 per cent Dalits, 8 per cent Madhesis/Muslims and 3 per cent Tharus. This gives an indication of a higher participation of Janajatis in recent migration.

Most of the migrants had low educational statuses. A total of 78 per cent of them had obtained secondary or less education; 18 per cent had intermediate (or 10+2) level of education; 4 per cent had a bachelor's degree; and, 1 per cent had earned master's or above degree. Of the total respondents, 5 per cent migrants were illiterate and 7 per cent had studied up to primary level. Among the current migrants, 58 per cent had secondary education or lower, 34 per cent had intermediate level or equivalent, 6 per cent had a bachelor's degree and 2 per cent had a master's degree or above.

The same figures for returnees were: 83 per cent, 21 per cent, 3 per cent and less than 1 per cent, respectively. In the aspirant migrants' group, the respective figures were: 75 per cent, 21 per cent, 4 per cent and 1 per cent.

### **Regional background of migrants**

In total, a large share of migrants (31%) were from Gandaki Province, followed by Bagmati (about 17%), Provinces 1 and 2 (12% each), Province 5 (9%), Karnali Province (6%) and Sudur Paschim Province (12%).

Among current migrants, 29 per cent were from Province 1 followed by Gandaki (28%), Bagmati (17%), Province 5 (16%), Karnali (1%) and Sudur Paschim (2%). Likewise, 36 per cent returnee migrants were from Gandaki followed by Sudur Paschim (16%), Bagmati (15%), Province 2 (13%), Karnali (9%), Province 5 (6%) and Province 1 (5%).

An assessment of regional background of current and returnee migrants gives an interesting picture. A large number of migrants from Province 1 seem to stay on in countries of destination. On the other, there were more migrants in Karnali and Sudur Paschim who returned home. This could be because migrants from these two Provinces mostly go to India and they returned home during the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in India. Likewise, the proportion of aspirant migrants was 28 per cent from Bagmati Province followed by Province 1 (25%), Gandaki Province and Province 5 (14% each), Province 2 (12%), Sudur Paschim (6%) and Karnali (2%).

### **Duration of stay in destination**

An overwhelming 61 per cent of the returnee migrants stayed in countries of destination for less than a year. On the other, about 41 per cent current migrants worked for less than a year. The ratio of migrant respondents staying for more than two years was relatively lower (approximately 25%). For almost all (99%) who received labour permits, the duration of the contract period was 24 months.

### **Destination countries**

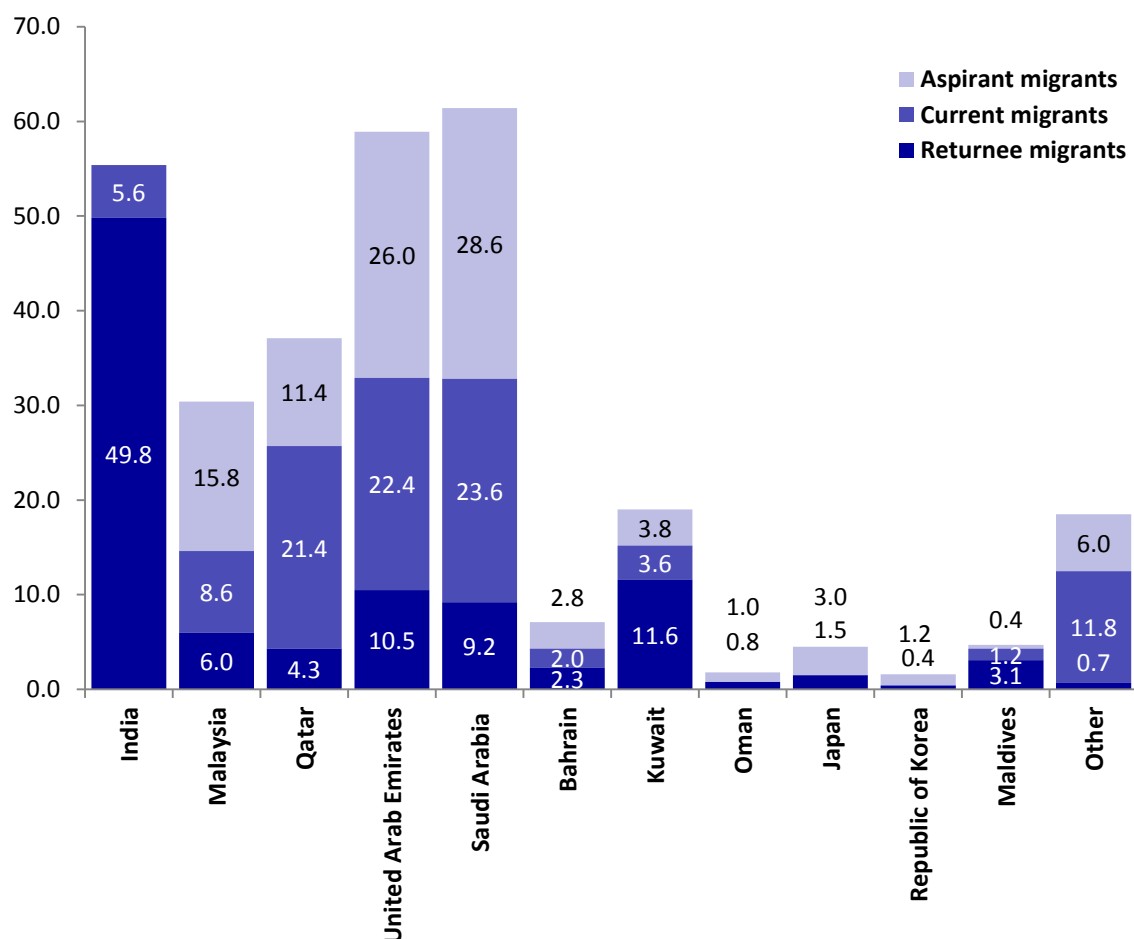
Among the current migrants, 24 per cent were in Saudi Arabia, 22 per cent in United Arab Emirates, 21 per cent in Qatar, 9 per cent in Malaysia and 6 per cent in India. Equal 4 per cent of current migrants were in Thailand and Kuwait (Figure 1).

Among the returnees, half of them had returned from India, 12 per cent from Kuwait, 11 per cent from United Arab Emirates, 9 per cent from the Saudi Arabia and 6 per cent from Malaysia. The return from India could be attributed to open borders, Nepal's geographical proximity and a huge number of seasonal migrants working in the Indian cities.

About 29 per cent aspirant migrants were prepared to go to Saudi Arabia, 26 per cent to United Arab Emirates, 16 per cent to Malaysia, 11 per cent to Qatar and 4 per cent to

Kuwait. Other countries included Japan (3.0%), Bahrain (2.8%), the Republic of Korea (1.2%), Oman (1.0%) and the Maldives (0.4%).

**Figure 1: Percentage of migrants in different destination countries**

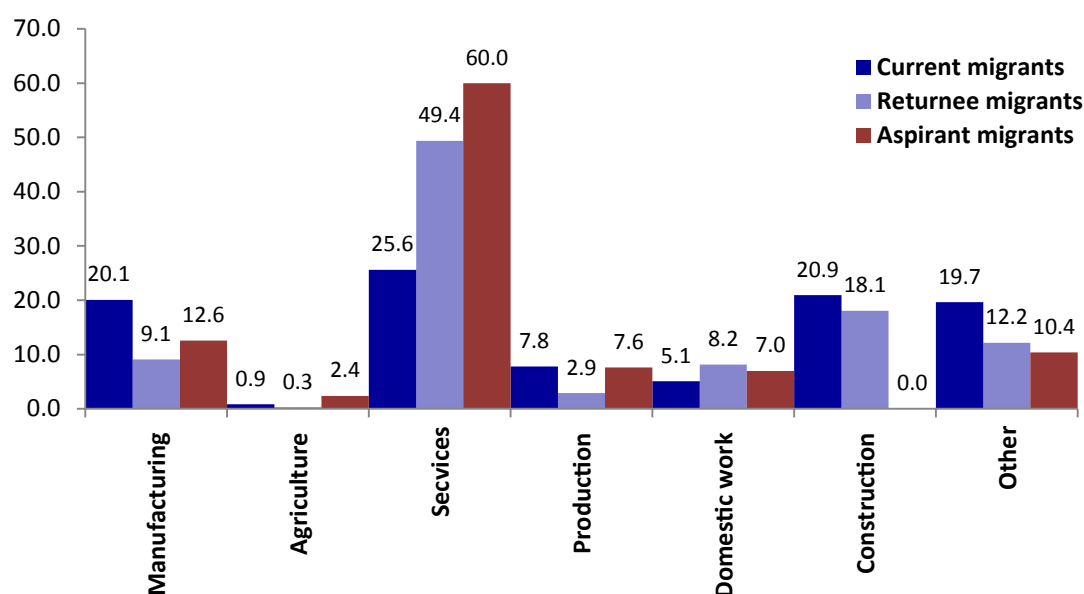


### Occupational change

Most of the current migrants were employed in service, construction and manufacturing (about 20% each) sectors. In the production sector, 8 per cent of them were employed, 6 per cent were serving as security personnel and 5 per cent as domestic help. Likewise, 1 per cent of them were working in agriculture. A majority (56%) of the returnee migrants were employed in the hospitality sector, followed by construction (13%) and manufacturing (8%).

From the comparison of occupations of these two groups, returnees were mostly employed in hospitality sector and were less involved in manufacturing sectors. This indicates that service sector was the hardest hit due to COVID-19 resulting in job losses of Nepali migrants. Startlingly, 52 per cent of aspirant migrants had job in service sector followed by manufacturing (13%), production and domestic work (7% each), security guard (8%) and agriculture (2%). This could also mean that aspirant migrants may not get employed in the stated occupation as 'service sector' as it seemed to be hardest hit by the crisis (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Occupation of migrants in different groups in destination countries**

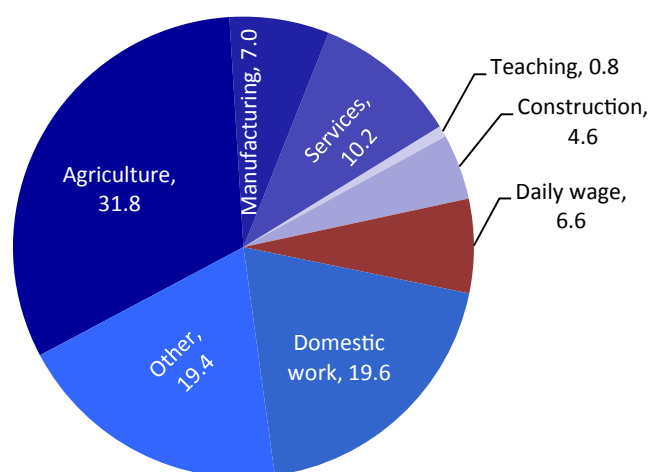


### Current occupations in Nepal and reasons for migration

The current occupations of aspirant migrants indicate the occupational opportunities in Nepal. Agriculture and domestic works seem to employ most of the aspirant migrants because 32 per cent and 20 per cent of the respondents stated those occupations, respectively. About 10 per cent were employed in services, 7 per cent in manufacturing, 5 per cent in construction and less than 1 per cent in teaching (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Current occupation of aspirant migrants**

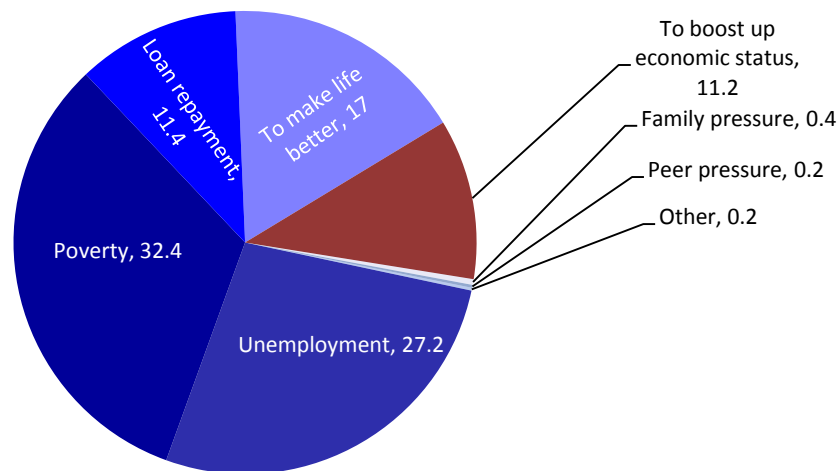
Push factors were most crucial for the people to migrate for foreign employment. For example, about 32 per cent of aspirant migrants stated “poverty” and 27 per cent “unemployment” as major reasons for their migration. The other reasons stated were “to make life better” (17%), to repay loans (11%) and to better economic status (11%). A few others stated family pressure and peer pressure (0.4% and 0.2%, respectively) as the reasons to migrate. Therefore, the main reason of migration was for income making.



Contrary to the popular assumption, migration of youth is not seen to be induced by social reason (Figure 4).



**Figure 4: Main reasons of plans for migration**

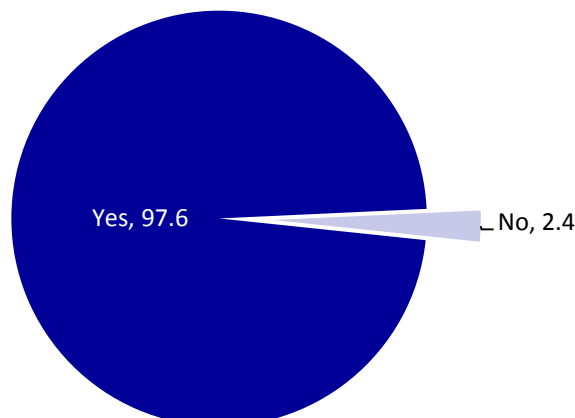


## **2.2 MIGRATION VULNERABILITIES AND SUPPORT**

### **Impact of COVID-19 on migrants and their job status**

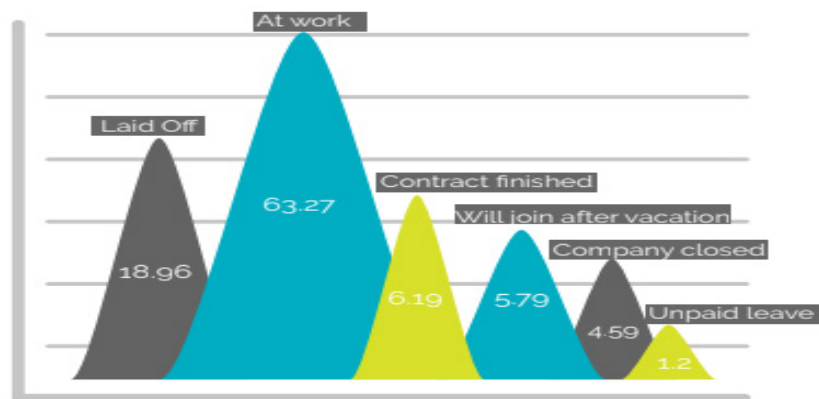
Almost all (98%) migrants stated that they have been affected by COVID-19 in the countries of destination (Figure 5). Similarly, as stated by current migrants, the problem looms large for their job security after the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Figure 5: Felt effect of COVID-19 at current countries of destination**



Even though all sampled current migrants are still in the countries of destination, about 63 per cent are at work (Figure 6) and the remaining 37 per cent are without work. Some were laid off, some may re-join after a “vacation” period, and for some, the companies were closed. The job status of male and female is similar but “layoffs” were more common among female migrant workers (26%).

**Figure 6: Current job status in the present country of destination**

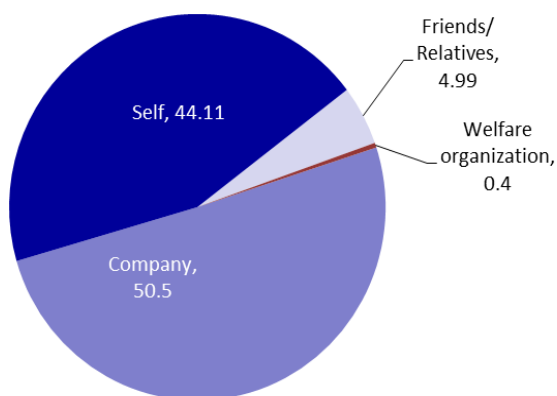


### Source of support and change in working hours after COVID-19 in destination countries

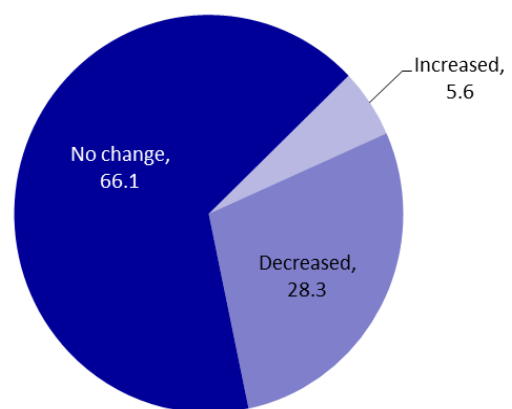
For the migrants who were unemployed yet staying in countries of destination, bearing the cost of living on their own is a big problem. Nevertheless, about 51 per cent of these migrants stated that the cost of living is borne by the company. About 44 per cent migrants still had to support themselves, 5 per cent received support from friends and relatives, and 0.4 per cent from welfare agencies (Figure 7).

Migrants who are working in countries of destination experienced changes in working hours after the COVID-19 pandemic but most of those still in jobs have not faced a decline in working hours. This is one of the reasons why they are still working (Figure 8). About 66 per cent of the current migrants stated that there has been no change in their working hours whereas 28 per cent reported decrease in working hours.

**Figure 7: Living cost of current migrants borne by different agencies**

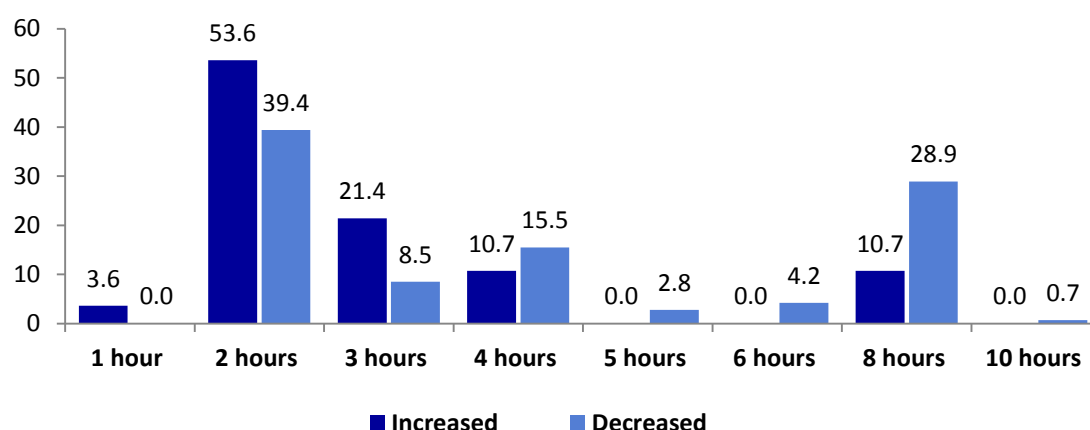


**Figure 8: Change in working hours after COVID-19**



For those who experienced a change in working hours, a majority (54%) said it increased by 2 hours and 39 per cent reported that it decreased by 2 hours a day (Figure 9). On an average, working hours increased by 3 hours and decreased by 4.4 hours.

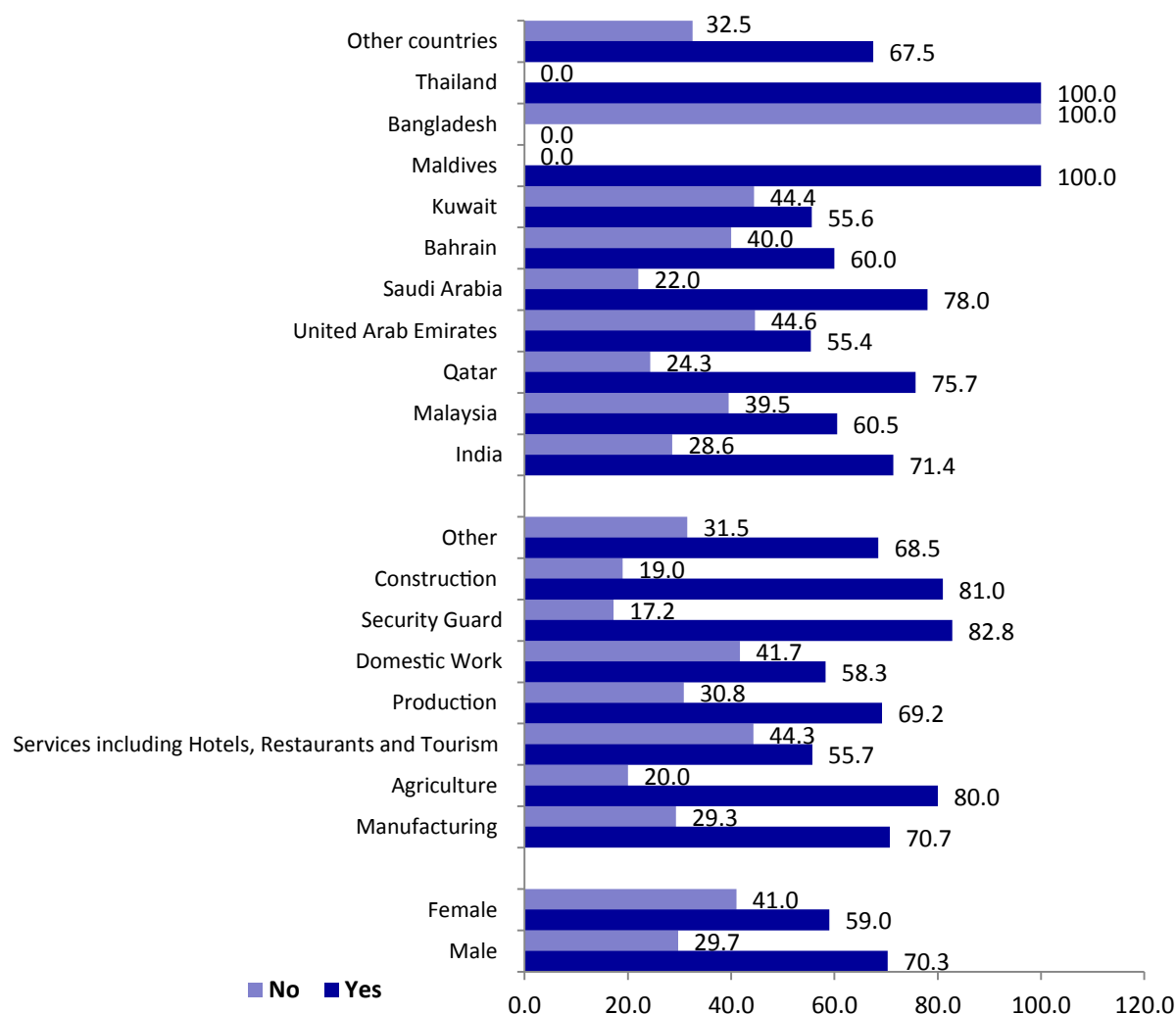
**Figure 9: Change in daily working hours after COVID-19**



### Regularity in payments

A majority of current migrants (70%) said they got regular payments. About 30 per cent reported that they did not get timely payments (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Regularity of salary payments by destination country, work sector and gender**



Higher numbers of female migrant workers did not receive a regular salary as compared to their male counterparts. More migrants engaged in domestic works did not receive regular payments as compared to other occupations. In terms of countries, more migrants (40% to 45%) in United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain and Malaysia stated that they were not paid in time. Those working in formal and organized sectors were largely paid in a timely manner, but this was not the case in informal and unorganized sectors.

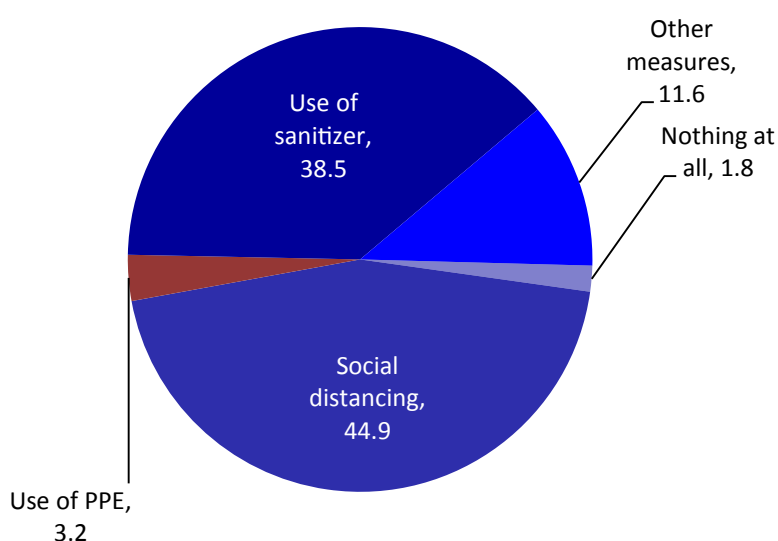
### 2.3 MIGRANTS' HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

Different types of safety measures were reported to be used in the workplace by current migrants (Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Safety measures adopted by current migrants**

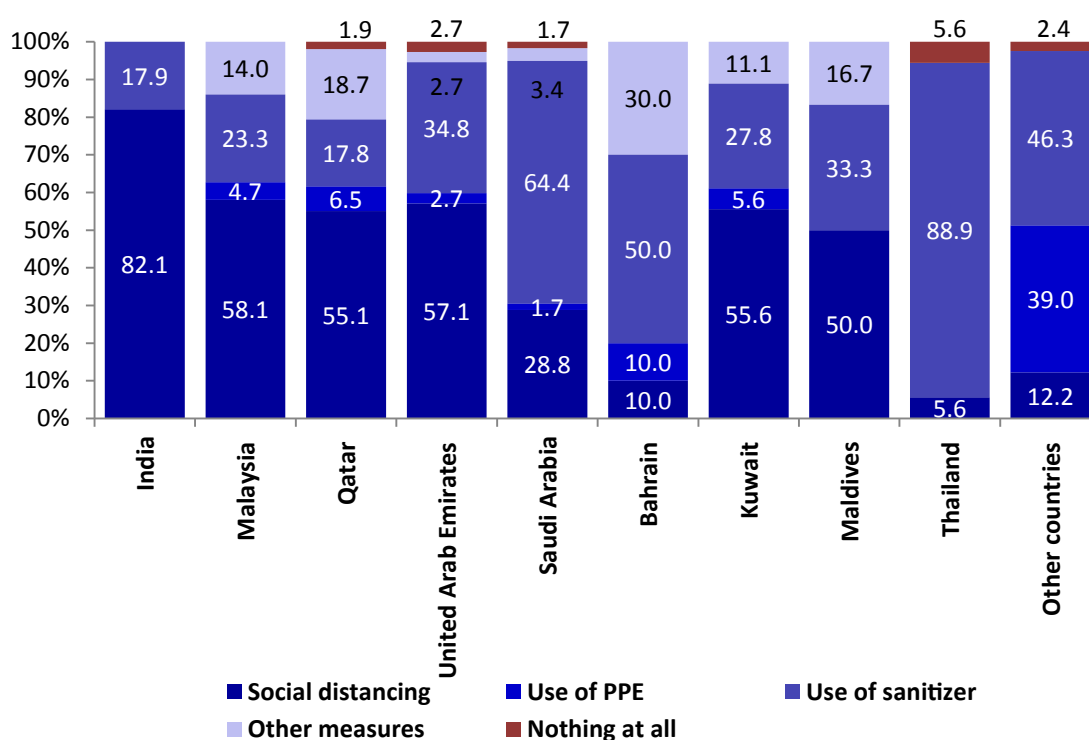
Almost all (98%) current migrants reported that they used one or another safety measure. Only 2 per cent of the respondents stated they did not use any safety measures. Nearly 39 per cent of them used sanitizer, 45 per cent followed social distancing, 12 per cent used “other” measures and 3 per cent used PPE.

Social distancing was found to be a primary safety measure used in India. Other countries that prioritized



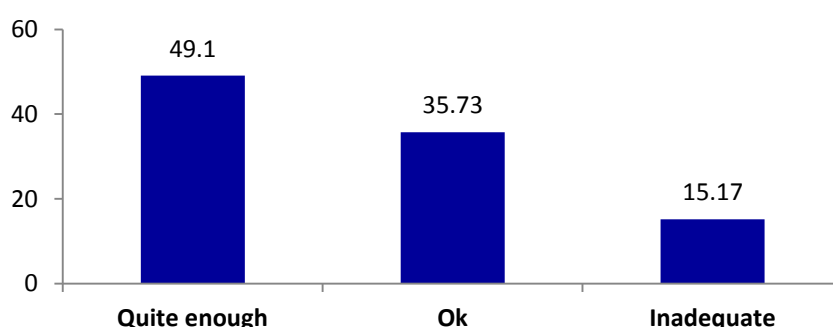
social distancing for migrants include Malaysia, Qatar, Kuwait and the Maldives. In Thailand, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, the “use of sanitizer” was more common. PPE were used in Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Malaysia but the proportion of migrants using this was relatively less (from 3% to 10% in individual countries) (Figure 12).

**Figure 12: Safety measures adopted by current migrants at work places**



Slightly less than half (49%) of the current migrants reported that health and safety conditions in the workplace were quite enough, 36 per cent reported that they were good enough and 15 per cent reported that they were inadequate (Figure 13).

**Figure 13: Status of health and safety at workplace**



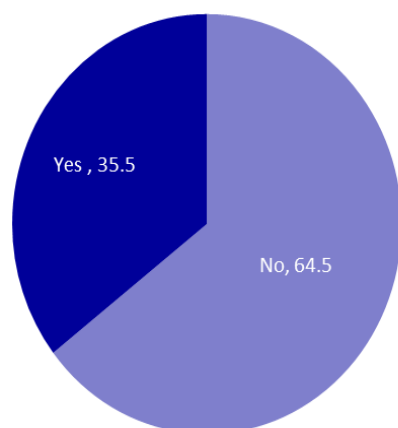
Relatively more migrants in the construction and service sectors did not use any safety measures. Social distancing was common among males and sanitizer among females.

### Residential status of migrants

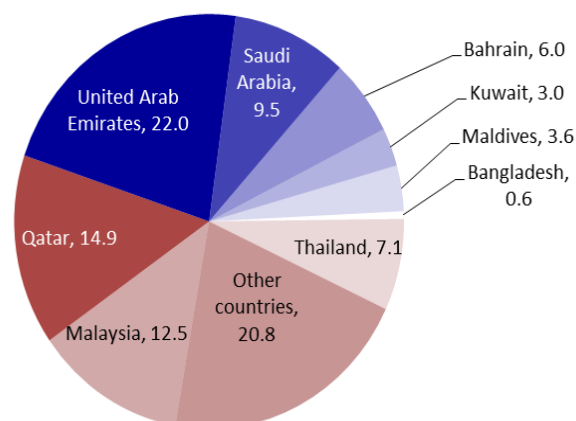
About 36 per cent of the current migrants stated that their visa has expired (Figure 14). This was a key reason for the current migrants to get stuck in the countries of destination. About 22 per cent of current migrants had visas expired in United Arab Emirates, 15 per cent in Qatar, 13 per cent in Malaysia, 10 per cent in Saudi Arabia, 7 per cent in Thailand, 6 per cent

in Bahrain, 4 per cent in the Maldives, 3 per cent in Kuwait and 1 per cent in Bangladesh (Figure 15).

**Figure 14: Visa expiration of current migrants**

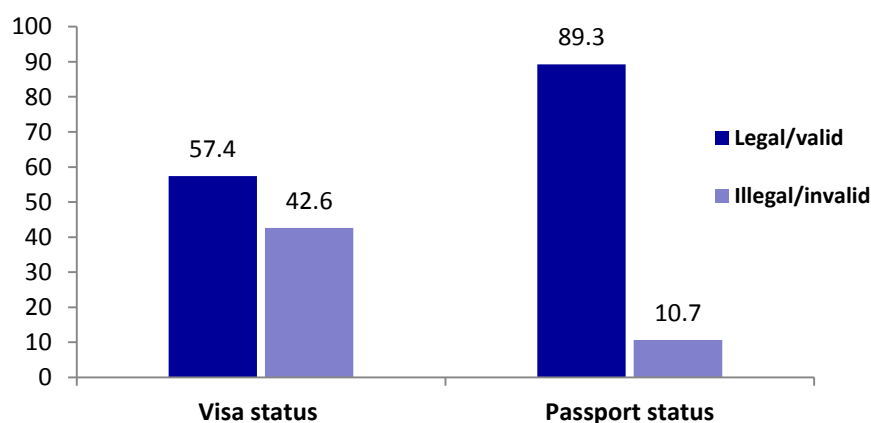


**Figure 15: Visa expiration of current migrants by country**



Among the returnees, 43 per cent were in legally invalid statuses with regards to visas. About 11 per cent of the returnee migrants had invalid passport statuses (Figure 16).

**Figure 16: Validity status of returnee migrant in foreign land**



## 2.4 SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEME FOR CURRENT MIGRANTS

Bangladesh, Kuwait, India and Malaysia were reported as the countries providing little in terms of social security coverage for migrants. Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and United Arab Emirates were relatively better in providing social security (Table 1).

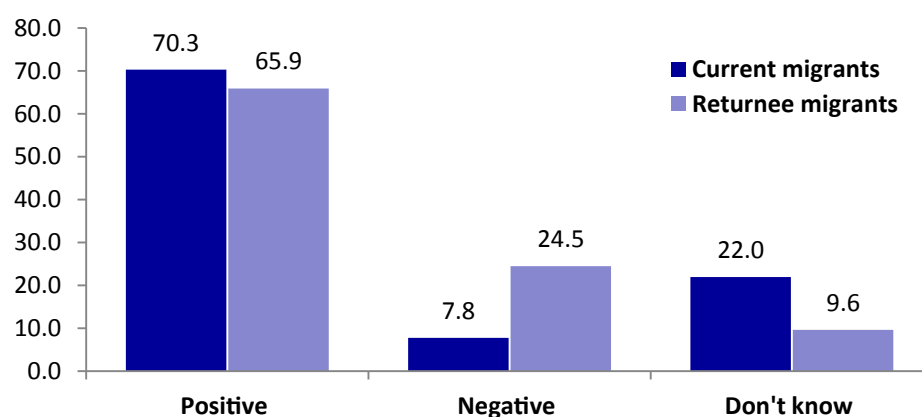
**Table 1: Social security schemes received by current migrants (%)**

Country	Insurance	Medical service	Economic support	Not at all
India	21.4	17.9	0.0	60.7
Malaysia	30.2	16.3	0.0	53.5
Qatar	30.8	47.7	0.9	20.6
United Arab Emirates	33.9	17.9	0.0	48.2
Saudi Arabia	29.7	44.9	1.7	23.7
Bahrain	0.0	70.0	0.0	30.0
Kuwait	0.0	11.1	5.6	83.3
Maldives	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bangladesh	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Thailand	50.0	38.9	0.0	11.1
Other	42.5	15.0	5.0	37.5

### Treatment of migrant workers in destination countries

The majority of current and returnee migrants (70% and 66%, respectively) reported that they were treated with respect and empathy while working in countries of destination. However, about 8 per cent current migrants and about 25 per cent returnee migrants reported that they were disrespected by the local population in countries of destination. A few respondents were ambivalent on this question (Figure 17).

**Figure 17: Treatment by locals at place of destination and home land**



## 2.5 CHALLENGES FACED BY MIGRANTS

### Challenges in countries of destination

In the wake of COVID-19, migrants faced various challenges (Figure 18). Though about 64 per cent migrants reported that they did not experience challenges in countries of destination, other migrants said they faced various issues.

**Figure 18: Different challenges faced by migrants currently residing abroad**



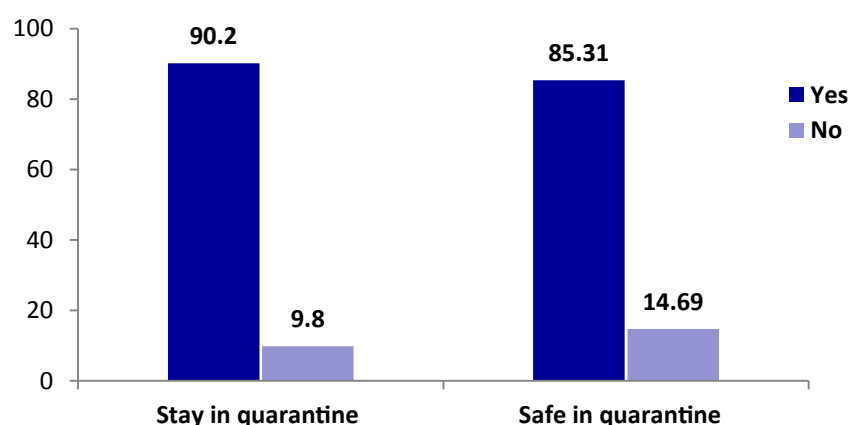
21 per cent faced economic insecurity – the main challenge as reported by migrants; 7 per cent faced health related issues (mainly hypertension and depression too); 6 per cent had psychological issues related to “fear”; Slightly less than one per cent had experienced loneliness.

### Problems in quarantine facilities and local communities upon return to Nepal

Returnee migrants were asked to report on quarantine facilities upon their arrival back to Nepal and the treatment they received in their local communities.

About 90 per cent of the returnees stayed in quarantine facilities. Of those staying in quarantine facilities, 85 per cent reported that it was safe (Figure 19).

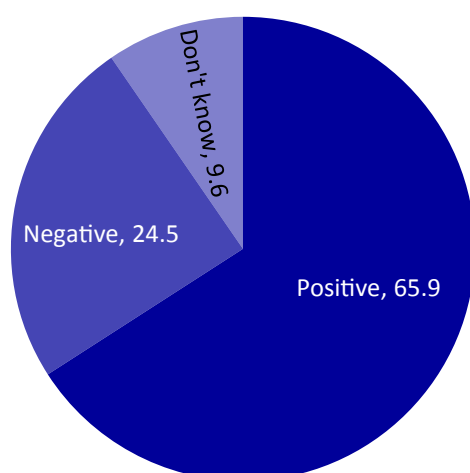
**Figure 19: Quarantine experience of returnee migrants (%)**



One in four (25%) returnee migrants reported that they were not treated positively in their communities mainly because they perceived that the coronavirus infection was taking place due to migrants. Two in three migrants reported that they were treated with respect and empathy (Figure 20).



**Figure 20: Perceived behaviours of local people at home country to returnee migrants**

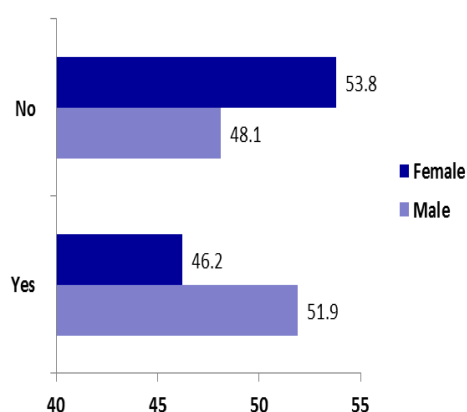


## 2.6 RETURN AND REINTEGRATION PLANS

### Return plans of current migrants

About 52 per cent of the current migrants reported an interest in returning to Nepal due to COVID-19. More males (51.9%) expressed a desire to return home, while comparatively fewer females (46.2%) expressed a desire to return home (Figure 21). This is attributed to the Government's provision needing legal and valid documents for migrants to return home. That was not likely for the female migrants as they landed in the countries of destination from other routes than Nepal's only international airport. Likewise, some were found to have worked as domestic workers and in informal sectors without valid documents. Countries from where current migrants wanted to return, in order of frequency, are: Bangladesh (100%), Kuwait (78%), Malaysia (77%), United Arab Emirates (55%), Saudi Arabia (51%), Thailand (50%), Qatar (42%), Bahrain (40%) and India (36%). No one working in the Maldives wanted to return (Figure 22).

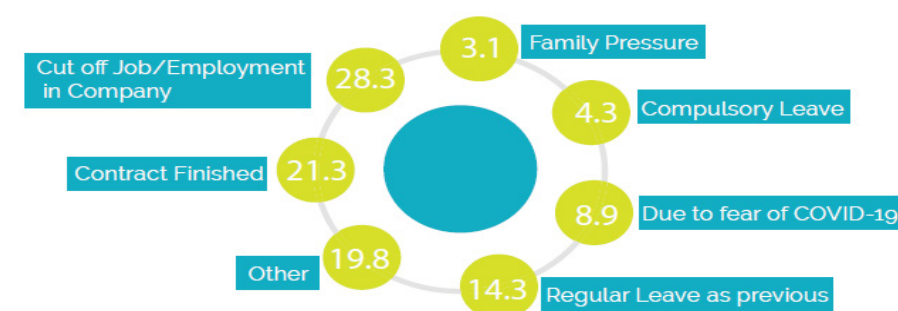
**Figure 21: Return plan of current migrants by gender**



**Figure 22: Return plan of current migrants by countries of destination**

Respondents from the current category reported several reasons for their will to return to Nepal (Figure 23).

**Figure 23: Main reasons of return plan to homeland**



- Cessation of employment in the company (28% respondents);
- Contract over (21%) and Regular leave (14%);
- Due to fear of COVID-19 (9%);
- Compulsory leave (4%);
- Family pressure (3%) and others (20%).

In proportion, more migrants employed in service, manufacturing, domestic work and agriculture sectors have developed their return plans.

### Aspirations of current migrants on economic activities

About 40 per cent of the current migrants expressed a desire to start their own business. About 30 per cent of them wanted to continue traditional agriculture and 20 per cent to pursue modern farming. Only a few migrants opted for entrepreneurship (Table 2). This leads to a conclusion that almost half of the migrants wanted to get involved in farming upon return to Nepal.

**Table 2: Main priority sectors of current migrants after return (%)**

Country	Run own business	Involved in agriculture (traditional)	Involved in agriculture (modern)	Start entrepreneurship	Stay idle	Other
India	39.29	14.29	0	0	0	46.43
Malaysia	18.6	39.53	20.93	4.65	6.98	9.3
Qatar	33.64	30.84	25.23	2.8	4.67	2.8
United Arab Emirates	47.32	23.21	8.93	5.36	1.79	13.39
Saudi Arabia	49.15	25.42	14.41	0	0.85	10.17
Bahrain	50	10	30	0	0	10
Kuwait	33.33	16.67	16.67	11.11	11.11	11.11
Maldives	66.67	0	33.33	0	0	0
Bangladesh	0	0	0	0	0	100
Thailand	66.67	0	16.67	0	5.56	11.11
Other countries	47.5	5	30	5	0	12.5

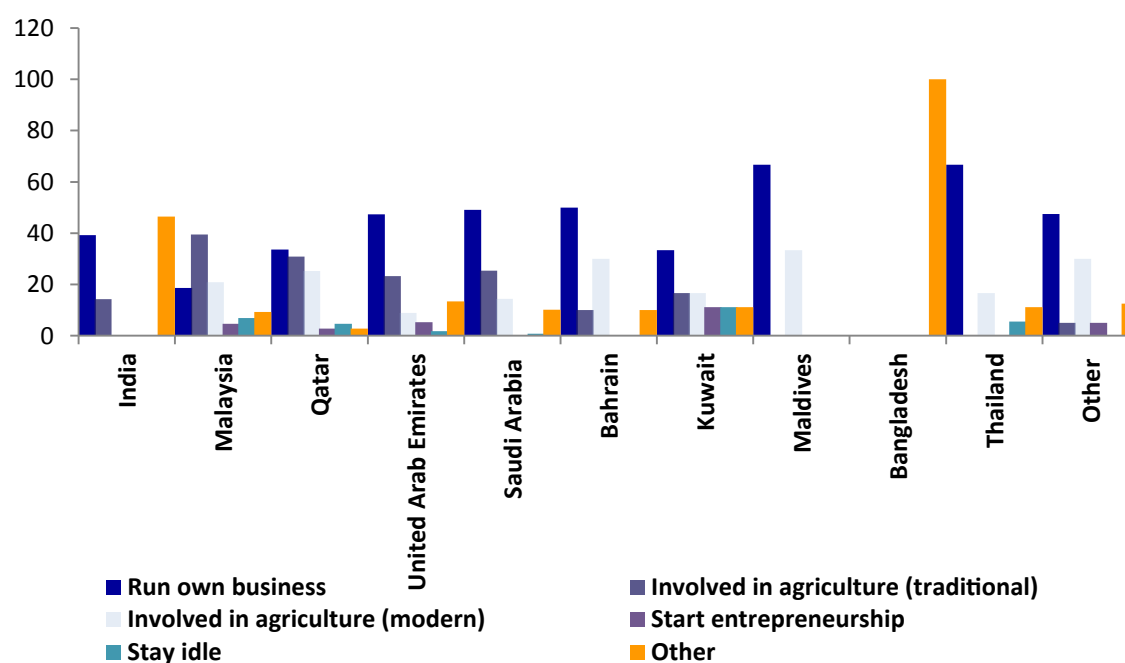
### Box 1: A current migrant aspiring to do beekeeping and poultry farming upon return

I had pretty good income before COVID-19. But, my salary and working hours are halved now. Many of my friends from other companies have also shared the same stories. I heard that my job here in the factory is in crisis. I worked for almost two years in this country and the situations have hugely changed after Coronavirus infection.

After the outbreak of this virus, life is not good here and income is very limited. Now, I will go back to my home anytime soon. I am thinking of beginning beekeeping and poultry farming. Back in my village in Chitwan, there is good possibility of beekeeping while poultry farming is already an established business there. I can learn something from my villagers also if I start a poultry farm. I can grow my business well if I get financing from banks and financial institutions. Also, I wish my local government will ensure good markets for my products because marketing is a huge challenge for the people like me.

Response of migrants working in all countries showed a similar trend. They preferred to set up their own business followed by traditional farming and modern farming. Only in case of migrants working in Malaysia, this was slightly different and most of them wanted to get involved in farming than owning a business (Figure 24).

**Figure 24: Main priority sectors of current migrants after return to Nepal**



### Box 2: A current migrant wants to be involved in agriculture after return

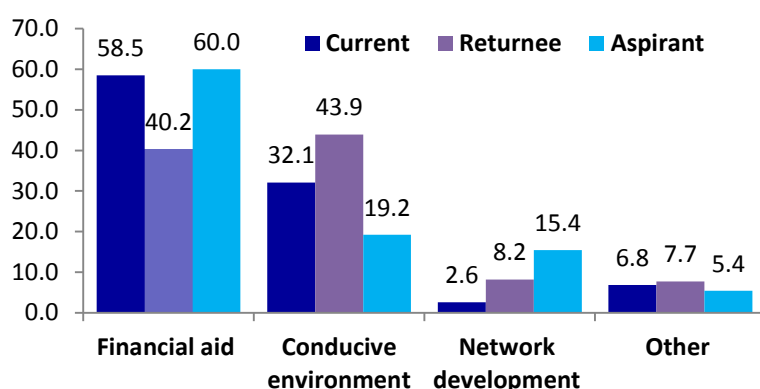
I am in Qatar for past one and a half years. Given the pandemic COVID-19, I lost my job after the closure of business here. Now, I and my friends are staying in the company's residential apartment for almost three months on. I have no interest to stay here idle and the company manager has told us to stay at home until further notice.

In this circumstance, I wish to go back to Nepal. Upon reaching my village in Kaski district, I will opt for farming. If I get some technical assistance from my local level or other institutions, I also plan to begin commercial farming. We can grow plenty of carrots, coriander and other seasonal as well as off-seasonal vegetables. I have also talked to my family members over phone about this issue. It would do better if I get subsidized loan and some short-term orientations on vegetable and crop productions.

## Expectations from the Government of Nepal

Overall, the migrants expected helps from the Government. In order of priority, some 55 per cent expected the Government help in financial matters (soft loans, seed money and grants), about 34 per cent expected a conducive environment (appropriate law, policy and easy procedures) and network development for business and entrepreneurship (about 9%) (Figure 25).

**Figure 25: Main expectations from the Government**

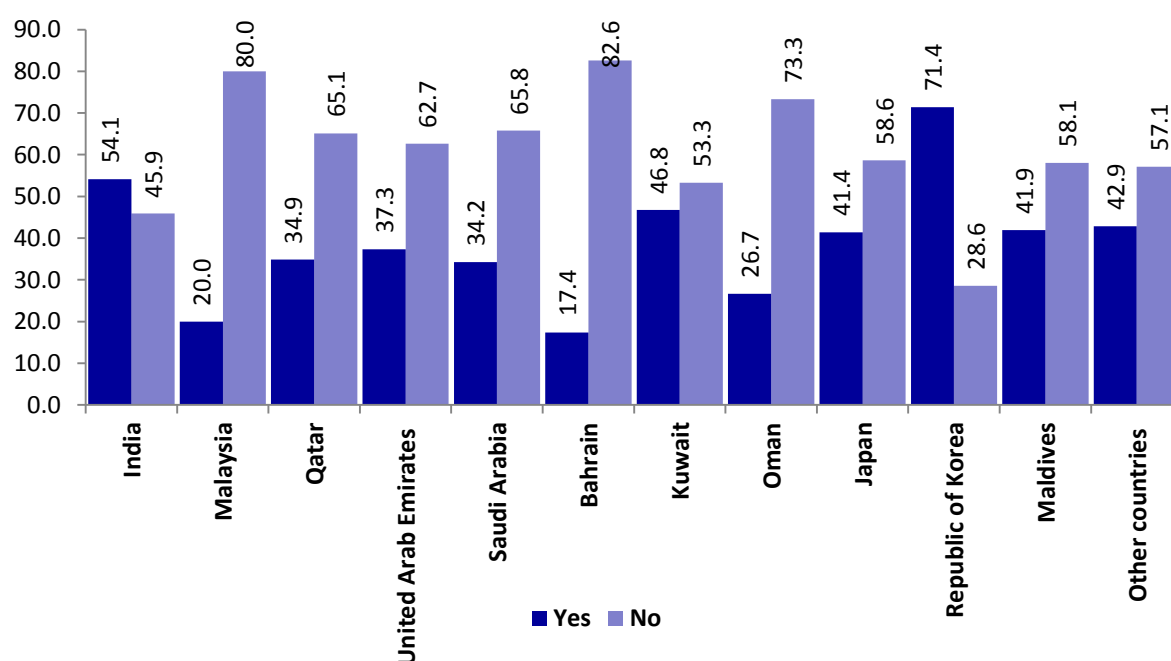


Proportionately more current and aspirant migrants prioritized "financial help" followed by "conducive environment" and "network development". Returnee migrants prioritized conducive environment followed by financial help and network development.

## 2.7 RETURNEE MIGRANTS: PLANS AND ASPIRATIONS

Despite the problems that led to the return, still slightly more than 50 per cent of the returnee migrants have made return plans to work in countries of destination. Following findings were received from their responses (Figure 26):

**Figure 26: Having return plan of returnee migrants**



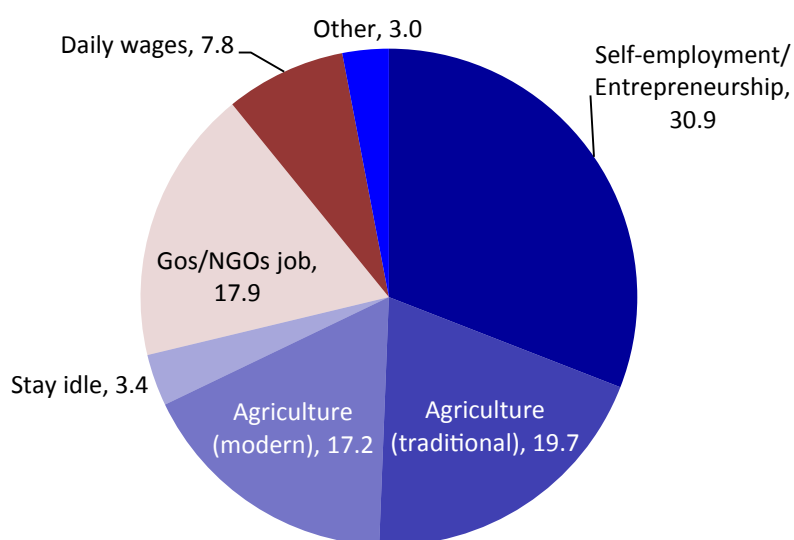
- In countries considered safer, proportionately more returnee migrants want remigration;
- It is interesting that 54 per cent returning from India have made return plans;
- The Republic of Korea is a country where most of the returnee migrants want to return (71%);
- Countries least preferred for the return include Bahrain (17% want to return), Malaysia (20%), Oman (27%), Saudi Arabia (34%), Qatar (35%), United Arab Emirates (37%), the Maldives (42%), Japan (41%) and Kuwait (47%).

The main reasons for remigration plans were in order of importance: in search of employment opportunities (57%), poverty (28%), low income (10%) and family pressure (2%). This also indicates that lack of job opportunities in the homeland was the key reason for remigration (Figure 27).

**Figure 27: Main reasons of return intentions**



**Figure 28: Main aspirations of returnee migrants who do not have remigration plans**

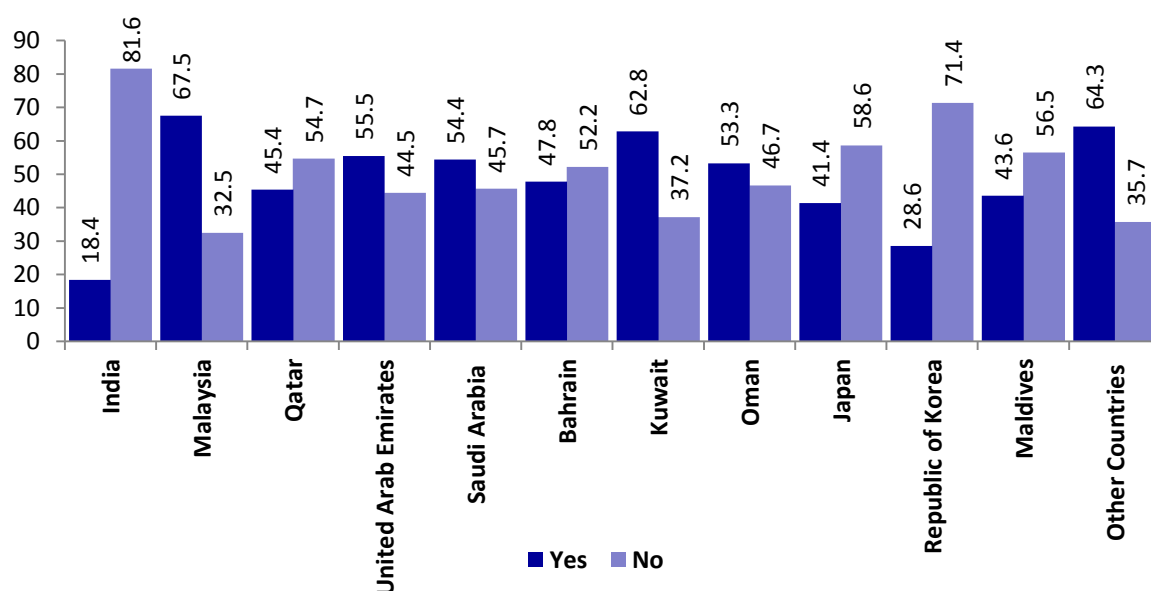


Migrants not having return plans have some aspirations. Figure 28 reveals that most of the returnee migrants (37%) want to work in farming – 19.7 per cent in traditional farming and 17.2 per cent in modern farming. Similarly, “self-employment” was second important aspiration (31%) followed by “GOs/NGOs job”, which was aspired by 18 per cent whereas only 8 per cent returnee migrants have aspiration to get involved in daily wages.

## 2.8 STATUS OF LOANS

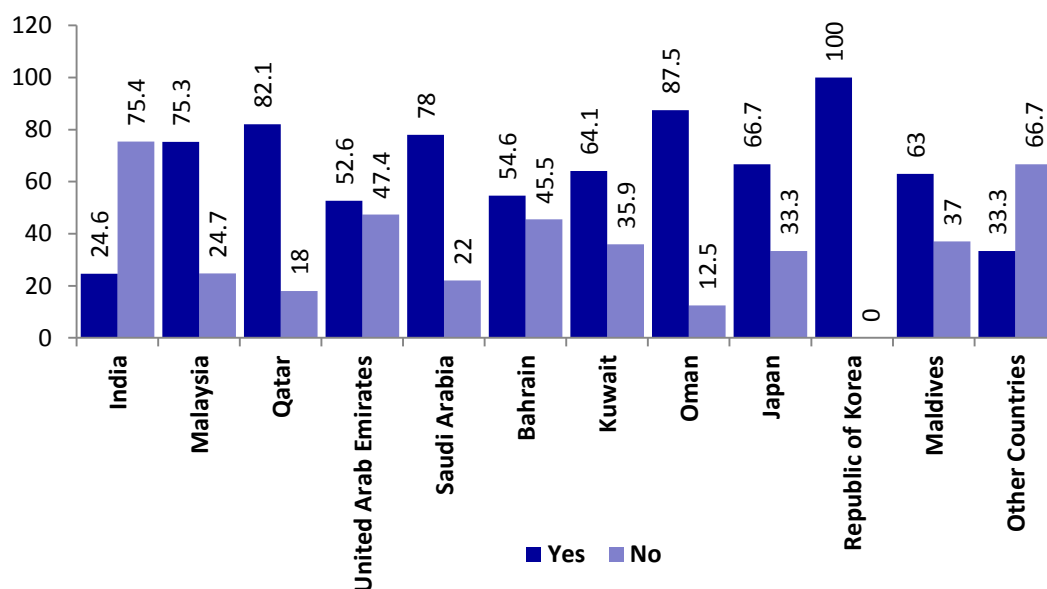
Loans are a major burden for the migrant workers. The returnee migrants reported that most of them (around 60%) had taken out a loan to pay migration costs and fees. Only a few migrants (18%) returning from India had taken out loans while more returnee migrants from Malaysia (67%), Kuwait (63%), United Arab Emirates (55%), Saudi Arabia (54%) and Oman (53%) had taken out loans. In the case of returnees from other countries including Qatar, Bahrain, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Maldives, between 40 and 50 per cent had taken out loans (Figure 29).

**Figure 29: Status of loans taken out by returnee migrants by country of destination**



Almost 60 per cent of the returnee migrants had paid off their loans (Figure 30).

**Figure 30: Status of loans paid by returnee migrants by country of destination**



All returnee migrants from the Republic of Korea had paid off their loans, whereas 1 in 4 returnee migrants from India had paid off the loans. A large proportion of returnee migrants from Oman (88%), Qatar (82%), the Saudi Arabia (78%) and Malaysia (75%) had paid off their loans. Likewise, returnees from Japan (67%), Kuwait (64%) and the Maldives (63%) also paid off their loans. Likewise, slightly more than half of the returnees from Bahrain (55%) and United Arab Emirates (53%) had paid off their loans.

## 2.9 PRIORITY AREAS OF RETURNEE MIGRANTS

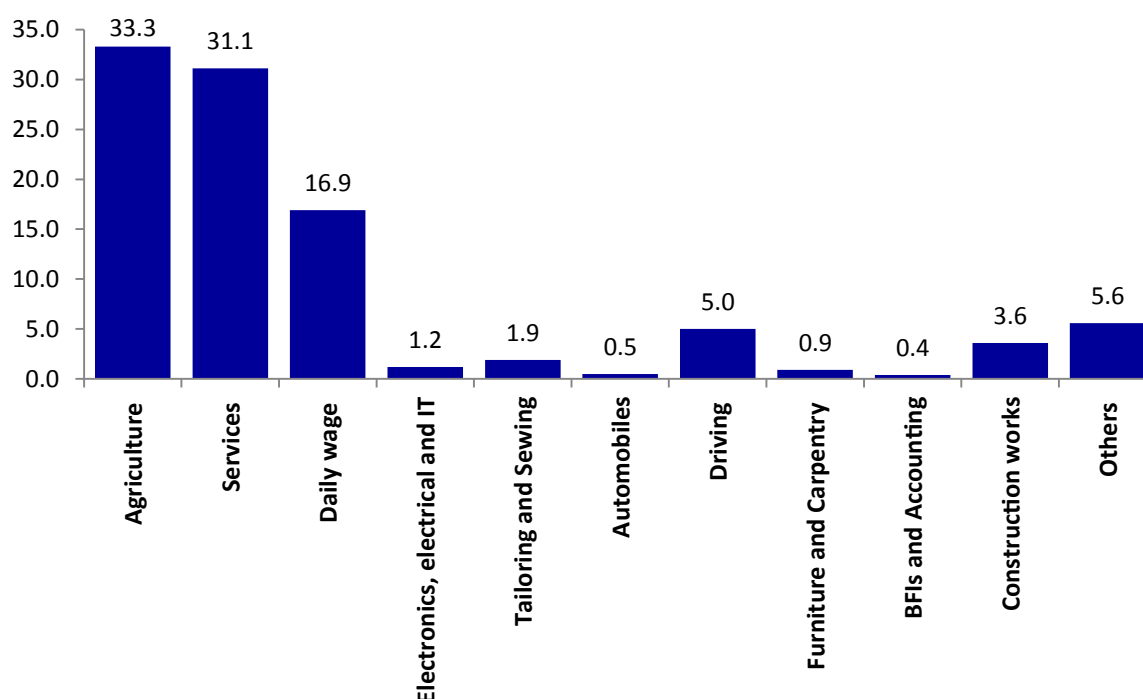
The major areas of works that returnee migrants prioritize include the following (Figure 31):

- Agriculture
- Services
- Daily wages
- Driving
- Construction work
- Tailoring and sewing

It is seen that the first priority sector (reported by 33.3% respondents) to engage in Nepal is agriculture. This could be because most returnee migrants have had some experiences in farming before going abroad. This could also be because they came from farming background and were informally trained. The second priority sector mentioned by them (31.1%) was the service sector, which essentially means hospitality and other service-related activities. Migrants were well aware that hospitality sector has badly been affected by the pandemic, even in Nepal. But this aspiration has been set for once the situation normalizes after some time. For the emergency, they chose agriculture, which is less affected by pandemic (Figure 31).

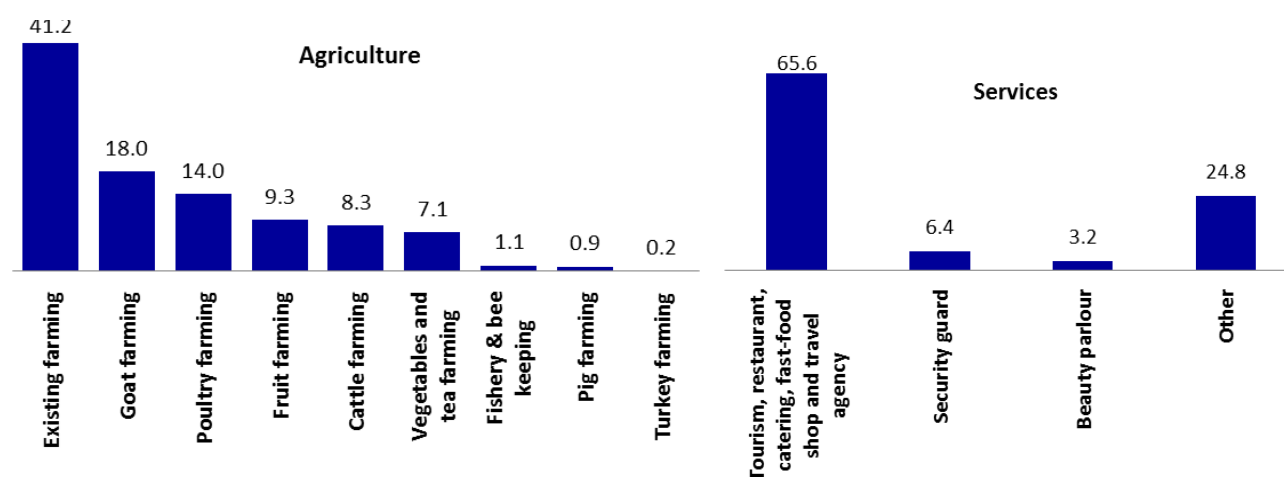
The highest proportion of respondents (33.3%) showed their major priority sector as agriculture, followed by services (31.1%), whereas few expressed that their priorities were automobiles (0.5%) and bank/financial institutions, and accounting (0.4%) (Figure 31).

**Figure 31: Major priority sectors of returnee migrants**



The other works that returnee migrants prioritized, in order of importance, were daily wages (unskilled manual work), driving, construction works, tailoring and sewing, electronics/electrician/IT, automobiles and financial services. Some of these jobs could be started immediately and some others after the pandemic, but in these areas, migrants could use their skills learned in countries of destination (Figure 31).

**Figure 32: Returnees' priorities within agriculture and service sectors**



Within the agriculture sector, a large chunk of migrants (41%) wanted to continue their own traditional farming, which they did before going abroad. The rest wanted to continue other activities by using modern methods and inputs. These other farm activities they wanted to get involve are, in order of priority:

- Goat farming (18%)
- Poultry farming (14%)
- Fruit farming (9.35%)
- Cattle farming (8.3%)
- Vegetable and tea farming (7.1%)
- Fishery and beekeeping (1.1%)
- Pig farming (0.9%)
- Turkey farming (0.2%)

Within the service sector, most of the returnees (65.6%) wanted to join tourism-related jobs including restaurants, catering, fast-food shops and travel agencies. Other major priority areas of jobs include the Government jobs and teaching. Security guards (6.4% respondents) and beauty parlours (3.2%) were other jobs within the service sector that the returnees wanted to undertake. Migrants could use their skills learned in countries of destination in these jobs only after public life returns to normalcy (Figure 33). Due to COVID-19, about 28 per cent of males lost their jobs, whereas the proportion of job loss was higher among females, at 41 per cent (UNDP, 2020). In such a situation, the Government needs a concrete plan to adjust both returned migrants and jobless. Furthermore, the aspired sector of involvement by country of destination varies significantly. The highest proportion of returnee migrants from India (43.8%) aspired to join the service sector whereas returnees from other countries chose agriculture (45%). Those opting for agriculture seem noticeable among the returnees from India (21.5%). The highest number of respondents from other countries expressed their willingness for traditional agriculture and seasonal farming, which



is the higher than services (tourism, restaurant, catering, fast-food shop and travel agency combined) (Table 3).

**Table 3: Aspired sectors of involvement of returnee migrants (India versus other countries)**

Aspired sector of involvement	India	Other countries
Agriculture*	21.5	45.0
Services**	43.8	18.2
Daily wage	17.9	16.0
Electronics, electrical and IT	0.7	1.6
Tailoring and sewing	1.4	2.3
Automobiles	0.7	0.2
Driving	2.5	7.5
Furniture and carpentry	0.7	1.1
BFI and accounting	0.4	0.3
Construction works	4.7	2.5
Others	5.7	5.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* Agriculture includes traditional farming, fruits, vegetable and tea farming, and pig, goat and cattle farming.

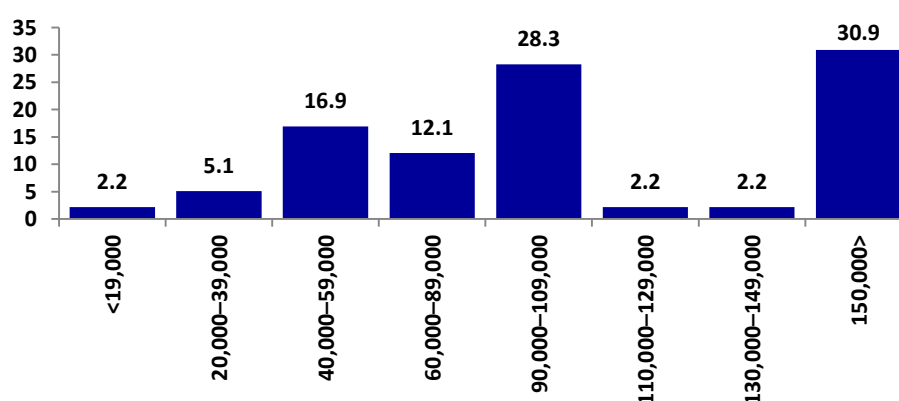
\*\* Service encompasses tourism, restaurant, catering, fast-food shop and travel, security services, beauty parlour and other services.

## 2.10 STATUS OF LOANS, INTEREST OF CANCELLATION AND EXPECTATIONS

About 63 per cent of aspirant migrants had taken out loans to repay for their migration costs. The average amount of loans taken was NPR 117,984 (Figure 33).

**Figure 33: Loans taken out by aspirant migrants (in NPR)**

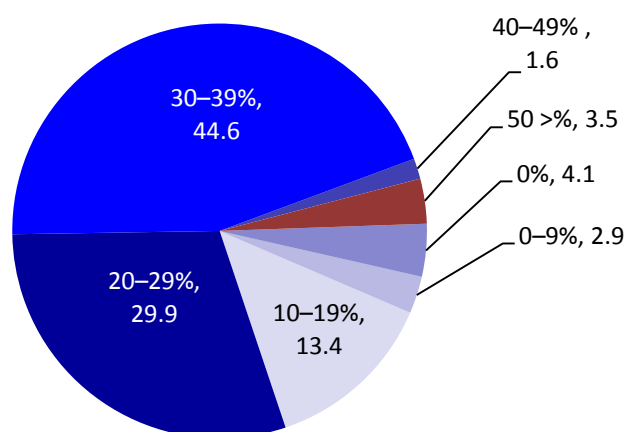
About 25 per cent of aspirant migrants took less than NPR 60,000 in loans, whereas 40 per cent took loans in the range of NPR 60,000 to NPR 110,000. Similarly, 31 per cent took NPR 150,000 plus in loans.



The average interest rate of loans was 29.4 per cent per year, which is considerable. But aspirant migrants stated that they obtained loans at varied interest rates (Figure 34).

**Figure 34: Interest rates of loans taken out by aspirant migrants**

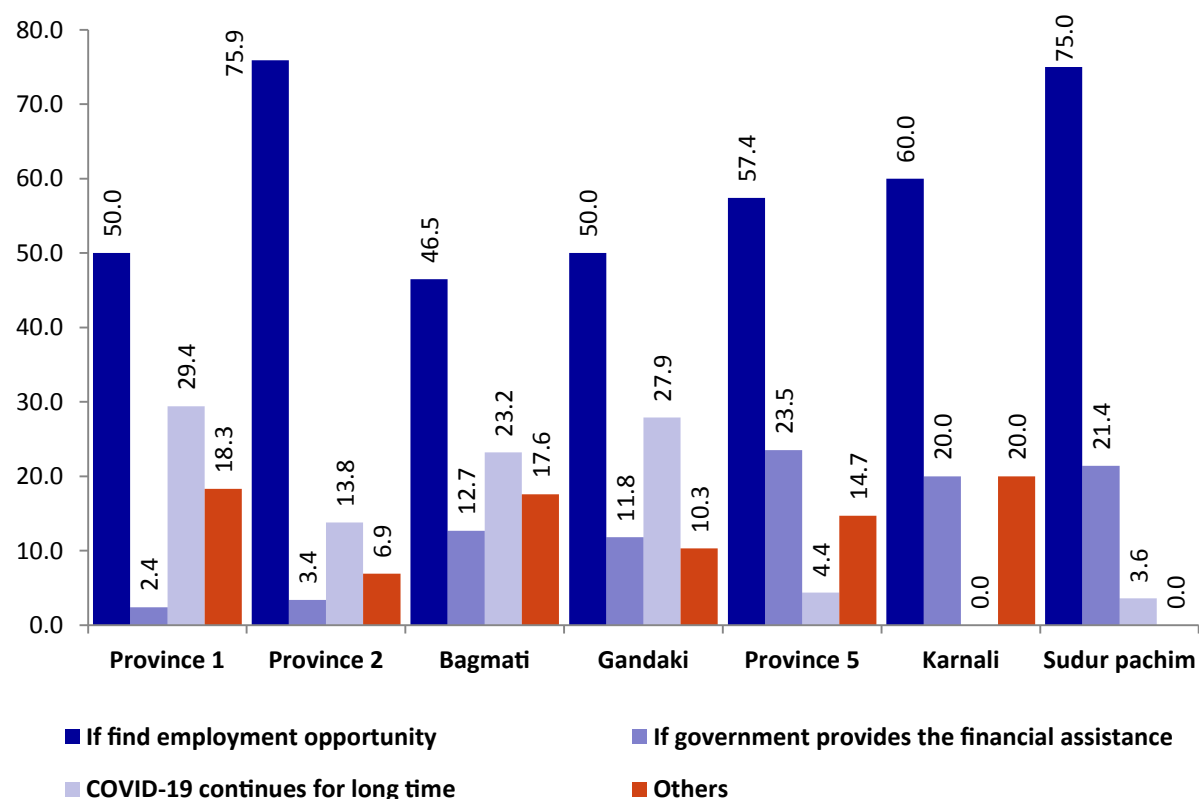
About 45 per cent aspirant migrants said they paid 30–39 per cent in interest whereas 30 per cent respondents paid 20–29 per cent in interest. About 5 per cent paid more than 40 per cent interest rate; however, 4 per cent migrants got interest-free loans.



### Migration in the wake of COVID-19

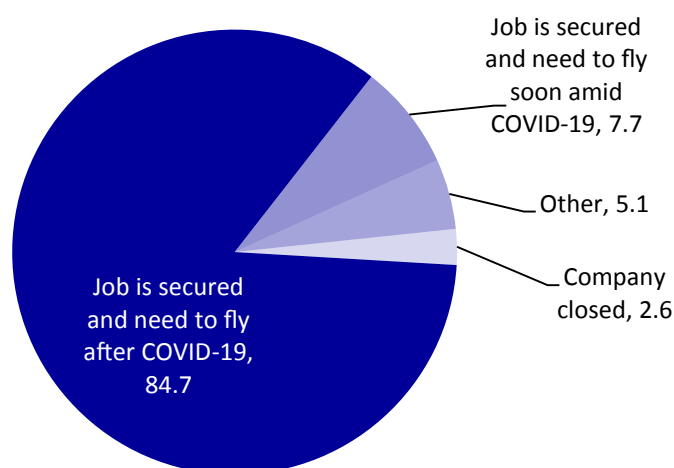
The aspirant migrants reported that they would cancel their plan to go abroad “if they find employment”, “if COVID-19 continues for long” and “if the Government provides them financial assistance”. This was a similar situation across all provinces (Figure 35).

**Figure 35: Conditions of cancelling foreign employment plans (100% of each province)**



Except for COVID-19, an overwhelming 92 per cent of aspirant migrants stated that their job is secured. But a large majority (85%) could fly only after COVID-19. Only about 8 per cent aspirant migrants intended to go to the promised jobs in the countries of destination even during the COVID-19 pandemic. A large majority of aspirant migrants would not be able to join their job anytime soon as it is uncertain that when the virus will be contained. In addition, 3 per cent of aspirant migrants reported that their would-be employer company has already been closed. In total, about 88 per cent aspirant migrants may not be able to go abroad anytime soon (Figure 36).

**Figure 36: Employment status of aspirant migrants in the intended country of destination**



If the plan for a foreign job is cancelled, a large number of aspirant migrants (36%) want to join farming — 24 per cent in modern farming and 12 per cent in traditional farming. About 24 per cent want to do business and 22 per cent of them want to get employed in Government or non-government sectors (Figure 37).

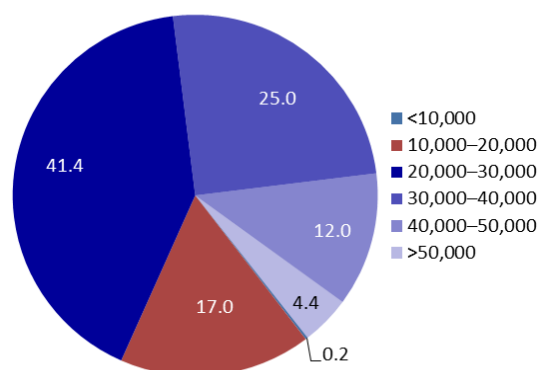
**Figure 37: Priority sectors of aspirant migrants at home if their foreign job is cancelled**



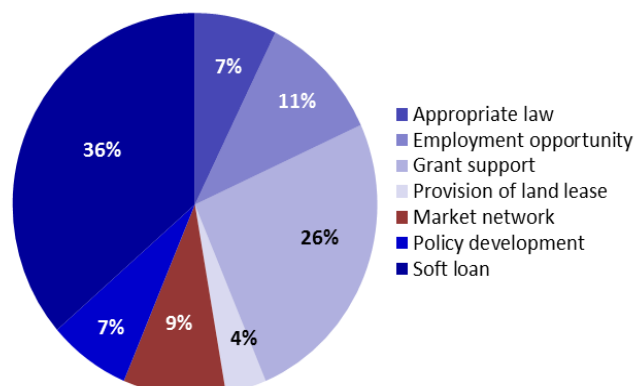
Aspirant migrants reported that they would not go to foreign jobs if they made a monthly income of NPR 25,000 at home. A large section of aspirant migrants (41%) considered that NPR 20,000–30,000 was enough for them and would cancel the planned foreign job. About 25 per cent of migrants would cancel their trip if they had an income of NPR 30,000 to 40,000 per month. Only 12 per cent wanted to have income in the range of NPR 40,000 to

50,000. The two-thirds of aspirant migrants (67%) would stay in Nepal even if their income is NPR 30,000 per month (Figure 38).

**Figure 38: Tentative amount of income that holds aspirant migrants in Nepal**



**Figure 39: Expectations of aspirant migrants from the Government**



If aspirant migrants had to stay on in Nepal, they expect the Government to support them in various ways (Figure 39). It appears from their response that they expect support so that they get employment. Therefore, economic support will be important. For example, a good chunk of them (36%) expected a soft loan, 26 per cent expected grant support to start the work and 11 per cent expected job opportunity. This essentially means about 73 per cent aspirant migrants expected direct financial support and employment opportunities. Appropriate policies, land leasing system and market network are their other expectations.

## SECTION 3: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

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### 3.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study examined the status of, and challenges and vulnerabilities faced by, Nepali migrants in the context of COVID-19 and supports needed for their reintegration. As is widely known, migrant workers are at the receiving end when the pandemic is raging across the globe. This study then looks into their specific issues and ways to support them. In this context, the objective of this study was to undertake an assessment of the conditions of migrant workers, in relation to their vulnerabilities, labour rights, social protection mechanisms, return intention, changes in social perceptions. Such an understanding was made for current migrants, returnee migrants and aspirant migrants.

Demographically, most migrants were young (in the age group of 20–40 years) and married. The proportion of migrants in other marital groups (divorced, separated, widowed) was very small in size. A larger proportion of respondents were Brahmins and Chettris followed by Janajatis, Dalits, Madhesis/Muslims and Tharus. Most of the migrants had low educational statuses. About 78 per cent of them had obtained secondary or less education, and 18 per cent had earned the degree equivalent to Intermediate (or 10+2) level.

A comparison of regional background of current and returnee migrants gives an interesting picture. A large proportion of migrants from Province 1 seem to stay on in the countries of destination. On the other, there was more return migration in Karnali and Sudur Paschim. This is because the migrants from these two provinces mostly go to India as daily wage labourers and they returned home with the outbreak of COVID-19.

#### **Migration vulnerabilities and social protection mechanisms**

Employment in service sector was more vulnerable than in manufacturing, which seemed more secure in the pandemic. Returnees were mostly employed in the service sector. In Nepal, agriculture seemed to be the main employment sector for most of the migrants. Push factors, mostly poverty and unemployment, were crucial for abroad migration. Therefore, the main reasons for migration were for employment and income generation. Almost all migrants (98%) were affected by COVID-19 in countries of destination. Even those current migrants faced job losses, as only about 63 per cent are at work. Other 37 per cent are laid off and are on unpaid leave. About 44 per cent migrants still had to support themselves through their savings. About 5 per cent of them got support from friends and relatives and 0.4 per cent received support from welfare agencies

Some migrants experienced changes in working hours after COVID-19. A total of 28 per cent migrants reported decrease but 6 per cent reported increase in their working hours. About 30 per cent reported that they did not get regular payments.

Different safety measures were used in the workplace and 98 per cent stated that they used one or another measure. However, 2 per cent did not use any safety measures. The main safety measures were, in order of importance, sanitizer and social distancing. Safety measures also varied from country to country. Fifteen per cent respondents viewed that the safety measures were insufficient. About 25 per cent returnee migrants reported that the local population in destination countries treated them negatively.

One in every 10 returnees did not stay in quarantine facilities and 15 per cent of those in quarantine facilities said that it was unsafe. Similarly, one in four returnee migrants reported that they were not treated positively in their communities mainly because of the fear of COVID-19 coming with the migrants.

### **Return and reintegration plan**

More than half of the current migrants have an interest to return home as they have lost jobs at their current companies, their contract period is over and for fear of the COVID-19 pandemic. All groups of migrants expressed a desire to pursue farming if they stayed on in Nepal. This is because most of them were from farming backgrounds with low education and limited skills. They were not able to gain skills in the countries of destination that could be used in Nepal because most of them had been unskilled.

Specific areas that the returnee migrants prioritize for work in Nepal include the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tourism</li><li>• Travel agency</li><li>• Restaurants</li><li>• Catering</li><li>• Fast-food shop</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Daily wage</li><li>• Cleaning</li><li>• Domestic work</li><li>• Goat farming</li><li>• Cattle farming</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poultry farming</li><li>• Fruit farming</li><li>• Vegetable and tea farming</li><li>• Driving</li></ul>
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Overall, migrants expected help from the Government in financial matters (55%), in creating environment conducive (34%) and in network development for business they undertake (9%). Slightly more than 50 per cent of the returnees made plans for remigration. The main reasons for remigration plans were, in order of importance, found to be the lack of employment opportunities, poverty, low income and family pressure. This indicates lack of economic opportunities as the main reason for remigration.

Debt repayment is a major challenge for the migrants. A majority of the returnee migrants reported that they had taken out loans to pay for migration costs. About 63 per cent of the aspirant migrants have taken out loans to pay for migration costs (NPR 120,000 on average). The average interest rate of the loans was 29.4 per cent a year. Likewise, most of the aspirant migrants expressed their desire to cancel the remigration plans if they find employment. Aspirant migrants reported that if they had some monetary assistance and employment opportunities, they would drop their remigration plans.

If aspirant migrants had to stay on in Nepal, they expected support from the state for employment to ensure their income generation. Equally important is the appropriate policies, suitable land leasing system and market network to meet the expectations.

A quarter of the returnee migrants reported that the local population in countries of destination treated them with disrespect and blamed for COVID-19 infection whereas nearly two-fifths respondents stated that they faced various problems in countries of destination. These included economic insecurity and issues related to health and psychological aspect.

One in every 10 returnee migrants did not stay in quarantine facilities. Around 15 per cent of those who stayed in quarantine facilities said it was unsafe due to lack of health measures. Similarly, one in four returnee migrants reported that they were not treated positively in their communities mainly because of the fear of COVID-19 coming with the migrants.

### **3.2 CONCLUSIONS**

This study has identified the status of Nepali migrant workers in relation to COVID-19 and the challenges faced by them in the countries of origin, countries of destination and upon arrival. The study revealed that migrant workers employed in the service sector are hardest hit, while others working in the manufacturing sector have been less impacted. A large number of Nepali migrants working as security personnel in the countries of destination also have secured jobs.

A sizeable number of the returnees and the current migrants have pinned high hopes on agriculture. They have expressed their willingness to opt for farming because of family support to run agri-businesses, even from limited investment. However, their aspirations to get engaged in agriculture are likely to face multiple challenges. Nepal is making very little headway in modernization and commercialization of agriculture, while the returned migrants, who have already been familiarized with modern farming in the countries of destination, seem to be reluctant to get involved in traditional farming.

Most of the migrant workers selected in this study were identified as being affected by the COVID-19 both in the destination countries and in Nepal. Many current migrants experienced job losses and were laid off and on unpaid leave. Even many of those who are still at work have faced a reduction in work hours or pay or both. Some of the respondents from destination countries also reported that their contract was not renewed.

Many of the current migrants who were unemployed still have had to support themselves through their savings and supports from friends and relatives, as well as from various welfare agencies. Some of them experienced changes in working hours after COVID-19. A decrease in working hours has resulted in the reduction in income. Although different safety measures are used in the workplace, many reported that personal safety was largely not prioritized.

## SECTION 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 4.1 COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

- i. As many migrants have interest to return after the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government should coordinate among the related ministries and institutions for migrant repatriation process. The Government is also expected to manage gender-responsive holding centres.
- ii. Both returnees and current migrants have faced various problems such as layoffs, irregular payments and reduced working hours. Diplomatic facilitation and labour tribunals are required to ensure the full payment of wages and other entitlements, the exercising of labour rights and appropriate occupational health and safety measures.

### 4.2 LOAN EASEMENT, NEED-BASED PRODUCTION AND INCOME GENERATION

- iii. For the reintegration of migrants, it is observed that many have a keen interest on farming, so, financial and technical support for farming is needed. If they are provided with concessional loan, improved seeds, fertilizers and other support for insurance and marketing, livelihood options would be more available and would decrease the feeling of further migration as a necessity. It is also seen that most returnee migrants may not be able to use their skills learned in countries of destination, as they were involved in hospitality and service sectors, which are also severely affected in Nepal. Therefore, there is not much scope for them to find employment in these sectors in the immediate future. It is one of the reasons for them to aspire to engage in agriculture. However, in showing interest in agriculture, they have relied on their past experiences and on some family resources. For many, the resources were not enough for full livelihood, but could give some foothold. Even though farming in Nepal gives a low return in general, intensive cash crop production and access to market have resulted in good income. As a result, peri-urban areas and roadside locations have resulted in good income even in small farm. People having no land in such areas have rented or leased land for farming and reaped good income.
- iv. A large proportion of returnee migrants who aspired to undertake hospitality and service-related activities might not be able to start the enterprise until life returns to normal. They were also the ones who were most heavily affected in terms of job loss in countries of destination. However, those without remigration plan need to be supported to start the activity they desire once the economy reopens.
- v. As loans are a major challenge for migrants, collateral-free loans with low-interest should be provided so that those returning and aspirant migrants can repay their existing high interest loans. For soft loans, micro-credit companies and cooperatives can lend the returnees without collateral.



- vi. Since most of the migrants were found to be unemployed, they need support in income-generating areas related to agriculture, livestock and industrial jobs for their retention.

#### **4.3 RETAINING THE RETURNEES**

- vii. As most of the migrants returning from India are from Karnali and Sudur Paschim provinces, special income-generation programmes can be implemented in these regions in a coordinated effort among the local, province and federal levels. In general, need-based training in modern farming and new enterprises are needed.
- viii. Migration is seen in many cases a result of economic problems directly linked to employment and income, so an investment in skills and jobs creation at the local level could help to make migration a choice rather than a necessity. Skill enhancement of returnees can play a pivotal role to meet the demand for skilled human resources.
- ix. To effectively manage the repatriation processes of migrant workers and the ones stranded in the countries of destination, a mechanism of the federal, provincial and local governments needs to be set up so that all the Government bodies can work in collaboration to meet returnees' expectations. The federal level of Government can set up a central body to oversee the repatriation process by coordinating with recruiters, state agencies and the Embassies of Nepal in countries of destination. This will facilitate an easy and trouble-free repatriation of Nepali migrant workers during the time of pandemic. Even in the post-pandemic period, such a coordinated body should be put in place for proceeding skills mapping, orientation, training and job placement.
- x. Authorities should provide returnee migrants with employment and livelihoods opportunities. For this to materialize, the Prime Minister Employment Programme could be the best option for the time being. Likewise, Projects with the National Pride can hire returnee migrants with priority on the basis of their skills. This step will be win-win for returnees and the Government because it will help in timely completion of such projects and the returnees would avail job opportunities.
- xi. Most importantly, an action-oriented research is a must to offer practical suggestions for the continuous evaluation of policies and programmes unveiled by the Government. In the initial phase, it can be conducted as a pilot programme and then the Government can upscale considering its positive impacts and findings.

#### **4.4 AWARENESS AND SENSITIZATION ON HEALTH BEHAVIOUR**

- xii. Awareness-raising in communities in Nepal is needed to help reintegration. Repatriation can be safe if quarantine measures are practised for a minimum of 14 days. The quarantine facilities need to be improved with due consideration of gender and people in special need and care.

# ANNEXES

## ANNEX I: TABLES AND FIGURES

**Table 1: Percentage of survey respondents by background characteristics**

Characteristics	Current Migrants		Returnee Migrants		Aspirant migrants		Total	
	N	per cent	N	per cent	N	per cent	N	per cent
<b>Gender</b>								
Male	462	92.22	1808	90.45	424	84.80	2694	89.80
Female	39	7.78	191	9.55	76	15.20	306	10.20
<b>Age</b>								
<19 Years	2	0.40	125	6.25	11	2.20	138	4.60
20–24	40	7.98	494	24.71	164	32.80	698	23.27
25–29	114	22.75	502	25.11	144	28.80	760	25.33
30–34	129	25.75	366	18.31	98	19.60	593	19.77
35–39	105	20.96	249	12.46	56	11.20	410	13.67
40–44	72	14.37	154	7.70	17	3.40	243	8.10
45 and Above	39	7.78	109	5.45	10	2.00	158	5.27
<b>Caste/Ethnicity</b>								
Brahmin/Chhetri	226	45.11	761	38.07	156	31.20	1143	38.10
Dalit	51	10.18	502	25.11	62	12.40	615	20.50
Indigenous Nationalities	181	36.13	557	27.86	209	41.80	947	31.57
Tharu	11	2.20	21	1.05	16	3.20	48	1.60
Madhesi/Muslim	28	5.59	127	6.35	41	8.20	196	6.53
Other	4	0.80	31	1.55	16	3.20	51	1.70
<b>Marital status</b>								
Married	415	82.83	1337	66.88	337	67.40	2089	69.63
Unmarried	74	14.77	643	32.17	161	32.20	878	29.27
Divorced	6	1.20	6	0.30	0	0.00	12	0.40
Separated	0	0.00	11	0.55	1	0.20	12	0.40
Widow/Widower	6	1.20	2	0.10	1	0.20	9	0.30
<b>Education</b>								
Illiterate	14	2.79	115	5.75	12	2.40	141	4.70
Less than Primary	21	4.19	161	8.05	29	5.80	211	7.03
Primary	38	7.58	232	11.61	43	8.60	313	10.43
Lower Secondary	77	15.37	653	32.67	128	25.60	858	28.60
Secondary	140	27.94	502	25.11	162	32.40	804	26.80
Intermediate/10+	168	33.53	271	13.56	103	20.60	542	18.07
Bachelor	32	6.39	59	2.95	19	3.80	110	3.67
Master and above	11	2.20	6	0.30	4	0.80	21	0.70
<b>Province</b>								
Province 1	146	29.14	93	4.65	126	25.20	365	12.17
Province 2	33	6.59	268	13.41	58	11.60	359	11.97
Bagmati	83	16.57	297	14.86	142	28.40	522	17.40
Gandaki	141	28.14	718	35.92	68	13.60	927	30.90
Province 5	82	16.37	119	5.95	68	13.60	269	8.97
Karnali	7	1.40	176	8.80	10	2.00	193	6.43
Sudur Paschim	9	1.80	328	16.41	28	5.60	365	12.17
<b>Total Sample Size</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>3000</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Figure 1: Duration of stay in foreign land (in months)

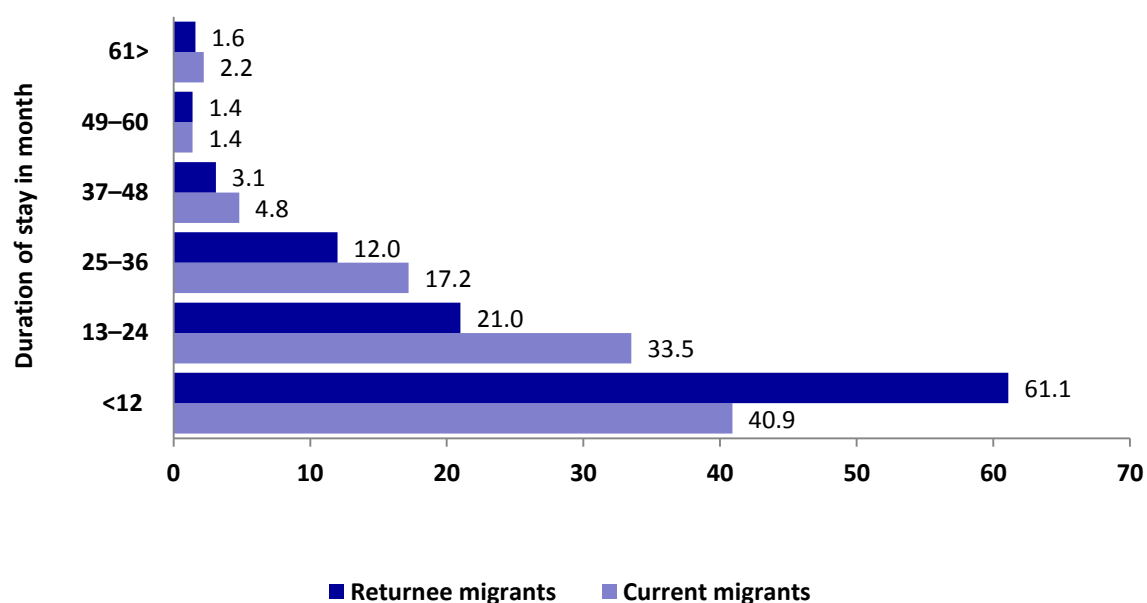
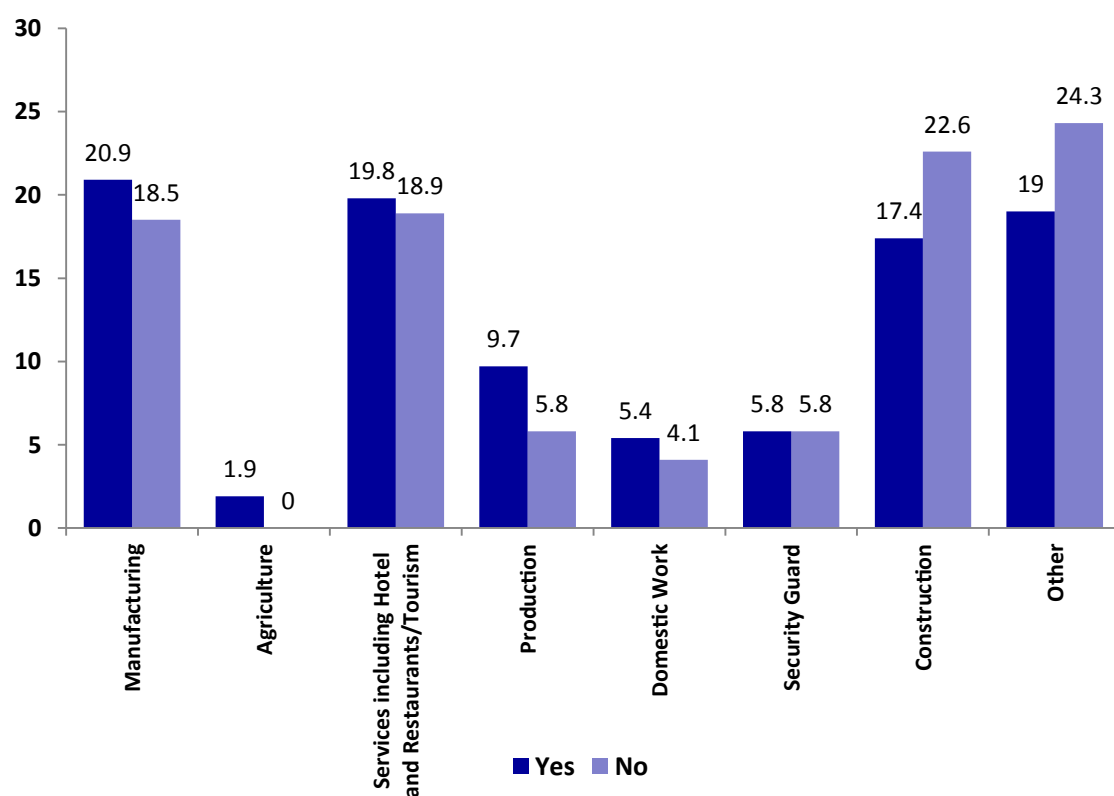


Figure 2: Return plans of current migrants by sector of involvement



## ANNEX II: QUESTIONNAIRES

### Section [100]: Questionnaire for Current Migrants

Q.N.	QUESTIONS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
101	101. Name (Record the full name of respondent)	_____	
101.a	Contact Information (Write the contact information including phone number/WhatsApp/Viber/Imo/Messenger and so on.)	_____	
102	Age	_____	
103	Sex	Male... 1 Female... 2 Others... 3	
104	Caste/Ethnicity	Brahmin/Chhetri... 1 Dalit... 2 Adibashi Janajati/Indigenous Nationalities... 3 Tharu... 4 Madhesi/Muslim... 5 Other... 6	
105	Occupation of respondent at currently residing country	Manufacturing... 1 Agriculture... 2 Services including Hotel and Restaurants/Tourism... 3 Production... 4 Domestic work... 5 Security guard... 6 Construction... 7 Other... 8	
106	Specific work/occupation (Record the engaged specific work)	_____	
107	What specific skills do you have? (Write the main skills of respondent)	_____	
108	Completed education	Illiterate... 1 Lower than primary... 2 Primary... 3 Lower secondary... 4 Secondary... 5 Intermediate/10+2... 6 Bachelor... 7 Master and above... 8	
109	Marital status	Married... 1 Unmarried... 2 Divorced... 3 Separated... 4 Widow/widower... 5	

110	District (of permanent residence)	_____	
110.a	Permanent residence (Province)	Province 1... 1 Province 2... 2 Bagmati... 3 Gandaki... 4 Province 5... 5 Karnali... 6 Sudur Paschim... 7	
111	Current country of residence	India... 1 Malaysia... 2 Qatar... 3 United Arab Emirates/Dubai... 4 Saudi Arabia... 5 Bahrain... 6 Kuwait... 7 Oman... 8 Maldives... 9 Bangladesh... 10 Thailand... 11 Other... 12	
112	Duration of Stay in total months (Total duration of stay in month after last visit in this country)	_____	
113	What is your current job status?	At work... 1 Laid off... 2 Will join after the vacation... 3 Company closed... 4 Contract finished... 5 Unpaid leave... 6	
113.a	Who is bearing your current living cost?	Company... 1 Self... 2 Friends/relatives... 3 Other welfare organization... 4 Government of this country... 5 Government of Nepal... 6 Other... 7	
113.b	Have you felt any effect from COVID-19?	Yes... 1 No... 2	
114	Which one of the safety measures are you adopting?	Social distancing... 1 Use of PPE... 2 Use of sanitizer... 3 Other measures (specify)... 4 Nothing at all... 5	
114.a	Do you think health and safety in the workplace and place of stay good enough?	Quite enough... 1 Ok... 2 Inadequate... 3	
115	What is the treatment and/or behaviour towards you by local in destination country?	Positive... 1 Negative... 2 Don't know... 3	

116	Is there any change in working hour after COVID-19?	Increased... 1 Decreased... 2 No change... 3	
117	Total hours of change in a day (Record the total hours of change)	_____	
118	What is the main life security scheme in terms of lifelong and livelihood given to you?	Insurance... 1 Medical service... 2 Gratuity... 3 Economic support... 4 Provident ... 5 Not at all... 6	
119	Are you regularly getting salary now?	Yes... 1 No... 2	If answer is No, skip to Q.120
119.a	Was there salary (wage rate) reduction, if so, by how much (% of reduction)	_____	
120	What about your passport status (valid date) (Do not ask this question residing in India)	Valid... 1 Invalid... 2	
121	Is your visa expired? (Do not ask this question to the ones residing in India)	Yes... 1 No... 2	
122	What problems do you have now?	Loneliness... 1 Fear... 2 Hypertension... 3 Economic Insecurity... 4 Depression... 5 Others... 6 Not at all... 7	
123	Are you planning to come back to Nepal soon?	Yes... 1 No... 2	
124	If yes, what is the main reason to return?	Due to fear of COVID-19.....1 Contract finished...2 Regular leave as previous.....3 Cut off job/employment in company/entities... 4 Compulsory leave... 5 Family pressure... 6 .Other... 7	
125	Where will be your destination for residence?	Place of origin... 1 Capital city... 2 Nearest city... 3 Next village... 4	(If answer is 1 (place of origin) skip to Q. 126)
125.a	If you want to stay in other place other than place of origin, please state one main reason. (Please record the one main reason of residing in another place)	_____	
126	After returning in Nepal, what will be your priority sector of involvement?	Employment... 1 Self-employment/ Entrepreneurship... 2 Agriculture... 3 Other... 4	

127	What specific job/work do you want to do after returning to Nepal? (Record one of the most important/specific priority job/work)	_____	
128	What types of support do you want from the Government when you return?	Financial aid... 1 Conducive environment... 2 Network development...3 Other...4	
128.a	Please state one of the main supports: financial aid-soft loan, grant, financial aid for income generation, conducive environment).	_____	
129	What problem do you visualize, if you come to Nepal? (Please record one of the main problems you visualize)	_____	

### Section [200]: Questionnaire for Aspirant Migrants

Q.N.	QUESTIONS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
201	Name (Record the full name of respondent)	_____	
201.a	Contact Information (Write the contact information including phone number/WhatsApp/Viber/Imo/Messenger and others)	_____	
202	Age	_____	
203	Sex	Male... 1 Female... 2 Others... 3	
204	Caste/Ethnicity	Brahmin/Chhetri... 1 Dalit... 2 Adibashi Janajati/Indigenous Nationalities... 3 Tharu... 4 Madhesi/Muslim... 5 Other... 6	
205	Current occupation	Agriculture... 1 Manufacturing... 2 Services... 3 Teaching... 4 Construction.....5 Daily wage... 6 Domestic work... 7 Other... 8	
205.a	Were you employed (if answer is other in Q. 205)?	Yes... 1 No... 2	
205.b	What specific skills do you have? (Write one main skill of respondent)	_____	

206	Marital status	Married... 1 Unmarried... 2 Divorced... 3 Separated... 4 Widow/Widower... 5	
207	Completed education	Illiterate... 1 Lower than primary... 2 Primary... 3 Lower secondary... 4 Secondary... 5 Intermediate/10+2... 6 Bachelor... 7 Master and above... 8	
208	Current place of residence	Province 1... 1 Province 2... 2 Bagmati... 3 Gandaki... 4 Province 5... 5 Karnali... 6 Sudur Paschim... 7	
209	District (of permanent residence)	_____	
210	Intended destination country	Maldives... 1 Malaysia... 2 Qatar... 3 United Arab Emirates... 4 Saudi Arabia... 5 Bahrain... 6 Kuwait... 7 Turkey... 8 South Korea... 9 Oman... 10 Other... 11	
211	Types of occupation as stated in contract paper	Manufacturing... 1 Agriculture... 2 Services... 3 Production... 4 Domestic work... 5 Security guard... 6 Construction... 7 Travel/Tourism... 8 Others... 9	
211.a	Skill type	Low skilled... 1 Semiskilled... 2 Skilled... 3	
212	Main reason of planning for foreign migration/employment	Unemployment... 1 Poverty... 2 Loan repayment... 3 To make life better... 4 To get better opportunities... 5 Family pressure... 6 Peer pressure... 7 Other... 8	



213	Duration of contract (Contract period)	_____	
214	Have you insured in insurance scheme?	Yes... 1 No... 2	
215	Money spent for foreign employment process (till approval in lump sum)	_____	
216	Have you taken loan for foreign employment process?	Yes... 1 No... 2	If answer is No, skip to Q. 218
217	How much loan have you taken? (Please record the amount of loan in Nepali rupees)	_____	
217.a	Please share the interest rate of the loan	_____	
218	Salary per month (As per the contract letter) Record the salary per month in the currency of concerned country	Insurance... 1 Medical Service... 2 Gratuity... 3 Economic support... 4 Provident fund... 5 Not at all... 6	
219	Have you communicated with your concerned recruitment agency/company after COVID-19?	Yes... 1 No... 2	If answer is No, skip to Q. 220
219.a	If yes, what is your job/employment situation in the contracted company in destination country?	Company closed... 1 Job is secured and need to fly after COVID-19... 2 Job is secured and need to fly soon amid COVID-19....3 Other... 4	
220	Are you aware of safety measures to stay safe from COVID-19?	Yes... 1 No... 2	
220.a	Are you oriented or given training of such health protocol related to COVID-19?	Yes... 1 No... 2	
221	If you know, can you name two measures? Please record the two safety measures (In capital letter)	_____	
222	Are you currently working in your place of residence?	Yes... 1 No... 2	If answer is No, skip to Q. 224
223	If yes, what is the current work sector?	Agriculture... 1 Manufacturing... 2 Services ... 3 Teaching... 4 Construction... 5 Daily wage... 6 Domestic work... ..7 Other... 8	
224	In which condition do you cancel the plan of foreign migration/employment	If find employment opportunity... 1 If the Government provides the financial assistance.....2 COVID-19 continue for long time... 3 Other... 4	
225	Do you have any intention to cancel the plan for foreign employment?	Yes... 1 No... 2	

226	Suppose you cancel your plan for foreign country, what will be your priority sector in Nepal?	Business... 1 Agriculture (traditional)... 2 Agriculture (modern)... 3 Government/NGO... 4 Other...5	
226.a	Please specify your specific involvement sector. (Record the main sector)	Employment.....1 Self-employment/ Entrepreneurship....2 Agriculture... 3 Other...4	
227	What support do you need/expect from the Government?	Financial aid... 1 Conducive environment... 2 Network development... 3 Other... 4	
228	How much minimum monthly income in Nepal would hold you back here?	Below 10,000... 1 10,000–20,000... 2 20,000–30,000... 3 30,000–40,000... 4 40,000–50,000... 5 Above 50,000... 6	

### Section [300]: Questionnaire for Returnee Migrants

Q.N.	QUESTIONS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
301	Name (Record the full name of respondent)	_____	
301.a	Contact information (Write the contact information including phone number/WhatsApp/Viber/Imo/Messenger and so on.)	_____	
302	Age	_____	
303	Sex	Male... 1 Female... 2 Others... 3	
304	Caste/Ethnicity	Brahmin/Chhetri... 1 Dalit... 2 Adibashi Janajati/Indigenous Nationalities... 3 Tharu... 4 Madhesi/Muslim... 5 Other... 6	
305	Current occupation	Agriculture... 1 Manufacturing... 2 Services ... 3 Teaching... 4 Construction...5 Daily wage...6 Domestic work...7 Production... 8	

		Other... 9 Not applicable...10	
306	Marital status	Married... 1 Unmarried... 2 Divorced... 3 Separated... 4 Widow/Widower... 5	
307	Completed education	Illiterate... 1 Lower than primary...2 Primary... 3 Lower secondary... 4 Secondary... 5 Intermediate/10+2...6 Bachelor... 7 Master and above... 8	
308	Current place of residence	Province 1... 1 Province 2... 2 Bagmati... 3 Gandaki... 4 Province 5... 5 Karnali... 6 Sudur Paschim... 7	
308.a	District (of permanent residence)	_____	
309	Country you returned from	India... 1 Malaysia... 2 Qatar... 3 United Arab Emirates/Dubai... 4 Saudi Arabia... 5 Bahrain... 6 Kuwait... 7 Oman... 8 Japan... 9 The Republic of Korea ..10 Maldives... 11 Other...12	If answer is not 1 (India), skip to Q. 310
309.a	How many times did you visit India during last 12 months? Write only visited times during last 12 months (Ask this question to returnee from India)	_____	
	Departure month (usual)	_____	
309.b	Duration of stay at last visit to India. Write the total duration of stay at first visit (in month)	_____	
310	Duration of stay in the foreign land last time (total duration in month)	_____	
311	What was your involved work (specific work)	_____	
312	Involvement sector	Manufacturing... 1 Agriculture... 2 Services including hotel and restaurants/tourism ....3 Production... 4	

		Domestic work... 5 Security guard... 6 Construction... 7 Other... 8	
313	What types of specific skills do you have? (Please record the specific skills of respondent)	_____	
314	Did you face mobility restriction due to COVID-19?	Yes... 1 No... 2	
315	What was your status in the foreign land? (Documented or undocumented ) (Do not ask returnees from India)	Documented... 1 Undocumented... 2	
316	What was your passport status? (Do not ask returnees from India)	Valid... 1 Date expired... 2	
317	Had you involved in insurance scheme?	Yes... 1 No... 2	
318	When did you return to Nepal?	_____	
319	Have you stayed in quarantine after returning from?	Yes... 1 No... 2	If answer is No, skip to Q. 322
320	If you stayed in quarantine, how many days did you stay? (Total days)	_____	
321	Have you felt safe while you were in quarantine?	Yes... 1 No... 2	
322	How do you perceive the treatment/behaviour of people of home country?	Positive... 1 Negative... 2 Don't Know... 3	
322.a	Do you think it promotes social harmony?	Yes... 1 No... 2 Don't know... 3	
322.b	Have you found any difficulty in adjusting in your locality after returning to Nepal?	Yes... 1 No... 2 Don't Know... 3	
323	Do you have any plan to return to foreign land/country?	Yes... 1 No... 2	If answer is No, skip to Q. 324
323.a	Why do you want to return to foreign land/country?	Due to poverty... 1 Lack of employment opportunities... 2 Low income... 3 Family pressure... 4 Other... 5	
324	If no, Have you any plan or aspiration to involve in any economic activities?	Self-employment... 1 Agriculture (traditional)... 2 Agriculture (modern)... 3 Government/Non-stay idle... 4 Government services... 5 Wage labour... 6 Other... 7	
325	What is your specific priority Sector? (Please write the more specific priority sector)	_____	
		Financial aid... 1	

326	What is your expectation from the Government or other organization to initiate your work in eco-sector?	Conducive environment... 2 Network development...3 Other...4	
327	Have you taken loan for foreign employment?	Yes... 1 No... 2	
328	If yes, have you paid back your loan?	Yes... 1 No... 2	

### ANNEX III: ENUMERATORS

1. Aakash Chemjong	11. Prem Kumari Rai
2. Ashok Ghimire	12. Purnima Shrestha
3. Bhuwan Paneru	13. Rama Sharma Baral
4. Buddhi Narayan Shrestha	14. Ranjita Regmi
5. Deewas Subedi	15. Renu Maharjan
6. Kamal Prasad Adhikari	16. Saraswati Shahi
7. Kundan Gurung	17. Sheela Sharma
8. Mani Raj Rai	18. Shikha Gurung
9. Oshika Shrestha	19. Unnati KC
10. Pabitra Bhattarai	20. Uttam Gurung

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