

Indo-Nepal Migration: Problems and Prospects

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Introduction

Nepal is a land of ethnic diversity. The proper understanding of Nepal's ethnic diversity is not possible without understanding the role of international migration. The population of Nepal represents waves of migration from the north and the south at different periods of history. As such, Nepal contains both the Mongoloid and the Indo-Aryan races as well as their admixture. The legend of Manjusri coming from China and the draining away of the Kathmandu Valley lake and the subsequent rehabilitation provides some clues as to the earliest settling of the people from the north. Nepalese hills became a pleasant habitat for the people coming from the harsh climatic conditions of the Tibetan plateau (Hagen, 1961:39). Later on, however, the geographical and historical compulsions brought Nepal and India close to each other. The relations between Nepal and India date back to hoary past. Before the occupation of India by the British, large scale migration of population into Nepal from the south resulted in the wake of invasions and disturbances in India. Thus migration of population from the north was of voluntary nature in search of pleasant habitat, whereas that from the south was of involuntary or forced nature in search of secure place for shelter against political persecutions and repressions by powerful enemies in India.

The Indo-Nepal Migration Prior to British Invasion in India

Before the Muslim invasions in India, migration from India to Nepal was confined to the kings, nobles and their attendants. During the Muslim invasions it encompassed a large section of Indian population who took refuge in Nepal to avoid proselytization into Islam as well as political persecutions. The intruding refugees were mostly Hindus and were in such a large number that they encroached upon the fertile lands of the indigenous populations such as Gurung, Magar, Tamang, Rai, Limbu, Sunuwar, Jirel, etc., and drove them to the slopes of the hills. With the introduction of the caste system and conversion into Hinduism, the immigrants from India greatly affected the social structure of the Buddhists and the indigenous aborigine population observing animism. Prior to the introduction of the new code of law, the social and religious structures of Nepal were largely Buddhist and partly Brahminical. Though the ruling dynasties from the third century A.D. to the present day are Saivas, the harmony among different religions in Nepal is unparalleled in the world. As regards religious fervour of the indigenous ethnic groups living south of the main Himalayas, Hinduism sat very lightly amounting to little more than respect for the Brahmin and reverence for the cow (Nepal and the Gurkhas, 1965:21). These ethnic groups do not fall into any of the caste hierarchies of the Hindus.

The Indo-Nepal Migration During British Colonial Rule in India

The British occupation of India virtually stopped immigration of Indians into Nepal for shelter against political persecutions, excepting the refuge of Nana Saheb, one of the leaders of the Mutiny of 1857, and the widows of King Ranjit Singh of Punjab and Nawab Wazir Ali Shah of Oudh. However, a large number of Nepalese royalties, nobles and elites continued their political exiles to India during and after the period of the unification of Nepal and most of them went to the holy city of Banaras. Throughout the nineteenth century, Banaras has been a hot-bed of intrigue for restoring some royal exile to Nepal (Wheeler, 1889:574-75). In the twentieth century, it became the centre of political exiles from Nepal and political movements in Nepal. Moreover, Banaras has been the major place of attraction for the Nepali Brahmins seeking Sanskrit education, because there are several Sanskrit institutions providing free scholarship.

Migration of population between Nepal and India since the late eighteenth century has become more of the economic character than of the political one. The attempts made by the kings of Palpa, Makwanpur and Bijayapur to reclaim the Terai forest for cultivation through the Indian immigrants were also followed by the Gorkhali rulers after the unification of Nepal (Dahal, 1978:51-52). The period of unification and expansion of Nepal's territory during the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century was accompanied by movement and settlement of the Nepalese in Darjeeling, Sikkim, Kumaon and Garhwal. However, large scale emigration of Nepalese to India for economic opportunities started after the Anglo-Nepal war of 1814-15. After the fall of Malaun fort under Kazi Amar Singh Thapa, Major General David Ochterlony compelled Amar Singh Thapa to enter into convention on 15 May 1815, entitling the Gorkhalis to have liberty to enter into the service of the British East India Company (Aitchison, 1863:110-112). By the time the war in the west ended in 1815, about 4,650 soldiers of the Gorkhali (Nepali) army had deserted and sought service with the Company in response to the invitations of the British commanders (Pemble, 1971:348), and the British raised three regiments from the Gorkhalis which later became the I, II and III Gurkha Rifles (Tuker, 1957:86-87). Sensing the resistance offered by the Gorkhali army to the British, Sikh King Ranjit Singh tried to recruit Gurkhalis in the Khalsa (Sikh) army by offering high pay and also entered into treaty with Nepal Government in 1839 (Naraharinath and Basnyet, 1964:21-22).

Nepal up to 1950 was essentially a military state, the royal family and the military leaders represented the total leadership of the country. The energies of the government were concentrated primarily on the collection of revenue to finance its growing military and administrative expenditures. Concern for the well-being of the people seldom found a reflection through the disbursement of public funds (M.C. Regmi, 1971:14). Since the signing of the Sugauli treaty in 1816, Nepal's prospect for territorial expansion virtually stopped and Nepal since then had been able neither to increase the strength of the army nor to maintain the existing strength. So the government opted for a policy of army service on a rotation basis. Those in the service were termed as jagiriya and

those off the employment as dhakriya. In 1832 Brian Hodgson had estimated 30,000 dhakriyas in the Nepalese army and strongly pleaded with the British government to enlist them in the Indian army:

"In my humble opinion they are by far the best soldiers in Asia; and if they were made participators of our renown in arms, I conceive that their gallant spirit, emphatic contempt of Madhesias (people of the plains) and unadulterated military habits, might be relied on for fidelity; and that our good and regular pay and noble pension establishment would serve perfectly to counterpoise the influence of nationality, so far that could injuriously affect us" (Hodgson, 1874:41).

The Nepalese government was principally against the recruitment of its people in the Indian army and as such it was extremely difficult to get Nepalese in the Indian army. When the British carried out recruitment secretly by sending recruitment agents into Nepal, the Nepalese government disliked the clandestine operations and took strong measures like putting to death some of the Gurkhas on their return home on leave and confiscating property of those serving the Indian army (Mojumdar, 1973:11). Owing to the harassment meted out by the Nepalese government to the families of the Gurkhas serving the Indian army, and to make the recruitment easier emigration of the Gurkhas from Nepal with their families was encouraged with the establishment of settlements of the Gurkhas in the hills of India, such as Dharmashala (Bhagsu), Bakloh, D. rjeeling, Dehradun and Shillong. There are also considerable colonies scattered over Burma and Assam; those in the former started in the days when Gurkhas were enlisted into the old Burma Military Police (Nepal and the Gurkhas, 1965:61), and those in the latter among the pensioners of Assam Rifles (Gait, 1892:67).

The installation of the Rana regime in 1846 through Kot Massacre heralded the end of the era of active enmity and beginning of good faith, understanding and cordiality with the British, because Jung Bahadur cherished the goodwill of the British for the consolidation and support of his regime. Jung Bahadur himself leading 12,000 Nepalese troops went to help the British to quell the Indian Mutiny of 1857. In recognition of that assistance, the British government, under a treaty concluded on 1st November, 1860, restored to Nepal the tract of territory on the Oudh frontier (Far Western Terai) which had been ceded to the British government in 1816 (Elles, 1884:27). As agriculture was the main source of revenue of the government, Jung Bahadur wanted to reclaim the new areas as well as the other areas of the Terai to appropriate income for his family, favourites and supporters as well as for the state. Because of the problem of ecological adaptation in the hot, humid, and malarial environment of the Terai the hill-people were reluctant to settle in the Terai, and because of the absence of the provision of landownership rights Indian immigrants were also unwilling to migrate into the Terai. As such, many governments failed in reclaiming the Terai. Realising the possibility of reclaiming the Terai through immigrants from India, Jung Bahadur made provision in the first legal code of the country entitling the alienation

of land through sale or purchase to the foreign nationals residing in Nepal (the Legal Codes, 1966:35). Since then the reclamation of the Terai forest for cultivation started and resulted in immigration of the Indians from Bihar and United Provinces in a large number.

The Rana families for the first time employed European and Bengali teachers from India to impart education to their children (Wright, 1877: 141). During Jung Bahadur's time, Indian traders were permitted to carry on trade at specific points in the Terai. However, some of the Indian traders were carrying on trade in Kathmandu city even before that period to cater to the luxurious needs of the royal families, rulers and nobles (Hodgson, 1874:94). During the Rana period, initially most of the technical manpower needed for running schools, colleges, hospitals, hydro-electric installation, water supply, ropeway and railway, came from India. Moreover, India became an important country for the Nepalese to acquire higher education in academic and technical fields.

The beginning of the present century has been the most important period in the history of Indo-Nepal migration. Nepal's assistance to the Younghusband Mission to Tibet and the discovery of Chumbi Valley of Sikkim as a trade route from India to Tibet gave a death blow to the importance of Nepal as a trade route between India and China. Some of the traders and artisans, mostly the Newars and a few Sherpas, managed to move to Kalimpong and Sikkim. The Nepalese were the only foreigners from South Asia permitted to carry on trading activities within Tibet. However, the large-scale migration of the Nepalese from Darjeeling and from eastern Nepal has been connived at by the British since last century. The Nepalese who accounted for over one-fourth of the population of Sikkim at the end of the 19th century, has reached to two-thirds of Sikkim's present population, making the original Bhutia-Lepcha of Sikkim a minority in their own country (Rustomji, 1971:141). The overwhelming number of Nepalese migrants to Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri of West Bengal constitute those who migrated from eastern Nepal for employment in tea gardens.

By 1904, the three Gurkha battalions of 1816 have swelled into sixteen and by 1908, the Gurkha Brigade had reached its permanent establishment of 20 battalions organised in 10 rifle regiments numbered from one to ten. During World War I, Nepal helped to raise more than 200,000 men for recruitment in the Indian army, and they fought in every theatre of war with casualties of 20,000 people. The magnitude of the movement of the Gurkhas for recruitment in the Indian and the Nepalese armies (Nepal also assisted the British by sending its own army) was so great that able-bodied males from the villages of the martial races (Magars and Gurungs) were difficult to get during the war (Bruce, 1928:xxvii). The drain of manpower led to the deterioration of agriculture and food supply in the hills as well as loss of government revenue from the land. Moreover, there was difficulty of getting back the Gurkhas discharged from the army service, because most of them stayed back in India to work either as watchmen, or even to work in the police under the government, or in other positions available to them. For many Indian merchants had good faith in the Gurkhas as honest and loyal servant (Bruce, 1934:200).

Of the 10,932 Gurkhas discharged after World War I, only 3,838 returned home in 1919 (Mojumdar, 1975:73). A large number of the Gurkhas, therefore, settled permanently in India. Before World War II, the number of Nepalese living in Calcutta alone was estimated at 30,000 (Nepal and the Gurkhas, 1965:131). During World War I, the Indian independence movement gained momentum, and sensing the ever-growing threat to the British and their settlements, the British government encouraged the retired Gurkha officers to settle with their families around major settlements of the Britishers in the hill resorts and other places of India such as Shillong, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kohima, Dehradun, Mussoorie, Almora, Simla, Ranikhet, Dalhousie, Nainital, Abbotabad, Murree, and Quetta. Thus the children of the Gurkha officers were educated in the best educational institutions of India, but the educated Gurkhas were, indeed, not enrolled in the Indian army, they were suspected as potential transmitters of political ideas to the Gurkha regiments (Mojumdar, 1975:30). In order to ensure the regular supply of the Nepalese in the Indian army, in 1919 the British government provided the Nepal government with a gift of one million rupees annually in perpetuity (Tuker, 1977:201). This gift and the entire revenue of the state were treated as the ruling Prime Minister's personal income, and they deposited the money in foreign banks particularly in India.

The British government's formal recognition of Nepal as a sovereign independent country under the treaty of 1923 led to the opening of the Terai for Indian traders. The industrial development of the eastern Terai which started after the establishment of Biratnagar Jute Mills in 1936 led to another wave of immigration from India, mostly entrepreneurs, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labourers to run various industries. Industrial development in the Terai did not result in mobility of labour from hills to the Terai because of the problem of ecological adaptation of the hill people in the hot, humid and malarial environment of the Terai on the one hand, and the preference for working in India due to high wages and highly prestigious social position accorded by the hill society to the people working in the foreign army.

The involvement of the Gurkhas in World War II was on a grander scale. The 20 battalions were expanded to form a total of 51 battalions comprising 44 Infantry and Parachute battalions, 6 Training battalions and one Garrison battalion (Mansergh and Moon, 1980:865). The Gurkha casualty was 24,000 persons. During this period it was difficult to get able-bodied men not only from the lands of the Gurung and Magar, but also from the lands of the Rai and Limbu. There had been a greater difficulty than ever before in getting discharged soldiers to return to their homes and a large number of the Gurkhas released in 1946-47, made only short visit to their homes before going back to India for civil employment.

The Issue of the Gurkhas During Transfer of Power in India

The Cripps offer of 1942 came up with the declaration regarding the complete transfer of power from British to Indian hands. However, the probable effect of change in India's constitution on the Gurkhas remained unresolved for a long time (Kansakar, 1982:91-94). Initially,

the British were totally against transferring the Gurkhas to the future Indian government. However, with constitutional change in prospect, the British government realised Nepal government's anxiety regarding the maintenance of the position of the Gurkhas numbering nearly 100,000 in the Indian army, because Nepal's economy needed to export her manpower (Mansergh and Lumby, 1970:307-308). In order to ensure the steady supply of recruits in the Indian army, the Indian government increased the annual "present" of Rs. 1,000,000 which had been given to Nepal in perpetuity since 1919, to Rs. 2,000,000 in 1945 (Mansergh and Lumby, 1970:62). British Commander-in-Chief indicated the desirability of retaining as many as possible of the pre-War Gurkha battalions to garrison British colonies like Iraq, Aden, Ceylon, Burma, Singapore, Hong Kong and Borneo because it was difficult to get British troops for these places. Moreover, the cost of maintaining Gurkha units was very low. After the War, the Labour Party came to power in the U.K. and adhered to the policy that any decision on matters relating to India should be made only after consultations with the interim government in India. The Indian leaders, however, opposed the employment of Gurkha troops by the British government, and opted for retaining them in the post-war Indian army officered by Indian officers. They suggested the settlement of the issue by negotiation between the U.K., Nepal and India (Mansergh and Lumby, 1980: 30-31). In 1946, Dmbar Singh Gurung, President of All India Gurkha League had already declared that his league did not countenance the continuation of Gurkha units in the British Imperial Service. The reason given then and later was that such service should prejudice the relation of the Gurkhas with Independent India (Tuker, 1950:268). The Gurkhas had to go through the ordeal of being a symbol of contempt for the people of India. The assistance of the Nepalese army in quelling the Mutiny of 1857, the involvement of the Gurkhas in Jalianawalabagh massacres at Amritsar in 1919 and the use of the Gurkhas in the Quit India movement of 1942 have led the Indians to consider the Gurkhas as stooges of the British. The outcome was that though the Cripps' offer of 1942 assured to safeguard minor communities, the Gurkhas did not feel assured because they had not been recognised as a community in India despite their living in India for generations. In order to safeguard the interest of the Nepalese living in India, All India Gurkha League which was established after World War I, appeared as a political party in June 1943 with loyalty to the British Raj (Rawat, 1980:182-186). But when they realised that their fate was bound with India because most of the Gorkha settlements would fall within the Dominion of India, they became anti-British and actively participated in the independence movement after 1945, and a lot of the Gurkhas joined Indian National Army of Subhash Chandra Bose. During the communal riots in the Punjab and Bengal in 1946, the Gurkhas, though mostly Hindus themselves, carried out the task required of them by their British officers with strict impartiality and saved the lives of millions. But the Bengal ministry, by unfair treatment and taking a communal line, exposed the Gurkhas to the abuses from both the Hindu and the Muslim papers. They were also subjected to a cruel boycott by the Hindus though long months of 1946 (Tuker, 1950:234). The Bengal landlords turned the Gurkhas and their families out of their houses and they were generally boycotted in the food-shops. The Gurkha soldiers were subjected to insult and mole-

stations wherever they travelled (Tucker, 1950:193). The general slogan prevailing against the Gurkhas at that time was "Hindustan for the Hindus, Pakistan for the Muslims and Kabaristan (graveyard) for the Gurkhas." It is remarkable that despite being a man of independence and self-respect, the Gurkhali did not lose his temper and retaliate in a violent and bloody fashion.

When the British thought of retaining the Gurkhas in the imperial force outside the Indian army with the notion that the Gurkhas had complete loyalty to the British Raj, Prime Minister Padma Shamshere said that Gurkhas who wished to serve in the new Indian army should be allowed to do so. He opined that Nepal is landlocked, and with the unbending policy towards the State of Hindustan's leaders it was likely that whatever economic pressure was necessary would be exerted to keep her compliant. But the most important fact was that Nepal's economy cannot support both the people and her top-heavy family of rulers, their kinsmen, bastard children and retainers. So poor peasants must seek a living outside. The long tradition of and preference for emigration of the unskilled hill people for employment opportunities in army service and other economic opportunities, is still continuing, and the existence of these avenues has tended to postpone the necessity of responding to the pressure of population in the hills and the crisis arising out of it since a long time. Moreover, the rulers of Nepal had substantial personal investments in India, as it was most necessary, apart from political reasons to remain on terms of friendship with the Central Government of India (Tucker, 1950:629). The attitude of the Nepalese government and Nehru's indispotion in dispensing with the Gurkhas to the British put the British government in an awkward position.

Sensing the difficulty of getting Gurkhas, Viceroy Lord Montbatten hit upon a plan for settling once and for all the question of the Gurkhas by putting forward the issue of the Andaman and the Nicobar islands before the Indian government stating that Britain would retain them for her strategic requirements in case India was unwilling to offer the Gurkhas for the British (Mansergh and Moon, 1982:319-320). Sensing the strategic importance of these islands to India, Nehru agreed to the British proposal (Mansergh and Moon, 1982:608). On 8th August 1947, it was revealed that the 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th Gurkha regiments had been selected for continued service with the British, while the remaining six regiments should serve the Indian government (James and Sheil-Small, 1965:254). However, the tripartite agreement between Nepal, India and the U.K. was signed only on 9th November 1947. Had the Gurkhas not been loyal to their duties, there would be no question of maintaining them in the Indian army after independence. Nehru's concern for the Gurkhas was governed by India's own situation at home. The Indian army was largely composed of Muslims accounting for 60 percent of the army. Nehru said to the Viceroy Wavell that India would need a first class army if she did win her freedom (Glendevon, 1971:174). Moreover, the Congress Party was not in a position to take the Sikh into confidence, and they were at a dilemma regarding the inclusion of the Punjab in the Indian Union because of the Sikh's persistent demand for autonomous status (Collins and Lapierre, 1982:125). The loyalties of the Gurkhas did not affect their service to either India or the U.K.

The communal violence that ensued after the transfer of power to India and Pakistan by the British resulted in mass exodus of the Hindus from Pakistan and also a large number of Muslims from India, and the brutality committed by rival groups over the refugees en route their aspiring homeland could be controlled only by the Gurkhas escorting the refugees. Captain R.E. Atkins and his Gurkhas spent weeks escorting refugee column, taking Sikh into India, then bringing hordes of Moslems back over the same route (Collins and Lapiere, 1975:378). In India, the recruitment of the Nepalese is not confined to Gorkha Rifles, they are to be found in large numbers in Assam Rifles as also in Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, Garhwal Regiment, Kumaon Regiment, Border Security Force, Central Reserve Police, and so on. The magnitude of the recruitment of the Nepalese in the Indian army fluctuates with its hostility with its neighbours. The strength of the Nepalese in the Indian army has been ever increasing since conflict with China in 1962, and it is further increasing with growing hostility and conflicts with Pakistan. The large-scale emigration of the hill people to India and the preference for employment in activities requiring no skill at all, such as army and police services, watchman, household servants, and security guards have been governed by availability of these jobs in Indian cities and towns to a greater extent.

After the installation of democracy in 1951, the Nepalese who were exiled to India during the Rana regime and also domiciled Nepalese returned to Nepal in a large number. It also marked the complete relaxation on movement of population between India and Nepal. This movement was the result of the Indo-Nepal Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950 which agreed to grant, on a reciprocal basis, to the nationals of one country in the territories of the other the same privileges in the matter of residence, ownership of property, participation in trade and commerce, movement and other privileges of a similar nature. It is to be noted that Nepal has open border policy not only with India but also with China. However, with the posting of Indian military check-post along the Sino-Nepal border in the early 50's according to the clauses contained in the letter of exchange of the treaty of 1950, the Sino-Nepal border became closed one, requiring people on either side to have visa to travel between the two countries. However, the movement of population between China and Nepal was very low as compared to that between Nepal and India.

The agricultural, industrial and commercial potentialities of the Terai attracted more Indians than the native population from the hills. By the time the Terai became attractive for the hill people after the eradication of malaria, large tracts of the alluvial part of the Terai were already owned and cultivated by the Indian immigrants; only the marginal lands north of the Terai, the Bhabar region and some forested areas of Jhapa and the far Western Terai were available for the hill people (Kansakar, 1979:250). Reclamation of the Terai and the resulting agricultural development which led to a large-scale immigration of labourers from India was further increased by land reform. The demand for labour from India is closely related with the prevailing large holdings, absentee landlordism and the inefficiency and inability of the hill migrants to work in the Terai environment. Moreover, cultivation of

land by the immigrant labours preclude the risk of according tenurial right to the tillers (Kansakar, 1982). The Temporary Citizenship Certificate Distribution Teams in 1976 failed to detect the foreigners in the Terai and as such a large number of foreign nationals living in the Terai were successful in acquiring the Nepali citizenship certificate. It has been alleged by the local people and the media that corruption among the government employees deputed for that task was widespread, and it has been a major reason behind the acquisition of citizenship certificate by foreigners as compared to the indigenous population. The task force on migration constituted by the National Commission on Population has noted the encouragement to immigration by existing citizenship policy. This is evidenced by the unprecedented increase in award of citizenship certificates based on parentage and birth right, following the change in rules regarding naturalized citizenship (the National Commission on Population, 1983:49).

Distribution of Indian Migrants in Nepal

India-born and Indian nationals constitute the largest number of foreign-born population and foreign nationals in Nepal. According to the census of 1961, there were 76,311 Indian citizens in Nepal representing 69.3 percent of the foreign citizens, while there were 324,159 India-born population representing 96 percent of the total foreign-born population. The number of Indian citizens went up to 128,829 persons in 1971, an increase of 68.8 percent within a decade. The India-born population on the other hand, has gone down to 322,718 persons. However, the census figures cannot indicate the magnitude of migration between India and Nepal, because census enumerators cannot find correct answers regarding a sensitive issue like migration. According to the reply given by the External Affairs Minister, Mr. P.V. Narshingha Rao, in Indian Parliament on 24 July, 1980, there are 3.8 million people of Indian origin in Nepal out of which 23,87,973 persons have already acquired Nepalese citizenship (Dimān, 1980:42:38). This statement sparked off several reactions in Nepal as a threat to national integrity and sovereignty. Since then immigration of the Indians has been looked upon as a matter of serious concern in Nepal, and this concern was further reinforced by the incidents in the north-eastern states of India from where a large number of domiciled Nepalese fled into Nepal.

The Terai region contains 96.6 and 94.8 percent of the total Indian nationals and India-born population in Nepal respectively (Table 1). According to the census of Nepal (1971), Indian nationals are characterised by preponderance of males over females indicating immigration of enterprising population such as traders, businessmen, skilled and unskilled labour, etc. India-born population is characterised by preponderance of females, and they are mostly confined to the Terai indicating large-scale marriage migration owing to the socio-cultural similarities on either side of the Indo-Nepal border. In the Terai, 65 percent of the India-born population are females. Similarly, according to the census of India (1971), 85.2 percent of the Nepal-born population in Bihar are females.

Table 1
Distribution of Indian Nationals and India-Born Population in Nepal 1971

Geographic Regions	Indian Citizens			Indian Born Population		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
NEPAL	128829	71169	57660	322718	115606	207112
MOUNTAIN REGION	346	201	145	2212	926	1286
1. Eastern Mountain	203	114	89	1172	555	617
2. Central Mountain	42	25	17	68	42	26
3. Western Mountain	7	3	4	59	32	27
4. Far Western Mountain	94	59	35	913	297	616
HILL REGION	4037	2385	1652	14689	7712	6977
1. Eastern Hill	536	318	318	1743	875	868
2. Central Hill	2706	1632	1074	4929	2725	2204
3. Western Hill	766	414	352	7376	3812	3141
4. Far Western Hill	29	21	8	641	300	3141
TERAI REGION	124446	68583	55863	305817	106968	198849
1. Eastern Terai	56045	32864	23181	100991	46,027	54964
2. Central Terai	27279	13670	13609	118427	28,636	89,791
3. Western Terai	32249	17191	15058	68894	24,673	44,221
4. Far Western Terai	8873	4858	4015	17505	7632	9873
					Percentage	
					Male	
					Female	
					Male	
					Female	

Source: Census of Nepal, 1971.

Considering skill, entrepreneurship, efficiency and cost effectiveness, neither the government nor the private enterprises have been able or willing to replace Indian immigrants by providing employment to the relatively unskilled and in-efficient Nepalese citizens (Kansakar, 1979:54). Moreover, any attempt at developing industry, commerce, trade and construction activity in the Terai in particular, and the hill in general, has actually benefitted the Indian immigrants who by virtue of comparatively high level of skill and entrepreneurship have made it very difficult for the less skilled and less enterprising Nepalese to compete with them.

Distribution of Nepalese Migrants in India

In 1911, there were 274,251 Nepal-born persons in India and it went up to 526,526 persons in 1971, an increase of 252,275 persons or 92 percent over a period of 60 years. However, up to 1951 the increase was steady (Table 2) with a moderate decline in 1921. The decline has been

Table 2: Nepal-Born Population in India (1891-1971)

Year	Persons	Percentage of all Foreign-Born Population
1891	234,260	36.4
1901	239,127	36.2
1911	274,251	42.0
1921	260,220	45.9
1931*	303,139	44.7
1951	278,972	-
1961	498,836	5.3
1971	526,526	5.6

*The figures upto 1931 include Nepal-born population in Burma where the Nepal-born population in 1931 was 23,889 persons.

Source: Census of India, 1891-1971.

attributed to World War I casualties of the Gurkhas and the influenza epidemic of 1917. The decline between 1931 and 1951 might be due to World War II casualties of the Gurkhas, the Bengal famine, the partition of India and the communal violence before and after independence of India. However, there was a drastic increase from 278,972 persons in 1951 to 498,836 persons in 1961, an increase of 219,864 persons or 78.8 percent over a decade. The drastic increase might be related to large-scale recruitment of Nepalese in the Indian army and the relaxation of movement of Nepalese within and outside the country after 1951. The increase between 1961 and 1971 is, however, 27,690 persons or 5.6 percent only. Nepal-born population in India constitute 0.1 percent of the total population of India while India-born population in Nepal constitute 2.79 percent of the total population of Nepal. The highest percentage of Nepal-born

population was in Arunachal Pradesh (3.33 percent), while the percentage of India-born population in Nepal was 7.05 percent of the total population in the Terai.

More than 90 percent of the Nepal-born population in India is confined to Northern India. Nepalese emigrants to India were tending to spread rather than to concentrate in the border areas (David, 1951:39), and as a result, their proportion in bordering states of Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh has declined from 70.0 percent in 1951 to 59.2 percent in 1971 (Table 3). The magnitude of Nepalese emigrants in India has been increasing ever since India's confrontation with China in 1962 and with Pakistan in 1965 and 1971, and this has been further increasing as a result of deteriorating situation of law and order in the cities and towns in India where there is a great demand for Nepalese as security guards and watchmen. However, the seasonal movement of Nepalese hill population to north-eastern India and Sikkim and Darjeeling district of West Bengal has declined as a result of agitation in Assam, restriction imposed by Sikkim State and the Central Government declaring Sikkim and Darjeeling as strategically sensitive areas.

In Assam, the Nepalese, by clearing the heavy tree jungle infested with wild animals and malaria for sugarcane, prepared the land for subsequent cultivation of rice by the Assamese (Lloyed, 1923:42). The Nepali migrants entered the State (Assam) with their traditional occupation of dairy farming and wetland in the sub-urban areas. They have been successful due to the absence of competition from local inhabitants (Gogoi, 1980:10). Tea plantation in Assam, which started in 1839, also seems to have attracted a large number of Nepalese due to the practice of granting rice plots to plantation workers by the tea-estates. However, Nepal government imposed restriction on migration of Nepalese to those areas on the plea that they were being used as slave and bonded labour (Rana, 1925:35-36). The planters used all methods, including physical coercion, to prevent their labour from leaving tea garden, since labour was scarce (Bhowmik, 1980:6).

The tribal heartland of the north-eastern states, also known as 'seven sisters', has been a troublesome spot in India since the British period. The political assimilation of these states, without the assimilation of these distinct and diverse tribal people into the great Indian cultural milieu, after independence has been a major reason behind dissident underground movements by the Nagas, Mizos, Manipuris, and others in these states. However, the use of the Gurkha troops to quell underground movements of these groups since the 60's brought about more hostility between the people of Nepalese origin and the native population. This resulted in the frequent fleeing of the domiciled Nepalese from these areas. These people had to enter Nepal because of the nativist policy of the Sikkim government.

Nepalese emigrants to India are not confined to able-bodied males only. Able-bodied females are also emerging as important migrants to India, and these females constituted an important supply of women for

Table 3: Nepal-Born Population in India (1961-1971)

	Nepal-born Population		Absolute Increase	Percent Increase	Annual Rate of Growth
	1961	1971			
INDIA	498836	526526	+27690	+ 5.55	+ 0.54
Andhra Pradesh	1860	3535	+ 1675	+ 90.05	+ 6.63
Assam	82624	91665	+ 9041	+ 10.94	+ 1.04
Bihar	108971	122528	+13557	+ 12.44	+ 1.22
Gujarat	3352	4315	+ 963	+ 28.73	+ 2.56
Himanchal Pradesh	9699	19718	+10019	+103.3	+ 7.35
Jammu and Kashmir	310	1296	+ 986	+318.06	+ 15.38
Kerala	424	1280	+ 856	+201.89	+ 11.68
Madhya Pradesh	7605	8825	+ 1220	+ 16.04	+ 1.50
Maharashtra	13704	18422	+ 4718	+ 34.42	+ 3.00
Manipur	3576	6940	+ 3364	+ 94.04	+ 6.86
Mysore	1398	1705	+ 307	+ 21.96	+ 2.01
Nagaland	4926	9278	+ 4352	+ 88.35	+ 6.53
Orissa	2476	3555	+ 1079	+ 43.58	+ 3.68
Punjab	11719	11166	- 553	- 4.72	- 0.48
Rajasthan	2053	2626	+ 573	+ 27.91	+ 2.49
Sikkim	5352	5569	+ 217	+ 4.05	+ 0.40
Tamil Nadu	2645	2465	- 180	- 6.81	- 0.70
Tripura	861	930	+ 69	+ 8.01	+ 0.77
Uttar Pradesh	111718	83459	-28259	- 25.29	- 2.87
West Bengal	109190	100365	- 8725	- 7.99	- 0.84
Andaman & Nicobar Is.	129	173	+ 44	+ 34.11	+ 2.99
Arunachal Pradesh	8223	15551	+ 7328	+ 89.12	+ 6.58
Dadar & Nagar Haveli	9	4	- 5	- 55.56	- 7.79
Delhi	5892	9670	+ 3778	+ 64.12	+ 5.08
Goa, Daman & Diu	10	298	+ 288	+2880.00	+ 40.42
Laccadive, Minicoy & Amindive Is.	110	188	+ 78	+ 78.91	+ 0.55

Source: Census of India 1961 and 1971.

Assam includes Maghalaya and Punjab includes Haryana and Chardigarh.

brothels in Indian cities. According to the report in a newspaper in 1973, out of 10 prostitutes in the city of Bombay, 3 were from Nepal. The rescuing of the destitute girls by voluntary organisations and by the police is well-known to all. Serious concern has been expressed by the Nepalese people regarding the growing trafficking of Nepalese women to India for selling into brothels in Indian cities.

Some Problems and Prospects Associated with Indo-Nepal Migration and Relations

India's support for the democratic movement of 1950 is a fresh chapter in the memory of the Nepalese. In 1948, Nepal had also made a loan of 10,000 Nepalese army to India, when the Indian government faced major challenges in both Hyderabad and Kashmir. Since British period, Nepal's relations with her powerful neighbour were based on the loan of her men, and these relations were governed by the friendship and constant intercourse that the transaction promoted. The Gurkhas are said to have no religion when they are soldiers, and it is an important quality which distinguishes them from their Indian colleagues in the Indian army, who are characterised by diversity in caste, creed and belief (Kansakar, 1982: 111-112). The Gurkhas, because of their valour, constitute the major spearhead of Indian defence, and they have demonstrated their valour in India's war with her neighbours in 1962, 1965 and 1971. The drain of these Gurkhas from Nepalese hills has deprived the hill areas of most enterprising and dynamic elements of population, and the absence of these youths has stagnated the development of the hills. Though the remittances from the army and civil services in foreign countries have relieved the people from economic hardship by the hills, the remittances have only worked as oxygen to keep the deteriorating economy of the hills just alive rather than to transform it. The economy of the army villages has remained the same as it had been several decades ago (Kansakar, 1982:117-118).

India's contribution to the development of agriculture, industry, irrigation, hydro-electricity, transportation and communication, education, etc. particularly in the initial phase of Nepal's economic development as well as the aftermath has been significant. Nepal's contribution to India, particularly in the field of irrigation, is no less important, e.g. the Sharada canal, the Koshi Project and the Gandak Project which irrigate considerable portions of land in India as compared to that of Nepal. In the industrial development, the investment by Indian private investors individually and in collaboration with Nepalese is very significant. It is to be noted that the investment in India made by the Nepalese is no less important, because the Ranas have made considerable investment in India, they conceded to Indian government proposition regarding the recruitment of the Gurkhas in the Indian army and the treaty of 1950 which was kept secret until 1959. The clauses in the letter of exchange of this treaty contained a number of restrictions imposed on Nepal by India in the matter of defence and foreign assistance beyond India. In 1972, among the largest tax-payers of India, General Singh Shamsher Rana occupied the third position. These clauses contained in

the letter of exchange of Peace and Friendship: 1950 are being looked upon by the Nepalese as India's design to keep Nepal as its dependent satellite and these clauses have remained a major hitch in maintaining smooth relations with India as well as with other countries.

The attitude of Indian politicians has been to look with suspicion any assistance Nepal gets from China. The debate in both houses of Indian Parliament on Kathmandu-Kodari Highway linking Kathmandu with Lhasa and terming of that highway as "military road capable of moving tanks" bears ample testimony to the fact. However, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has to say, "China is a neighbour of Nepal and naturally they would like to remain friends with China also. But I do not think it in any way interferes with the very close friendship and close cultural ties which we have with them" (Bhasin, ed., 1970:116). When the Chinese constructed a ring road around Kathmandu and Lalitpur, some Indian papers carried the news that the road is wide enough to land jet fighters. Frequent strains in the relationship between Nepal and India at government level are not due to political, geographical, economic or cultural reasons, but due to the amateurish handling of some of the issues by Indian politicians (Sharma, 1970:2). The early fifties has been a period when India's interference in Nepal's internal affairs reached its zenith. The treaty of 1950, in effect, brought Nepal within the security system the Indians were attempting to build for South Asia, without providing the Rana regime with the type of formal guarantee that had been extended by the British. In addition, after the installation of democracy, the Indian Ambassador, C.P.N. Singh functioned as Tribhuvan's political advisor and even interfered directly in policy and political matters (Rose and Scholz, 1980:37, 47). Even a person of the stature of the late Jawaharlal Nehru loosely informed the Indian Parliament by making a statement in 1950 that Nepal's independence was "formal" (Sharma, 1970:2). However, Nehru was the Indian leader who aspired for and established cordial relations between Nepal and India. Speaking at a press conference in New Delhi on 18 January 1961, he said, "Broadly speaking, our relations depend not really on any person's goodwill, on Nepal's goodwill, on that government or this government. They depend on geography and history, which cannot be easily done away with" (Bhasin, 1970:55).

Indo-Nepal trade is an important issue which has been the subject of constant discussion between the two countries. Nepal's foreign trade is predominantly confined to India, and it is characterised by an adverse balance of payments on Nepalese side. Since British India, treaties between Nepal and India regarding trade and transit which are of particularly crucial importance to a small, poor, landlocked country have so far tended to regulate rather than to encourage Nepalese exports (Blakie, Cameron, and Seddon, 1980:12). The present condition of Nepalese manufactured goods seeking export to Indian market, require 80 percent of the manufactured items consisting of indigenous materials. It is a difficult hurdle for developing industries to meet local demands and to export to narrow down the trade gap between Nepal and India. Inder Malhotra has remarked, "Nepal's economic needs should be treated with the maximum understanding and generosity even if India has to suffer losses here and

there, provided no grave damage is done to the Indian economy. India's unwillingness to adopt such attitude has been due to the diversion of import and export between Nepal and India in which a particularly unsavoury group of Indian businessmen in Nepal have been the main promoters as well as beneficiaries of the various rackets. If allowed unchecked, the activities of these ugly Indians may do incalculable damage to India-Nepal relations" (Malhotra, 1970:6). India's trade protectionism has a direct bearing on import of consumers' goods from overseas beyond Nepal's own needs, with the calculated purpose of smuggling them across India. Smuggling from Nepal to India has been termed as "smuggling by the Indians, to the Indians and for the Indians." In absence of industrial development in Nepal, the strain on the limited natural resources of Nepal is ever-increasing with an adverse impact on ecosystem of the Himalayas. The ecosystem and natural resources of the Himalayas are the common interest of both countries, the deterioration of which will have a disastrous effect on climate, agriculture, irrigation and hydel-power. Therefore, the exploitation and conservation of the ecosystem and the natural resources of the Himalayas is possible only through mutual cooperation of both countries.

The ever-growing pressure of the Nepalese population on limited agricultural land and a lack of industrial development in the country is creating an acute problem of unemployment. The urge for providing native population with whatever economic opportunities available in the country has become the need of Nepal. In such a situation, it is not surprising to find a growing sense of nationalist sentiment among the Nepalese. The development of these sentiments among the Nepalese is the reflection of a growing sense of the nativist attitudes and policies in the north-eastern States and Sikkim State of India. There is no dearth of All Assam Students Union - or of Gana Sangram Parishad-like elements in Nepal, and one element in Nepal is spreading the rumour that there are 5.22 million Indians in Nepal (as against 3.8 million people of Indian origin as stated by the External Affairs Minister of India), and they have demanded the introduction of work permit for immigrants and to discard open-border policy between Indian and Nepal.

Indo-Nepal migration is a unique type of international migration, not to be found elsewhere in the world. It is characterised by migration on either side for exploiting economic opportunities. It is comparable, neither with migration of Tamils to Sri Lanka, nor with that of Bangladeshis to India. It is shameful to report in a newspaper of international repute like The Telegraph that Sri Lanka-type of situation is cropping up in the Terai, and that the visit of ex-Prime Minister K.N. Bista to China as seeking some kind of an assurance that the Chinese authorities would exert a countervailing pressure if India intervened in the event of ethnic trouble in the Terai region (The Telegraph, October 2, 1983). Such a baseless report by the newspapers might do incalculable damage to Indo-Nepal relations. Whatever might have been the origin of Nepalese nationals in Nepal, they are true citizens of Nepal, and Nepalese nationals of different origins in India are likewise true citizens of India. The problem of people in a country is the internal problem of that country. So far as the territorial integrity of both the countries are

concerned, neither will India support the secessionist movement of the Terai people, nor will Nepal support the secessionist movement of the Nepalese in India.

Conclusion

The geography of the Indian sub-continent has a considerable bearing on the large-scale movement of population between India and Nepal since time immemorial, and the impact of this movement on cultural development of Nepal in particular has been far-reaching. The hordes of migrants have completely modified the culture of the tribal people at many places and at the same time the immigrants have adopted several culture traits of the indigenous people. When Nepal felt the necessity of a super tribal culture, she borrowed foreign traditions from the Hindu and the Tibetan mode of life, which have penetrated into landlocked areas through the Siwalik and the Great Himalaya. In fact, these two great cultures have been the forces which have eroded or acculturated the indigenous tribal cultures in Nepal (Kawakita, 1957). Nepal's position as an entrepot between India and China has played an important role in the introduction of the Hindu culture and the Tibetan culture in Nepal. Historically, when Nepal lost its entrepot position after the occupation of India by the British and the discovery of the Chumbi valley route, Nepal was compelled to have a greater degree of socio-economic relations with India. The movement of people, goods and cultures between Nepal and India has been taking place without any hitch and hindrance. As Mr. K.N. Sharma, staff reporter of The Times of India remarks, "The relation between India and Nepal are not the handiwork of treaties or agreement but natural. Both the countries are bound by a common geography, history and heritage of religion and culture. Whether the governments agree on particular clauses of a treaty or disagree on the economic relations, the relation between the peoples of India and Nepal continue perennially unaffected" (Sharma, 1970:2).

In order to ensure the unrestricted migration of Nepalese hill people for recruitment in the Indian army and an unrestricted flow of raw materials from Nepal for industries in India, the British kept the Indo-Nepal border open between the people of both countries. India after independence maintained the status quo of the open border and reinforced and formalised the movement of people and goods by the Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950. To sum up, the movement of population, and economic and political relations between Nepal and India are bilateral issues. However, both the governments have been responsible for adopting unilateral approaches to the issues of mutual interest of Nepal and India. It is not possible to find solutions to bilateral issues through unilateral action on the part of either country. The policy of Nepalese government to control immigration (from India) without realising the problem of emigration of Nepalese to India is an instance in point. Similarly, the resentment against the Nepalese and the Indians of Nepalese origin in the north-eastern India, and the restriction imposed by the Indian government in the movement of Nepalese in Sikkim State and Darjeeling district, are also examples of unilateral approach

towards bilateral issues. Because of such actions, friendly relations between the two countries at times have been marred at the governmental level as well as public level by occasional misunderstandings. Recent incidents in the north-eastern States of India are just one illustration of such misunderstandings. The assurance of the Indian Prime Minister and of the Home Minister to the delegation of the North-Eastern Nepalese United Front that the government would ensure their interest and of other minorities in the north-eastern region (The Times of India, November 5, 1980) and the similar assurance by the Nepalese Home Minister to a delegation of Nepal Chamber of Commerce regarding Indian immigrants and Nepalese of Indian origin (The Gorkhapatra, September 24, 1980) have been helpful in erasing the misunderstandings. They indicated attempts towards an amicable solution to these bilateral issues, rather than indulging in recriminatory debates. Those instigating xenophobia in India forget the contribution of the Gurkhas as a spread-head of Indian national defence, while those against Indians in Nepal forget the contribution of India in providing employment to the Nepalese in India. In order to erase the xenophobia towards each other, it is essential that Nepal and India should make a proper assessment of Indo-Nepal migration to understand its diverse problems and prospects, to control the unhealthy aspect of migration which will have adverse effects on demographic, economic, political and cultural development of the two countries. Migration between the two countries for employment opportunities is indicative of both countries' inability in generating suitable employment for their respective people. The growing nativist attitude is, not only confined to each country, but also extended within regions of the countries. With the ever growing sense of "the sons of the soil", the export of poverty and unemployment between Nepal and India will not be possible within foreseeable future.

The spatial characteristic in terms of distribution of migrants between India and Nepal is distinctly different. Nepalese migrants in India is marked by dispersal in different parts of a huge country like India which is 22 times larger in land-area and 45 times larger in population size than Nepal. On the other hand, Indian immigrants are marked by their concentration in the Terai region of a small country like Nepal. The political implications of such concentration in the Terai are apparent. The concern of the politicians in power is confined to ballot papers rather than national interest and national integration. The incidents in the Assam State of India and the continuing agitation against the Bangladeshi immigrants by the local population are glaring examples of public resentment against the party in power's interest in ballot papers rather than the interest of the local population. Had the Bangladeshi immigrants been dispersed over different parts of India, there would have been no Assam agitation in India. The indifferent attitude of the Bangladesh government in solving this problem compelled India to fence with barbed wire the entire length of the Indo-Bangladesh border in the interest of the Assamese and India. The continued unrestricted movement of the Indian immigrants and their concentration in the Terai, and the resulting political risk might give rise to an Assam-like agitation in Nepal unless Nepal and India think over this issue seriously.

India and Nepal should be always cautious and watchful in preventing the cordiality and friendliness of Indo-Nepal relations turning into hostility. It is rather unwise to set aside the Indo-Nepal migration and related issues as sensitive, and the economic, political and social price of procrastinating Indo-Nepal migration issue will be high. Indo-Nepal migration is a bilateral issue; there is no solution to it through unilateral action. Therefore, the need for bilateral approach to deal with problems arising from and contributing to Indo-Nepal migration at government and academic levels by both countries is urgent.

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