

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IN NEPAL: TOWARDS AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

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Introduction

On the basis of assumed causes influencing human movement, international migration can be broadly categorized into two groups: voluntary and involuntary (Peterson 1978). The present paper concentrates on voluntary international migration in Nepal although in many cases, the difference between voluntary and involuntary movements may be unclear (see David 1970: 73-95).

The current population situation in Nepal results in part from both emigration and immigration. Historically, three forms of emigration are evident: (a) movement related to military recruitment, mainly Gorkha recruitment, (b) movement for agricultural and other economic activities in rural areas among low level wage workers such as *durban*, *kulli*, watchman and prostitutes, mainly to the urban centers of India, and (c) marriage migration. More than 90% of all emigrants are from Hills and the Mountains.

Immigration comprises both regular and periodic flows. The regular flow is the continuation of the past stream when people from North Indian plains were encouraged to colonize the forested areas of the Tarai. The Tibetans were also encouraged to conduct their business and settle down in Nepal hills until the termination of the salt trade. On the other hand, major periodic flows include: (a) the flow of Hindus (figure not known) from North India during 11th and 12th centuries as a result of Muslim invasion in India, (b) the flow of about 16,000 Tibetan refugees in 1959/60 due to political instability in Tibet, (c) the flow of Nepali-origin people from Burma because of Burmese Nationalization Act in 1964, (d) the flow of about 10,000 Bihari Muslims from Bangladesh around 1970s, and (e) a (return) flow of a considerable number of Nepali people who were forced to leave Nagaland and Mizoram in late 1960s. With a few exceptions, the stream of immigration is directed to

the Tarai.

This paper utilizes secondary sources to examine two major international migratory flows in Nepal, emigration from the Hills and immigration to the Tarai, and shows how various factors affect them. This assessment is based on secondary sources. The paper is organized into three sections. The first section provides a synopsis of the forms of emigration and immigration. The second section analyzes international migration in Nepal within the framework suggested by Weiner (1985). The third section identifies a few critical issues with regard to international migration in Nepal. Emphasis is placed upon migration between Nepal and India, especially of those migrants who have migrated for agriculture-related occupations.

An Analytical Framework

The patterns and trends of migration in Nepal have been widely discussed in recent literature (Kansakar 1974, 1983; Rana and Thapa 1974; Dahal et al. 1977; CEDA 1977; Shrestha 1979; Banister and Thapa 1981; Conway and Shrestha 1981; Thapa 1982; Gurung 1984, 1985; Sharma 1985a; Shrestha 1985). With a few exceptions (e.g., Gurung and Sharma 1986), no attempt has been made towards developing or applying an analytical framework to explain the migratory pattern.

Myron Weiner (1985:441-455) has suggested a framework for the analysis of international migration. He suggests that there are four clusters of variables shaping international migration. The first cluster is *differential variables*. It includes variables such as wage differentials and differences in employment rates and land prices. Many economic studies have emphasized these variables in explaining migration patterns (Todaro 1987; Greenwood 1969). *Spatial variables* such as distance and transportation costs constitute the second cluster. Many geographers and demographers have emphasized those variables as well. This cluster of variables seems quite similar to what Gradner discusses as constraints and facilitators in migration (see Gradner in De Jong and Gradner 1981:58-89). *Affinity variables* comprise the third cluster. Religion, culture, language, kinship network are the major variables in this cluster. Ritchey (1976:389) also lists a number of hypotheses, like the affinity hypothesis, the information hypothesis and the facilitating hypothesis. Weiner's cluster resembles some of these. The fourth cluster of variables comprises the *access variables*, meaning the rules for entry and exit.

Large-scale population movements across borders are induced by high differentials, small distance, close affinity and unrestricted rules of entry and exit. Weiner maintains that access variables are the crucial ones because individual decisions are intimately influenced by it, despite the heavy positive

influence of other variables. Again, unrestricted access allows migration even when the differentials are not that great. Let us see how these variables apply to international migration in Nepal.

Differential Variables

Wage differentials

It has generally been accepted that the direction of net migration is away from low wage regions towards high wage ones. Todaro (1976), based upon unemployment research in Kenya, posits that movement is the response to expected earning differentials, in his case rural-urban wage differentials. Because of the rural- to-rural nature of most Nepali emigration, rural-urban wage differential does not have direct relevance to the rationale of migration. In the past, many Nepali emigrated to India and other countries not because they perceived wage differentials but because of their search for arable land for which North and Northeast India became the potential destinations. As a result, people from the Hills of Nepal colonized the relatively poor, sparsely settled interior parts of Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and Kangra valley of India (Mandal 1981).

This process of land colonization applies for both emigrants from Nepal and immigrants to Nepal. The initial clearance of the malarial Tarai forest and its settlement is due to Indian immigration in Nepal. Indians from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were mainly responsible for it (Regmi 1977). In general, wage differential does not appear important in shaping international migration in Nepal.

Differentials in employment opportunities

In the past as well as present, non-farm employment opportunities in the Hills have remained extremely limited (Sharma 1985b). Employment opportunities in India, on the other hand, existed in such areas as labour in tea plantations, border security, oil-fields, timber work and road construction in many areas in North and Northeast India. Employment in the British and the Indian Army has acted as an incentive for Nepali emigrants. From the early 19th century, the British Indian government had begun recruiting "Gurkhas" in their army. This avenue for employment enticed many young adults from the hills to join the British or Indian army. Stiller (1976:43) observes that around 1915 there was a large-scale recruitment of able-bodied men for foreign armies.

Davis (1951:117) indicates that Hill emigration for agriculture-related work to Darjeeling, Sikkim, and Bhutan remained steady for more than one-hundred and fifty years. Mandal (1981) states that the root of Nepali Hill emigration

and settlement in Northeastern India is employment in the British-Indian army, many of whom settled there following retirement. Moreover, in the early phase of tea plantation, oil mining and land clearance, Nepali laborers were in high demand (Dahal and Mishra 1987). Dixon (1977:110), by observing very low intra-district movement and high proportions of people living abroad, concludes that the relatively low level of domestic intra-district mobility reflected a lack of job opportunities in Nepal compared to India and elsewhere. Ojha (1983) also states that different economic opportunities available outside the country were responsible for Hill emigration.

With regard to immigration, the census of manufacturing establishments indicates 19% of the total laborers in the industrial establishments as immigrants (Sharma1985b:79). This proportion is as high as 69% in industries that process primary raw materials. Immigrants were employed in skilled or semi-skilled categories and were mainly concentrated in the Tarai. This has been the case immediately from the establishment of industries in the Tarai in the 1930s (Dahal 1983a). Lack of required skilled and semi-skilled local manpower for industries in the Tarai provided employment opportunities to migrants from North India. On the other hand, for Nepali non-agricultural emigrants, the availability of low level jobs such as hotel boys, *durbans*, watchman, etc. in the India towns provided employment opportunities there. Thus, the role of employment opportunities appears important in Indo-Nepal migration.

Differentials in land prices

This variable applies to agriculture-related migrants and helps explain the direction of Indo-Nepal migration until the 1960s. Access to land is more important than the price differentials between the origin and destination. Up to the 1960s, land in the Tarai was easily available for emigrants as well as immigrants. Historically, the political regime in Nepal encouraged settlement in the Tarai areas in order to augment revenue accruable to the state. Since the hill people were reluctant to move to the Tarai, migrants from India were encouraged to settle in the Tarai. (The causes of reluctance among the hill people to move to the Tarai will be discussed later). Besides initial tax remissions, those who undertook the development of waste and virgin lands for cultivation were entitled to 10% of tax free land (*birta*) (Ministry of Law and Justice 1965:19). This is no more the case. But, in the past, it played a major role in attracting immigrants from the densely populated northern states of India.

Davis (1951:117) indicates that the practice of granting rice plots to tea state plantation workers seems to have augmented the number of Nepalis in Assam. The same was true for the Kumaon area of India, especially in the

Kangra Valley where the British government had established Gorkha settlements without the settlers having to pay for the land. Gaige's (1975:66) observation is that economic deterioration in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh together with the opportunity to obtain land either free or at a relatively little cost in the Nepal Tarai encouraged the people of the Gangetic plains to move there.

Differentials in population density

Density differentials have played a dominant role in shaping international migration in Nepal. The Tarai was sparsely populated up to the 1960s and it was necessary to encourage more people to settle in the region. The Hills, in terms of total arable land, were already densely populated. In the meantime, large-scale migration from the Hills to outside the country was also taking place (Gurung 1984). A comparison of population density in the Tarai with that in the adjoining districts of India reveals that density in north Indian districts is very high. According to the 1981 census of Nepal, the population density of the Tarai districts ranges from 80 persons per sq. km. (Kailali) to 366 persons per sq. km. (Dhanusha), with an overall average of 234 persons. On the other hand, even the 1971 census of India shows that only two among the Gangetic plain districts had a density to less than 250 persons per sq. km. (Kheri and Pilibhit in U. P.). Some districts such as Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Saran, etc. had a density of over 600 persons per sq. km. Density in north Indian districts has been increasing, and it will continue to do so at least up to the end of this century. Gaige (1975:66) points out that population density in eastern India districts was two or three times greater than in the eastern Tarai districts. The differential was even greater for those Indian districts adjoining western districts in the 1960s. This information suggests that Indian immigrants to Nepal have moved from densely populated north India to the relatively less populated Tarai areas.

Hill emigration from Nepal is also influenced by density differentials between the Hills of Nepal and the Northeastern hills of India. A comparison of population density between two areas shows a lower density in the latter. Sikkim had a density of 26 persons per sq. km. in 1971 whereas the corresponding figure for the Hill districts of Nepal was more than 80 persons per sq. km. This is one reason why Nepali emigrants from the hills might have moved to the sparsely populated Northeastern Hills in India.

Spatial Variables

Spatial variables are concerned with time, distance and space. In a simple gravity model formulation, migration becomes a function of "friction of space", i.e., as distance increases, the size of the migratory flow tends to decrease and *vice versa* (Zipf 1946). A number of studies have found an

inverse relationship between the probability of migrating and the distance between origin and destination. Greenwood (1969) found that in Egypt a 10% increase in home wages deterred migration as much as a 13.3% increase in distance. In the Nepali context, however, many ethnographic studies have shown that people from the central hills and mountains have crossed a considerable distance to north-eastern parts of India (Bruce 1934; Caplan 1970; Furer-Haimendorf 1975; Macfarlane 1976; Rose 1981; Dahal 1983; Fricke 1986). MacDougal (1968) reports the same situation in the western Hills. Dahal et. al (1977) also state that the people from the far western Hills have moved to distant places to earn a livelihood. Lall (1968) points out that many Nepalis from the hills have moved as far as Burma for better opportunities and land. Kansakar (1974) observes that many Nepalis worked in the Punjab army in the past. This means that proximity to the destination is not an important variable in hill emigration.

Distance, nonetheless, does appear to be a factor in shaping the immigration pattern in Nepal. The concentration of about 96% of China-born population in the northern mountain region and about 91% of India-born population in the Tarai shows that proximity to the areas of origin is one of the variables determining immigration pattern in Nepal. The Tarai is an extension of the Indo-Gangetic plain. Apart from the short distance, the relatively inexpensive Indian railway lines constructed during the British administration also facilitated the movement from north India to Nepal. The extension of Indian railway network up to the border of Nepal has a particularly positive impact on immigration to Nepal. The railway network also facilitated the Indian "gallawala" (labour recruiting agent) and rice traders to extend in their activities to Nepali villages.

Affinity Variables

People tend to move to areas with cultures and languages that are similar to those of their points of origin as well as areas where they have a kinship network. Weiner's third cluster focuses on these variables.

Culture and Religion

Many people of Nepal and India share a common religion and beliefs. A very large proportion of Nepalis and Indians are Hindus. As such, they observe the common festivals and visit temples and religious shrines in both the countries. There are considerable ethnic similarities among the people of India and Nepal as well as Tibet. This similarity is region-specific. Similarities exist between the Mountain people of Nepal and the Tibetan people across the Himalayas. The hill people are similar with the hill residents of India to the east and the west of Nepal. The majority of the Tarai

people are similar in their physical appearance and social behaviour with the people of the north Indian plain. Migration has followed these religious and cultural lines. The first migratory wave of Hill people was from the Kumaon area to the middle Hills of Nepal (Poffenberger 1980). People from Tibet migrated to the Mountain regions of Nepal until the termination of salt trade in 1959. The Tarai is dominated by descendants of migrants from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

Sharma (1978:1) notes that the Hindu-Tribal dichotomy is much less sharp in Nepal than in India. The resulting higher level of religious tolerance among Nepali people has also served to encourage immigration of Indians to Nepal.

A study undertaken by a National Commission on Population Task Force (1983) found that 79.3 percent of household heads among immigrants belong to similar Hindu social/ethnic groups existing in the Tarai.

Language

Nepali and Hindi, the national languages of Nepal and India, respectively, have their origin in Sanskrit and share the same script. Based on mother tongue data, the 1981 census of Nepal records Maithili and Bhojpuri as the second and third dominant languages in Nepal. In the Indian census, these two language groups are included within the Hindi language category (for detailed discussion of the problem and similarity of languages in the Nepal Tarai and North Indian plains, see Gaige 1975:100-125).

In the mid-western Tarai districts of Nawalparasi, Kapilvastu and Rupandehi, more than 85 percent people spoke Awadhi in 1961. In the contiguous border districts of Uttar Pradesh, according to the Indian census, 85 percent or more speak Hindi. Gaige (1975) argues that those classified as Awadhi speakers in the Nepali census seem to speak the same language which is classified as Hindi in the Indian censuses. The dialect of Doti, Dadeldhura, Darchula, and Baitadi, neighboring the Kumaon areas of India is included within Nepali in Nepal. This dialect (Kumaoni) is spoken by 96 percent of the people in the contiguous districts of Almora there. Gaige (1975) further notes that most of the speakers of Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, and other tribal languages of the plain areas speak Hindi as a second language. He observes that about 46% of the total population in the Tarai speaks Hindi as a second language. Combining together the native speakers of Hindi and those who use it as a second language, a substantial percentage of population in the Tarai (63 percent) speaks Hindi (Given the 62.8 percent positive change in the Indo-aryan language group between 1952/54 and 1981 (Gurung 1985, unpublished paper). Given the growing commercial contacts between Tarai and India, it unlikely that the percentage of Hindi-competent

may not have declined in the recent years.

In a similar manner, a similarity exists in the languages used in the hill areas of Nepal and those of the northeastern (also northwestern) hills of India. The 1971 census of Sikkim showed that 64% of total population of the state listed Gorkhali (i.e., Nepali) as their mother tongue. In Darjeeling, where most people speak Nepali, the people of Nepali origin constitute more than half of the total population. Even in Bhutan, more than one-third of the national population is of Nepali origin and speaks the Nepali language.

Thus, linguistic similarities between the plains areas of Nepal and India and between the Nepali and Indian hills (both in the North and the Northeast) must have led to increasing cross flows of migrants.

Kinship Network

The kinship network across the border of the Nepal Tarai and North India is relatively intense. Marriages between Indians and Nepalis are common feature in these regions. Low caste and tribal people tend to marry neighboring villagers. Upper caste and upper class families frequently arrange marriages with families living many miles away. Many Hindus and Muslims in Nepal are either migrants or descendants of migrants from India. These families tend to maintain the close ties to their ancestral villages. Gaige (1975) in his study of Nepal Tarai observes that households continue to make marriage arrangements with affines and other distant relatives in ancestral villages. The presence of relatives and friends and thus the continual maintenance of close ties between the points of origin and destination has accelerated the wave of migration into the Nepal Tarai in particular. A recent survey (NCP 1983) finds that 12 percent of the migrant Indian household heads had migrated to the present location simply because of the presence of relatives.

In the hills, marriage between Nepalis and Indians is not as common as in the Tarai. However, it is generally observed that in the middle hills upper class Hindus tend to marry in Assam, Sikkim and Darjeeling areas as well as in the Kumaon area in the west. There is a tradition to marry in India among the ruling classes of Nepal. Marriage relationships represent a continual and active reinforcement of the cultural ties between the people of Nepal and India.

Within the affinity variable, another component that works through kinship is the demand for and supply of information and communication. In this connection, Ritchey (1976) emphasizes the impact of the information network in shaping international migration. Up to the beginning of 19th century, i.e., before recruitment was officially allowed in Nepal, young adults from the hills moved down to Indian towns armed with information and communication they had obtained through the kinship network. This has a

simple logic: no one leaves his/her home territory without any idea of where he/she is moving. Kinsmen are trusted to provide the most reliable information.

Similarity in Physical Habitat

This variable (not mentioned by Weiner) also shares in shaping international migration in Nepal, particularly for agricultural reasons. Besides those recruited or working as "durbans" and hotel boys in Indian cities and towns, people previously tended to move in areas with familiar environmental conditions. The people from the middle hills of Nepal migrated to the northeastern hills of India. Since there were no transportation facilities across the hills, such migrants had to cross the Tarai and the north Indian plains. Even though these migrants were exposed to the north Indian areas during their travel, they chose to settle in the hills of northeast India and Burma (c.f. Lall, 1968).

Up to the 1950s, the government of Nepal encouraged settlement in the Tarai. Ojha (1983) states that government policies encouraging hill people to settle in the Tarai met with little success even though the hill population was increasing rapidly, and large numbers of people were migrating to India. Tropical environmental conditions are usually mentioned as the deterrent for the settlement of the hill people.

While Nepalis were moving out from the hills to India, people from north India were clearing the Tarai forest and settling there. They were familiar with the tropical environment. They could sustain themselves in the climate. That the Tarai only attracted people from the Nepal hills only the planned settlement and malaria eradication programs indicates that environmental similarities are important factors in shaping patterns of rural-to-rural migration in agrarian societies.

Access Variables

The tendency to assume the primacy of differential, distance and affinity variables in migration literature has tended to diminish the importance of variables. This is partly because most studies have focused upon internal migration. Weiner emphasizes the role of the access variables in relation to the international migration. The rule of entry and exit of governments impacts in two ways. It can influence other variables that affect migration. In turn, other migration-influencing variables can influence the rule of access. Nepal allows unrestricted entry and exit vis-a-vis India. No passport or visa is needed for people traveling either direction. Any citizen of either country can freely move into the other and stay as long as desired. This situation explains much about the nature of movement between Nepal and India. The Treaty of

1950 has further enhanced the free movement between the two countries.

The unrestricted rule of entry and exit has played an important role in the flow of military recruits from Nepal to India. During the Rana period (1946-1951), especially when Jung Bahadur was in power, Nepal restricted the recruitment of Nepali adults in foreign army. The emigration rate of that period was very low. After Bir Shamsheer came into power (1885) there were no such restrictions. This led to heavy emigration from the hills. During the two World Wars, the government encouraged emigration for recruitment in the British Indian army. Kansakar (1974:63) mentions that during this period very few young adults of the "military classes" were left in the Nepal Hills. Recruitment to foreign armies continues, resulting in the emigration of many able-bodied young adults.

Unrestricted rules of entry have facilitated the movement of the people from neighbouring countries. Before 1959, there was much interaction and migration between Tibet and Nepal. The movement has declined after 1959. The last major flow was of the Tibetan refugees (about 16,000 strong) during the Tibetan rebellion in 1959.

The flow continues from the south. Given the unrestricted rules of entry, together with cultural similarity and low spatial distance, this flow seems unlikely to change its course in the near future. However, border regulations have been an important issue among administrators and politicians in Nepal (for detail, see the National Commission on population Task Force 1983).

Conclusion

This cursory application of an analytical framework opens up further areas for research on the nature of international migration in Nepal. The variables indicated above have affected international migration in different ways. At this point, without quantitative data, it is difficult to conclude the relative importance of each of Weiner's variables in shaping the international migration in Nepal. However, the above analysis shows that Nepali Hill emigration has been shaped primarily by the differential and the access variables. Affinity variables are limited to very broad similarities in religious and cultural beliefs.

Immigration is shaped by all the four clusters of variables. Employment opportunities, availability of virgin lands, demands for specific skills in the manufacturing sector and development project, shorter distance, close affinity in religion, culture, language, kinship network, and unrestricted entry and exit rules have shaped and stimulated Indian immigration in Nepal.

Weiner's list of the cluster of variables is not exhaustive. In addition to what he has listed, many variables such as density differentials, similarity in physical habitat, role of communication and information network all seem

relevant in Nepali international migration. Since his framework is quite open several other variables can be added and their relative importance can be examined.

Although the framework explain the pattern of flow of emigration and immigration in Nepal, some facets of international migration remain unexplained. One of these is the case of refugees. There has also been a growing indication that population shifts between Nepal and India have taken a circular nature in recent years. The framework, being concerned with voluntary and permanent nature of flow, does not consider these aspects of international migration.

In recent years, policy makers and administrators in Nepal have shown their concern about these streams, counterstreams that make up the total immigration picture and their consequences. International migration in Nepal has raised several issues of which some are politically sensitive as well. A few are briefly discussed here:

1. Many Nepali emigrants have moved to the rural areas of the India. They have occupied agricultural areas of low economic prospect. There are also Nepali emigrants in the cities of India. They hold very low-level jobs like coolies, durban, watchman etc. Immigrants, though previously destined to rural areas, are currently destined to urban ones. In many cases, they have displaced the Nepali labor force.
2. Considering the vast size and population of India, Nepali emigrants comprise a negligible proportion of the total population (less than 0.1 percent), and their impact is largely absorbed within the rural sector. On the other hand, Indian immigrants to Nepal are engaged in the urban and industrial sector. They comprise a significant percentage of regional population (6.4 percent in the Tarai). This may further enhance Nepali dependency with India in terms of skilled laborers. It might be that the productive sector of Nepali economy will remain more outside the control of the natives.
3. Emigrants are mainly from the hills. wherever they go, they identify themselves as Nepali. Immigrants are found reluctant to identify themselves as Indians. The 1983 survey of the National Commission on Population in the Tarai districts found that more than one-third of all foreign-born individuals declined to state their country of citizenship. Nepali emigrants are easily distinguishable from Indians, but it is difficult to distinguish Indian immigrant in the Nepali Tarai, given the similarities in complexion and physical appearance. In times

of political disturbance in either country, this has significant implications. The expulsion of thousands of Nepalis from Nagaland and Assam is a recent example.

4. Emigrants from Nepal are mostly unskilled. Immigrants are semi-skilled and skilled laborers, occupying important positions in the manufacturing industries (Sharma 1985). This situation is further exacerbated by the control over many industries in Nepal by Indian businessmen and their preference for Indian laborers (c.f. Blaikie et al. 1980; Shrestha and Conway 1985).
5. Emigrants from Nepal show little concern for obtaining citizenship in Indian states (Gurung 1984). It is evident that in the student movement of Assam in the late seventies and early eighties, many Nepalis who had spent more than 25 years were deported simply because they lacked citizenship certificates. In contrast, given the similarities of the plains peoples and their extended cultural ties, it is difficult for the Nepal government to deny citizenship to Indian migrants, notwithstanding the exaggeration that more than half of the total "Indian origin" migrants to Nepal have not obtained citizenship certificates (Paramanand 1986:1006). It should be noted that the political instability in West Bengal and Assam is rooted in the issue of citizenship.
6. Studies show that a large proportion of emigrants intend to return home to Nepal. They move to areas of opportunity, live there for some time, and return (McDougal 1968; Weiner 1973). The majority of immigrants to Nepal, on the other hand, intend to remain. Gurung and Sharma (1986) report that about 97.1 percent of the immigrants indicated their intention to remain in Nepal. This might lead to further increases in man-land ratio and complicate the unemployment situation in Nepal.
7. Dixon (1977:123) indicates that emigrants were mainly single and seeking short-term employment. Among immigrants, about 41 percent had come in groups. Those who came with their families comprised about 11 percent (National Population Commission 1983).
8. Since Nepali emigrants in India are scattered in rural areas, they have marginal and only local impact on the political scene. On the other hand, immigrants can play an important role in Nepali national

politics. Gaige (1975) states that immigrants were in the forefront in raising the issue of regionalism in Tarai and demands for Hindi to be officially recognized as the national language of Nepal. Indian immigrants have emerged as an economically and politically powerful lobby within Nepal (Blaikie et al. 1980). Indian merchants control the commerce and construction sectors to a substantial extent (Conway and Shrestha 1981:34).

9. There is no evidence that the rate of emigration to India increased during the period from 1951 to 1961 (Weiner 1973:622). Dixon (1977:123) observes a constant rate of emigration in 1971. The same is true in the period between 1971 to 1981. Because of the nativist movement in India (for details, see Weiner 1978) and the high rate of natural increase, there is no reason to expect that India will be able to provide land or substantial employment opportunities for an increasing number of Nepalis in the future. On the other hand, provided the present situation continues, the flow of Indian immigrants in Nepal might continue.
10. In two Tarai districts surveyed by the Nepal FP/MCH Project, it was found that the fertility of Indian immigrants was not only the highest, but they were, as a group, the least receptive to family planning programs (Nepal FP/MCH Project 1981:311-48, cited in Thapa 1982). This may have important long-run demographic and political consequences.

The scenario of migration patterns portrays the fragility of the Nepal hill economy and an active population dynamic. The process and reasons for leaving the Hills still operated though the nature and location of opportunities have changed. Through emigration, Nepal is losing young able bodied, innovative manpower. Through immigration, it is bringing another nation. In the context of relatively small and land-locked country, as Gurung and Sharma (1986) indicate, immigration undermines the nation of sovereignty in political as well as economic terms. Unrestricted emigration and immigration, without any formal arrangement and understanding between the countries involved, does not serve the interests of the concerned nations. It has been general tendency that countries facing problems of immigration have shown a greater concern on this matter than countries facing emigration. By the same token, Nepal has shown greater concern about Indian immigration to the Tarai than India has.

A recent study on the carrying capacity in the Tarai has shown that the

Tarai, the so called 'breathing space' of Nepal, has reached its carrying capacity (National Commission on Population, 1948). Thus, the Tarai can no more be regarded as a safety valve. Since unrestricted rules of entry and exit seem to be important in shaping international migration in Nepal, prompt attention is needed in this direction. The implications of unrestricted immigration policies are quite evident in neighboring South Asian countries. Thus, besides regulating the border with India, specific programs and appropriate changes in industrial, labor, trade, and citizenship policies are necessary to regulate the influx of migrants to Nepal. Mutual understanding and bilateral cooperation between the Nepali and Indian governments is essential to come up with mutually acceptable solutions.

**Table 1: Population Absent Abroad
1952-1954**

Region	Number	Percent
Mountain and Hill	189,917	95.9
Eastern	49,553	25.0
Central	96,639	48.7
Western	43,725	22.2
Kathmandu Valley	2,911	1.5
Inner Tarai	3,472	1.8
Eastern	1,938	1.0
Central	1,318	0.8
Western	216	0.01
Tarai	1,830	0.9
Eastern	1,544	0.8
Central	163	0.1
Western	123	0.1
Nepal	189,120	100.0

Source: Population Census, 1952/54

**Table 2: Number and Change of Absentee Abroad
1961-1981**

Region	1961		1981		Change	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mountain and Hill	305,257	92.9	355,467	88.2	50,219	16.5
Eastern	80,591	24.5	70,041	17.4	-10,550	-13.0
Central	150,502	45.8	202,598	50.3	52,096	34.6
Western	74,164	22.4	82,837	20.6	8,673	11.7
Kathmandu Valley	7,089	2.2	4,449	1.1	-2,640	-37.2
Inner Tarai	6,626	2.0	13,510	3.4	6,684	102.1
Eastern	3,341	1.0	3,127	0.8	214	6.4
Central	2,766	0.6	4,029	1.0	1,263	42.7
Western	519	0.2	6,354	1.6	5,835	1124.3
Tarai	9,529	2.9	29,542	7.3	20,013	210.0
Eastern	7,155	2.2	14,063	3.5	6,908	96.5
Central	1,899	0.6	9,217	2.3	7,318	385.4
Western	475	0.1	6,262	1.6	5,787	1218.3
Nepal	328,470	100.0	402,977	100.0	74,507	22.7

Source: Population Census 1961, Vol. II.
Population Census 1981, Vol. IV.

**Table 3: Foreign-Born Population in Nepal
1961-1971**

Country of birth	1961			1971		
	Region of Enumeration					
	Mountain & Hill	Tarai	Total	Mountain & Hill	Tarai	Total
India	13,498	310,661	324,159 (96.1)	15,851	306,867	322,718 (95.6)
China	8,050	11	8,061 (2.4)	1,500	34	1,534 (0.5)
Other*	1,903	2,982	4,885 (1.4)	4,624	7,871	12,495 (3.7)
Other**	143	372	515 (0.1)	605	96	701 (0.2)
Total	23,594 (7.0)	314,026 (93.0)	337,620 (100.0)	22,580 (6.7)	314,868 (93.3)	337,448 (100.0)

Note: The figure in the parenthesis indicate percentage.

* Other Asian Countries.

** Other Countries

Source: Population Census, 1961.

Population Census, 1971.

Table 4: Foreign-Born Population in Nepal, 1981

Region	Total	India	China	Other Asian Countries	Other Countries
Mountain	1,819 (0.8)	867 (0.4)	706 (0.3)	203 (0.1)	43 (0.0)
Hill	11,122 (4.7)	8,453 (3.7)	1,278 (0.5)	1,025 (0.4)	366 (0.2)
Tarai	221,098 (94.5)	212,958 (91.0)	497 (0.2)	6,599 (2.8)	1,044 (0.5)
Nepal	234,039 (100)	222,278 (95.0)	2,481 (1.0)	7,827 (3.3)	1,453 (0.7)

Note: The figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage.

Source: Population Census, 1981 Vol I.

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