An Overview of Nepal’s Foreign Labour Migration

Top Five Destinations For Nepali Migrant Workers
- Malayasia: 40.9%
- UAE: 20.3%
- Saudi Arabia: 11.2%
- Kuwait: 2.1%
- Others: 22.9%

Benefits Of Foreign Labour Migration to Local Community
- Land Ownership: Land purchases were higher among migrant households compared to non-migrant households over the past 15 years across all kinds of land. (The Asia Foundation, 2017)
- Reconfiguration of power relations at local level: The financial empowerment of traditionally marginalized communities due to increased financial independence
- Rising Educational Level: Expenses in education rank as the third most important objective for sending remittances
- Rising Living Standards: Remittances account for 42% of the household income of long-term migrant workers (IOM, 2017)

Current Trend in Obtaining Labour Permits, 2012/13 - 2016/17

Province wise breakdown of migrant workers (2008/09-2016/17)
- Province 1: 25.16%
- Province 7: 19.79%
- Province 6: 18.62%
- Province 5: 17.68%
- Province 4: 7.11%
- Province 3: 5.39%
- Province 2: 2.19%

Social Costs Of Foreign Labour Migration
- Psychological burden on left-behind children: The absence of parental guidance increases in the number of young people engaging in delinquent acts
- Family Separation: Enormous increase in divorce cases has come at the price of emotional and psychological impacts on children
- Low educational level: Only 4% of them complete high school or professional education (IOM, 2017)
- Reliance on remittance economy: From 2006-2015, remittance sent home accounted for over 20% of GDP (IOM, 2017)
- Rise of immediate poverty: The total cost of migration income including application and transportation fee all has to be borne by migrant workers
- Unproductive Investment: Only 3% of the remittance is invested in productive sector (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2008)

Brain Drain
Outmigration of skilled workers has become a drag on the local economy

Limited left-behind women’s autonomy
Gender norms are more rigorously imposed on them in the absence of their husband

Left-behind Responsibilities
The entire responsibility of taking care of the welfare of family is placed on the shoulders of the wives

Extra financial burden
5,992 migrant worker deaths were reported from 2008 to 2017, leading to the termination of family income for their families (Government of Nepal, 2017)

Labour Shortage
By 2030, Nepal may face a labour shortage of 2.4 million if foreign migration continues (The Kathmandu Post, 2017)

Economic Costs Of Foreign Labour Migration
In 2018, Nepal is the 19th highest beneficiary of funds sent by migrants around the world. However, the over migration of workers from the economy has entailed various economic costs.