



NEPALESE LABOR MIGRATION TO JAPAN:

MULTIPLE PATHS TO HOUSEHOLD DEVELOPMENT
IN THE GLOBALIZED ECONOMY

Workshop: “Food, Agriculture and Human Impacts on the Environment:
Japan, Asia and Beyond”
November 6-7, 2017

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Introduction: **Migration in Asia**

- Sociologist, teaching in Asian Studies & Asian American Studies
- Research: Immigration, Citizenship and Multiculturalism in Asia
- **Labor exchange between:**
 - **East Asia:** Japan, Hong Kong, S Korea, Singapore and Taiwan
 - **Southeast Asia:** Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Myanmar, **Nepal**, . . .
- Population, labor demand & supply, historical context
- Immigration policy: **circular migration** for unskilled labor
- **Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan: Strict policy**
- **Japan and S Korea: ambiguous**

Nepal: Environment & Development

- One of the most **ecologically wealthy** but **economically distressed and Politically unstable** countries in South Asia
 - Rich in ecological diversities
 - with 80% of the land covered by rugged hills and mountains
 - Developmental activities created many environmental problems due to inadequate consideration and poor management
- **Political changes, 1950s to 2010s**, from absolute monarchy to democracy, especially impact of the 10-year civil war on the economy
- **International migration** as a viable strategy for family survival, increasing remittances but negative impact on agriculture and natural resource/ ecological management



Backgrounds

- I conducted research on “Nepalese labor migration to Japan” in **the 1990s, 2000s**
- Interviews and surveys
 - Nepal: Kathmandu & Pokhara
 - Japan: Shizuoka and Aichi Prefectures
- “Nepalese labor migration to Japan: from global warriors to global workers,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 2000
- Social ties and social capital (highly diverse groups, British Army Gurkha soldiers, ethnic & regional network)
- **Visa-overstayers** in the manufacturing industry
- Lively community activities during the weekends

A Quarter Century Later, 2010s

- Nepalese labor migration to **Japan**
 - An increase of **10 times** in number
 - From 2,686 in 1995 to 55,236 in 2015 (registered residents)

◦ <u>2005</u>	<u>5,314</u>	–	
◦ 2006	6,596	24.1%+	Civil war ended in Nepal
◦ 2007	8,417	27.6%+	
◦ 2008	11,556	<u>37.3%+</u>	
◦ 2009	14,745	27.6%+	Global Economic Crisis
◦ <u>2010</u>	<u>17,149</u>	16.3%+	
◦ 2011	20,103	17.2%+	
◦ 2012	24,071	19.7%+	
◦ 2013	31,537	<u>31.2%+</u>	
◦ 2014	42,346	<u>34.3%+</u>	New Constitution in Nepal
◦ <u>2015</u>	<u>55,236</u>	<u>30.4%+</u>	

Nepal's Political History

- 1951 Absolute monarchy
- 1991 First Democracy Movement, Constitutional Monarchy
- **1996 Maoist People's War began**
- 2001 Massacre of the Royal Family
- **2006 Second Democracy Movement**
- **2006 United Communist Party (Maoist), a coalition party**
- 2008 The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal
 - Forming the Constitutional Assembly
- **2014 The Constitution of Nepal**
- **2015 Great earthquakes (Mag 7.8, 9,000 died, 12,000 injured)**

Nepal as a Labor-Sending Country

- Nepalis outside Nepal

- 1961 328,470 9,741,466 3.4%
- 1981 402,977 15,425,816 2.6%
- 2001 762,171 23,499,115 3.2%
- **2011 1,921,494 26,494,504 7.3%**

- **2011 25% of the total households have a migrant**

- Destinations (A total from 2006/07 to 2011/12)

- **India 880,000 (free border)**
- **Middle East 1,070,000 (Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE)**
- Malaysia 380,000
- East Asia 100,000 < (**Japan** and South Korea)

Nepalese Labor Migration to Japan, 2010s~

- 2008 Global Economic Crisis, Fewer manufacturing jobs, repatriation
- Diversification of visas to enter and reside in Japan

- 2014 Nepalese Residents

◦ International students	15,697	37.1%
◦ Family Stay	10,308	24.3%
◦ Skilled migrants	7,412	17.5%
◦ <u>Other</u>	1,692	3.9%
◦ Total	42,346	100.0%

- **Japanese language & vocational school students, work 4 hours/day**
- **Cooks of Indian/Nepali restaurants and their families**
- Working age, 20-29, 48%
- Children 12< 12%

Nepal: Migration & Remittance Economy

- Not only economic, demographic & environmental push of the sending society, but also historical and political contexts
- **Increasing remittances from abroad** (e.g., Philippines, Indonesia)
- **Household Strategy**
 - Remittances in the globalized economy
 - Diversify income sources, defuse risks
- **National Economic Development**
 - Remittances > ODA
 - National revenues but also social development
 - During 10 years of Maoist conflict, poverty rate decreased from 42% in 1995 to 31% in 2004
 - Infant mortality rate improved significantly
- **Labor migration alone does not develop a country**
- **Many social issues: fewer working age men in villages; unattended fields, natural resources, ecological degradation**

Works Used

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