

Migration Patterns and Trends in Nepal: Challenges and Opportunities of Migration Governance

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Introduction

- Human migration is the movement of people from one place to another with the intention of settling, either permanently or temporarily, in a new geographic region. (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024)
- Migration is categorized into two parts, which are internal and international migration (International Handbook of migration and population distribution, 2016)

Overview of Nepal's Migration

Before 19th
Century

- **Trans Himalayan Trade**
 - Trade between India, Nepal, Tibet and China
 - 1815 Sugauli Treaty: British India recruited young Nepali Men

19th
Century

- **Migration to India**
 - Northern India to work in tea plantation, oil refineries, and coal mines

1974 Ad

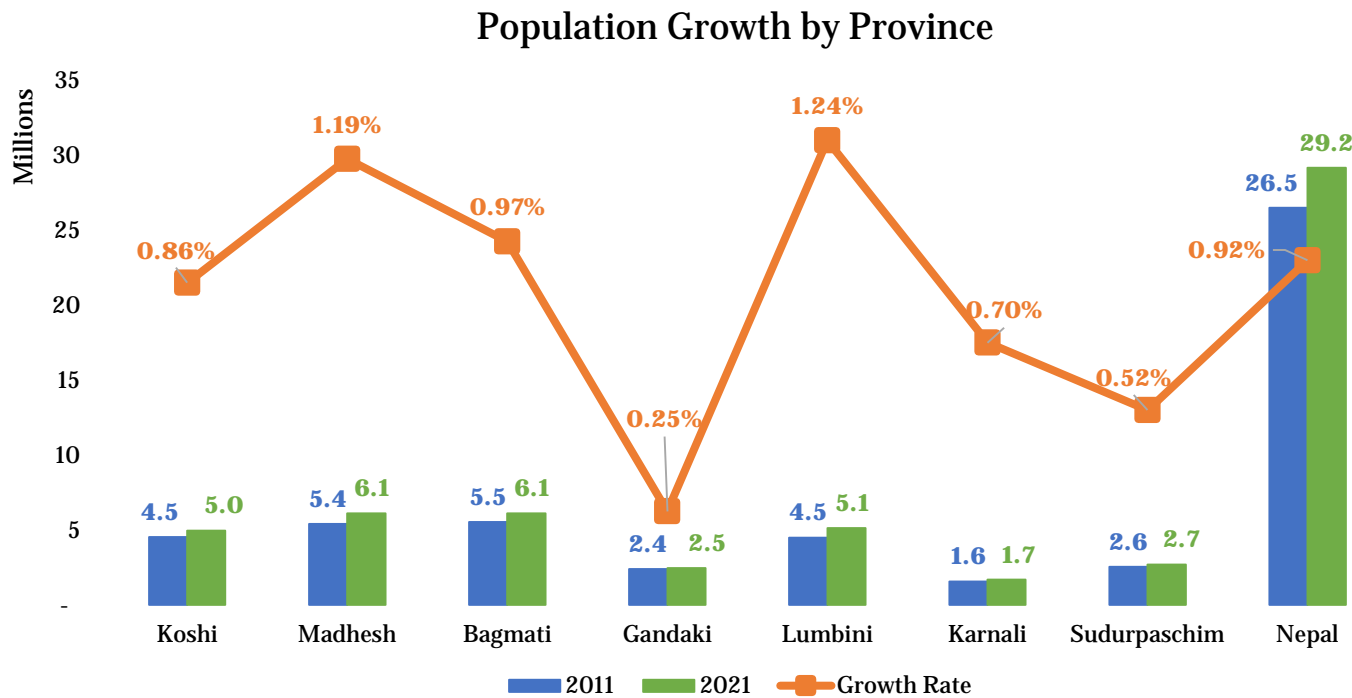
- **Tripartite Agreement (British, Nepal & India)**
 - Recruit Nepali Men into its army

Post 1990

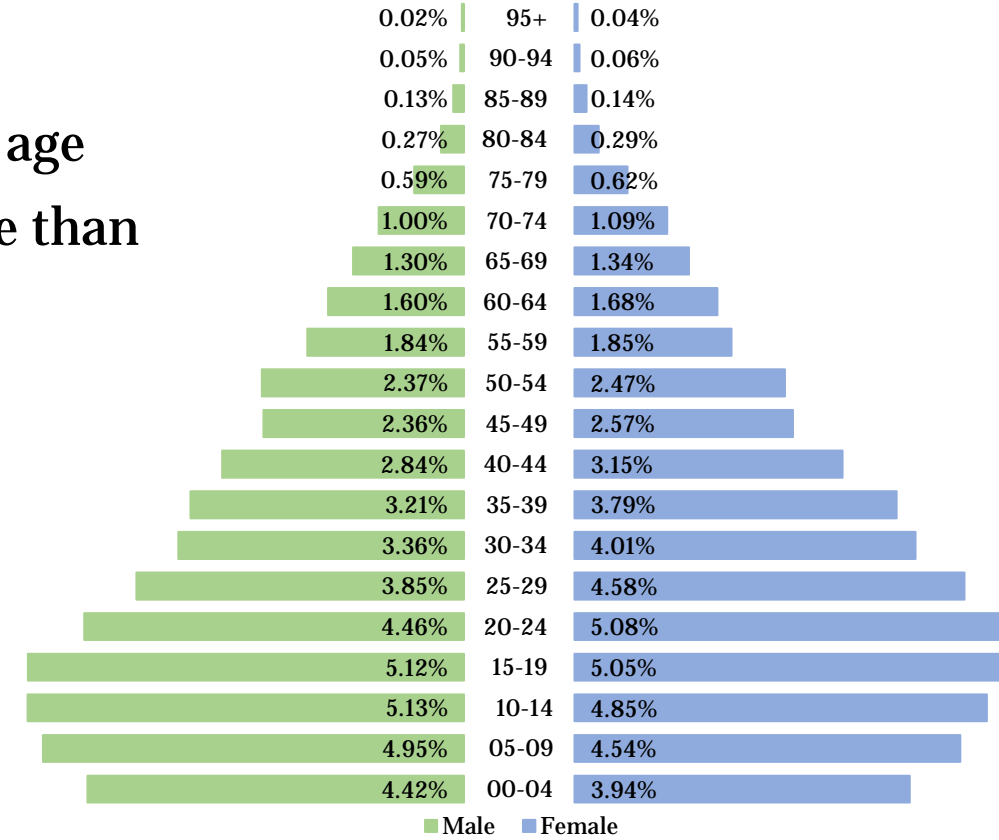
- **Globalization, Liberalization and Privatization**
 - 1990: Gulf regions, South and East Asia

Population and Migration

- Youths contribute to economic performance
- Young dependents higher than old ones
- Population of Males aged 20+ lower than Females of the same age
- Population in Madhesh and Lumbini Provinces increased more than 1%



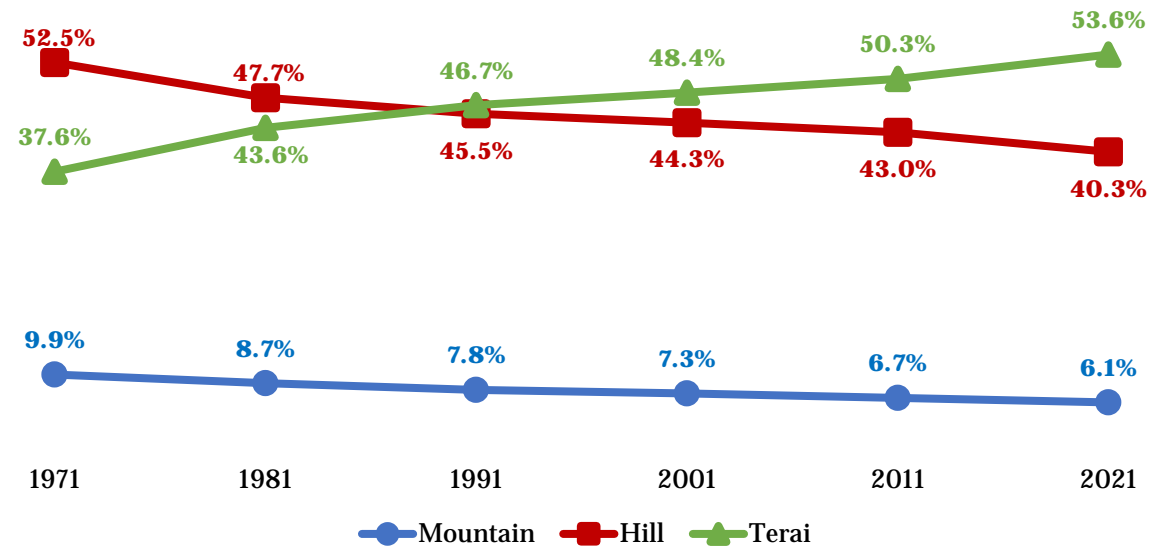
Population Pyramid 2021



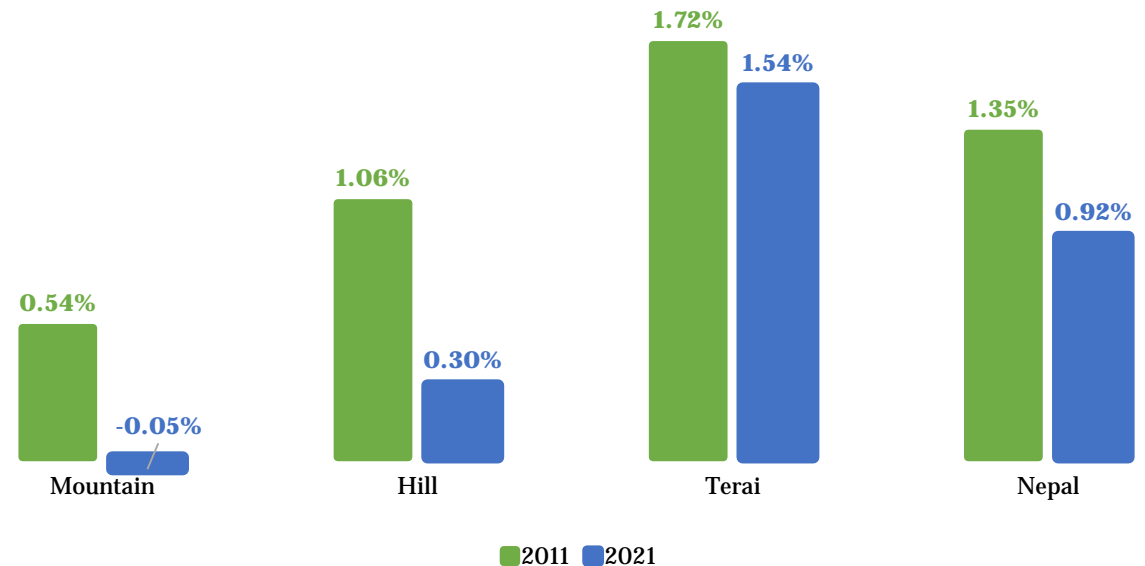
Changes in **Migration** Pattern?

- Decrease in share of population in Mountain and Hill
- Increase in share of population in Terai
- Negative growth rate in Mountain
- Seeking better opportunities?

Population in Ecological Belt



Population Growth by Ecological Belt



Why do People Migrate?

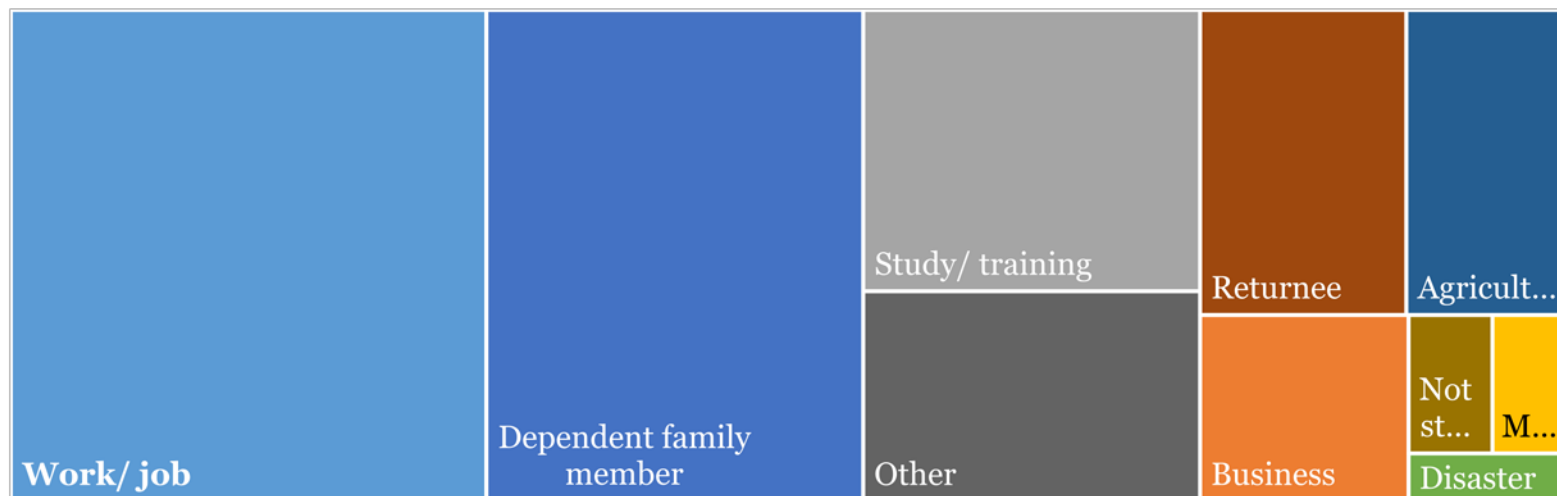
- Difference in reason for migration by gender

30.6% Males migrated for their work

58.2% Females migrated due to marriage

- Marriage as the major reason for migration in all **ecological belts** and **provinces** except **Bagmati Province**

Reasons for Migration (Male)

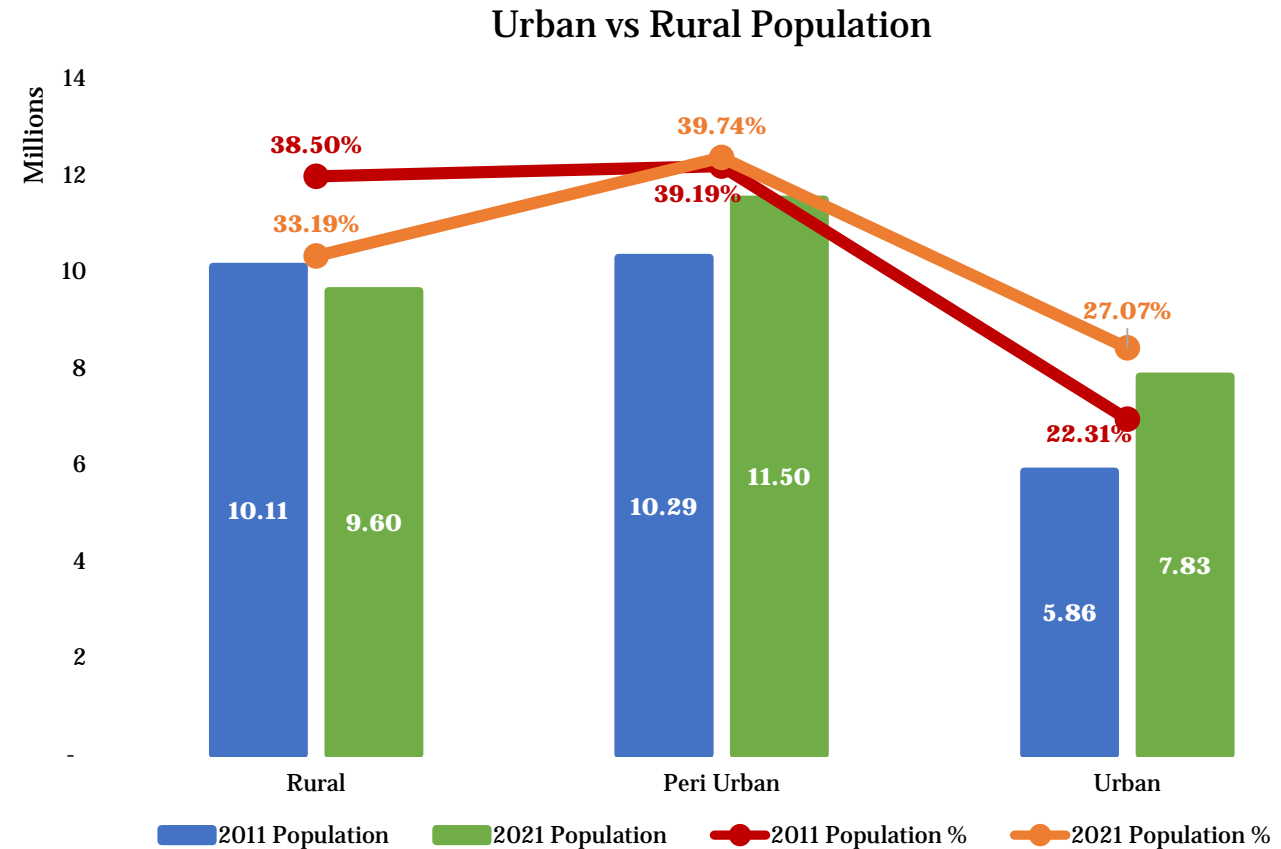


Reasons for Migration (Female)



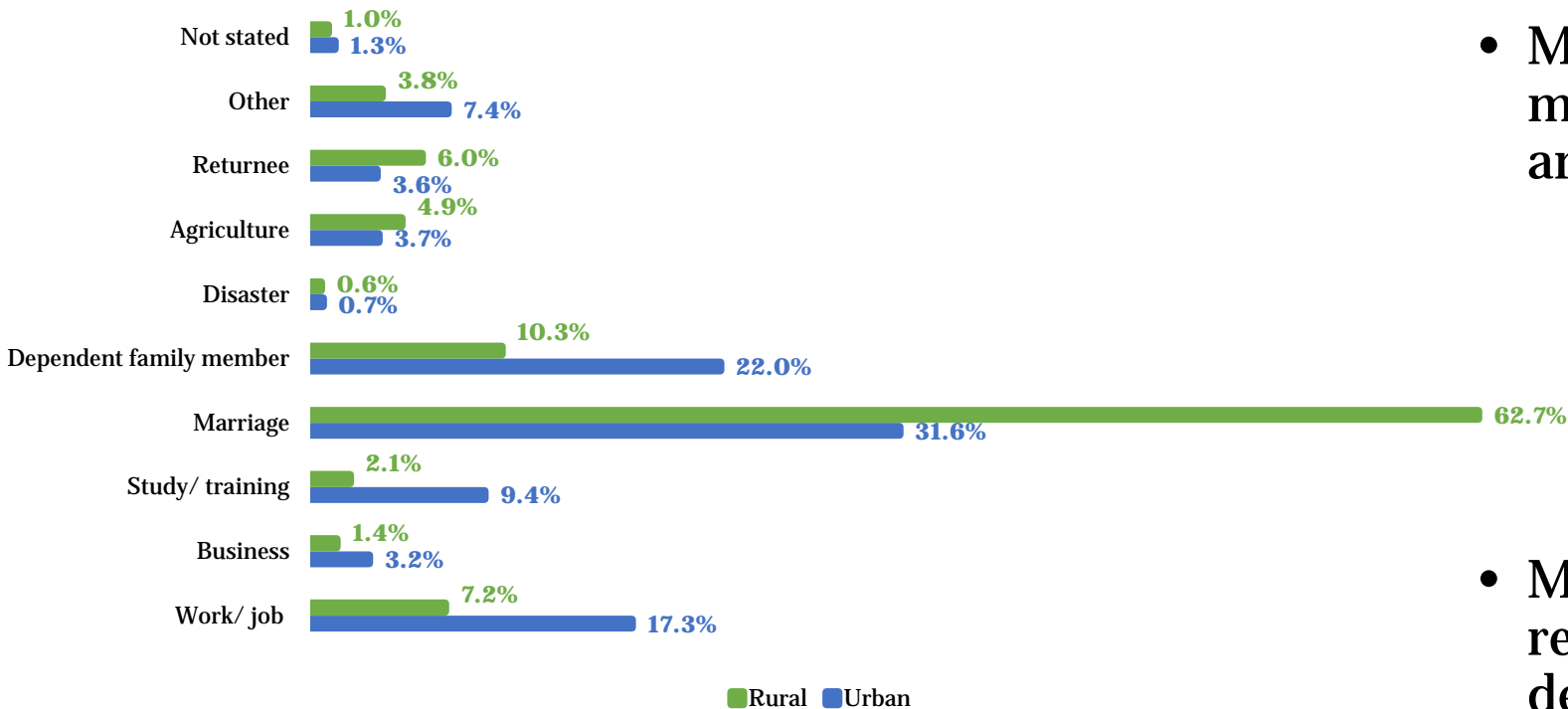
Migration and Development

- Increase in population living in Peri Urban and Urban areas
- Increased standard of living?
- Increased income and purchasing power?



Urban vs Rural Migration

Urban vs Rural Reason for Migration



- Marriage as the major reason for migration in both urban and rural areas

- More people migrated to urban regions for work, study and due to dependent family member compared to that to rural regions

Forced to **Migrate**

32,000

New Displacement in 2021

8,400

IDPs as of December 31 2021
(not including people displacement
by the Gorkha earthquake)

3.4 million

New displacements 2011-2021

245

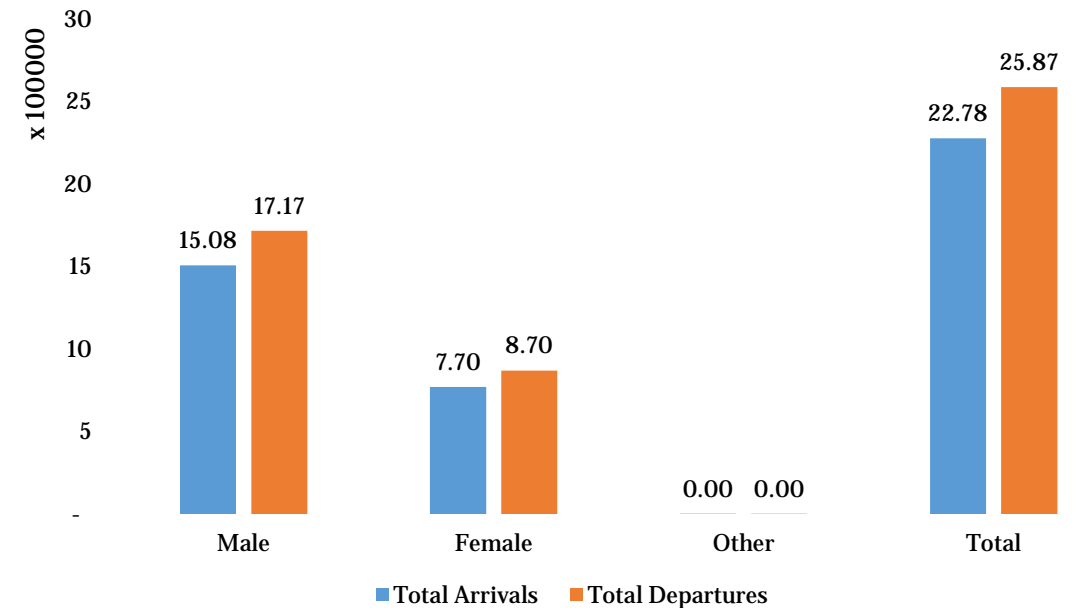
Disaster events reported 2011-2021



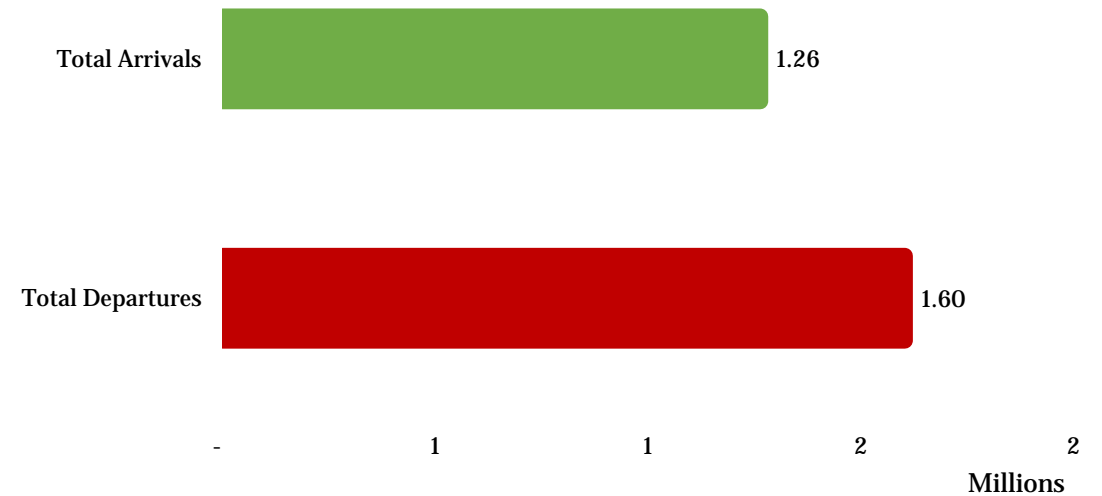
Immigration and Emigration

- Males travel more than females
- Total departures from Nepal higher than arrivals
- Shortage of 0.34 million Nepali people in 2023

Arrivals and Departure in Nepal in 2023



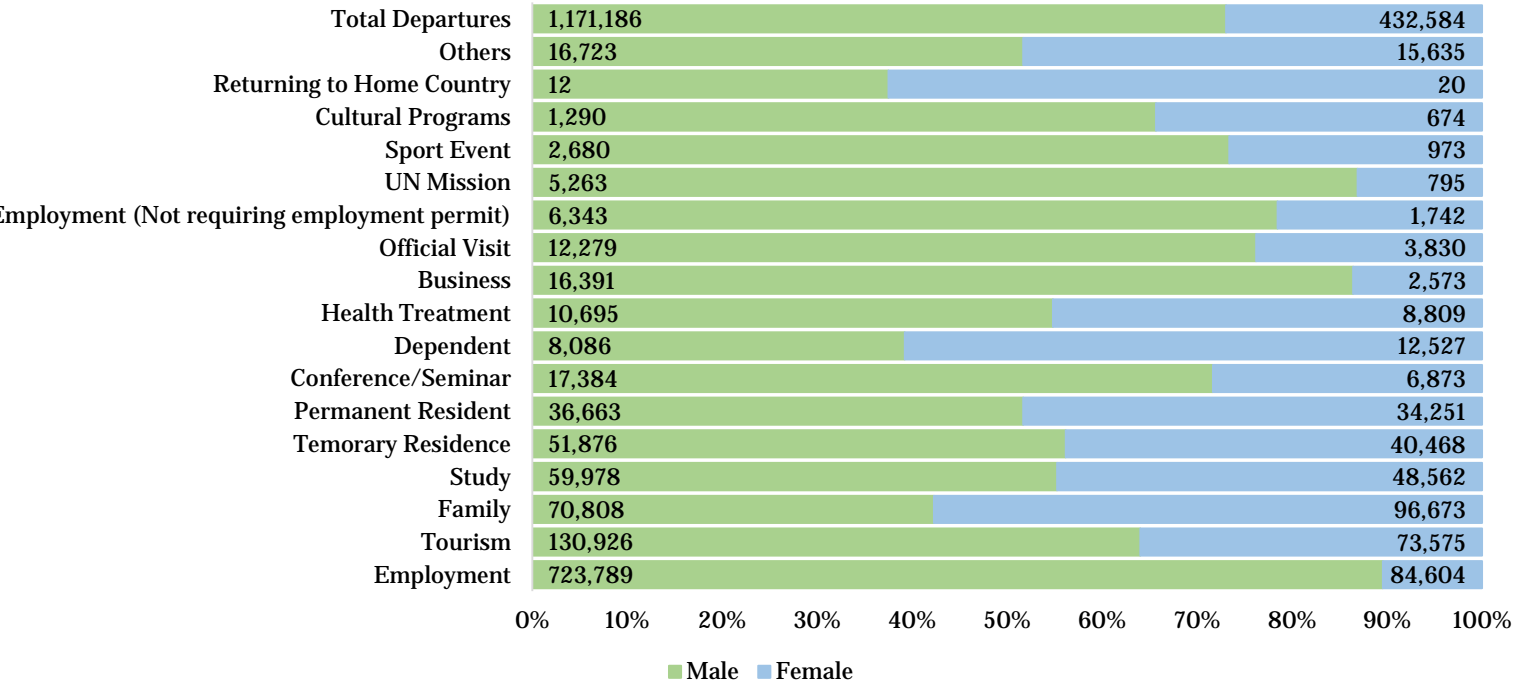
Arrival and Departure of Nepali Citizens in 2023



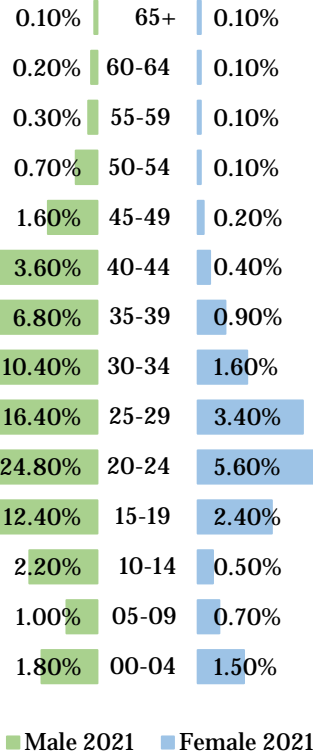
Why Foreign Migration?

- 89.5% males migrated for employment
- 60.8% females migrated as a dependent
- Migration for study, health check up, permanent and temporary residence balanced between males and females

Reason for Departure in 2023



Absentee Population in 2021 Census



Source: Arrival/Departure Report 2023, Department of Immigration & National Population and Housing Census 2021, National Statistics Office formerly known as Central Bureau of Statistics

Trend of Labor **Migration**

- Increasing labor approvals
- Major destinations: Middle east

Trend of Labor Approval			
Fiscal Year	Male	Female	Total
2018/19	476,705	32,123	508,828
2019/20	340,000	28,433	368,433
2020/21	155,242	11,456	166,698
2021/22	582,010	49,200	631,210
2022/23	699,193	72,134	771,327

Top 5 destination country for employment in FY 2022/23			
Country	Male	Female	Total
Malaysia	252,295	7,299	259,594
Qatar	126,563	6,699	133,262
UAE	92,068	24,091	116,159
Saudi Arabia	111,844	933	112,777
Kuwait	31,691	11,816	43,507

Protection of **Migrants** Rights in Nepal

- Equal treatment and nondiscrimination
- Right to health
- Restrictions on movement between country
- Protection of privacy
- Gender right protection
- Social integration
- Labor rights of workers
- Strengthening of right to information
- Ensure the skill and development training according to destination

Driving Factors of **Migration** within Nepal

Migration in Urban Areas

- Economic opportunities:
 - Employment, SMEs/Entrepreneurship, remittance
- Infrastructure
- Social factors:
 - Social networks, facilitating the transition and integration process
- Health and Education

Migration in Rural Areas

- Social factors:
 - High living costs, congestion, pollution, and lack of job satisfaction, one's ancestral land and community may encourage individuals to remain in or return to rural areas
- Individual Preferences:
 - Quieter lifestyle, closer connection to nature, and community-based living
- Entrepreneurship and Agriculture:
 - Businesses or engage in agriculture and agro-based activities

Socio-Economic Impact of Internal **Migration** in Nepal

Theme		Positive and Negative Impact
Socio-Economic Impact of Migration	Urbanization and Infrastructure Development	Construction of infrastructure and other amenities, employment opportunities
		Strain existing resources, leading to challenges such as congestion, inadequate housing, and increased demand for services. Disparities; brain drain, poverty, unemployment from rural areas
	Social Dynamics and Community Structure	Cultural exchange and diversity, blending of the traditions and lifestyle, contributing to a richer cultural tapestry
		Disrupt traditional social structures in rural communities; demographic imbalances, with an older population left behind, potentially impacting community cohesion.
	Urban Crowd and Rural Deprivation/Abandonment	People are getting better opportunities in urban areas
		Neglect and deprivation of rural communities, may leave behind villages with reduced working-age populations, affecting local economies and development initiatives.

Policies and Regulations Governing **Migration** in Nepal

- Immigration Act of 1992
- Foreign Employment Act (FEA) of 2007
- National Policy on Foreign Employment (NPFE) of 2012
- National Strategy on Migration of 2015
- Labor Act of 2017
- Bilateral Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)
- International Conventions

Key Challenges in **Migration** of Nepal

- Demographic Imbalance: Rural to urban, Hill to Terai Region
- Under-utilize/over utilize of resources
- Urban areas as a transition for foreign employment
- Hazards induced displacement
- Lack of National Migration Policy

Key Challenges in **Migration** Process

External **Migration**

- Excessive Fees/Fraud
- Exploitation, Trafficking and Smuggling
- Discrimination and Xenophobia
- Family Separation
- Trauma and Stress

Internal **Migration**

- Employment and Economic Challenges
- Discrimination and Xenophobia
- Social Isolation
- Exploitation and Trafficking
- Trauma and Stress

Recommendations

- National Migration Policy, effective Urban Policies
- Human Resource Mapping
- Integrated Population Management Information System
- Balanced and equitable development policies
- Providing necessary social, physical and economic infrastructure in hilly region
- Prioritize investments to fulfill services required in Terai regions
- Self Employment Policies
- Entrepreneurship Development Package (Training, Seed Money, linkage with Financial Institutions)
- Grant to agricultural and livestock
- Generating the employment opportunities in rural/hilly area

Recommendations

- Optimum utilization of the demographic dividend
 - Effective Brain Gain Center
 - Creating environment to hold or return to Nepal
 - Attractive Salary and incentives to the returnee
 - Scholarship for the high and technical education with service bond
 - World Class Education Institution Establishment

Migration Policy Vision and Key Issues

- Vision: Safe, Orderly and Responsible Migration
- Key Issues:
 - Informed choice for migration
 - Integrated migration information management system
 - Strengthen negotiation capacity for BLAs
 - Implementation of social security for labor migrants
 - Reintegration support for sustainable livelihood

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