

Migration Patterns and Socio-Economic Integration of In-migrants in Nepal

Pradeep Kumar Bohara¹, Tantrika Raj Khanal², Rekha Raut³

Lecturer, Tribhuvan University, Sanathimi Campus, Bhaktapur

Lecturer, Tribhuvan University Mahendraratna Campus Tahachal, Kathmandu

Lecturer, Tribhuvan University Sanathimi Campus, Bhaktapur

Abstract: Urbanization patterns, demographic trends, and labor markets are all greatly impacted by migration, a basic socioeconomic activity. In this study, the Madhyapur Thimi Municipality in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, is examined for its in-migration patterns, causes, and impacts. The study examines the association between migration and important socioeconomic characteristics like age, ethnicity, education, and employment using primary data from 180 in-migrants and statistical techniques like chi-square tests. Economic prospects (31.67%) and the need for improved living conditions (33.33%) are the main factors driving migration, according to the findings. A sizable portion of in-migrants are employed, and there has been a discernible shift from agriculture to service-oriented occupations. The findings highlight the necessity of measures that increase migrant workers' access to jobs, healthcare, and education. In addition to providing insightful information about urban migration in Nepal, this study lays the groundwork for comparative research in other urban areas of the nation.

Keywords: Migration, In-migrants, Socio-economic Integration, Urbanization, Economic Opportunities

1. Introduction

Migration is a major factor in determining a country's socioeconomic structure, especially in emerging nations. Migration trends in Nepal are changing as more people from rural areas move to cities in pursuit of better opportunities. Over the past few decades, there has been a notable increase in in-migration to the Kathmandu Valley, which is home to the capital city of Kathmandu and the nearby municipalities. This migration trend has made Madhyapur Thimi Municipality, which is located in this valley, a focal center. In Nepal, the majority of internal migration has been from rural to urban areas as people look for better jobs, better access to healthcare and education, and better living conditions (World Bank, 2020). Research on migration in Nepal has traditionally focused on general migration trends and their effects on the economy (Gurung, 2006). There aren't many studies specifically examining the socioeconomic integration of newcomers in tiny cities like Madhyapur Thimi, though. By investigating the socioeconomic traits of in-migrants in Madhyapur Thimi, this study seeks to close this gap. In particular, it looks at the causes of migration as well as variables like age, ethnicity, education, and occupation. In addition to providing insightful information for policymakers to encourage the socioeconomic integration of migrants in urban areas, the study's findings will help to clarify Nepal's urban migration trends.

2. Literature Review

Many different socioeconomic, cultural, and political elements impact the complicated phenomena of migration. De Haan (1999) asserts that the main forces behind migration are economic ones, such as the need for better

living conditions and work. This tendency is especially noticeable in Nepal, where people from rural areas relocate to cities in search of better economic opportunities (Gurung, 2006). According to Czaika and de Haas (2014), migration is frequently a tactic used by those looking for better socioeconomic possibilities, especially by younger, more educated people.

There has been a significant influx of migrants from rural areas seeking greater access to amenities including healthcare, education, and work as a result of Nepal's growing urbanization, especially in the Kathmandu Valley (UNFPA, 2014). Education is a major factor in migration; those with higher levels of education are more inclined to migrate in search of work (Nepal & Paudel, 2022). Another important component of migration in Nepal is the transition from agricultural to non-agricultural jobs, as the country's economy gradually shifts from agriculture to services and construction (Pattison & Ennis, 2020).

Social networks and ethnicity are also important factors in migration decisions. Ethnic identification affects migratory patterns, with particular communities displaying unique migration behaviors (Sharma and Sharma, 2018). Rural migrants frequently depend on family or community ties to ease their adjustment to metropolitan settings (Haug, 2008). Social capital from these networks can facilitate migration, but it can also cause social fragmentation and segregation in metropolitan areas.

Furthermore, there are substantial obstacles that migrants must overcome in order to integrate socially and obtain resources like housing, healthcare, and education. Sharma & Sharma (2018) and Haug (2008) both highlight how ethnic variety shapes migrants' experiences in urban settings. Social and cultural hurdles frequently prevent migrants from fully assimilating into urban society, which could exacerbate social inequality.

3. Methodology

The socioeconomic traits and integration of in-migrants in Madhyapur Thimi Municipality are examined in this study using a cross-sectional research design. To assurance a representative sample of the population, a stratified random sampling technique was employed, selecting respondents from a range of age groups, ethnicities, and educational backgrounds. Cochran's formula was used to estimate the minimal sample size of 180 respondents, guaranteeing adequate statistical power for the research. Questionnaires and structured in-person interviews were used to gather primary data. These tools collected data on work status before and following migration, educational attainment, demographic characteristics (gender, age, and ethnicity), and the causes of migration. The study also investigated the degree of social integration among immigrants, concentrating on elements including perceptions of prejudice, involvement in community activities, and access to services. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. An overview of the socioeconomic traits of in-migrants was given by descriptive statistics, and the associations between migration status and socioeconomic factors were investigated using chi-square tests, with statistical significance established at a p-value of less than 0.05.

4. Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of In-Migrants

The majority of respondents are between the ages of 16 and 45, according to the demographic data of in-migrants in Madhyapur Thimi, which shows a balanced male-to-female ratio. Age and migration status were found to be statistically significantly correlated by the chi-square test ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$), indicating that younger people are more inclined to travel in pursuit of better economic prospects. This result is in line with research that emphasizes how common young migration is in cities (Nepal & Paudel, 2022).

Ethnic Composition of In-Migrants

In Nepal, ethnicity has a big impact on migratory trends. According to the findings, the Tamang ethnic group accounts for the largest percentage of in-migrants in Madhyapur Thimi (28.35%), followed by Brahmins (25.57%) and Chhetris (17.97%). Ethnic groups have distinct migration trends, which may be impacted by historical, cultural, or social variables, according to the chi-square test, which found a significant link between ethnicity

and migration (p-value = 0.02). This is consistent with research by Sharma and Sharma (2018), which indicates that social networks within ethnic communities may influence migration decisions.

Educational Attainment of In-Migrants

Regarding their educational background, most immigrants have at least a secondary degree. The chi-square test verified that there is a significant correlation between migration status and educational attainment (p-value < 0.01), suggesting that those with higher levels of education are more likely to migrate. This result is consistent with studies by Nepal and Paudel (2022), which demonstrate that education improves mobility and is associated with better employment prospects in cities.

Employment Before and After Migration

The change in in-migrants' occupations from agriculture to non-agricultural industries is among the most noteworthy findings. Table 5 shows that the percentage of in-migrants working in construction (50%) and services (125%) has significantly increased. This is in line with Nepal's larger urbanization trend, where migration is frequently linked to a shift from rural, agriculturally based jobs to urban, service-oriented, and industrial jobs (Pattison & Ennis, 2020).

Reasons for Migration

The desire for improved living conditions (33.33%) and economic opportunities (31.67%) were found to be the main drivers of migration to Madhyapur Thimi. These results corroborate earlier research that highlights economic incentives as the main cause of migration (Czaika & de Haas, 2014). Economic conditions and migration were found to be significantly correlated by the chi-square test (p-value < 0.05), supporting the idea that economic factors are the primary driver of movement.

Social Integration and Challenges

Regarding social integration, 10.13% of those surveyed said they had trouble fitting in with their local community. Language hurdles, cultural disparities, and a lack of support systems were the main causes of these difficulties. Since migrants frequently rely on family or community ties to get by in urban life, social networks are essential to the integration process (Haug, 2008). Social fragmentation can make it difficult to adjust to urban living, especially for migrant communities who are ethnically diverse.

5. Discussion

The study's conclusions emphasize how intricate urban migration and socioeconomic integration are. Although migration increases the labor pool available to non-agricultural sectors, it also poses problems for social integration and service accessibility. The transition from farming to service-related jobs highlights how crucial urbanization is becoming to Nepal's economic development. But even with the financial benefits, social integration is still a major problem for immigrants. Full integration is frequently thwarted by discrimination, cultural hurdles, and a lack of support systems, which causes social fragmentation in metropolitan areas. Therefore, to guarantee that migration contributes to sustainable urban development, policies that encourage migrants' social inclusion are essential.

6. Conclusion

The necessity of all-encompassing strategies to facilitate immigrants' assimilation into metropolitan neighborhoods is emphasized by this study. Improving employment chances in non-agricultural industries requires skill development initiatives, vocational training, and assistance for migrant entrepreneurship. Additionally, improving the quality of life for immigrants and promoting an inclusive society depend on guaranteeing access to healthcare and education resources. By tackling the socio-economic issues that migrants encounter, Nepal can establish a more peaceful and effective urban setting.

7. Recommendations

1. Policy Support for Migrants: Create initiatives for vocational training and skill development to improve in-migrants' employment chances, especially in non-agricultural industries.

2. Social Integration Programs: Put in place community-based integration initiatives to promote inclusion and social cohesiveness while lowering ethnic and cultural tensions.
3. Access to Healthcare and Education: To enhance their socioeconomic well-being, make sure that immigrants have access to basic services like healthcare and education.
4. Infrastructure Development: To handle the expanding migrant population, make investments in urban infrastructure, such as reasonably priced housing and transit.
5. Additional Research: Carry out long-term studies on how migration affects housing, work, and social service accessibility over the long run.

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Corresponding Author: Pradeep Kumar Bohara, Lecturer, Tribhuvan University, Sanothimi Campus, Bhaktapur.

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