

EMIGRANTS' MIGRANT WIVES: LINKING INTERNATIONAL AND INTERNAL MIGRATION

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Introduction

Bāulāi goṭh, āmālāi ghar / Chorālāi videś, buhārilāi sahar

(Pasture for father, house for mother Foreign country for son, city for daughter-in-law)

– A Magar woman while returning to Baglung bazaar from a village

This paper is about married women who leave their villages and move to the towns after their husbands emigrate for foreign labor. It tries to find out why these migrants' wives move and how their mobility is related to the emigration of their husbands. I highlight the mobility of such women who are traditionally considered 'left behind'¹ by their men, and also suggest that such a study has the capacity to link international migration with internal. In this age of globalization, international migration has become so prevalent that migration has become synonymous with international migration. In the meantime, internal migration has received little attention, and women's even less so, even if it is widespread in developing countries. Also, due to the 'male bias' in studies on the effects of men's migration on women, women are referred to as immobile and sedentary in their rural homes and villages. In this article, I venture on studying women's mobility which I consider to be an important phenomenon for Nepal, and I primarily concern myself with the question: Why do emigrants' wives migrate and how is their migration related to their husbands' emigration?

I begin by briefly reviewing studies that look at the impact of men's migration on women's lives and those that connect international migration

¹ In migration literature, the term 'left behind' is copiously used (for example, Desai and Banerji 2008; Khalaf 2009; Maharjan, Bauser and Knerr 2012; Gartaula, Visser and Niehof 2012 include the term in their titles). I avoid this term in this paper because it connotes absence of mobility as an effect of migration, which is precisely what I am trying to critique in this study. Whenever I use it in this paper, I do so because the sources I cite have used or suggested the meaning of the term. For discussion and critique of the term 'left behind' and other terms denoting absence of migration, see Jonsson 2011.

with internal. Then I discuss factors responsible for internal migration of women in general and emigrants' wives in particular. This is followed by a brief methodology for the study, after which, I discuss the key findings by disaggregating my respondents' demographic characteristics. I focus on three reasons for women's migration: schooling children, enjoying urban life, and family conflict. Then, I briefly highlight the process of decision-making regarding women's migration to suggest a link between the two types of migration. I conclude the paper with a discussion on how such migrations have impacted the rural areas of Nepal.

Locating the Study

Impact of Men's Migration on Women's Lives

There have been innumerable studies on impacts of men's migration on women's lives.² In Nepal, several studies have sprung up on this topic, covering aspects such as migration's effects on public services including education and health care, change in family structure including gender and generational relations, women's empowerment and well-being, dependency, consumerism, etc. (Kaspar 2005; Lokshin and Glinskaya 2009; Aubriot 2009–2010; Berardi-Tradié 2009–2010; Ghimire 2009–2010; Thieme and Müller-Böker 2009–2010; Gartaula, Visser and Niehof 2012; Maharjan, Bauser and Knerr 2012).

In most such studies regarding mobility, women are generally viewed as 'left behind' and trapped in the village due to increased responsibilities of agriculture and housework, and hence generally unfree to move. Moreover, studies show that international migration and remittances work to confine family members, especially the wives and older parents, within villages (Menon 1995; Kanaiaupuni 2000). Thieme and Müller-Böker (2009–2010) argue for the Far West Nepal that migration increases women's dependency on husband's family and on remittance as most women stay in villages with their in-laws.

However, such studies on effect of men's migration on women's lives have, in my view, failed to consider the residential choices of women and should be dealt with some reservation. Rashid's (2013) study of Bangladeshi women's experience of their husbands' migration, for example, found emigrants' wives to be in three types of situations: She may live separately

² See reviews by Cohen 2011 and Arias 2013 on Mexico; Sadiqi and Ennaji 2004 and de Haas 2007 on Morocco; Hugo 2002 on Indonesia.

but nearby her in-laws; may continue to stay with in-laws; or may move to her natal home. In addition to these options, Pauli (2008) notes that often Mexican men put their wives under the custody of their mothers after they move to the US, even if they had been living in nuclear family earlier, thus triggering a transition from nuclear to joint family. In Nepal, it is noted that a different phenomenon is on the rise, which sees emigrants' wives migrating to nearby towns or cities, leaving behind their in-laws. These women often do not own properties but rent rooms or apartments in the urban areas initially because it takes many years for emigrants to Gulf countries to build a house with the meager remittance earned there. In any case, this new social phenomenon is noteworthy for two reasons: First, it brings to surface a relatively new form of internal migration and clarifies that women are not immobile, sedentary, or 'left behind.' Second, such movement amounts to *de facto* nucleation of the family and has consequences for relationships with both the husband and the in-laws. In this paper, I focus on the mobility aspect.

Methodologically, studies on impact of men's migration were hitherto all carried out in the rural areas of the sending countries where the left-behind women are supposed to live, which can be considered a rural bias. In other words, by confining their research on the rural areas, scholars overlooked the possibility that women might have outmigrated. In this study, I try to critique and overcome such bias by focusing on a subgroup of women who migrated to urban areas.

Linking International and Internal Migration

Several scholars are increasingly highlighting the need to study the relationship between international and internal migration (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002; de Haas 2007; Cohen 2011; Arias 2013) but very few studies have actually done so (Skeldon 2006; King, Skeldon and Vullnetari 2008; Zohry 2005 in the case of Albania; and King and Conti 2013, in Italy). Sheller and Urry (2006) offer one remarkable framework on this in their discussion of the 'new mobilities paradigm.' It might be fair to say that theories of globalization deal with migration holistically while theories of migration take a meso-level approach, thus linking diverse mobility phenomena. The research on international division of labor which draw on Wallerstein's (2004) world-system theory argue that colonial and global capital flows to developing countries, especially in the agricultural and export-oriented production sectors, disrupted local farming communities. One result of this

was that these communities were forced to migrate to urban areas to join industries. Although such theories suggest a link between global mobilities of capital and people, they do not link international with internal migration per se.

A schema has been provided by King, Skeldon and Vullnetari (2008) which links different destinations within and outside the country being studied, and accounts for mobilities of would-be migrants and returnees. However, these trajectories are only applicable for a single migrant and cannot account for mobilities of multiple individuals within a family. In Nepal also, there is growing realization for the need to link multiple mobilities (Bruslé 2009–2010). Nelson (2013) notes that people from rural areas are moving to cities, especially to the capital city of Kathmandu, as a preparation for migrating abroad. An alternative pathway was noted by Poertner, Junginger and Müller-Böker (2011) in a study of internal migrants from Bajhang to Dhangadi. They showed that a few successful international labor migrants with intergenerational history of migration to India had effectively relocated their households to the Tarai. I suggest that the case of emigrants' migrant wives may provide a closer link between the two distinct but connected phenomena of international and internal migration.

Internal Migration of Women

Studies on internal migration of women have focused, in Nepal and elsewhere, more on single women than on married women. For single or unmarried women, the motivations may be for personal achievements such as education, jobs, and urban aspirations, whereas married women with children are less motivated by individual achievements and more by family survival or future prospects for children (Jacka 2006). Moreover, for married women, migration is an escape from an oppressive marriage and family relations.

In Nepal, internal migration,³ especially of women, has received less attention compared to international migration (Chhetri 1987; Graner 2001; Timalisina 2007). Women's internal migration for purposes other than joining or reuniting with families is mostly studied as part of overall migration while taking into consideration only those pursuing paid labor. For example,

³ Unlike some socialist states such as China and Vietnam, the Nepali state does not control mobility but rather encourages it, especially from the hills to the plains (Shrestha 1989), often without keeping record of internal migrants unless they have bought land or built house in their new localities.

Graner (2001) notes in a survey of carpet workers in the Kathmandu Valley during the late 1980s and early 1990s that half of the labor force comprised of women, mainly teenagers and young adults, came almost exclusively from rural hill and Tarai districts.

Regarding internal migration of emigrant families, if we trace back studies on *lāhure* migration, it can be seen that before 1970, there was no mention of internal migration of *lāhures* or their families, neither in Pignède's (1993) study among Gurungs in Kaski district in the late 1950s nor in MacFarlane's (1976) study of Gurungs in Kaski, nor in Caplan's (2000 [1970]) study of Limbus in Ilam. However, MacFarlane, writing in supplementary notes on Pignède (1993: 450), noted that from 1975, and "[i]ncreasingly after that date, and almost universally in the 1980s, ex-servicemen retire to Pokhara or other towns." Adhikari (2001: 39) regards such migration due to the impact of remittance money as the "major structural change" in recent times, while implicitly suggesting that the migrants are returnees rather than the 'left behind' women and children.

A first clear indication, if not a detailed account, of migration of *lāhures'* wives has been given by Des Chene in the case of Gurungs. She notes that almost all *lāhures* from the village she studied were part of a battalion earlier stationed in England who later migrated to either Tarai or Pokhara: "Young women today see marriage to a Hong Kong *lāhore* [sic] as a path that leads out of the village. Such a path leads out of the fields, and out of in-laws homes. It leads toward town where there are bazaars, movies and other enticements. In the town there are also better schools for one's children" (1991: 258). Significant in this quote is the observation that young women's aspiration to marry *lāhures* is based on their preference for an urban life and nuclear family. This paper elaborates the connection made by Des Chene by considering that now such women coming to the towns include wives of not just *lāhures* but all other types of emigrants. What is not clear in her account is the extent to which such aspirations were realized, and if so, whether women moved to the towns or Tarai before their *lāhure* husbands retired.

Methodology

My research site was the town of Baglung bazaar, the headquarters of Baglung district and Dhaulagiri zone. Among the women migrants, I studied only those who are currently renting places to live and not those who owned

the houses they were living in.⁴ I chose two residential areas where most new private schools, called ‘boarding’ during conversations even though they did not offer lodging for students, were located. It was considered that these residential areas were more suitable for families with children because they were situated outside the bazaar proper, thus attracting lesser vehicles on the streets.

The data on which this study is based come from three sources. The first is a questionnaire survey of 75 migrant women. This survey was accompanied by a survey of 12 ‘boarding’ schools out of a total of 15 in the bazaar area, disaggregating the number of students whose families had come from villages. The second source was a series of interviews with 15 women who had come many years ago, with additional seven who arrived just three months ago. The third and last source was periodic visits to the migrants’ homes in Baglung and Myagdi districts, which helped me understand the perceptions of their family members and other villagers on migration of the emigrants’ wives.

Internal Migration to Baglung Bazaar

Muzzini and Aparcio (2013) argue that people travel long distances to big cities for labor purposes, while they go to nearest urban center for non-labor purposes such as urban lifestyle and education. This also applies to the migrants who came to Baglung bazaar. Historically, Baglung bazaar was a major trading route in the trans-Himalayan trade in the central region after the conquest of western Nepal by Prithvi Narayan Shah in the mid-18th century (Regmi 1975). Newars, Thakalis, Magars, Chhetris, Gurungs, and Dalits were the main residents in the bazaar area in the past. The ethnic composition remains similar, although it has to be noted that there is still a large number of Newars in the old bazaar area even if many have migrated more recently to the Kathmandu Valley and other regions of Nepal, and also abroad.

Rapid urbanization of Baglung bazaar is itself a new phenomenon, only about two decades old: Baglung bazaar became a municipality in 1996. As far as migration into Baglung bazaar is concerned, there are four distinct reasons:

⁴ The reasons I focused only on those living on rent were three: First, since they were relatively new migrants, the circumstances and consequences of their migration can be better accounted for. Second, I argue that women living on rent also represented the earlier trajectories of those who now own houses. And finally, their current temporary status gives them an identity as *baccā paḍhāuna āune* (those who have come to educate children).

First, Baglung bazaar has been an educational center since at least half a century. Usually students for higher education would come to the bazaar from the whole region, and school students from nearby villages. Second, the Magars, Chhetris, and Gurungs of Baglung district have historically been British or Indian *lāhures*, and as their economic status improved, the returnees constructed new houses and moved to Baglung bazaar. Third, Dhaulagiri was one of the highly affected areas during the Maoist insurgency. During the latter part of the insurgency, as Maoists targeted the upper classes/castes in villages, they fled to Baglung bazaar.

Lastly, there emerged a new culture of emigration, to the Gulf and developed countries, especially during the insurgency when men fled to avoid Maoist recruitment or persecution by the security forces. The remittance from this last wave of emigration enabled many families, especially women, to leave the troubled villages and come to Baglung bazaar along with other urban destinations. Also, many schools were established or were relocated from the villages to the bazaar due to the conflict. Business opportunities increased in Baglung bazaar as consumption, fueled by remittances, increased. It is this last phase of emigration and migration that this study will focus on.

Demographics of Emigrants' Migrant Wives

I studied women who had come to the Baglung bazaar and were living on rent⁵ while their husbands were abroad. To get a somewhat 'proxy' estimate of this otherwise invisible population, and because most women came to educate their children in private schools, I conducted a survey of private schools in the Baglung bazaar. It was found that the private schools relocated from villages to the bazaar during the Maoist insurgency attracted more students from the migrant families: the proportion of students whose parent(s) were abroad and either living on rent or in hostel was as high as 60 percent in these schools, while in other schools it was at least 20 percent.

Almost all of the participants I interviewed came from three of the four districts of Dhaulagiri zone – Baglung, Parbat, and Myagdi – and one each from Arghakhanchi and Gulmi district which fall in Lumbini zone. Among those who came from Baglung district itself, most came from the eastern half. This is because Baglung bazaar lies on the eastern tip of the district,

⁵ Baglung municipality has a total of 7,848 houses/housing units, with 45.58 percent houses rented in one way or another (CBS 2012).

and for people in the western half of the Baglung district, Tamghas, Tansen, and Butwal are nearer and preferred for schooling proposes. There were only six respondents from Myagdi and five from Parbat districts. The low number is because people from these districts go to the big cities of Pokhara or Kathmandu rather than come to the town of Baglung bazaar.

Most of the respondents were in their 20s and 30s, with one to three children: the average number of children was 1.87. Most of them married when they were younger than 20, and husbands of most women emigrated abroad either before marriage or within five years of marriage. All of them had endogamous marriage in terms of ethnicity.

In terms of education, 65 percent of the respondents had passed at least the tenth grade (School Leaving Certificate, SLC), which is high compared to the figures of 9.0 percent, 14.3 percent, and 10.2 percent in Myagdi, Parbat, and Baglung respectively (CBS 2012). This suggests that mostly literate women came to the town; a few of them were college students.⁶ In terms of ethnicity, almost three-fourths of the respondents were Magars, who were the largest population of the Dhaulagiri zone, followed by Chhetris and Bahuns. This is because I studied two areas where Magars were a majority, and not the third in the north where Bahuns were a majority.

Regarding family background, mostly women who had joint family had come to the town. Almost all (except 2 out of 75) had at least one parent-in-law at home in village, along with married or unmarried brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law. It means there was somebody in the village to look after their property, which made sense because it was difficult for women of nuclear family to leave their home and property.

The range of remittance varied as per destinations, ranging from India and Malaysia in the lowest to Japan, Europe, and US in the highest. Women received remittance between 220,000 to 2,000,000 rupees per year, with most women receiving an average of 25–30 thousand rupees per month. The number of women receiving either very low or very high remittance was small. The low number of women who receive less remittance can be explained by the fact that Baglung bazaar is a relatively expensive town. Similarly, those earning higher remittances will not stay in a small town like Baglung bazaar but prefer to go to the cities of Pokhara or Kathmandu.

⁶ I met many women who were college students in the Dhaulagiri Multiple Campus, Baglung.

Regarding emigration, Dhaulagiri zone has one of the highest migration rates in Nepal. This is reflected in the proportions of female-headed households: 43 percent in Baglung, 40.5 percent in Parbat, and 43.5 percent in Myagdi, which are much higher than the national average (25.73%) for Nepal. The survey found that the largest number of respondents' husbands (48%) were in the Gulf and Malaysia, which is consistent with the national figures. The second largest number (35%) was that of those going to India, mostly serving as *lāhures*, while a few (10%) had gone to the developed countries such as the USA, Japan, Hong Kong (China) and European countries. Besides going abroad to be *lāhures*, those in the Gulf countries and Malaysia were working mostly as security guards and drivers, followed by factory work in Korea and waiting in restaurants in Japan and Euro-America. However, it should be noted that circular migration is increasing, with the following trends discerned: (a) within the Gulf countries and Malaysia, i.e., from Malaysia to Gulf countries or from one Gulf country to another; (b) from Gulf to Japan; and (c) from Gulf and India especially involving the Indian *lāhures* to Europe or the US.

About half of the husbands of respondents had emigrated after marriage. Two-thirds of the men went abroad within less than a year after marriage, which might point to the added family responsibilities on men's shoulders after marriage. The fact that only a few women gave poverty as a reason for their men's migration and also my observation that only a small number had great difficulty in living the urban life and educating children, show that only families with a certain level of income, at least 20–30 thousand rupees monthly, were able to come to live in the bazaar. Along with earning money, some women related their husbands' migration with *ijjat* (honor). It seems that *ijjat* has got a new meaning, that of economic standing in the community, by aiming to go to a developed country rather than be just a *lāhure* or an 'ordinary' emigrant to the Gulf.

Findings and Discussion

The argument of this paper is that women's migration is related to their husband's emigration. This necessitates exploration of the reasons for women's migration and explaining its relation to men's emigration and the remittances received. The primary reason for women's migration was children's education, although other reasons included an attraction toward

urban lifestyle, including pursuit of their own education or avoiding conflicts with the in-laws. These reasons are elaborated in the following subsections.

Education

English-medium education in private schools has become a new necessity in Nepal. Liechty relates it to the cultural logic of the formation and rise of middle class in Nepal: “schools become spaces in which people are encouraged to imagine themselves in terms of economic class,” (2008: 213) thus constructing a class hierarchy between those studying in the public schools and the various shades of private schools. Higher education was necessary for social mobility *within* Nepal before 1990, and now this has become the ticket to enter the global labor market, paving ways toward developed countries (Tamot 2008; Adhikari 2009–2010; Sijapati 2009–2010). “English proficiency is simultaneously the key to a better future, an index of social capital, and a part of the purchase price for a ticket out of Nepal” (Liechty 2008: 213). The case was starker among the *lāhures* but is now applicable to all types of foreign labor migrants. The importance of both education and English proficiency for global competence and aspiring of modernity might have been first felt more acutely in rural areas historically known for sending *lāhures*. *Lāhures* are arguably seen to be more exposed to the world than their compatriots since the First World War and thus have become the pioneers of modernity in the rural areas, including by affording children’s education in private schools in the urban areas (MacFarlane, in Pignède 1993: 459). MacFarlane quotes one of his informants: “the soldier returns to the village on the first leave and spends some money there; on the second leave he marries; on the third he buys a little land in the town; on the fourth he buys further land; and on the fifth and subsequent leaves he builds his town house. From the fourth leave onwards he starts to educate his children in the expensive town schools” (Pignède 1993: 451). This quote indicates, first, that men became *lāhures* *before* marriage, and secondly, educating in town for settlement was *after* buying land and *before* retirement. Later, high school education with English proficiency became necessary even for joining as *lāhure* (Pignède 1993: 250; Caplan 2000[1970]: 206). Also, with dwindling prospects in joining *lāhure*, education became a major and sometimes the only tool to thrive in a modern world and to achieve financial security. So, nowadays *lāhure* parents educate their children not

with the hope of making their children *lāhures* but for a better future in a new global labor market.

As globalization and economic liberalization took root in Nepal in the 1990s and as emigration increased between South Asia and the Middle East, migrants could then afford to educate their children in private schools since it was considered that these offer better promises than public schools, concurrent with the failure of the public education system in Nepal. The migration increased even further after the Maoist insurgency intensified a decade later. Later, migration perhaps not so much to the Middle East but to developed countries in Asia, Europe and America became a cultural status which further added to the attraction of sending children to English-medium schools. The new trend on children's education then gave rise to parents' migration to urban areas where private schools newly opened. It also has to be noted that demand for private schools in urban areas grew, especially among the parents who could afford them, as the Maoists shut down private schools in rural areas, calling them places of 'bourgeois education.' In this study, I focus particularly on this recent trend of children of rural-based parents being schooled in towns *before* men return home from abroad and buy land. I consider this phenomenon to indicate that parents have now begun to prioritize children's education over buying land.

Baccā Paḍhāune – For the Sake of Children's Education: More than two-thirds of my respondents said they came to Baglung bazaar to educate children (*baccā paḍhāune*⁷), while one-tenth said they came for children's schooling and for treatment or finding a job.⁸ The mothers who had come to Baglung bazaar for their children's education gave different reasons: Coming for the sole purpose of educating children was voiced by either those who considered their children too weak in their study and hence needed extra

⁷ Women's migration for educating their children has become such an important and prevalent phenomenon that their identities are derived from it. When I visited the town of Tansen in west Nepal for choosing my research site for this study, the locals termed the women I was going to interview as '*baccā paḍhāuna āune*.' Later, I found this term common all over Nepal.

⁸ However, a few women replied that they came for schooling their children, even though they either had no children or their children were not of school-going age (say, below three years) when they first came to the bazaar. This was found after cross-checking data on age of children and number of years of stay in the bazaar. This suggests that children's schooling is an easy excuse for coming to the urban area for women, which will be discussed later.

attention or too ‘talented’⁹ in their study to be confined to public schools. A Chhantyal woman who had arrived from southern Baglung only 18 days ago told me that although her husband had told her to come to the bazaar a year ago, she had resisted because her “husband does not earn much” and also that she suspected her son had “no mind” as “he does not understand however many times he is told.”¹⁰ In contrast, a Chhetri woman who had come to the bazaar from the suburb of the Baglung municipality had brought her son to the bazaar because she did not like to put “such a well-studying son” in the ‘school’ in the village and that “if such a talented boy gets good education, maybe he will do something [significant in his life].” Somewhat differently, a young mother of a two-year-old child who was still in her 20s expressed she “did not think of anything else besides educating the child.” Other women were of general perception that public schools in the rural areas did not “care” for students or that children became “stubborn” in these schools.

Some of my respondents had to come to the bazaar not only because they themselves wanted to put children in ‘boarding’ but also because their children insisted on it.¹¹ For example, a woman who had migrated from southern Baglung, came to the bazaar simply because her daughter did not want to go to the public ‘school’ after the closure of a ‘boarding’ school:

I came because this elder child did not want to go to the ‘school’....After closure of the boarding, she was sent to ‘school.’ In ‘school,’ all the books were in Nepali; only one book of grade 1 was in English....At the same time, her father returned from abroad, and she complained to him. His mind changed, and he said: “We need to take her” [to the bazaar].

⁹ I use this notion of ‘talent’ from the mothers’ expressions when talking about children. Interestingly, almost all Bahun-Chhetri women considered their children (and often also their husbands) to be ‘talented’ in education, while almost all *Janajāti* women considered their children to be weak or mediocre (*bodho*).

¹⁰ When I interviewed her, the boy was sleeping; the night before, he had vomited blood and the bedsheet was stained with blood.

¹¹ The dislike of public schools by children themselves is revealed in the following conversation. When I was interviewing one of my respondents, she admonished her son for disturbing our interviewing by saying that she would rather take the child out and put in the “school.” Then the boy replied, “We understand, we understand. Do you think we will go to that *khātē* school?” As the term *khātē* (literally ‘street children,’ meaning ‘the worst’) suggests, the difference between ‘boarding’ and ‘school’ is ingrained not only inside the minds of the parents but also, maybe more deeply, inside those of the children.

A more specific reason was that women came to take matter into their own hands as children were having problems in hostel care.¹² My survey of hostel students shows that putting children in school hostel has become a compulsion for many parents, either because both parents are abroad or because mothers cannot control their children. When not in hostels, children might at times also be left in the care of relatives living in towns, but these were not the preferred options. An old woman from southern Baglung had moved to the town to take care of her daughter's son who had suffered because he was kept in hostel.

Here one can cook and feed one's child. He has become so thin. It takes an hour for him to get fed.... He was kept in hostel when in KG or 1. He got *duhkha*, so I came here.

In contrast, a woman whose husband is in Qatar and she herself now does embroidery, came solely because her son suffered after she kept him with her *phupū* (father's sister) in the town:

I stayed with my mother-in-law for two years [in the village]. [My son] was four; I had left him here with the *phupū* at her 'hotel' [an eatery or tea shop] here to study. I used to live with my boy for one month and would go to village to work the next. I kept him with the *phupū* for one year. The boy suffered very much. How he had looked! Others also scolded me for leaving such a small boy. That's why I came here.

As can be seen from the case studies, caring for children in the bazaar has involved a family member or relative (as a guardian) other than the mother herself. This implies that daughters-in-law are expected to live in the villages, especially for doing household and agricultural work, and even may indicate control on women's mobility in the absence of their husbands. Women coming to the town to educate the children themselves may be one of the results of the family dynamics after men's emigration.

Such developments should also be seen in the context of the Maoist insurgency in that the Maoists shut down nearly all private schools in Baglung district except the few in Baglung bazaar. After the insurgency came to an end in 2006, some new boarding schools might have been established in the villages, but they still would offer only primary education. Ironically, the rising phenomenon of *baccā paḍhāune* which took root in the towns made

¹² In the town of Beni, Myagdi district, I found some students who were in hostel but their mothers and relatives lived nearby.

it difficult for new schools in the villages to sustain. For example, a Bahun woman had come to the bazaar just a week before I met her because the boarding in which her child used to study was closed due to low number of children:

There was a boarding in the village, but it was closed, this year. It had no children because all parents took their children to bazaar. Everyone thinks that children's education in bazaar is good....The boarding in the village was good. There were also teachers. But without children whom to teach?...Those who could, brought their children to the bazaar; those who could not, put them in the 'school.'

These cases suggest that the dysfunctional educational system of the government and the Maoist insurgency from 1996 to 2006 had a severe impact on children's education in the rural villages in Baglung, and by extension, in the whole country. This suggests that women's migration is not by choice but a necessity brought on by the national transition. It also has to be remembered that there is a close interrelationship between growing requirement of schooling with English proficiency and mobility. On the one hand, parents often cite education of children as an important, if not the main, reason for going abroad. In the survey, many women gave children's education as the main or an additional reason for their husbands going abroad. On the other hand, women, especially mothers, also cite children's education as the main reason for their migration to urban areas where there are better educational facilities.¹³ In other words, children's education has become a new motivating factor for both parents – the husband emigrating abroad and the wife migrating to town – in the context of modernity and culture of emigration.

Escape from Rurality, Aspirations for Urbanity

The prospect of development in the rural areas of Nepal historically has been low. The Nepali rural population in the hills has been long engaged in subsistence agriculture, often supported by non-farm sources of income, including remittance. While explaining underdevelopment in Nepal, Blaikie, Cameron and Seddon regard the stagnation of agrarian economy of the

¹³ However, many women were unsatisfied with the quality of education in Baglung bazaar. For example, a *lāhure*'s wife remarked: “*Ki gāunmai jānu, ki thāunmai janu,*” meaning “one should go either to the village (*gāun*, that is, return back) or to the area with best facilities (*thāun*, literally ‘place’), such as Pokhara and Kathmandu.

hills as partly due to “diminishing relative returns to labor in agriculture” (2005: 301) compared to non-farm activities. This is partly related to men’s migration both historically and currently. On the one hand, low productivity has compelled men to migrate both internally and internationally, even for having one less feeding mouth by “eating out” (Thieme and Müller-Böker 2009–2010: 115). On the other, in the absence of working men, women are burdened with hard agricultural labor (Aubriot 2009–2010; Thieme and Müller-Böker 2009–2010). The ‘feminization of agriculture’ may have even resulted in diminished agricultural returns, although there is some evidence that remittance helps to ease this burden by employing hired laborers (Maharjan, Bauser and Knerr 2012). Even so, women have the traditional burden of unpaid household work on top of having to do hard agricultural work. Also, women often suffer economic hardships in the first year or two of their husbands’ absence due to the need to repay loans.¹⁴ So, women often try to get or supplement income by taking up paid work. However, there are very few employment opportunities in the rural areas for women apart from subsistence agriculture. So, it can be argued that, just as men migrate out to avoid relatively unproductive agriculture, women may also be moving to urban areas after their husbands emigrate.

Apart from escaping hardship, women may harbor urban aspirations, especially if they are facilitated by men’s migration. As MacFarlane (in Pignède 1993) showed, the *lāhure* first buys land in the nearby town or a major city or Kathmandu and later builds a house, after which he and his family move to the town. Also, as Des Chene (1991) described, young women see marrying a *lāhure* as a way toward an urban life which may offer them freedom, entertainment and opportunities for schooling. Over the two decades, the growing trend of men’s emigration, and hence remittance, has made it possible for a growing number of women to aspire to move to the urban area. However, because not all emigrants can afford buying land in urban areas, women’s aspiration is realized by living in rent in the urban area in the name of schooling children.

Sukha Kāṭnu: During conversations with participants, almost all women denied that they came to the bazaar just to achieve urban aspirations (*rahar*). Rather, they asserted that they came to the bazaar due to compulsion

¹⁴ A household budget survey (NRB 2008) shows that 25 percent of remittance is used to repay loans.

(*bādhyatā*) to educate children in private schools or to take care of children properly.

The denial, if not absence, of urban aspiration can be partly explained by their marital status. Women's mobility without a good reason may be interpreted as a lapse in their sexual morality, and hence educating a child might be considered a good reason a woman may use to justify her decision to migrate. But it might as well be that married women focus more on the well being of the children and whole family than their individual aspirations (Jacka 2006). This might especially be the case in rural Baglung which now enjoys basic services such as communication, drinking water, electricity, cable television, and road access at least seasonally. So, it is plausible that, as many women claimed, they did not come to enjoy such services and amenities per se that an urban life presents, but for schooling their children. The most denial comes from the comparison of urban life and village life by the newcomers. The wife of an Indian *lāhure* who had come to town only three weeks ago when I met her said:

I had no aspiration to come to stay in bazaar. I came here only for educating children....
In village, people say we have come to bazaar, but here there is problem of water....
When we went to fetch water in the temple [the famous Baglung Bhagawati temple], one woman shouted, "Oh! They have come for getting *sukha* from village. Here they are carrying water!" Some say, "Here it is difficult to digest a mouthful of rice. So, they need to carry water."

Despite their denial of having come to towns in pursuit of *sukha*, it has to be kept in mind that many women considered village life hard (*duḥkha*) regardless of the amenities in the villages. In the rural agrarian economies, women cannot avoid working in the fields even though their husbands send remittance. For example, a woman whose husband migrated to Qatar to work as a cook and who herself did embroidery work felt that she no longer needed to do hard agricultural labor and no longer needed to live with her mother-in-law. She said she was busy to the extent that her son could not get any good food to eat during his infancy. A Magar woman whose husband took her to the bazaar after she complained she was oppressed by her mother-in-law admitted that she has much *sukha* in the bazaar as she does not need to work: "Here, whether I drink water or eat a handful of rice, it nourishes my body."

However, not all women were happy with leaving their family and land behind. The embroiderer woman mentioned above herself feels sad for her mother-in-law as she is alone in the village taking care of the house, land, and cattle. Similarly, a Magar woman who used to work as a social worker and whose husband is a *lāhure* regrets that she could not stay in her village, that her mother-in-law is alone in the village taking care of the house and land. She regrets because her *deurānī* (husband's younger brother's wife) is also in the bazaar schooling her own children, and they have a harmonious family; the two *deurānis* have themselves bought land in the name of their mother-in-law with the money earned by their husbands.

Related to the argument that women came for *sukha kāṛṇa* is husband's insistence for coming to the town in some cases. In two cases, husbands took their wives to the town against the latter's will. A woman whose husband is an Indian *lāhure* came to the bazaar because of his insistence:

When in village, I used to do housework in the morning. I used to go to child education center and teach there. My husband kept saying that I needed to go to the bazaar and take the children there for schooling. I don't know what was inside his mind. I said that we would take the children after they had grown up. It was like forcefully that I had to come. He came to the bazaar and rented a room. Then I had to come.

Similarly, a Magar woman who works as a cleaner in offices does not know why her husband brought her to the bazaar:

I don't know why my husband brought me down here. I came down without any reason. Initially, I stayed in the village. I used to wonder why I needed to go down to the bazaar. But my husband said, "Later you should not say this did not happen and that did not happen." I did not know that he had rented a room in Beni; later, he told me about it. I had thought of not coming down. But after he rented a room, I had to. Initially, we had no children. I stayed in Beni for one and a half year, and came here after I had a child. I was alone also there in the village.

But she believes that her husband insisted her on coming to live in urban area because he himself did not live much in village. He had gone to India at 17 or 18. After marriage he went to Saudi Arabia, and from there to Qatar about six months ago. When they left village, there were no in-laws. His elder brother divided the property and now handles their part of land.

The above cases suggest that if women themselves deny that they came to town for comfortable living, then their husbands may have wanted their

wives to live comfortably (*sukha kaṭāunu*). This is because, on the one hand, urban living provides the couple with privacy regarding both anonymity of remittance from their parents as well as intimacy and freedom. On the other, as the remarks above suggest, men who usually go abroad from a younger age do not like to live in the village, however emotionally attached they may be to it. So, they want their wives also to live in towns and cities.

By observing the daily lives of these women, I contend that women enjoy comfort in one sense: they do not (need to) do paid work like those migrants who came for labor purposes, and they need not do hard agricultural labor in the town like in their village life. The most significant work these women were doing was taking care of children. All women replied that their children now get more care. So, the urban life of these women can almost be characterized as that of sedentary housewives. The perception of locals in the bazaar as well as people back in the village was that these women have come for *sukha kāṭna* since they were unemployed, which I discuss next.

In the survey, one third of women were employed in offices or were self-employed. Among the employed, the two teachers were employed before coming to the bazaar, and two worked in office before their husbands went abroad. Obviously, these four were educated and had passed at least the SLC. All other who were working as tailors, shopkeepers, and workers/helpers had begun working only after coming to the bazaar. However, among the total employed, only four were getting significant income that would make them independent. It was also found that even for those who were working, the aim for coming to the bazaar was not to get a job. Additionally, very few came actively seeking work or doing business, along with child schooling, in bazaar, although not all have found suitable work. On questioning the housewives about why they did not work, answers varied. Most replied either that remittance was enough and/or that they had small children. Some did not work because they needed to study themselves. One woman said she simply could not work. In some cases, husbands told them not to work, in one case not to do low-grade work.

The unemployed status of women should be seen in the light of several factors. First, because they have at least one family member abroad, they do not consider extra earning necessary. In fact, one third of women surveyed replied that remittance was enough, so they did not seek or do work. Second, we should take into account whether and what works are available in the bazaar. Baglung is a small town rather than a city, and it is a commercial

and educational center rather than an industrial center; so there are very few job opportunities, and almost none for uneducated women. For educated women, the only visible job, according to women themselves, is that of school teachers, but it was difficult because in private schools in the town a teacher was required to have proficiency in English. For skilled women, or women who would develop skills, the most visible and feasible job, according to migrants themselves and locals, is in tailoring, embroidery, or parlor, and some of my respondents were involved in them. Three respondents were running shops, two grocery shops and one cosmetic shop. Also, women's age, married status, and having school-going children preclude her from working. Lastly, with husband's remittance, it is also a matter of losing *ijjat* (honor) to work as cleaners or laborer. Five women were emphatically told by their husbands not to work.

It is notable that their husbands' remittance amount had a significant effect on the working status of these woman. Three women who worked after coming to the bazaar said they needed to work because their husbands' remittance was not enough, at least initially. This was also noted by Rashid (2013) in the case of Bangladesh. But most women considered their work to be just for passing time. For example, a woman whose husband is now a retired Indian *lāhure* and is on his way to the US illegally, and her parents are in Hong Kong and were *lāhures*, recently opened a tailoring shop along with two other partners who were also migrants just like her. She learned tailoring, parlor, and other skills while in India and does it for passing time, "*bhulne bāto.*"

Views of Locals and from Village: The views of local people in town and family members and neighbors in villages on whether women came to educate their children or to seek comfortable lifestyles (*sukha kāṭna*) are poles apart from those of the women themselves. Such perceptions should be seen in the context of the non-employed/housewife status of most women.

Conversations with people in two adjoining villages in southern Baglung, where I visited for two days, reveal that many in-laws were not happy with their daughters-in-law moving out of the village. The mother-in-law of the embroiderer woman became serious and even angry when I questioned her why *she* sent her away. She bluntly answered that her daughter-in-law went away for comfort (*sanco pārna*) and without her consent. However, she was energetic and was taking care of a big house and the cattle.

Another woman had put her one child in the public school and another smaller one in child development center. She could not go to the bazaar because she had no money. Regarding women moving to town, she says that life of those who moved to the bazaar in the name of educating children is easy: “You keep children in school. You cook and eat. Here you need to gather leaves and firewood and you need to work continuously.” An old woman in the jeep when returning from the village complained that “in the bazaar, they keep sleeping and sitting.”

A retired Indian *lāhure* had four *lāhure* sons. His three daughters-in-law were in Pokhara, and one son was not yet married. When I visited him on the day of *Caitra Daśain* in April, he was a little tipsy and very humorous. He was expecting his daughters-in-law to come home during children’s holiday at the end of academic session. But his daughter had come to *māita*, or natal home:

They went to educate children. The girls need care. Who will wash the children’s clothes? Need to cook. Need to take the children to school and fetch them. Okay, on other days they did not come home on the pretence that they needed to wash children’s clothes and feed them. But now it is vacation. They could have come and worked here, but they are in Pokhara. They have gone to rest! From last 14th of Caitra, the school is over. Today is 24th. The school opens again from 4th or 5th of Baisākḥ. What is there to do?

The case of an old couple is illustrative of the situation of old people in village and summarizes villagers’ views on schooling, emigration, migration, and who migrates/emigrates. The old woman said:

Daughters-in-law also have studied 10th grade. Why should they want to work in dirt here? They don’t know how to and don’t want to do such work. There they have good food to eat; only *āñṭo-dhiṇḍo* (flour) is here for us to eat. In the bazaar, they may eat delicious (*mīṭho*) food. They may eat whatever they want. They can have meat if they want. They get whenever they want if they have money. Here even if you have money in pocket you cannot eat whatever you like, not even fruit. Here you need to grow your own vegetables (*tarkārī*) and green leafy vegetables (*sāgpāt*). There they stay comfortably (*sanco basyo*). I have to say that they have money. Maybe because they have money they can live in a place like Pokhara...

[In bazaar] There is no need to plant, no need to weed. That’s why nowadays people left land barren. All have gone to bazaar...

Back in Baglung bazaar, a Magar woman from Myagdi talked about what village people were saying:

Villagers say, “Husbands go abroad. Whether they earn there or not, wives come down to bazaar in the name of schooling.” Many people have told me: “They go to eat delicious food, but they don’t get fat.”

The above remarks of villagers give a glimpse of the stigma related to leaving one’s village. Not only villagers but also locals in the town view them negatively, saying that they came for *sukha kāṭna*. Most locals expressed their aversion to such women, saying that they come to the town for comfortable living no sooner than their husbands had gone aboard. One Khadka local man remarked:

They put children inside ‘boarding’ under the shed of tin roof and roam around the bazaar the whole day, while their husbands toil in the Gulf of Arab. They adorn themselves (*nakkal pārne*). When it is time to fetch children from school, they come back to the room. Wives whose husbands are abroad to earn do not stay in the room.... When there is a fair, it is covered with these women. Those who have come for study, job, or business have no time to roam...

In the above remark, on the one hand, the man vented at the poor infrastructure and educational quality of ‘boarding’ schools in the bazaar, many of which were relocated from the villages. His vent was also at those who come to study or educate in them. This was in contrast to his own grandchildren’s schools in Kathmandu where the fee was much higher. Yet, he lamented¹⁵ the downfall of public schools even when there were trained teachers. Such negative attitude toward migrants reflects the conflict between locals and migrants.¹⁶

Apart from such migrant and ethnic differences, their views were guided more by the consequences of migration – especially, their perception that

¹⁵ Interestingly, not only this particular man, but every Bahun and Chhetri man or woman, whether local or migrant, lamented the downfall of ‘schools,’ but most migrant women of Magar or other indigenous groups did not care it at all and preferred ‘boarding’ schools.

¹⁶ It should be noted that counting both permanent settlers with houses and temporary ones in rented housing, Magars are now in relative majority in Baglung bazaar, whereas Newars, Khadka Chhetris, and Dalits were in majority in the past. Most Newars, who are relatively rich, have either gone to Kathmandu or abroad, and many Khadkas and even Dalits have gone to developed countries by selling land due to high land prices in the bazaar.

many women have failed to care for the children, and perception toward and incidents of such migrant women's infidelity.¹⁷ Nonetheless, locals cannot deny that women come for children's education. In this regard, a Chhetri woman, who herself had rented out three rooms, expressed sympathy toward such migrants because she herself was a migrant from an adjoining village. She needed to come to the town because her children needed tuition as they were weak in their studies. She agreed that these women came due to compulsion rather than personal aspiration. She even wondered how the women were 'surviving' whereas she, who now has a big house in the bazaar and an Indian *lāhure* husband, is struggling to live in this expensive town of Baglung. On this issue, the remark by a woman sums it well: "Those who understand will say that women have come for educating children; those who do not understand will say that women have come for getting *sukha*." Also, regarding the urban aspiration and denial of it, one should differentiate between *sukha kāṭna āunu* (coming to enjoy comfortable life) and *sukha kāṭnu* (getting *sukha* after coming to bazaar), the former as cause and the later as consequence of migration. The link between the two was expressed by a *lāhure*'s wife: "On the one hand, it may be for *sukha kāṭna*. On the other, it may be for children's education. Schooling children is a compulsion. Along with it, they may have got *sukha*."

Family Conflict and Violence

Family conflict and domestic violence has been considered a major cause of women's migration (Fawcett, Khoo and Smith 1984; Arya and Roy 2006). Apart from migrating for work, women also migrate due to family conflicts, either with husbands or with in-laws. The non-inclusion of this cause of migration, especially in national census or migration surveys, is obvious because they are private matters. This was the case during my survey also, in which no one gave family conflict as a reason for migration. However, on detailed interview, it was found that family conflict, with parents-in-law or other in-laws, was a significant reason for their migration along with children's education. In such cases, it can even be said that *baccā padhāune* is only an excuse.

¹⁷ Infidelity – perceived and real – of such emigrants' migrant wives is a 'hot' issue in Baglung bazaar, as is in every emerging, small, or big town in Nepal. I deal with this issue in a separate article under preparation.

Among the participants, some came solely due to family conflict. In two cases, the issue was conflict over remittance. In the third case, it involved verbal abuse and the woman did not want to go into the details. The cases also indicate vulnerability of women from their own family members. One woman came to educate her grandchildren by taking them out of hostel, *after* she quarreled with her daughter-in-law.

A Magar woman whose family I visited in southern Baglung had not liked her husband's village, and after her father-in-law ordered her to leave one day, she went first to her *māita* (natal home) and then came to bazaar.

[*Your child is only two years old. Why did you come here?*] At home, I have two *nandas* (husband's younger sisters), married but staying in *māita*. My in-laws would scold and threaten me. I felt bad, so I went away. They would show more home loan to its [baby's] daddy [her husband], but then put the money he sent in their daughters' names. After that I became ill.¹⁸ It was about 3-4 lakhs. Husband just repaid it. But they would say there was more loan even after paying. Husband told me to go to bazaar and to stay together with *jethāni* (husband's elder brother's wife). *Jethāni* is already here. She stays here for children's education.

Another Magar woman had also come to town after dispute about the money sent by her husband:

It is due to money that we did not get along. When my husband was in Iraq, he bought a vehicle [jeep for his eldest brother]. Another *jethāju* (husband's elder brother) drives *sāhū's* [other's] jeep. *Nanda* and *jethāju's* children studied here with husband's money. Now that he is in Afghanistan, I was charged that I did not show the money....My husband says he will return and sort things out: either one of them will buy it [the vehicle] or sell it to others....In reality, a *nanda* got us separated....After separation, they did not give me even a good place to stay. They gave me only a room. I informed husband about the separation. He told me to come to the bazaar.

A Bahun woman from a nearby village had said in the survey that she had come to educate her children, but she in fact came to the bazaar from the nearby village the day after she had a quarrel with her father-in-law. She left her small shop and poultry farming behind.

¹⁸ When one of my research assistants and I visited her home in southern Baglung, her mother-in-law confided that she had attempted suicide by taking poison.

The day before coming here, I left 30,000 rupees worth of chicken and feed, and 50-60 thousand rupees worth of shop. Something of that sort happened. I came abruptly to bazaar....Something happened; let's not say what that was [*Smiled.*]. I gave the chicken to village brothers...

[*How did you feel at that time?*] Let's not talk about it. [*Smiled.*]...It was raining; it was dark. On that day, I left for bazaar in that way. My heart was also dark. That's all.

I left the decision to leave home to my husband. I had not told him; he came to know it from villagers. He suddenly phoned me, saying, "I have arranged a room in the bazaar. Now a jeep is coming; pack things up." In this way, I suddenly left home. An uncle had arranged the room. I came early next morning....Father-in-law later regretted....I also regretted why I told father-in-law such things. He comes here. He calls me home; I sometimes go.

Such conflicts in the family arise from many sources and these drive women to migrate. While the disagreements with their mothers-in-law and meddling by *nandas* (husband's sisters) on household affairs are common problems for daughters-in-law in Nepali joint families with or without migrants, conflicts over ownership of remittance and vulnerability to abuse in the absence of their husbands are specific to migrant families. In two of the above three cases, they suffered violence and maltreatment from family members because their husbands were not sole breadwinners. In the first case above, she was ousted from home because her father-in-law was economically more dominant and physically more overpowering (which I experienced after visiting her home in her village). In the third case, the vulnerability and maltreatment, although she did not elaborate, was due solely to the absence of her husband.

Decision-making about Migration

The relationship between women's migration and men's emigration can be seen when analyzing the decisions to come to the town. In the survey, most women (43/75) reported that their migration was encouraged by their husbands. That women were encouraged by their husbands to come to live in town is too obvious. As noted earlier, some men themselves brought their wives and children to the bazaar before going abroad or when returning on vacation, in some cases even against the wife's wishes. Apart from such cases, the husband of a Bahun woman brought his wife and the child to the bazaar during his vacation visit from abroad because he felt that their elder son, who has low vision and wears thick glasses, needed to be kept in a good school.

Many women also reported that their in-laws encouraged them to migrate. There is realization among the elderly, especially those of Magar ethnicity or Dalit caste, that children need to be better educated. The parents-in-law of a Magar woman supported her decision to migrate, by saying that they would take care of the house and land: "Ok, go. Your idea to educate child in the bazaar is good. Go and educate the child well." Moreover, a Magar woman, who now has already stayed for ten years, was suggested by her father-in-law that the children would suffer in the hostel, and she was brought to the bazaar by her father-in-law. There were very few cases of resisting or telling not to go. On this issue, noteworthy is a remark by a woman whose father-in-law wondered why she needed to go to the bazaar: "It is not something that should be resisted." Also, the in-laws were certainly not in a position to say no, as heard in a remark made by an old woman in the village in southern Baglung: "How can we stop them when they tell us that they want to educate *their* children with *their own* money?"

Also significant is the finding that some women (10/75) independently took the decision to migrate. While some women raised the issue of coming to the bazaar in the family, a woman came due to her own insistence on educating children. A woman from Myagdi raised the issue and consulted with her husband who had come on vacation. After her husband agreed, they came; now she "feels like it was a dream." Those who came independently did so mostly to find jobs or due to family problems, besides children's education. This may suggest lessening of patriarchal control of women by their in-laws and the moving toward *de facto* nucleation of the family.

Remittance, irrespective of the amount, was also found to be a motivation to come to the urban area. Out of 75 women surveyed, all except one (in which case her in-laws) were sole remittance receivers. About two thirds of women said that they would not have come if their husbands had not emigrated, or if they did not have a good source of income in Nepal. For them, this was so obvious that many were vexed at my question. Interestingly, one woman said that she would have come to the bazaar for the sake of children's education even by sending her husband abroad.

Conclusion

This study explored various reasons for migration of emigrants' wives. The trend, or 'fashion,' of women coming to the towns for educating their children reflects the priority for education in English-medium private schools even

among the rural people, which is being realized due to emigration, mostly of men. In the case of the Dhaulagiri zone, such education is related to the honor associated with emigration as there are already a large number of immigrants to developed countries. This trend, however, can be seen as the continuation of the mobility of the *lāhure* families from the past, as noted by Pignède (1993) and others, with the major difference being that it is the women and children who are moving and that they are moving even if they do not yet have permanent bases in their new locations and are living in rent. Also, this trend is having negative impact on education in rural areas: not only public schools but also private schools in the rural areas are beginning to close because of the lack of students. This raises concern for the future of educational system in the rural areas, as the poor who remain are now being deprived of education, especially as the quality of public schools deteriorate even further on the face of the government slashing quotas for teachers and even merging schools.

The locals as well as villagers in the rural areas perceive women's migration negatively. On the one hand, women are stereotyped as coming for comfortable living rather than due to necessity or even compulsion. However, it may be argued that men more than women have urban aspirations, as suggested by some women's reluctance, initially, to come to the town despite encouragement or even insistence from their husbands. On the other, women are perceived to have escaped the rural agricultural and household work by going to live in the urban areas where they usually do not need to take up employment. This mobility has been facilitated both due to husband's remittance and due to the need to educate children. Such perceptions can be considered an instance of control of women's physical mobility. Participants and locals also claimed that women also come to town along with or immediately after husbands' emigration. It suggests, on the one hand, that parents-in-law now have lesser control over their daughters-in-law's mobility. On the other hand, there is lesser obligation toward parents and parents-in-law, and such migration is contributing to *de facto* nucleation of family. With such migration becoming a trend, it is likely that women in the villages, even those with low or average family income, might aspire to migrate.

Such migration is also contributing to demographic shifts in both the rural and urban areas. I argue that nowadays rural areas are becoming depopulated not only because of men's emigration but also, and even more so, because

of women's migration along with children. 'Who will sow our fields?' (Adhikari and Hobley 2013) and 'There are no mourners in village' are common sayings. As a consequence, parents-in-law are bearing the burden of hard agricultural labor. In other words, there is increasing geriatrization, not only or rather than feminization, of agriculture. Moreover, most of those living in the village are the elderly and the disabled. Care of these people is going to be a major challenge of emigrants and migrants. In her study of Mexican women whose husbands are abroad, Pauli (2008: 182) notes increasing involvement of daughters in the care of their parents. While this may also become a partial solution in the case of Nepal, the women's practice of going to live with one's parents generates another cycle of family conflict and nucleation, especially if a woman's brother is abroad, giving rise to migration of this brother's wife. Furthermore, such migration is increasingly becoming permanent as migrants do not wish to return to the villages but aspire to build houses in urban areas. Thus, there is increasing visibility¹⁹ of women in the towns and cities, which may point toward 'feminization' of towns and cities.

The study also suggests that women's migration can be linked to their husbands' emigration, on two accounts. On the one hand, regarding motivation and decision-making, more than half of the women were encouraged, and in some cases even insisted, by their husbands to come to the town for educating children. On the other, while some women had come to the town even before their husbands emigrated or their husbands were working somewhere within Nepal, surely remittance from abroad was the major enabling factor for those who migrated after marriage, as revealed by women that they would not have come to the bazaar had their husbands not emigrated. The need for English-medium education in private schools, which is itself a symbol of modernity, seems to serve as a link between the two types of migration. Moreover, the labor motive of men and the unemployed or non-labor status of women clearly show the gendered nature of mobility.

Putting it in a relational perspective, husbands' international labor migration is directly and indirectly causing wives' internal non-labor migration. Such a relationship is very different from the relationships summed and analyzed by Pignède (1993); Adhikari (2001); King, Skeldon

¹⁹ When I was asking a newcomer woman who had migrated to the bazaar, she remarked, "Everywhere we see more women, isn't it? Yes, where there is a *melā* (fair), most are women. Everywhere they are seen mostly."

and Vullnetari (2008); Poertner, Junginger and Müller-Böker (2011); and Nelson (2013), where family members migrated in different locations both outside and inside the country at different times, without suggesting a definite link. I have shown that the case of emigrants' migrant wives, which considers mobilities of both men and women in a family, rather than just of emigrating male family members as has been hitherto done, has the ability to integrate all three dichotomies of international/internal, labor/non-labor, and men's/women's migrations. Furthermore, it also bridged the rural/urban divide now that the previously rural, sedentary, and rooted side of the transnational family is now mobile and is moving to the urban areas. This suggests a new form of mobility that is collective and gendered, thus giving rise to a new form of multi-locality of family. Thus, while analyzing family dynamics in migrant families, mobility should be considered not only as a cause but also a consequence.

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