

**MHS
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**GENDER ROLES AND MIGRATION: A QUALITATIVE FIELD
STUDY OF NEPALESE MIGRANTS IN BERLIN**

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Abstract

This study investigates the issues emerged from the transnational life's of Nepalese migrants living in Germany. The reasons for migration, social, political and economic transformation, changing gender roles, the reasons for the changes and consequences of migration have been dealt on. Qualitative methodology was adopted using the in-depth interview and observation techniques.

The thesis discovered that the reasons for migration was not just economic but beyond the economic returns; such as education, exploring western world and expanding skills and knowledge. It was found that most of the migrants were actively maintaining their ties with their native communities through various ways like: remittance, social remittance which resulted in social and economic transformation in both sending and receiving countries. Migrants possess a deep attachment with their native land as they were concerned with their country political scenario and their loss of identity from their homeland. Also it was revealed that most of the migrants went through various social transformations like changing their social status and acquainted with cultural competence and cosmopolitan. It was found that the orthodox concept of gender roles were no longer applicable in Nepalese migrants as they have adopted modern values and engagement in economic involvement.

Abbreviations

DoFE	Department of Foreign Employment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MOF	Ministry of Finance
NIDS	Nepal Institute of Development Studies
NRNA	Non Resident Nepalese Association
US\$	United States Dollar
WMR	World Migration Report

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1 Introduction

The research that more or less covers the issues of Nepalese migrants living in Germany, tries to analyze and examine their changing, neutral or unaltered gender roles that occurred through the migration process. The current study does not favor utterly feminist research approach; neither sticks itself to an orthodox men-centered research approach. A balanced methodology (involving both male & female) has been adopted and is consistent throughout the research process – problem selection, literature studies, research design, field study and analysis. Qualitative method is the primary method used to solve the research question. In this introductory chapter a brief summary on gender and international migration issues is presented in chapter 1.1. Second, the background of the study is elaborated in 1.2. Third, the research questions are stated in chapter 1.3. Fourthly, the relevance of the study in the chapter 1.4. will be discussed and finally, chapter 1.5 describes a short summary of the structure of the study that will be presented.

1.1 Gender and International Migration Flows

In 2000, there were 175 million international migrants in the world, meaning one out of every 35 persons in the world was an international migrant (including both refugees and other international migrants). Numbers of international migrants have more than doubled since 1960, and as a percentage of the world population, have raised from 2.5 in 1960 to 2.9 per cent in 2000 (Jolly and Reeves 2005:6). According to the World Migration Report (WMR) 2010, the numbers of international Migrants in the world today have exceeded 214 million.¹ Out of these migrations, significant percentage of contribution comes from female migration. According to Boyd and Grieco (2003:1) in their paper cited (Tyree & Donato 1986; UN:1955), Today, women make up about 45% of international migrants. Similarly, according to the same paper, despite the increasing presence of female migration flows, until 1970's, little research has focused on female migration or acknowledged that their migration experience may be fundamentally different from that of men. The push–pull model,

¹ NIDS (2011), *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*, p.1

based on neo-classical economic theory, which provided for a long time the classic explanation for migration to Europe, did not pay attention to gender, but was a deeply gendered approach as men were the prototype migrants, being regarded as the decision makers (making individual rational choices) and bread winners (Anthias 2012:105). These statements signify the ever increasing international migration trends and the ignorance of gender perspective into the international migration studies.

In context of Nepal, the number of Nepalese living abroad at present is estimated to 7 million (NIDS 2011:48). For a small country with a total population of 26.4 million², seven million is a significant percentage, which comprises of both male and female migrants living outside of Nepal. This master thesis focuses on the gender perspective of Nepalese migrants' in relation to the migration process that took place from homeland to the host country.

1.2 Background

Migration is not a new phenomenon; the migration in the beginning was for the sake of food and exploring new places for security purposes. Gradually the migration took the shape of diverse forms and now has become essential and common in each and every corner of the world. Millions of people from around the world (especially from developing countries) are leaving their usual place of residence for seeking better employment opportunities and supply food for their dependents. Globalization and integration of regional economics have added impetus to the growing mobility of workers across borders.³ Bhattra (2005), in his research points out that poverty and the inability to earn enough or produce enough to support oneself or a family are major reasons behind the movement of work seekers from one place to another. These are not only characteristics of migration from poor to rich states; poverty also fuels movement from one developing country to others where work prospects seem – at a distance, at least – to be better.⁴

² Central Bureau of Statistics (2012)

³ Bhattra (2005), cited ILO (2003), p.7

⁴ Bhattra (2005), cited OHCHR (2004), p.7

Nepalese Diaspora is also not a new trend; documented knowledge tells that history of labor migration to India began since early 19th century.⁵ With the discourse of time, the Nepalese Diaspora have reached almost everywhere around the world. *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*, suggests the number of Nepalese living outside Nepal at present is estimated at 7,000,000 in 60 countries. In terms of number, the highest proportion is in Middle-East (44.3 percent), followed by Asian countries (42.4 percent), North America (7.7 percent), Europe (3.9 percent), Oceania (1.7 percent) and less than 1 percent in South America and Africa.⁶ Economic migration to the Middle East from South Asia and other parts of the world was spurred-on by the oil boom in the early 1970s. The reasons behind the migration are almost the same in Nepal as in other parts of the world. Existing poverty, limited employment opportunities, deteriorating agricultural productivity, armed conflict are some of the reasons for the motives behind international labor migration (Bhattraï 2005:8). There are many villages in Nepal where the labor migration has been established as a culture of community to go abroad for work for a while and return with some money and experience of placement in a different geographical location. The influence of friends, relatives and well-wishers has also played a prominent role to the promotion of international labor migration (ibid:9).

⁵ NIDS (2011), *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*, p.42

⁶ NIDS (2011), *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*, p.45



Diagram 1: Labor Migration from Nepal

Source: M. Kollmair et al., *New figures for old stories: Migration and remittances in Nepal*, Migration Letters, 2006.

Likewise, international migration consists of a large portion of Nepalese male and female all around the world. The above graphical representation shows the labor migration to foreign countries from Nepal until 2006. It illustrates the numbers of population involved in labor migration from Nepal to all around the world. However, the figure doesn't show the numbers of Nepalese migrants in India, where the highest number of Nepalese migrants live. There is no accurate data of migrants living in India (because of open-border policies between the two nations). Nevertheless, one study assumes that there are 1.5 million⁷ Nepalese migrants in India.

⁷ NIDS (2011), *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*, p.42

The above diagram also provides the male and female composition engaged in labor migration in different countries. Over all, it gives a representation of the large portions of Nepalese migrating to Asian Golf countries and East Asia. Also male population seems to be migrating more in this part of the world than the women. However, the migration distribution of female and male can be considered almost equal in Europe, Oceanic and North America. In a nut shell, the figure shows the trend of migration to more developed countries (than Nepal) and the significant composition of both male and female in the international migration.

1.3 The Research Questions

The main objectives of the study are to examine and analyze the migration course from the gender perspective lens of the Nepalese migrants in Germany. The specific research questions include:

- What are the reasons for Nepalese migrants to migrate to Germany? What sort of transformation (social, economic and political) are they experiencing?
- How are Nepalese migrants practicing gender roles in Germany? What are the consequences of migration on gender roles (in household and community level)?

1.4 Justification for Doing the Research

Many scholars have studied the phenomenon of migration, but only since the 1970's, scholars have made attempts to understand migration from a gender perspective. Similarly, the female migrants only began to receive more scholarly attention in the 1980s. The international women's movements, and the consequent development of women's studies programs and feminist scholarship, as well as policy makers and academics renewed interest in migration, account for the shift. After decades of ignorance and denial, women were finally in the literature of migration. In the early, 1990s, there was plethora of research on the topic gender and migration. Research has shown that the circumstances around women's migration are of a more complex

nature than that of men.⁸ It is important to analyze migration from a gender perspective in order to gain a deeper understanding of female migrants, who previously often have been analyzed in the same context as male migrants (ibid:6).

This study attempts to understand the relationship between migration and gender roles of Nepalese migrants. It will be interesting to see if women and men tend to change their gender roles according to new societal contexts (receiving countries), or whether women and men practice the same orthodox gender roles in the migration situation as that of the prevailing one in the native homeland. Also the possibility of completely new findings might as well be on the cards. Hence, without a proper understanding of women's and men's situation it is difficult to define the flexible gender roles and migration procedure surrounding female and male migration, both from a household perspective and a societal perspective. To identify this, it is important to understand the different aspects of female and male migration. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the question of movement by viewing migration processes from a household and societal perspective. In particular, to study why men and women migrate and what impact it has had on migrant gender roles. Furthermore, some of the reasons behind such changes will be investigated.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The first chapter presents the purpose, aims, reasoning and validation of research, central question, brief outline and the research limitation of the thesis. Chapter two will be distributed into three parts; defining basic concept relating to gender and migration, review of literature and theoretical approach for understanding and analyzing the thesis. The first part will describe the rudimentary concepts of migration and gender roles in context of Nepal. Followed by, the history of Nepalese diaspora, when and how it started and then later, the scenario of gender roles in the context of Nepal. The second part of this chapter mentions the summary of past work and their principal findings that are relevant to this thesis. And finally in this chapter, it will be discussed the concept of 'Transforming social, political and economic structures' mentioned by Steven Vertovec in his book *Transnationalism*. Chapter three introduces the methodology of the thesis, describing the research design and

⁸ Eklund (2000), cited (Hoy 1997), p.6

techniques used for this particular research and a short introduction to the study area. Chapter four presents the findings and provides a comprehensive analysis of the research and compare with the literature and framework mentioned in chapter two. Furthermore, the next chapter will provide the summary of all the core findings offered in this research. Finally, there will be enlisted all the limitations of the research and at the end it will be presented future research perspectives.

2 Definition, Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

This chapter will be dealing with important definitions to understand the subject matter, relevant literature of review that is significant for this thesis and theoretical framework that facilitates our research in understanding and analyzing the relevant issues of the research.

2.1 Defining Gender Roles

Gender refers to those social, cultural, and psychological traits linked to males and females through particular social contexts. Sex makes us male or female; gender makes us masculine or feminine. Sex is an ascribed status because a person is born with it, but gender is an achieved status because it must be learned.⁹ The expected behavior associated with any given status is referred to as a role. Thus, gender roles are the socially constructed set of social and behavioral norms, which defines the roles of men and women in a social or interpersonal relationship. Gender roles are cultural and personal which determine how males and females should think, speak, dress, and interact within the context of society. Moreover, gender roles refer to the different activities that are ascribed to men and women based on their perceived gender differences. Typically, male have a productive role, and more often a management role, and women have a productive role and a reproductive role (child-birth), and a domestic role. These roles are subject to change, but often a reflection of societal norms and pervading perception of which types are "gender appropriate".¹⁰

2.2 Gender Relations in Nepalese Context

Nepal is a nation where the majority of people are Hindu (81.3%)¹¹. The patriarchal ideology derived from Hinduism is deeply rooted in every society of the country. Before elaborating the roles of men and women in Nepalese societies, one has to understand the structure and status of men and women that exist in the society. One of the most important social structures that organize social interaction is status—a

⁹ Lindsey (2010). *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective*, p.4

¹⁰ IOM (n.d), *Gender and Migration: The Legal Framework and the Global Agenda, Gender Issues and Migration Policy*, p.7

¹¹ Central Bureau of Statistics (2012)

category or position a person occupies that is a significant determinant of how she or he will be defined and treated. And a role is the expected behavior associated with a status.¹² To understand the hierarchical status of Nepalese societies, Lynn Bennett had discusses the most common status existing in familial and societal level in Nepal; they are: i) Patrifocal status and ii) Filiafocal status. In her ethnographic research carried out in a remote part of Nepal, she found these as typical status found in Hindu community mention in her book *Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sisters*. Although her research was carried out in a particular Hindu community, the result can be generalized all over the nation because most of the Nepalese societies are driven by Hindu traditions and cultures.

Patrifocal status as the name suggests refers to focused or centered on the father. Bennett (1983:144) elaborates that the term 'partifocal', indicates a system of relations based on respect and obedience to the father. This focal point of patrifocal is male and hierarchical principles operates in superiority of male over female (of the same generation), and second superiority of age over youth, which has corollary of reversing the first principle, so that senior consanguineal females rank higher than junior males. This patrifocal hierarchy enables male to complete control over the economic, political and social resources, leading women as a subordinate role to men. This hierarchy also defines the reproductive roles (caring, loving, child-rearing, domestic work) acquired by female. Whereas, productive (economic and income-generating) and communal roles (politics, development and social-service) are given to male.

Filiafocal status is a hierarchy which is influenced by relation between affine and cross-sex relations among consanguineal relatives, according to Bennett (1983:142). Additionally, this principle of hierarchy enables 'wife-takers' family to be always considered superior to the 'wife-givers' family. In another instance, a female bride will be considered high ritual superiority to her relatives which is shown by washing her feet during the wedding rituals.

The partifocal status shows the supremacy of male over female and superiority of age that exists in the Nepalese societies. And filiafocal status shows that the groom's family is superior to the bride's family which explains the preference of son in the

¹² Lindsey (2010). *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective*, p.2

society. Likewise, the female bride is considered superior to the bride relatives who just show kindness to her. The status and hierarchy mentioned is strictly followed in Nepalese context of societies. Therefore both statuses that Bennett present shows the typical orthodox patriarchal society and gender disparity existing in the Nepalese society. The roles, status and hierarchy mentioned by Bennett will be important in determining the gender roles of Nepalese migrants in Berlin. It will be interesting to see in this research whether the same status and hierarchy is unaltered or bound to change in a different context of society (i.e. sending to receiving countries).

2.3 Gender Disparities in Nepalese Context

Female-headed households in the Nepal have increased by about eleven point percentage from 14.87% in 2001 to 25.73% in 2011.¹³ Despite having increase in female-headed households over the years, the figure gives a clear picture of patriarchal societies and gender inequality in Nepal. In Nepal, the division of work is based on a person's gender which enables majority of women to engage in reproductive role, whereas men are in productive and community work. According to Prativa Subedi, gender roles are divided in three categories (productive, community and reproductive roles). Furthermore, she elaborates productive roles as such which directly generate income. Community role is that which works towards creating a society: Politics, volunteering and organization of social and cultural or religious activities. Reproductive work includes bearing and raising children, cooking, cleaning and other associated home-based activities.¹⁴ Women's culturally constructed position is partly responsible for the huge amount of gender disparity in Nepal. However, the extreme patriarchal societies and subordinate role of women can be found in villages of Nepal. In cities areas women are engaged in economic and political sectors which have challenged the traditional gender roles.

Also regarding mobility, females are lagging behind men, first because of the social and cultural restrictions to travel for women, and secondly, women's mobility is hindered by the long hours they engage in domestic works. The mobility among men and women directly influence the act of internal and international migration. In recent

¹³ Central Bureau of Statistics (2012)

¹⁴ Subedi (2010), *Nepali Women at the Crossroads*, p.2-3

times, both men and women are going abroad for labor and other purposes. The *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*, indicates that in 2009, the total number of international migrants from Nepal was 248,057, with the share of women being 4.7 percent. The concept that women can also work abroad and can bring resources to the country is a recent phenomenon in Nepal which emerged amid the traditional concept of patriarchal society. This can be proved by the fact that the Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE) responsible for maintaining the overall records of the migrant workers has started keeping record of the number of migrants' workers abroad by sex only after 2006.¹⁵

2.4 Defining Migration

The simplest definition of the word can be the movement of people from one place to another. It describes the process of the movement of persons. There are two main types of migration: first, internal migration, i.e. migration within one country, and secondly international migration, which means the movement from one country to another. In this study, it will be predominantly focused on the International migrants as persons who live outside his or her country of origin. IOM (2004:33) defines international migration as, "Movement of persons who leave their country of origin, or the country of habitual residence, to establish them either permanently or temporarily in another country". Another definition from Jean D'Cunha states,

International migration is characterized as people moving for various reasons to a country other than that of their usual residence, for a period of at least twelve months, so that the country of destination effectively becomes the new country of usual residence. Migration is generally consensual, although it also includes movements prompted by a force of socio-economic or political circumstance.¹⁶

The World Migration Report (2010) mentions that more than 200 million of international Migrants in the world. The migration comes from every corner of the world. In context of Nepal, there is a significant amount of migrants living outside the

¹⁵ NIDS (2011), *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*, p.16

¹⁶ D'Cunha (2005), *Claim & Celebrate Women Migrants' Human Rights through CEDAW*, p.18

country (7 millions) according to *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*. The notion of migration in this research tries to encompass international migrants of Nepalese; immigrants, labor migrants, student migrants and au-pairs who are temporarily or permanently living in Germany for at least more than a year. Furthermore, it will be discussed when and how the Nepalese international migration started in Nepal in the following heading.

2.5 Nepalese Diaspora and Nepalese in Germany

Migration of human population is as old as human civilization. In Nepal too, migration is an old age phenomenon. It began with the beginning of the human settlement in the territory, even before sketching the present boundary of Nepal. According to *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*, the history of many Nepalese residing in West Bengal (Dooars and Darjeeling), Sikkim, and Uttaranchal states in India is older than demarcation of current boundary between Nepal and India. They have become the Nepali diaspora in India. After India, many Nepalese also migrated to Bhutan and Burma and settled there. Migration to third countries (except India) began formally after the independence of India. The then British East-India company took some Ghurkhas regiments along with them. Along with British-Ghurkhas regiments, Nepalese began to migrate to Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Brunei, Fiji and recently United Kingdom. They went there for tenured military work. However, few of them and their families settled in these countries.¹⁷

According to *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*, these migration flows have created Nepali diaspora in different countries throughout the world. *Wikipedia* cites at least three waves of Nepali diaspora. First wave is expansion of settlement into eastern Nepal and then to Sikkim and Bhutan in dates back to hundreds of years. British created second wave through the recruitment of Nepalese in her mercenary soldiers beginning around 1815 and resettlement after retirement in the British Isles and Southeast Asia. The third wave began in the 1970s as job related emigration in India and Middle East, Europe and North America.¹⁸

¹⁷ NIDS (2011), *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*, p.43

¹⁸ NIDS (2011), *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*, cited Wikipedia, p.43

Among the European countries, Germany is one of the countries comprising a significant number of Nepalese migrants. However, there is no clear and sufficient data available providing population of Nepalese migrants in Germany, causing no factual statistics of people living in Germany. *Nepal Migration Year Book 2009*, suggests more than 4,000 Nepalese are living in Germany. An interesting newspaper article claims Nepalese in Germany are immigrants, refugees and expatriates from Nepal and German Nepalese origin. Hundreds of Nepalese emigrated from Nepal to Germany to seek political asylum, fleeing persecution either from the Maoists or police.¹⁹ In recent years, substantial number of au-pair and Nepalese students coming to Germany has increased. According to the Embassy of Federal Republic of Germany, in context of au-pair; Nepalese nationals (age 18-27) who are interested in the German language and culture have the chance to get to know the country, the culture, its rich history and the way of living in Germany by applying for a residence permit as an Au-Pair in Germany.²⁰ The trends of Nepalese female coming to Germany in an Au pair are increasing every day. The fact that Germany vibrant lifestyle, multifaceted culture and the opportunity to learn, live work in Germany with German family have attracted many Nepalese female to an Au pair Visa. Nepalese female who intend to come to Germany to be an au-pair can get au-pair entry visa from the German immigration office. Upon the arrival and taking residence with the families, they can extend their visa for 6-12 months.

Likewise, in context of student migrants; there seems to be a great trend that students migrate from all over the world. The globalization of higher education has increased the flow of professionals around the world.²¹ Germany is one of the student friendly destinations comprising seven percentage of total number of International student in the world in 2009 (NIDS 2011:51). The same study revealed that more than 550 Nepalese students are studying in Germany till 2011. However this data is based on Nepal ministry of education data, where student have to take '*No objection letter*'²² before going abroad. However, it is not mandatory to take '*No objection letter*' for student coming to Germany. An interesting finding showed that there were more than 8000 members (students) in Facebook group '*Nepalese Students Society in Germany*'

¹⁹ Raut (2001), 'Asylum'

²⁰ Embassy of Federal Republic of Germany, information about Au-Pair-Visa.

²¹ Eskelä (2013), mentions Collins 2008 and Stalker 2000 as being reports that handle this issue, p.146

²² 'No objection letter' is issued from the Education Ministry for the purpose of abroad study

including both students living in Germany and potential students who are interested to study in Germany in the future. The reasons behind student coming to Germany may be because of the quality education and the free education system in many part of Germany. One of the reasons for this attraction to Germany's education system can be that the colleges and universities in Germany are regulated by the state which ensures quality of education, infrastructure and resources. Moreover, students are allowed to work 120 days a year providing an opportunity to earn while studying. As a result, the number of students studying the German language in Nepal has been increasing recently.

2.6 Relevant Literature

This study has stemmed from another report entitled *Gender Roles and Female Labor Migration; A Qualitative Field Study of Female Migrant Workers in Beijing* by Lisa Eklund (2000). The results of this study have shown that there were many aspects in female migration, apart from the economic aspect, such as to gain an education, expand their vision, develop their freedom, and to see the world, which explained why female labor migration took place. Internal migration was a main concern in her research. However, there was no incorporation of male perspective in her research, since the study was entirely based on feminist approach. In contrast, this research will encompass not only the female perspective because gender is not entirely the study of female but also male has an important part to play in defining gender relations. Thus, it is important to try to take into account the relationship between both men and women in different social structures such as household and community which should be considered in a diverse societal context.

Another interesting literature is an article 'Transnational Mobilities, Migration Research and Intersectionality', by Floya Anthias. Her article looks at a range of problematic issues on migration studies while engaging with migration as a gendered phenomenon. She proposes a particular analytical sensitivity, which attends to the centrality of power and social hierarchy, building on the idea of intersectionality as a heuristic device. As a final point she developed the notion of 'translocational positionality' as a tool for making sense of the positions and outcomes produced through intersections between a number of different social structures and processes,

including transnational ones.²³ "The notion of 'translocation' recognizes the importance of the context, the situated nature of claims and attributions and their production in complex and shifting localities and the contradictory processes in play" (Anthias 2012:108). Thus, Anthias (2012) concludes that using this framework, it is possible to analyze intersections of social relations as at times mutually reinforcing (e.g. minority, working class women may live in the worst social space, in many different political, economic and cultural contexts) and at times as contradictory (e.g. working class man is in a relation of subordination to his employer, whereas in a relation of domination to his wife). Anthias discusses 'transnational positionality' tool which will be a useful instrument in analyzing experience of Nepalese migrants in different social contexts.

The important lens developed by Anthias 'translocational positionality', which discusses the societal context is important in determining the societal position and outcome of people in sending and receiving societies. This concept can be directly related to the cases presented in a book *Handbook of Sociology of Gender* by Janet Chafetz, under the heading 'Changing Gender Relations with Migration: Women who Cross International Borders'. Under this title she focuses on how gender relations change with migration. Many cases were presented where different contexts of societies play an essential role in changing male and female roles, status, power relation and hierarchy. Primarily, she focuses on the migration that took place in industrial economies (developed countries), which enables us to compare the situation with current research of Nepalese migrants with one of the industrial country (i.e. Germany).

Industrial economies are characterized by a labor market segment by race and citizenship, immigrant men are rarely able to be the sole bread winner and women's income activities become essential to the survival of the family. This is evident by Hondagneu-Stoelo's (1994) findings presented in *Handbook of Sociology of Gender* book where Mexican women gained power and autonomy and men lost some of the authority and privilege with migration. Eastmond's (1993) study shows "Chilean women in central California found that when immigrant women work for wages, they often reason that their wage work allows them to be a better mother by providing for

²³ Anthias (2012), refers to her own papers from 2002 and 2008, p.107

their children. In contrast, the Chilean men lost much of the public status and life meaning that they had previously derived from political and trade union activities." These gains and losses were reflected in the women's near unanimous preference for permanent settlement in the United States and in men's desire for return migration (Patricia Pessar's 1986). In some contexts, women benefited from traditional patriarchal household relations, which is called 'patriarchal bargain' by Kandiyotti (1989). Nazil Kibria's (1993) research on Vietnamese immigrant families in Philadelphia explored how immigrant women used traditional gender ideology to force men to support their families.

Migration had a huge impact on the gender relations between men and women. On one hand, migration to industrialized economies has enabled women's independence and power. However, on the other hand the men's power and authority had declined to some extent. A study shows that some men react to the decline in power resulting from migration. In a study of Vietnamese in Hong Kong refugee camps, Hitchcox (1993) showed, "Vietnamese men reasserted control over Vietnamese women by restricting their movement and raping them in response to their feelings of powerlessness." Abudulrahim's (1993) too, showed how Palestinian men restricted their women's mobility in Germany.²⁴

The relevant literature in this study which is mentioned above will be taken as an outline to contrast, evaluate and explore further findings in our analysis section.

2.7 Transnationalism and Modes of Transformation

The concept 'transnationalism' is taken from Steven Vertovec (2009), who concentrates on the multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions, across the borders of nation-states. In his book, he surveys on migrant transnational practices and demonstrates how fundamentally these migrants are transforming social, political and economic structures in the sending and receiving societies or countries. The concepts "social, political and economic structure" has guided researcher mind-set and the research process. The approach of transformation is presented here to explain

²⁴ Chafetz (1999), all references in the last two paragraphs are taken from *Handbook of Sociology of Gender*, p.120-122

the Nepalese migrants' alteration (if there is any) in social, political and economic structures. Vertovec discusses different approaches of transformation clustered into different portions. These modes of transnationalism ties and transformation mentioned by the author will be used in our study.

2.7.1 Social-cultural Transformation

Vertovec suggests the ways through which transnationalism has transformed the everyday social worlds of individuals in both migrant sending and receiving contexts. He begins with the most significant infrastructure fostering and shaping transnational lives i.e. the telephone network. Furthermore, he points out that the most significant institutions and aspects of social life affected by transnational ties can be considered into three dimensions; families, gender structure and 'habitus' or worldview, caused by living in different societies or countries. And lastly, Vertovec describes the assimilation or integration of transnational migrants. However, this particular concept will not be discussed since it is would be beyond the scope of this study.

2.7.1.1 The Telephone Network

Vertovec considers that the globalized world which is characterized by interconnectedness is a result of new technologies and among them, communication technologies has made a huge impact. Additionally, he argues that nothing has facilitated process of global linkages more than the boom in communication technology, and precisely the cheap international telephone calls. Especially cheap calls have impacted enormously the transnational communities and enabled to communicating with families abroad on a regular basis (Vertovec 2009:56).

2.7.1.2 Families

According to Vertovec, many families have regardless of cultural and social background taken part in transnational migration. Research shows that these families' life has been extensively modified in light of transnational practices (Goulbourne 1999, Fourn and Glick Schiller 2001, Herrera Lima 2001, Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, Gardner and Grillo 2002). Guarnizo (1997) proposes that "Changes in family

and household organization can be approached by way of transnational residential arrangement, budget management and intergenerational cultural reproduction." Moreover, there are other dimensions of transnational family life that are changing, these are; nature of parenting and the experience of children. In this research we have only been able to encompass the experience of immigrants' parents but limiting the experiences of immigrants' children. The concept of 'Long-distance parenthood' linking 'fractured families and geographical dispersed homes' is a common feature characterizing much contemporary migrant experience (Lobel 2003). Especially mothers of dispersed families (where the mothers are working abroad and children are left behind in the country of origin) are reshaping the definition of appropriate mothering. "Some migrant mothers have had to undertake the nurturing of their children through text messaging, phone calls and letters "(Parrenas 2005).²⁵

2.7.1.3 Gender

Transnational families may have significant influences on gender status, roles and relations. Transnational families demonstrate how culturally constructed concepts of gender operate within and between diverse settings (Vertovec 2009:64). "In various related ways, the position of women in household - and thereby daily gender relations – may be fundamentally altered and liberating, especially when it is the wives and daughters who have migrated to become the breadwinners for the families who have stayed" (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). "Women's social status – in the household and community (local and transnational) – generally improves through the migration process, mainly through access to employment and a certain degree of control over income and material resources" (Pessar 1999a, b, Wills and Yeah 2000, Pessar and Mahler 2003). Thus causing 'loss of status of men – potentially threatening their gender identity' (cf. Charsley 2007). In contrast, at other times gender structures are entrenched or strengthened by the migration and transnational life (Vertovec 2009:65). Margaret Walton-Roberts (2004), in her study of families spread across Canada and India, for instance, observed how the disadvantaged position of women in the 'private' sphere is reproduced within transnational households. Thus even though transnational practices provide women with possibilities for creating strong identities

²⁵ Vertovec (2009), mentions all these researchers, and the researcher find their views valuable for this research, p. 61-64

and resisting racial and class oppression, 'patriarchal domination' is not undermined through such a long-distance engagement (Marisa Alicea 1997).

Furthermore, transnational ties not only have an influence on gender concerns at family level but it also does at a community level. Jose Itzingsohn and Silvia Giorguli-Saucedo (2005) note that, "Men and women participate differently in transnational social spaces. Men appear to be more committed to the maintenance of public and institutionalized transnational ties than are women, while women appear more committed to participating in the life of the receiving country".²⁶

2.7.1.4 Habitus

Guarzino (1997) suggests we might think of a transnational habitus as entailing "a particular set of dualistic disposition that inclines migrants to act and react to specific situations in a manner that can be, but is not always, calculated, and that is not simply a question of conscious acceptance of specific behavioral or socio-cultural rules."²⁷ On one hand, Immigration does not only move into a new society; it also involves entering a new cultural field which their original habitus might not fit. Especially, immigrants who were socialized in earlier life in homeland come to encounter a new set of cultural practices, which generates dislocation of their habitus. When individuals enter a new social setting, they experience their old habitus may not fit in with the new reality. The original habitus they have maintained becomes outmoded and in conflict with the new setting.²⁸ On the other, when immigrants migrate then they do not simply start new lives as 'the immigrant': instead, they frequently maintain strong linkages with their place of origin. This instance is clear by Guarnizo (1997) in which it is presented, "how Dominicans retain 'a dual frame of references' through which they constantly compare their situation in their 'home' society to their situation in the 'host' society abroad."²⁹ By conceptualizing transnational experience through the idea of habitus, we can consider how conflicting original habitus and dual orientation arise and are acted upon in this research.

²⁶ Vertovec (2009), mentions all these researchers in the last two paragraphs, and the researcher find their views valuable for this research, p.64-66

²⁷ Vertovec (2009), cited Guarzino (1997), p.66

²⁸ Jo (2013), *Habitus transformation: Immigrant Mother's Cultural Translation of Educational Strategies in Korea*, p.10

²⁹ Vertovec (2009), cited Guarzino (1997), p.67

Furthermore, Vertovec argues the role of cultural competence/cosmopolitanism as a new form of habitus (experiences, skills, information, abilities & orientation characteristics of individuals) allowing persons to cope with a range of cultural differences encountered in transnational lives.

2.7.2 Political Transformation

Vertovec argues that migrant transnationalism itself does not bring about transformations of the nation-state. Such transformations are happening anyway, due to a confluence of processes within global political economy. But debatably, migrant transnationalism importantly contributes to such significant shifts. Moreover, he discusses in what ways transnational migrants are doing so. And these points will be discussed briefly under the following headings.

2.7.2.1 Identities-Borders-Orders

Within the field of international relations, one current way of attempting to understand broad contemporary political challenges is through the 'analytical triad' or 'dynamic nexus' between the concepts of 'identities-borders-orders' (Albert et al. 2001). Migration itself confronts 'identities-borders-orders'. The political dimensions of migrant transnationalism inherently involve questions of identity (Vertovec 2001a) and often raise contentious issues concerning civic order and the cohesiveness of 'host' societies (Vertovec 1999b).³⁰

With regard to identities in migrant transnational practices, David Fitzgerald (2000) observes that transnational migrants challenge nation-state ideals of belonging in both sending and receiving countries. "Transnational migrants often live in a country in which they do not claim citizenship and claim citizenship in a country in which they do not live" (ibid). With regards to the borders part, Sassen (1996) suggests that states are 're-nationalizing' themselves in the area more than others. Countries are trying to lift the border controls for flow of capital, information, and services and, more broadly, to further globalization. She notes, "however, when it comes to

³⁰ Vertovec (2009), mentions his own paper from past and another researchers, and the researcher find their views valuable for this research, p.88

immigrations and refugees, whether in North America, Western Europe, or Japan, the national state claims all its old splendor in asserting its sovereign right to control its borders." And lastly, with regards to 'orders' part of triad, a broad range of policies surrounding migration and migrants is concerned with reproducing certain legal, social and political systems. Notion of order, particularity in the triad have a relationship with dual citizenship or nationality and homeland political allegiances of migrant transnational practices.³¹

2.7.2.2 Dual Citizenship/ Nationality

The term dual citizenship means simply having more than one citizenship or nationality in different nations. The provision of dual citizenship is increasing and had been already in around 89 countries, according to Fritz (1988) and Rogers (2001e).³² While countries like United States, Australia, Canada comprises significant number of dual citizen. Whereas, Germany and United Kingdom does not tolerates dual citizenship (Vertovec 2009:91). In context of Nepal, till date there is no provision of dual citizenship too. One of the proposals of Non-Residential Nepali Association (NRNA) is to enable dual citizenship for Nepali Diaspora. "Dual citizenship provision, if it happens, would be a milestone for Nepali Diaspora in terms of economic development and investment."³³

2.7.2.3 Homeland Politics

Even though the transnational migrants are living their life regardless to their short term or long term stay in host countries, these migrants have a certain degree of attachment in political affairs of their homelands which is termed as homeland politics. Politics of homeland can be seen through variety of political forms within and around transnational migrants communities (for instance, see Koopman and Statham 2001, Guarnizo et al. 2003, Østergaard-Nielsen 2003a), such as: exile groups organizing themselves for return, groups lobbying on behalf of a homeland, external

³¹ Vertovec (2009), mentions all these researchers, and the researcher find their views valuable for this research, p.86-90

³² Vertovec (2009), mentions Fritz and Rogers researchers, and the researcher find their views valuable for this research, p. 90

³³ NIDS (2011), *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*, p.48

offices of political parties, migrant hometown association, and opposition groups campaigning or planning actions to effect political changes in the homeland. Some migrant associations also manage to carry out dual program of action aimed at both sending and receiving countries. (Østergaard-Nielson 2001).³⁴

Nepalese Migrants in Germany have also directly or indirectly connection to homeland political affairs. Many Nepali associations are running in Germany for different purpose. The major Nepali association in Germany³⁵ are:

1. Non Resident Nepali Association - Germany
2. Nepalese Student Society in Germany
3. Students of Nepalese Origin in Germany
4. Nepal German Academic Association
5. German Nepal Friendship Association
6. Nepali Patra

2.7.3 Economic Transformation

There have been significant economic aspects of migration and transnationalism. Vertovec (2009:101) states, "This is not surprising since economic considerations are often the prime reasons why migrants move in the first place". Estimates of global remittances sent by migrants exceed \$300 billion.³⁶ Vertovec (2009:101) further argues economic aspects of transnationalism take many forms and have myriad consequences (economic, social and political ones). Thus it becomes inevitable to study the economic part of Nepalese migrants in our study too. Besides, Vertovec discusses several economic forms and consequences. However, we will be only focusing remittance because it is considered the most transformative processes and phenomena of migrant transnationalism.

³⁴ Vertovec (2009), mentions all these researchers, and the researcher find their views valuable for this research, p.93-94

³⁵ Nrn.org.np 2014

³⁶ Vertovec (2009), cites IFAD (2007), p.101

2.7.3.1 Remittances

"Remittances have become the most visible evidence and measuring stick for the ties connecting migrants with their societies of origins" (Guarnizo2003). Remittances tend to follow three spending phases, namely 1) family maintenance and housing improvements, 2) 'conspicuous' consumption and 3) 'productive ' activities, according to Nyberg-Sørensen et al. 2002; cf, Massey et al. 1999. Landolt (2001) suggests drawing upon a research in El Salvador that "household that receive remittances have encountered tangible improvement in their standard of living". Further, she suggests remittances have broad effects, including the stimulation of change within a variety of socio-cultural institutions, such as; local status hierarchy, gender relations, marriage patterns and consumer habits.³⁷

According to 2008-2009 figures, remittances coming into Nepal currently contribute 23.6 percent of the country's GDP.³⁸ Nepal Ministry of Finance presents that the remittances to the country reached US\$ 2.7 billion in 2009.³⁹ "Among the economic and social contributions of remittances, poverty reduction and livelihood security are the main ones. Labor migration and remittances are primarily responsible for the reduction of poverty."⁴⁰ Studies on the use of remittances have shown that the first priority in the use is payment of loan, followed by investment in basic need like food and health, education, investment on land, and investment on foreign employment of family members. Remittances from migrant workers have also led to rise in investment in different sectors including health services, food, education and housing. Financial service institutions like microfinance have also emerged helping communities manage and invest their savings. The living conditions of households have also significantly improved over the years. Moreover, many researches show that there is positive link between migration, remittance and rural development. Hence, the transnational connection of migrants to Nepal is directly contributing in social and economic development of Nepal. Many studies have shown the uses of remittances are first and foremost on payment of loans, followed by basic needs, education and investment. NIDS (2011:38) cites Bhadra (2007) which reveals that

³⁷ Vertovec (2009), mentions all these researchers, and the find their views valuable for this research, p.103-107

³⁸ NIDS (2011), *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*, p.28

³⁹ Endo and Afram (2011), 'The Qatar-Nepal Remittance Corridor', p.1

⁴⁰ NIDS (2011), *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*, p.28

remittances are invested primarily in livelihood improvement. This research will also explore remit done by the Nepalese migrants and further its impact will be analyzed.

2.7.4 Conclusion

Vertovec presents how migrants are maintaining transnational ties and how they are fundamentally transforming social, political and economic structures simultaneously within sending and receiving societies or countries. This book will be the rudimentary module in analyzing this research process. We will try to examine and analyze the experience of Nepalese transnational lives from Vertovec transnationalism lens and further findings will be explored and discussed in the final analysis chapter.

3 Methodology

3.1 Choice of Qualitative Method

Qualitative study has been chosen because of the nature of the work. There are a relatively smaller number of respondents and we are trying to address and find several themes in the life world of the subjects. So quality is a vital aspect more than quantity. The focus will be on trying to obtain rich descriptions rather than fast set fixed categories. Qualitative research is a broad area of inquiry which studies the meaning of people's lives under real-world conditions. It has the ability to present the viewpoints of participants and their perspectives about the subject matter. This kind of research covers the social, cultural and environmental condition of the participants which they have experienced in their real lives. In qualitative research method, the researcher takes interviews and collect data from different participants and gets varieties of evidences which helps him to explore new concepts and ideas in the research. Thus, the best research for this subject matter is making in-depth interview and observation techniques.

3.2 Choosing the Research Site

Qualitative method has been selected for this research. After selecting this method, it is same important to decide where the fieldwork should take place. The researcher decided for the capital of Germany for his research site because of some important facts: Berlin is a modern city with a special history and a big development in recent decades. There is a big variety of transnational groups and immigrants which have led to big cultural diversity in the city. The Nepalese migrants have been chosen as a target group in this research, which enables analyzing gender concern and migration in a certain ethnic minority in a big modern, pluralistic environment.

Berlin is one of the places in Europe where a bigger amount of Nepalese have been settled and/or migrated. It is a big, modern metropolis, where western influences and outcomes should be remarkable on people with traditional and conservative backgrounds.

The researcher himself being a Nepali, feels especially related to people and groups from his own ethnic background and this subject- adapting in a new culture, defining the own role- is a special matter of interest and an ongoing process of reflection since he left his own country.

Altogether, Berlin is considered as a perfect research site for the whole study. A short introduction is presented below to introduce the reader the major facts of Germany and Berlin where the field study was carried out.

Germany- a short introduction

Germany is the largest country in central Europe. The *Statistical Yearbook Germany 2012*, shows that Germany comprises the population of 81.7 million⁴¹ in 2011, which made it the 16th most populous country in the world. Among the European Union states, Germany has the highest percentage of immigrants in its population. Just fewer than 10 million people living in Germany today were born outside of Germany, which is about 12% of the German population.⁴² A study showed that the foreign population in Germany in 2011 was 6.93 million.⁴³ Most immigrants come from other European countries, particularly from Turkey, Russia, Poland and Italy.

The capital of Germany is Berlin, consisting of 3.4 million⁴⁴ inhabitants. Out of total population of Berlin, 12% are either born outside Germany or born of non-German parents, thus making it one of the most international cities in Germany. Berlin is not only statistically salient; it is a city full of people with different origins, religions, perspectives and cultures. This city went through a lot of changes, just in the last 25 years. Until 1989 it was a divided city and had two different developments in East and West. Berlin is today the most pluralistic city not just in Germany, in whole Europe. It is an ultra-modern metropolis, with obvious traces of its history and a ceaseless growth and change.

⁴¹ Willand (2013), *Statistical Yearbook Germany 2012*

⁴² Worldpopulationreview.com 2014

⁴³ Willand (2013), *Statistical Yearbook Germany 2012*

⁴⁴ ibid

3.3 Research Design

The main target of this research is to highlight and explore the changes not only in a gender perspective but also within a migration process with the help of different informants. Primary and Secondary data are applied to give the answer of research questions. Out of many research methods within qualitative research method, the researcher has chosen interviews more specifically with in-depth interviews and observation. Primary data will be collected through the fieldwork in Berlin by interviewing the informants and observing the subject matter among Nepalese migrants. Secondary data will be collected through the relevant books, texts, documents, journals, documents and through internet for the successful completion of the research in future. All the data will be analyzed and evaluated thoroughly and the new outcome will be presented.

3.4 About the Interview and its Theoretical Aspect

"An interview is a point at which order is deliberately put under stress. It is a situation in which respondents are required to demonstrate their competence in the role in which the interview casts them."⁴⁵ In an interview the interviewer chooses the informants and those informants put their views according to the situation. An interview is the primary source for data collection in this research writing. It is the way through which the researcher and the respondents get to know each other and bring them into a mutual relationship.

The interview is a main part of qualitative research method. There are different ways to interview; such as structured, non-structured or unstructured, semi-structured etc. Among them, we have selected semi-structured in-depth interview. This kind of interviewing is open and allows the informants to give free ideas and the questioner can spontaneously react and deepen the conversation when he/she feels that the interview goes in another (important) direction. But the questioner can always come back to the original thread and guides so the conversation throughout the interview.

The interview is organized into three stages. In the first stage, the emphasize is to establish an understanding of the interviewees' background, by asking questions about

⁴⁵ Miller and Dingwall (1997), *Context and Method in Qualitative Research*, p.58

him/her professions and a brief history of how she/he came to Germany and to Berlin. In the second stage, the focus shifts to the details of the present experiences in Germany. For example, they were asked to reconstruct a typical day or talk about their impressions of Germany and what they have experienced so far. In third stage, the respondents were asked to reflect the meaning of their experiences. Typical questions were: "What have you concluded from all this...?" and "In your experience, does cultural/ or migration or religion of your home country affect gender aspect in your life?"

3.5 Selection of the Participants and Permission from Them

The researcher wanted to interview the Nepalese migrants living in Berlin, because of the desire to know how they perceive and encounter the changes in gender roles and their experience of adaption in a modern society. It was the most important task for this research to identify and select respondents for the interview. Since there are a high number of Nepalese migrants in Berlin, the need to limit the number of participants is inevitable to get proper information. To pick the informants, the researcher chose purposive and snowball methods. He got to know few Nepalese from Berlin who provided him with a lot of important and reliable information for the support of this research writing. It was essential to get the permission from the informants before interviewing them. First, the researcher selected a list of informants who were potential candidates for the research. It was a prerequisite that the interviewees were living in Berlin for more than a year and knew more about the German culture, these conditions were already quite challenging for the search of informants.

After this, the researcher contacted them through emails, phone calls and text messages and told them about the research. A brief description about the research was highlighted and then the informants were requested for participating for an in-depth interview. A lot of positive responses came along with few negative ones. To add this, no response at all was also encountered. The reason can be unavailability of time between researcher and respondent.

In-depth interviews were carried out with eight Nepalese participants. Five of them were purposive sampling and the other three were selected via snowball sampling method. The sample of Nepalese respondents was further refined according to the age, gender, education level, marital status and the length of time staying in Berlin. The interview-guide showed the researcher a proper track for conducting the interview. The conversation always started with an icebreaker, in which the informants were asked with factual and merely personal things related to their life story. After the icebreaker, more complex and personal questions were set forward. The respondents were then able to be more frank to talk about their life. After a while they were asked more specific about topic questions to get the proper answer concerning this research. Approximately 40-55 minutes is spent with each single informant for an interview.

The final breakdowns of the eight Nepalese respondents are as following:

Age Range and Gender	Marital Status	Level of Study	Language Spoken	Area of Occupation	Duration of Stay in Germany
Female-4 Male-4 Ages: 24-44	Single-3 Married-5	Language study, High school, Bachelor, Master, PhD	Nepali, English, German	Business analyst, Student, Computer Engineer, Kinder Gardener, Waiter, Restaurant owner	2-20 years (approx)

Diagram 2: Sample Characteristics

3.6 Observation

The Nepalese community in Berlin is known for organizing cultural and social events, which means they often initiate gatherings for building social connections and relationships. On the occasion of *Dashain* festival (the biggest festival of Hindu and Nepalese), the Nepalese embassy in Germany organizes a party as a festival event. Through Nepalese friends, the researcher received invitations to participate in this event during the research. He took this invitation as an opportunity to interview Nepalese migrants and to observe them more closely.

The researcher tried to interview some of the Nepalese students during the event but he was not able to conduct as most of the people were busy interacting with others and the conversations were often interrupted. So, it was decided to use the event for observations rather than for interviews. The researcher had both private and public conversations with the Nepalese during the observation period. And he was able to make some interesting observations, for example that the Nepalese women and men were keen on making their cultural event successfully and were enthusiastically supporting one another and carrying out responsibilities assigned to them. Most of them were dressed in traditional attire, but the researcher was more aware of the cultural activities and social practices occurring in a scene. There was a traditional dance and various symbols and elements of Nepalese culture were showcased. It was not possible for him to take field notes during the event as the researcher himself was also participating in the event. Notes were taken, afterwards, when the event was over.

Gender dimensions and power relations among the different people of the community, interactions occurred in the setting, hierarchy of opinions, decision-making procedures by both men and women were focused and considered carefully during the period of observations.

3.7 Role as a Researcher

A researcher is a person who takes the responsibility of finding something new in a research area through the interaction with the informants in the field. In qualitative research method, he collects primary data and secondary data through the field and books and addresses this in his writing. The role of a researcher is defined through the relationship he or she plays in the field according to the subject. For the effective findings, the researcher agrees to the subject matter and organizes the meetings with the participants to get more and valuable information. The researcher collects as much information as possible from the field through the recordings, highlighting actions and capturing words directly from the informants.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Yin (2011), *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*, p.159

The role of a researcher and biases should be taken into consideration in this study. The researcher is Nepali and Hindu by religion and he shares common beliefs and values of the people in the study. Some of the interviewees are friends of the researcher and so he hopes that they could open up more with him, more so than with a stranger. Some of the Nepalese the researcher did not know before, so to them he was just a researcher.

3.8 Data Collection, the Analysis and Data Transcription

For this research writing, the researcher collected the data through the purposive and snowball method for recruitment of respondents, and for the data collections he used semi-structured interviews and observation methods. The researcher tries to collect the valid and reliable data from the field with the help of different participants. From these collected data through different interviews and observation, the researcher will conduct the depth analysis of data to discuss and answer the research question of the thesis. These data are research authentic source which is about the alteration of gender roles in regard to migration of the migrants.

For this research writing, primary data are collected through the field research and the secondary data are collected through the journals, books and internet which will be connected with the research writing. First of all, the researcher has to identify the important and common themes which will emerge through the interviews and observation. After this, he has to locate and highlight the fundamental parts of the interviews and observations to connect it directly to the research questions. In the end of the process this research will be able to generate the expected results.

The researcher selects the audio instead of video recording since the priority is given to the words of the interviewees, not to gestures or facial expressions. It is also easier to transcribe and analyze the spoken word on one level, as in addition to have the visual level as material.

Interviews once done are categorized, labeled and saved on an external site and all transcripts were saved in this external area in case of computer failure. The interviews were mostly held in the native language, which is Nepali and later it got translated into English. Transcribing the audio records gave the researcher a good chance to

reflect about the comments and opinions being said. All these collected data from in-depth interviews and observations will be analyzed and various themes will be identified and discussed to answer the research questions.

3.9 Research Ethics

Research ethics helps to establish the moral standard for the conduct of research. Ethics is defined as "method, procedure or perspective for deciding how to act and for analyze complex problems and issues."⁴⁷ Ethics talks about the rights and responsibilities of the researcher and the moral decisions about what is good and what is bad for the research writing as well as about the informants. To avoid the errors, explore the truth, respect the social responsibility, build public support and honor the human rights and values of society, research ethics must be followed. If the researcher neglects the research ethics then it ruins the value and dignity of a research work. The researcher should know the language of right and wrong for his/her research writing. As a researcher, he valued research ethics and tried to follow these rules.

First before interviewing, he gave complete information about the research writing and its purpose with every informant. A written agreement was done with the participants by signing the consent form with the details about the confidentiality, researcher's right to publish the interview as a whole and the informant's rights etc.

Secondly, respecting the anonymity of the informants, it was agreed to protect their identities in this research writing. The researcher assured that all the data that are collected from different informants will be stored in the researchers' personal computer which no one, except the researcher can access. All the data are anonymous and will be deleted after the completion of research writing in August 2014. The researcher has tried to respect the feelings and dignity of every informant at the time of the interview.

⁴⁷ Resnik (2011)

4 Findings & Analysis

For the purpose of this study, extensive information has been collected through in-depth interviews, as well as from observation methods of Nepalese migrants. In this chapter, altogether eight in-depth interviews and observation with Nepalese migrants have been analyzed and various themes have been identified and discussed to answer the research questions.

4.1 Findings & Analysis from the Interviews

4.1.1 Who Migrates to Germany?

In order to understand why foreign migration to Germany is taking place it is important to ascertain who migrates. Under this heading we are trying to figure out what kind of individuals, groups, caste and gender are migrating to Germany. In Nepal, as in other parts of the world, the typical migrants are young people. Labor migration has maintained steady and strong trends among the Nepalese youths (NIDS 2011:10). This assumption can be applied not just for labor migration; there are also a remarkable number of au-pair and student Nepalese migrants in Germany. The migration among young people is possibly due to the fact that young people are less likely to be tied down by family responsibility and thus, more prone to migrate. All eight respondents admitted that young people are more adaptable than older people since they are often more educated and know more about the cosmopolitan world. In the field study, it was contained that both men and women are going abroad for employment opportunities and education. However, people coming as au-pair were only female. Three male respondents mentioned that they came as a student to Germany. One male respondent mentioned he was a labor migrant in Norway before coming to Germany. Among the four female migrants, two came as a student and other two female came as an au-pair. A female respondent entered to Germany as an au-pair and after three months transferred her status to international student and is pursuing her degree studies.

Almost all the respondents except one among the eight belonged to higher caste from Nepal. In general, the higher caste (Brahmans, Thakuris and Chhetris) is termed as

economically, socially and politically well off caste. Bennett (2005:5), "the dominant order has remained largely confined to male Brahmans (Bahuns) and Kshatriyas (Thakuris and Chetris) (...). Those left out at the margins were women, the formerly 'untouchable' castes who now call themselves Dalits ('oppressed', 'broken' or 'crushed'), and the 'tribal', indigenous ethnic groups, the Adivasi Janajatis or 'indigenous nationalities'." Coming to Germany is also not an easy task for all classes of people. One has to go through a lot of rigorous process and spend a significant amount of money and energy. Almost every respondent stated that they belonged to middleclass family. Thus, most of the respondent belonged to higher caste and very few to lower.

All respondent had at least high school to doctoral level of education. Six out of eight had already or were studying university degree and the rest of two respondents had at least intermediate level of education. Also all respondents said that it is mandatory to learn German basic language (A1)⁴⁸ before coming to Germany. Thus the level of education and migration can be strongly connected to each other. Persons with good academic education are more likely to migrate than the uneducated ones.

The interviewees said, coming abroad and being far away from family and friends is not an easy task. If you want to come to Germany then you should be talented, intelligent, adaptable, brave and hardworking. One of the respondent stated, "Not everyone can just enter Germany and stay here for long. (...) The reason that I had enjoyed more than 5 years in Germany is that I am very social (have many German friends) and adaptable to this culture." Thus personality of a person is another consideration in deciding for a migration and integration process.

Six respondents who came to Germany were unmarried when they entered to foreign land. At some point of time they got married and some of the respondents were still single. Other two respondents were married before they came to Germany. The single respondent admitted that he easily got a permission to go abroad since he was single. However, married men and female had more dilemmas leaving their family. One female Nepali responded, "I had to go through a lot of trouble convincing my family

⁴⁸ Beginner's Course A1 is intended for people with no previous knowledge of the German language.

and my in-laws family. The society in Nepal does not consider it well for married women to migrate. "It was hard for me to leave my husband and son. But I assured it to everyone that I will support my family financially and emotionally.(...) after some years I applied for family reunification and invited my husband and son." Therefore married status plays a certain role in migration of the people.

4.1.2 Why Migrating to Germany?

According to Vertovec (2009), economic considerations are often the prime reasons why migrants move in the first place. In the Nepalese migration context this assumption has also been adopted to a large extent and it seems unreasonable to contradict that money is a great motivation for migration. Every respondents was asked "what are your motives behind migrating to Germany?" in the initial part of the in-depth interview. Different respondent reacted according to their priorities in life.

Three out of eight informants mentioned the economic consideration as a major motive of migration. These three respondents also mentioned that the Nepal ongoing political instability and lack of employment opportunities for the youth is a reason to migrate, which matches to Bhattraï's (2005) findings mentioned in the above literature chapter. It is important to cite Raut (2001:1), "As long as there is unemployment and economic desperation in Nepal, there will be Nepali migrants trying to sneak into Europe or overstay in Australia."

Apart from economic motives, many other interesting motives pursue: further education, foreign countries exposure and experience, learning language and culture, independence and freedom came out also as a primary motives for migrating. And not always were the motives for migration clear in the beginning among the migrants. This was expressed by one of the male respondents: "When I first came to Germany, I thought that I wanted to earn money but later I thought that I wanted to live in this country to study in order to improve the chances for my future even if I go back to my home country."

Other respondents took migration as an opportunity to see the European world and broaden their views. A female respondent, aged 24, stated:

I like the lifestyle and culture of Europe and I have studied and worked in Poland, Norway and travelled throughout Europe. I take all this travelling as an experience and learning point in my life. (...). In few years' time, I will go back to Nepal and get involved in the political sector and develop my country with the experience I have gained staying abroad.

A Nepalese male respondent, who has been living in Germany for more than 10 years described as the eldest son it was his responsibility as a son to go abroad and support his family. He came as a language student and now is married and settled in Germany. Many came as students and studied in Germany and applied for work and settled down if they got a decent job in Germany. This shows the pressure especially for sons when they are adult and need to be successful and provide the needs of their family.

Another main motive for migration was the access to quality education that is by far, in more abundant supply in the foreign land. The German good education and well recognized universities acts as a pull factors to Nepalese student migrants on one hand and on the other unrecognized degree and poor quality of education system in Nepal acts as push factors to many Nepalese youths. A male Nepali respondent who was studying Mechanical Engineering says, "Unlike, Nepalese degree; International degree has a high value everywhere and especially in the Nepalese job market. Even after the completion of my studies and I am sure that I will find a decent job here or back home."

One Nepalese respondent was studying Computer engineering in Germany and after his completion of study; he got a nice job offering and has been living there for more than a decade. He said in a funny tone, "Yes, I pay a lot of tax to German government and consider myself half German."

Contrary to Vertovecs (2009) understanding of migration's prime reasons, but in accordance with the respondents, only three out of eight of them stated that pure economic motives as the main reason for migration. Thus, apart from economic

consideration other consideration should not be undermined, according to this assumption. Instead, usual answers were to pursue education qualification and skills, to get the opportunity to exposure and experiences, to become free and independent, and to see the western world. The findings from Eklund (2000) about the motives of migration among female migration, matches with this research findings in male and female migration.

4.1.3 Social, Political and Economic Implication of Nepalese Migrants

Out of the eight Nepalese informants, six stated that they maintain close contact with Nepalese families and friends network both in Germany and in Nepal. Most male and female Nepalese informants said they keep up with the current affairs of Nepal, read news from Nepal and discuss with their close network and in social media. Many are also supporting their families in Nepal financially. Thus, it can be said that the Nepalese migrants have close transnational ties and encountering major transformation living a transnational lives, which is discussed in the coming section. It is important to mention NIDS (2011:46) which cites Adhikari (2011) that,

Nepalese Diaspora has a tight bond with Nepal and its development and are said to be worried about Nepal's current political instability and the country's future development. The Nepali Diaspora can never be divorced from their emotional bond with Nepal as it has been the "roots of the proud of Nepali Diaspora" in the outer world.

4.1.3.1 Social Implication

4.1.3.1.1 Modes of Communication of Nepalese Migrants

All respondents have regular contact and communication with their families and friends. With the increasing use of internet, they are able to be in regular contact with their families and friends. The modes of communication were through telephone, video chat and social media. Three informants whose family had access to internet in both Germany and Nepal were engaging communication through Internet via Skype, Facebook video call, Hotmail messenger. Other five respondents were using either

internet call or Internet video call to communicate. All respondents mentioned the especial occasion (birthday, wedding, and anniversary), big festivals (*Dashain, Tihar*) and exchange of important information's as the prime reasons for telephone calls. Also most of the Nepalese informants stated that the communication is not just restricted to casual interaction of wishes and greetings but also about daily affairs and important family decisions etc.

The cheap telephone calls and availability of internet had played a huge role in maintaining an easy and regular between family, relatives and friends.

4.1.3.1.2 Social Institutions among Migrants

4.1.3.1.2.1 Family Relationship

The Nepalese informants considered family, kinship and friends ties the most powerful one. All eight respondents have a strong bond and regular contact with their family and kinship which was also mentioned in the above findings. Even migrants were far away from home, the family usually discusses important family decisions through telephone or internet. In Nepalese society, the parents usually seek advice from their grown up children, ranging from household decisions to political and financial decision. Even more when their children are living abroad because they believe their children know more than them, therefore, would give great advice.

A Nepalese male informant says, "My parents always consult me regarding household decisions, my brother's education, managing savings etc. They think that I have seen the world and so I am wiser now." A Nepalese female informant said she talks to her siblings almost every day and hence feels they are still a close part of her everyday life even if they are thousands of miles away.

A female respondent says, "My son and husband were apart from me for some years when I first arrived to Germany. During that time, I had to stay connected with my son via Skype and get informed what and how is he doing." This shows the role of parenting even the parents and child are living distance from each other.

The sharing of not only greetings to family but sharing each other life through different modes of communication had enabled many migrants to maintain a close bond between families in homeland and foreign land. Thus from our findings, we can say that the geographical distance could not create any barrier in communication between family members and they retain a strong family ties in both sending and receiving societies.

4.1.3.1.2.2 Habitus

The difference in societal context enables men and women to act accordingly to the new environmental settings. This was seen in our informants' responses, where they motioned how they have changed and altered their basic lifestyle from a Nepalese society to German modern societies. A male respondent says, "You have to adapt according to time and society. Today, I cannot expect my wife to act as a submissive Nepali wife. We both are working outside and both share our responsibilities."

All respondents to some extent have changed their lifestyle or way of living in the different societal context. Mentioned in the literature, 'translocation positionality' (Anthias 2012) again comes into play in this scenario. For instance, women in Nepal are considered religiously impure during the menstrual cycle and are disallowed for entering into kitchen and engage in religious activities. In our research, all informants responded that they do not believe and apply the concept of impurity during women's menstruation in their household. One female respondent stated, "Though, I disagree that the menstruation phase for women's is impure, I had to follow in Nepal because I did not wanted to offend my mother and grandmother. But here in Germany, I and my husband do not believe in such things."

Another changing was the food habit in the foreign environment. A male respondent mentioned that, "I had problem eating German food for few months but after a while he got used to eating and now eats more German food than Nepali." Also we saw a mix of Nepali food and German food in the cultural event in the observation. Another female respondent stated, "when I came to Germany, it seemed like another planet. Also I encountered cultural shock in the beginning. It took me a while to figure out

the culture and people. After some while I was able to make some friends and started to like the German culture."

Cultural competence and cosmopolitanism among migrants were seen in different form of habitus; information, experiences, attitude, food habits and way of thinking which is enabling Nepalese migrants to cope with range of cultural differences in diverse societal settings.

4.1.3.2 Political Implication

All informants possess a strong bond to their homeland and were concerned about the country's future. Three male respondents and one female always get informed about the current affairs of Nepal. Internet was the first and most important place to gather information. Various newspaper and news channel were easily accessible in internet to the respondents. Another main topic emerged in political implication was the issue of identity.

4.1.3.2.1 Issue of Identity

Two respondents had acquired German citizenship. One female respondent was happy to have German citizenship and said, "Travelling has always been my priority in life and by having a German citizenship it has allowed me to do so. I had travelled 17 nations till now and will continue to explore more." The German passport enables a person to travel to most of the countries in the world without any restriction. However, a Nepali passport had many restrictions while travelling to other countries. Another male respondent suggested that he gave away his identity for the sake of employment opportunities. It was found that two Nepalese informants gave up citizenship to trade their identities for travelling and economic opportunities.

The other six had till now no intentions or were confused to get German citizenship, if they had a chance to have one. The reason given for them was that they did not want to cancel their own Nepali identity in order to have a German one. Through the literature it is known that, both Nepal and Germany had no provision of dual

citizenship. It was, however, hard for the two respondents who had the German citizenship, to revoke their own home land identity.

All Nepalese respondents had close ties with both countries, which can be explained by the answer of a male respondent who is living in Berlin for five years. He discussed that he has close ties with both countries. He further mentioned Germany as "*karmathal*" and Nepal as "*janmathal*". The term *karmathal* means the workplace and *janmathal* the birthplace. This relation between home and foreign land supports Katy Gardners's (1993a, 1995) findings, cited in Vertovec (2009:68) that, home (*desh*) is associated with the locus of personal and social identity and religiosity, whereas, foreign land (*bidesh*) is associated with material bounty and economic opportunity. It shows the dual frame of attachment between homeland and foreign land.

4.1.3.2.2 Home-land Associations

Another interesting finding from the respondents was that all of them were more or less connected to the German-Nepali association. Two respondents were members of Non Residential Nepali Association Germany (NRNA). Five others were members of Nepalese Student Society in Germany. They were happy to be a part of such association. One female Nepali explained, "It is a great platform to meet our Nepalese people and German friends. We also welcome Germans and foreigners to take part of our culture." Another female respondent discussed the interaction of culture through different cultural events. She further stated, "Last year I participated in the cultural parade of different nations and to the Nepalese Republic day celebration at the Nepalese Embassy in Berlin. Also, I always like to celebrate Nepali festival with my Nepalese community." The German-Nepalese association is a platform for different individuals, groups and community to share common interest, goals and ideas.

4.1.3.3 Economic Implication

Almost one quarter of total GDP comes from the remittances only. One of the most important pillars of Nepalese economy is remittance sent by migrants. There are about seven million Nepalese living and working across globe and sending back money to support their families in Nepal. The increasing migration can be blamed on the lack of

employment opportunities in Nepal. The country has very low economic growth and insignificant manufacturing and non-manufacturing industry. Apart from that, the political instability and rise in population in the home country has motivated many people to migrate to other countries to secure their livelihoods and to seek better opportunities.

The Nepalese in Germany have also been found to support their families in Nepal financially. Among the interviewed Nepalese, five out of eight informants reported they regularly send money to their families in Nepal because their economic condition is not so strong. They said they would continue helping their parents financially. Although some of the respondents' incomes were lower than average income of Germans, they remit money regularly. Three other said that they are ready to help their families in Nepal if they are in need.

Most of the interviewed Nepalese come from middle-class families' background. Their families do not possess ample economic resources. All of the Nepalese respondents, especially male, felt obligated to support their family in Nepal. One male informant states, "My parents are dependent on me. I have been supporting them financially since last five years. As long as I can support my family and fulfill my responsibility, I am happy to do it."

It was also revealed that the female Nepalese respondents are sending money to their families regularly out of their own will. Daughters are socially and traditionally not obligated to take financial responsibilities for their natal families. Only the sons of the families are obligated to look after their parents and support them financially. In case of the interviewed Nepalese female informants, it was revealed that they do it out of emotional ties with their families. One female participant who remits money to her family says,

My family does not ask for any financial support from me. But I care for them and feel the love and support they have always given to me. Last year, I supported my family to build a house and buy a car from the money I sent. So, I am very happy to be able to support them.

Most of them use money transfer agencies to send the money to Nepal. Three of the respondents said that they send money once a month to cover the household expenses. Two of the respondents said they send money at least once a year for special occasions. The remittance from the Nepalese seems to be basically for household expenses, saving, purchase of commodities and then to investment. Thus, it is difficult to assess the impact of the remittance in the overall level of investment in Nepal. However, it can be stated that the level of savings in these households has increased.

4.1.4 Migrants Gender Dynamics

From the informants it is pointed out what sort of gender dynamics were experienced while living in another societal settings. The most common gender dynamics revealed were gender roles and power relations in the household level and community level have further discussed the major dynamics emerged from the interview.

4.1.4.1 Gender Roles

Nepalese society has traditional structure and norms with conservative concept of gender roles. Though gender equality is an advocated topic and there is a rise in number of working women, married women are still expected to adhere to the traditional expectations from the female gender. Nepal's patriarchal society gives men a greater social and economic status than women. The role of women in decision making is negligible except in raising children and household management. Germany being more developed and modern, the women seem to be much more independent and may not appreciate the traditional expectations from them as a wife or daughter.

Most Nepalese male said that they performed household chores like cleaning, cooking and helped their partners and wife's. They said they did not mind doing the household activities by themselves if needed. One of the male Nepalese respondent said that he did not have to do any housework growing up. Everything was done for him. But after coming to Germany, he learned to do everything by himself. Currently, he is a student helping and taking all the household responsibilities while his wife works in a German advertising company. Three single respondents were also doing their entire household and running errands by themselves. Furthermore, female respondents also

believed that household should be shared by both. A female respondent mentioned in a strong gestures that, "Both wife and husband are living in same apartment. They are equally using the apartment and contribute for making the mess and thus both are responsible evenly in cleaning and tidying up the apartment."

It is significant to mention that the Nepalese respondents mentioned the awareness that their position and role is different than what would have been in Nepal. It is important to cite again, 'translocation positionality' (Anthias 2012) which discusses that the different societies create an opportunity in determining the alteration of gender relation of migrants. This finding also applies in our research samples too.

As mentioned in the literature that the position of women in household and society may be altered when they engage in financial and economic activities through migration process, the same assumption is valid in defining changing gender roles and relations of the respondent in our samples. Based on the responses of the interviewees, it has been noticed that the traditional gender roles are not relevant to these respondents and roles and responsibilities are transferable between the genders.

The willingness of Nepalese informants to adopt non-traditional gender role seems to depend on factors like economic participation of women, exposure to European culture and status of employment. If the women were employed and the man was unemployed, it resulted directly in more involvement of male partner in the household work and vice versa. If both husband and wife are employed, both shared all household responsibilities. Though, traditionally cooking is not considered to be a task for Nepalese men.

It has been found that exposure of female informants to European culture and norms related to the role of women, changed their attitude towards their own gender role. They stated that they feel empowered and more confident in making decisions and that there is much to achieve for them than just fulfilling social expectations. Being more independent and employed also adds to their confidence because of social and financial security.

The female Nepalese informants also perceived a big change in the attitude of their natal family towards them. Two out of the four Nepalese female participants said they

are able to provide financial support to their natal families in Nepal. All of them noticed that their natal families value them more than before.

One of the informants says, "My father seeks my opinions and suggestions in many things these days. It was not like this before I started supporting them financially. When I visit Nepal, even relatives show more respect and care than they did before."

Thus, it can be inferred that economic contribution and support is one of the factor to challenge the traditional gender and patriarchal society in Nepal.

4.1.4.2 Power Relations

Who makes the decisions in a household depends on various factors including the tangible and intangible resources of each respondent. However, three single respondents did not encounter power relations with their partner, thus, they are excluded from this area of discussion.

It was found that there was an imbalance of power in married couples due to various factors including economic possessions, education level and arrival in Germany of the respondents.

Most of Nepalese men seemed to possess more power than the female partner where men were engaged more in economic activities. The female respondents who were engaged in economic activities had either equal power relation or higher power. Another assumption on determinant of power was the control over income and expenditure. Four out of five married couple mentioned they share the household income and expenditure. But, one did not have much control over it. He stated that, "My wife looks after the finances and the reason behind it was; she is good in managing these things and I had a bad habit of spending."

The Arrival in Germany 'who comes first' was also a factor that caused the power of imbalance. A foreign person who is staying longer in Germany may have a greater chance to be acquainted with the German language, system and bureaucracy. A respondent who invited her husband for family reunification had greater power regardless to gender. It was found that the female respondent who came first to Germany and after she got a decent job, invited her husband and son for family

reunification, possess higher power than her husband. She further stated that she had to do all the paperwork and other duties regarding residence permit and stay in Germany. Her husband relied on her to get introduced to friend network, learn etiquettes and norms and get by in daily life activities like shopping, learning about food, transportation system etc. In this sense, the gender who came first acted like a broker between two different cultures which ultimately led them to have more power than other.

In another instance, education level was also considered influencing in determining power relation. The two female respondents mentioned they are free to make their own decision and that their husbands are supportive of their choices. They also feel they have more bargaining power because they also work and study which enhances the chance of greater financial independence in future. When mentioning the sources of power, most Nepalese respondents said their financial contribution and their education gives them some bargaining power. Another female respondent also mentioned that her income gives her more bargaining power in their relationship. Thus, the underlying reason for the person to have more power is the engagement in economic resources and educational level.

From the statement of respondents, it has been noticed that the power relations among male and female varies according to the resources that person possess. The resources could be related to income, education and occupation. Through literature review, it was found that the women who possessed higher income generally gain certain degree of control over economic resources and resulting decision making authority. The finding did apply to the sample for this study.

4.2 Findings and Analysis from Observation

Nepalese expats society in Germany has been actively organizing cultural and social events. The researcher had the opportunity to participate in an events during this research; a celebration of the Hindu biggest festival of *Dashain*. There were some opportunities to observe the Nepalese migrants in various aspects. Gender dimensions and power relations among the different people of the community occurred in the setting was focused and considered carefully during the period of observations. The

findings are further divided into two topics that emerged which were encountered during the event.

4.2.1 Gender Roles

From the observation, the traditional gender roles also seem to be changing. There were numerous observations that were interesting to this study. Foremost, both men and women were assigned to contribute something for the events. Right from beginning of making the event successful; both men and women were equally involved from deciding the venue and concepts of events, preparing foods and making it successful. Furthermore, it was observed that the Nepalese male, who grew up in a traditional society with clear division of responsibilities for women, are taking on many responsibilities that were traditionally considered women's such as child care and cooking. One of the interesting observations was a Nepalese man carrying his infant baby in the baby carrier. When asked where the mother is, the father replied, "she is working overtime these days." Moreover, cooking is typically a women job in Nepal, but here even men did contribute in preparing cooking items in the events.

It was observed that, both men and women participation in the event was very high. Many people came in tradition Nepali dress. However, the incorporation of western fashion among both men and women was also high. This shows the open-minded personality that is more as a result of fashion trend and experience to European culture.

It was observed that both men and women were actively involved in making the event a grand success. Both men and women were engaged from planning, managing, implementing and decision making the cultural project. It can be said from the observation that men are willing to take not only income generating role but also child rearing and household work, which are typically considered as women's. On the other hand, one can also see the shift from orthodox tradition roles to modern roles that women are taking over their productive and political roles not only in household but also in the society as a whole.

4.2.2 Power Relations

In general, Nepal's male dominated society gives men a greater political position than women. During the observation it is obvious, that power relation between men and women were noteworthy to this research. It was observed that the role of decision making in men and women the event was more or less equal. This was a contrast to see in comparison with Nepalese societies where Nepalese women have few or insignificant involvement in political sector. This statement sums up the scenario in political sectors that the among the total candidates actually running for election is, only about 9% were women.⁴⁹ Thus, women participation in decision making is insignificant, especially at the societal level. However this was not the case encountered in this research, as both male and female were evenly involved in decision making and even power division. It is also observed the non-hierarchy of age and non-hierarchy between men and women in the event. Both men and women were treated more with respect and equality. No hierarchy over age was seen when people of different age groups were drinking and sharing the jokes together. However, the younger people always greeted older people or showed a matter of respect to them typical of what is a Nepalese tradition.

Bennett (1983), 'partifocal status' which enables men superiority over women was no longer relevant in the German societies for the Nepalese migrants. In this observation, neither men were superior to the women, nor were the women inferior to men. There seems a balance relationship between men and women. The reason for it can be women increasing involvement in economic and political sectors. Also same status mentioned by Bennett (1983), enables superiority of age over younger was also not relevant in the observed event.

4.3 Consequences of Migration on Gender Roles in Household and Community level

4.3.1 Adopting Western Lifestyles

From the observations and interviews, it was found that the Nepalese migrant's daily lives had integrated the foreign cultural elements, symbols and practices and values of

⁴⁹ Women and their Participation: The Nepalese Context (n.d) cited (UNMIN, 2008)

German cultures. The exposure to European society and the influences of the culture and system have made the Nepalese male and female more adaptive to the new culture. During the initial period of migration many of the respondents did not like being in a foreign land, but after a while they got used to it. The respondents thought that they had adjusted to life in Germany quite well. Thus, it seems it was not so easy for the Nepalese migrants just to adopt into new culture and life style. The constant process of negotiation and bargaining with German culture was observed and revealed by the interviews. Many respondents said that it was easy for them to adopt in German culture and lifestyle when they spent longer periods of time in the country.

Many respondents mentioned the changing lifestyle. One female respondent thought that she had changed her own character, and that moving to Germany made her grow up and feel stronger. Another female respondent mentioned the influences of German societies, that both men and women should be involved in productive work. She mentioned, "Most of the German wife and husband works in productive sector in this society. This is how it works in the German household. We are also doing the same; me and my husband are both working outside the home."

It was revealed from the observation and interview that the fashion of both women and men was changing. In the cultural event modern and western style of clothing's of style was encountered. The respondents also agreed that they had been inspired by the fashion in Berlin and they paid much more attention to clothing. "Before I came here I did not dare to wear skirts. Now I do it and feel comfortable because of the Berlin relaxed atmosphere and openness allows me to do so."

Another interesting idea emerged was the openness to new cultures. For instance, room and apartment sharing between Nepalese migrants was an matter identified. Both Nepalese men and women were sharing apartment and room in Germany. The reasons behind it was the expensive apartment and room rent than in native land. Also we encountered in some cases, where two strangers were sharing a room or an apartment either with Nepalese or German or other nation male and female. Generally, Nepalese culture consider inappropriate to share room and apartment between two genders unless you are related by family.

It was seen that the migrants were not just prone to adapt to new routine: western culture, way of life, fashion trend but to be more openness toward other culture, developing new personality, attitudes and lifestyle. Moreover, the respondents thought that they had become more mature and grown-up since they migrated. Further, they maintained that they had adopted some western values, which brought about several changes in their gender roles and attitude.

4.3.2 Migrant's Social Status

One of the concerns of migration was whether migration leads to improved social status of Nepalese men and women. This section will account for migrants' social status and how their social status is related to their gender roles. Through our observation and interviews, we found out that the migrants' social status was changed in household, family and societal level. Several factors determine a migrant worker's social status. Income, status of work and education level determined their social status in Germany as well as in their native land.

A respondent who was engaged in high education level, income generation and decent sector of employment had a greater social status. A female respondent stated, "I work as a business analyst in a reputed company and it has enabled me to get a better status from both family and relatives. My family considers me as an ideal daughter and praises me for the position that I have achieved."

Another male respondent mentioned that his education level enabled him to get a higher social status. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in Engineering.

Both women and male migrants seem to be engaged in employment sectors. Women respondents were involved in sector such as business, laws and advertising in our samples. This shows the involvement of both women and men in productive and political sectors.

It was shown that the respondents could exercise their bargaining-power concerning different matters in families. There seemed to be a correlation between the scope of the bargaining-power and the economic positions, which supports the assumption made mentioned in the literature by Vetoos (2009) that, women's social status in the household and community improves through the migration process, mainly through

access to employment and economic contribution. It seemed as if the respondents who sent money back home felt more respected due to their economic contribution to the family, and the fact that they were economically independent.

As it was shown in the previous section, economic transformation is illustrated through the fact that the migrants sent money as remittances, which seemed to be related to their gender roles. This is due to the fact that social status is dependent upon economic position and educational level. Nevertheless, some students' respondents did not send all their money back home, but spent some on university registration and living, which still gave them a chance to improve their social status by further education. Thus, it can be inferred that education level and most importantly economic involvement through which they can provide remittances is one of the factors to challenge the traditional gender roles and patriarchal society in Nepal.

4.3.3 Social Remittance

“Social remittances are usually defined as the ideas, practices, identities and social capital that flow from receiving to sending country communities.” (Levitt 1998:926)

The transmission of ideas and knowledge through letters, telephone, internet and many other media can affect the lives of the ones living in the home country. It is important to cite NIDS (2011:38) that, "Apart from money remittances, households also benefit from social remittances, which include non-monetary benefits like improvement in knowledge and skill, habits, social and political empowerment, exposure, family values, gender sensitivity and the like." Some of the Nepalese respondents mentioned that one of the important learnings they noticed in their families and back home is cultural sensitivity and recognition of gender equality. A female respondent says that her parents' traditional mind-set has broadened. She explained that while growing up, her parents did not approve of daughters choosing their own marriage partner. However, her parents do not impose any such restrictions on her younger sister. She also reported that the parents' attitude and expectations from both daughters have changed, especially since she started providing financial support to them from Germany.

Often the social remittance is flowing together with the economic remittances. For instance, when migrant women send money back home, they also help to change the traditional gender roles concept. Belanger and Line (2011:73) asserted that the efforts of migrated women to support their families have huge impact in changing perception of gender roles and power relations in some sending communities. The narrative evidence from the interviews also supports this finding. All Nepalese female participants stated that the way their parents and relatives treat them, have changed since they started providing financial support to their families. They reported that their families and relatives treat them like a valuable member of the family and seek their advice and opinions more often. All of the female participants reported the transformation in the attitude of the parents about daughters. One female informant says,

In the past they only celebrated son's birth because it was son preference societies. Nowadays in my community, people are happier when a daughter is born because they have seen how a daughter cares more about parents than son. My family and relatives always talk about me as an example that I care more about my parents than my brothers.

Another channel of social remittance is philanthropy. Two of the female participants stated they are involved in helping their community, especially in education sector. One of the female Nepalese respondent mentioned that she is supporting not only her families but also two Nepalese children for education and living expenses. She was able to do so by requesting her parents to take some children in their house, who cannot afford basic needs. Another female respondent was contributing a small amount of fund every month to a primary school, in order to build a library so that the children can get more education materials. Another female respondent mentioned she provides free au-pair counseling to Nepalese women who want to come to Germany which otherwise would cost significant amount of funds by private counseling intuitions.

Thus, the migrations have empowered the informants to improve their economic condition which in turn enables them to send social capital via direct and indirect channels to their native communities.

5 Summary of Findings

The overall study has identified and stressed out on various issues emerged from the transnational life's of Nepalese migrants. The reasons for migration have been dwelled upon and adaptation on a foreign land, changing gender roles, the reasons for the change and consequences of migration have been dealt on. The main findings of the study are summarized below.

5.1 Reasons to Migrate

The result of this study shows that there were many aspects in migration. Economic aspect can be considered one of the prime reasons. However, other aspects are such as to gain an education, broaden their horizon, develop their freedom and independence, and to see the western world. Thus, there were considerable underlying social factors behind the respondents' decision to migrate in Germany.

5.2 Social, Political and Economic Transformation

Through our study, we found constant change in social aspect of life. It was encountered that all respondents possess a deep attachment and contact with their families and relatives. This was shown by the constant communication with each other. Change in social institution such as family relationship; decision making actors and distance parenting was also noteworthy findings. Also cultural competence and cosmopolitanism among migrants were seen in different forms of habitus; lifestyle, values and character of Nepalese migrants that were acquired through the activities and experiences of everyday life in Germany.

It was revealed that all respondents mentioned their close ties with Nepal and involvement in different homeland associations and German-Nepalese associations. The respondents had a certain degree of attachment to homeland political scenario which was shown by the respondents' constant interest and collection of information and news from internet or families. Also homeland associations play a huge role in

bringing all communities together and sharing the culture and tradition with Nepalese migrants and to some extent, Germans and other nations, too.

It was found that most of the Nepalese migrants were supporting their families in Nepal financially. As many of the Nepalese partners come from middle class families, the economic opportunities have enabled them to earn better income than in Nepal so that they can help their families. Almost all of the Nepalese partners expressed willingness to continue financial support and also to go back to take care of their parents if it is needed. Though the remittance sent from Germany by the Nepalese migrants may not be significant for the investment, it definitely contributes to raise the household savings and improvement in quality of life for the Nepalese families.

5.3 Gender Roles

It was found that the traditional concept of gender roles were no longer relevant to Nepalese male and female migrants as they have adopted modern values and most often, both gender were engaged in economic participation. The male were open towards taking on the responsibilities like housekeeping and childcare, which are traditionally women's responsibilities. Another major finding is that the female Nepalese migrants perceived a change in the attitude of their native communities towards traditional gender roles and decline of gender discrimination towards them.

5.4 Consequences of Migration on Gender Roles

The exposure to European society and the influences of the culture and system have made the Nepalese migrants more adaptation to the new culture which has resulted in different consequences, not only in household level but also to community level in both sending and receiving societies. Nepalese migrants seemed to have been influenced by western culture and style of living. The understanding and adaption of modern cultures had direct or indirect impact on changing gender perspectives and attitudes.

There was considerable change in migrant men's and women's social status both in household and community level. Especially, female migrants had gained better social status than they possessed before. The economic contribution and level of education had enabled them to have more social status. It was revealed that the migrants who were contributing to their native family had better social status in the sending societies.

Social remittance is also another means through which the sending community is benefitting from the Nepalese migrants. It was found that some Nepalese migrants are involved in supporting education of children from poor families, collecting and supplying educational materials and infrastructure in Nepal. Though, it is not in the scope of the study to measure the amount of social remittance, it is an important phenomenon worth studying. Furthermore, the by-product of the economic contribution of Nepalese female migrants to their natal families in breaking down the traditional gender role ideologies in the more conservative sending communities is also mentionable.

6 Limitations of the Study and Future Research

6.1 Limitation of the Study

Limitation is inevitable in any research and this research is no exception. Even though the researcher followed the strict and rigorous process of qualitative research, there exists an unavailability of limitation in this research too.

This study is conducted to fulfill the requirement of Master's degree in Global Studies (MGS), so the study is not a very comprehensive study.

The research is based solely on the perception, judgment and analytical skills of the researcher, thus research was planned, controlled, managed, examined and analyzed by the researcher. Thus, there is no denying that the research project is perceived from the lens of researcher. It can be assumed that other individuals, group or institution may have different viewpoints on the same subject matter.

Considering the fact that the researcher is a Nepali, thus organizing for interviews was easy and the respondents were also flexible. It was convenient for the researcher to talk and build rapport with the Nepalese respondents.

Despite having good skills of avoiding biasness in qualitative research, the researcher himself belonging to the same community/society (Nepalese) may have involved knowingly or unknowingly, certain degree of biasness when he observed or analyzed things from a Nepalese point of view. For instance 'going naive'⁵⁰ in qualitative research, when the researcher was so closely involved with the study area (Nepalese community); thus his emotions and judgments may have been influenced to some extent in this research.

The secondary limitations were financial, time and resource constrains. For a paradigm, all the desired experts and key respondents could not be met due to the availability of the time constraint (respondent and researcher).

⁵⁰ Bryman (1999), *The Debate about Quantitative and Qualitative Research*

The research was carried out to identify the gender aspect of Nepalese living in Germany that took place during the migration process of these migrants. These limitations may have been considered challenges in one hand, but on the other hand, it will be taken as opportunities in combating, dealing and organizing research by the researcher, if any future research will be carried out.

6.2 Future Research

For the future research, it would be interesting to do a similar study with a more comprehensive and representative sample in order to be able to generalize the findings with more confidence. Besides that, the scope of this research was only limited to first generation migrants, thus it would be interesting to study various gender issues related to second generation; children of first-generation migrants. Each theme emerged in this study can be further investigated in detail, for instance, the impact of social remittances in homeland, changing social status and the factors affecting alteration in social status.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Interview Questionnaire

Short Introduction:

Gender:

Age:

Country of Birth

First language:

Other languages spoken:

Highest level of education:

Employment:

Married:

Duration of marriage:

Number of years in marriage:

Number children:

Initial status of Arrival in Germany:

Interview Guide:

1. How long are you living in Berlin and what was the main motives for you to come in Germany?
2. Define Gender roles in your own view.
 - a. Men Roles in today's society?
 - b. Women Roles in today's society?
3. Do you think husbands and wives should be equally responsible for housework?
 - a. Who takes care of the household stuffs in your house?
 - b. Why have you agreed on this division?
4. What do you prefer, to work outside the home as a bread winner or play a nurturing/ caring role within the family?
 - a. And what you actually do and why?
 - b. What is your profession and what is your partner's occupation?
5. Who manages all the income and expenditure of the total household income and why?

6. What do you say about the idea that husbands should be equally responsible for child-rearing duties or women should stay home to take care of the children and why?
7. It is difficult for a woman to successfully combine a career with marriage and a family.
 - a. Should women's pursue her own career, even if she is married and has her own family?
 - b. Or should she always put the needs of her family ahead of her career interests?
8. What kind of Gender roles do you practice in Germany? Have you noticed the change in your role before and after? How do you feel about your role in the family?
9. How well do you and integrate in this cultures?
 - a. Do you have any customs or traditions that you celebrate in Germany?
10. How often do you communicate with your family members? How do you communicate? How is the relationship with your families?
11. Are you actively involved in the Nepalese/ German community? Do you attend festivals, get-togethers, cultural activities, community activities?
12. Are you supporting your family members financially? How often do you remit money to your home country?
13. How are you maintaining your ties with Nepal? Are you associated with any associations in Germany? What are your associations like?

Closing Questions:

Anything you like to add on this topic?

Do you have any questions for me?

Can I contact you again if I think of another question?