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TITLE: State Restriction, Negative Social Perception, and Nepali Women's Labour Migration to the Gulf Countries

Author/s: Arjun Kharel

Affiliation/s: Kansas State University, USA

Although the socio-political contexts are not conducive to female outmigration, a significant number of Nepalese women have engaged in transnational labor migration in the last two decades. Nepalese state often restricts female mobility by imposing travel bans on women workers, and female migration is generally perceived negatively in the Nepalese society. However, many women have travelled to the Gulf countries illegally, via India, by crossing open Indo-Nepal borders. An analysis of 56 in-depth interviews with returned female migrants and hundreds of pages of field notes reveals that the female migrants negotiate various barriers at different levels – ranging from households and community to larger Nepalese society – in the process of migration as well as after their return. The study also finds important roles of social networks, economic hardships in the home country, better pay (or the perception of better pay) in the host country, unsupportive husbands, conflictual spousal relationships, and the low cost of female emigration in motivating Nepali women workers to look for foreign employment.