

PASSAGE TO INDIA

MIGRATION AS A COPING STRATEGY IN TIMES OF CRISIS IN NEPAL

Report Launch
17th December 2008



About *Passage to India*

- ***Passage to India*** is a joint collaboration between WFP and NDRI to better understand the phenomenon of migration in Nepal; particularly as it relates to poor communities as a key coping mechanism during times of hardship

The need to better understand migration

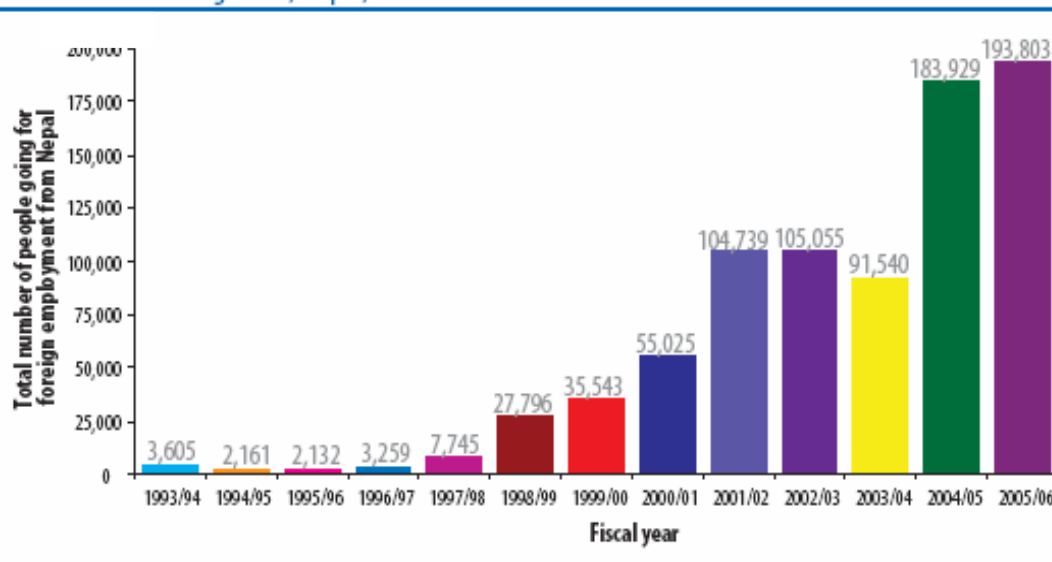
- Migration is increasingly becoming an integral component of the Nepalese economy and broader society
- However, a key gap in knowledge exists in relation to the circumstances which lead to migration, including the food security and livelihood push and pull factors
- In addition, there has been limited research to analyse the real household benefits of migration and prevalence of associated costs



The historical role of migration in Nepal

- Over the past millennium there has been a common west to east migration trend within Nepal and then to India
- Increasing globalisation is resulting in Nepalese migrants now taking positions in the Middle East, and South East Asia
- Seasonal migration patterns are historically linked to local agricultural production patterns and availability of other forms of employment

FIGURE 1 Out-Migration, Nepal, 1993 – 2006

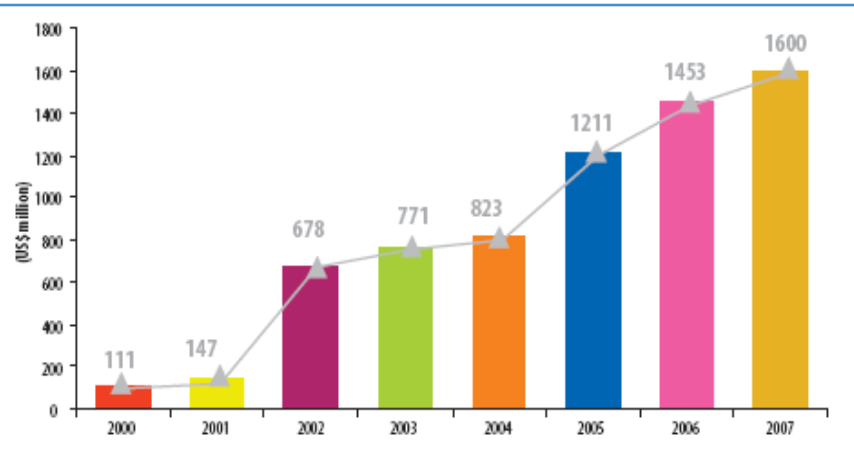


Conflict, poor crop harvests, natural disasters and increased ease of migration has increased migration over the past 10 years

Source: Economic Survey 2005-06, Government of Nepal

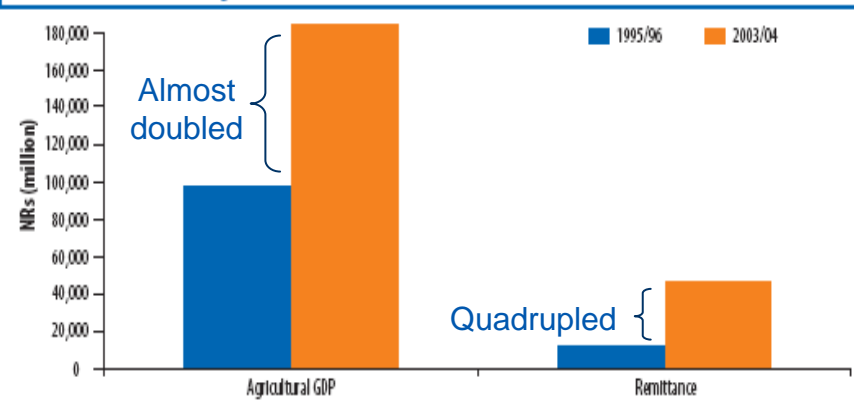
Migration, remittances and the Nepalese economy

FIGURE 13 Official Remittances (US\$ million)



Source: Development Prospects Group, Migration and Remittances Fact Book, World Bank

FIGURE 3 Growth in Agricultural GDP and Remittances



Source: Nepal Living Standard Survey, Government of Nepal (2003/04).

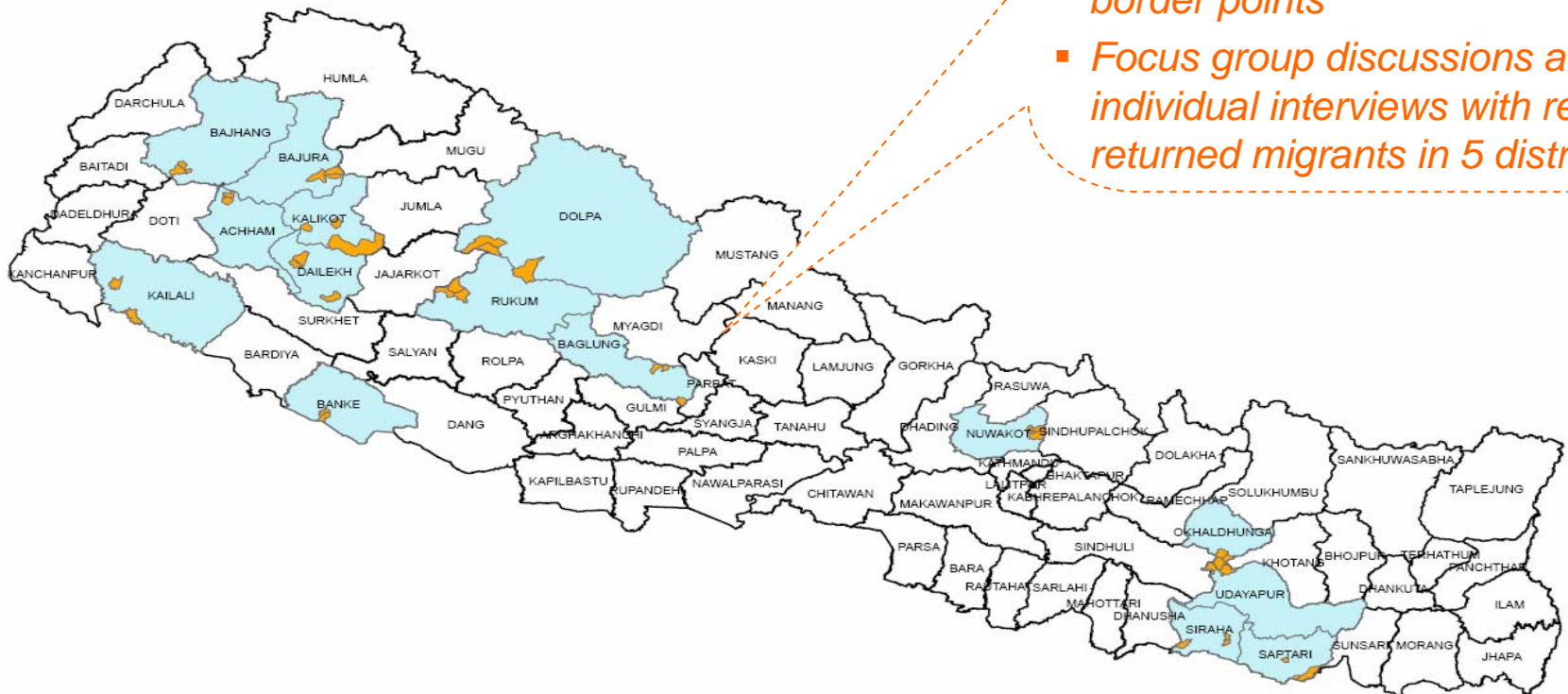
- Remittances are integral to both economic development and macro economic stability:
 - official remittance flows alone equate to over US\$ 1.6 billion per year¹
 - remittances make up some 15% of Gross Domestic Product
- Official remittances have increased 10 fold in the past 7 years
- Increases are largely attributable to higher earnings in Middle Eastern countries by wealthier migrants

1. True size of remittances believed to be much larger

Migrant household study – methodology overview

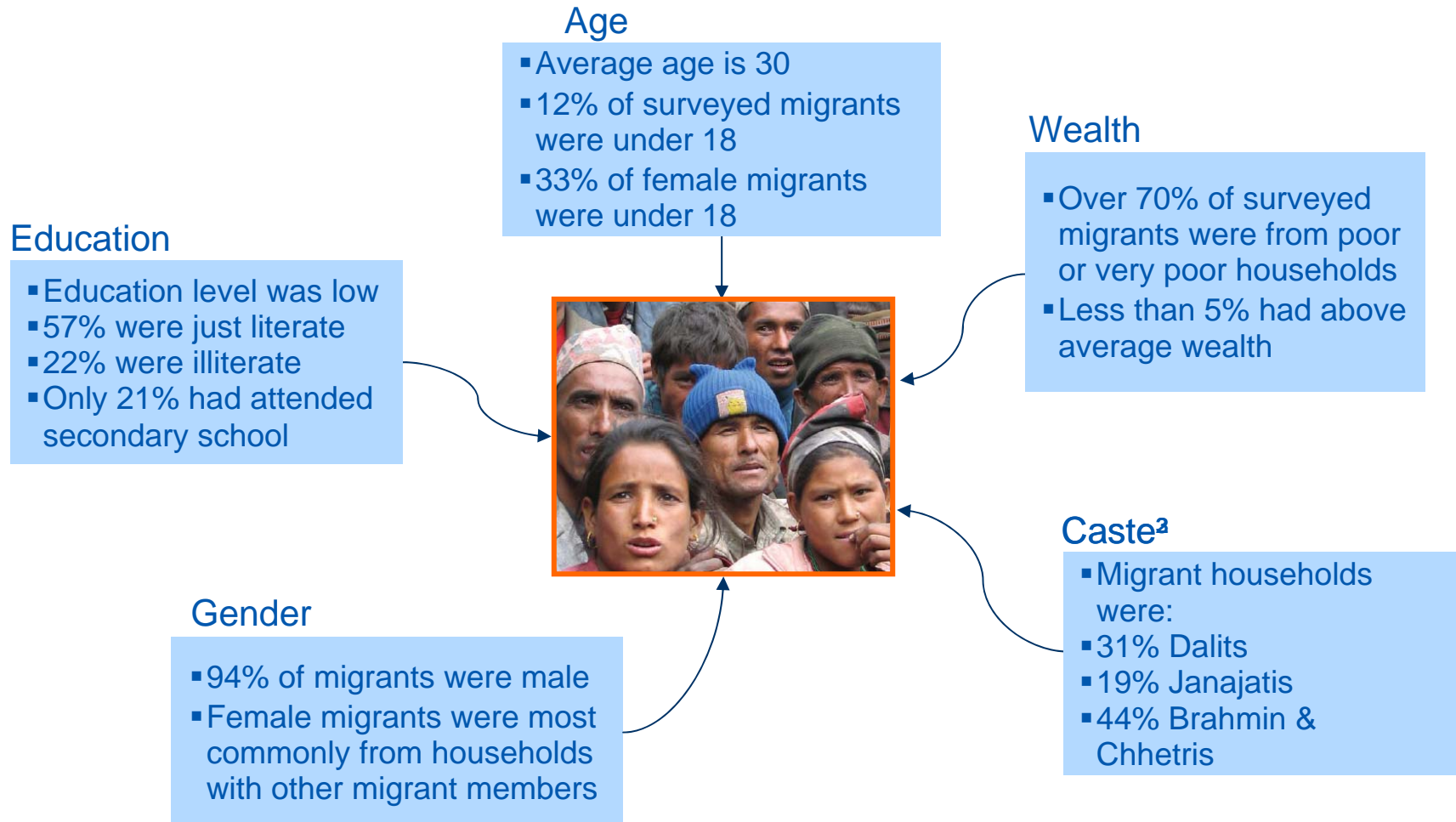
- **Passage to India** consolidates background research on migration with an extensive migrant household and border crossing study
- The study particularly focused on vulnerable and commonly food insecure communities

- Survey's and focus groups held across 40 VDCs in 15 districts
- 10-15 households per VDC
- 450 household interviews
- Border point survey at 11 Indian border points
- Focus group discussions and individual interviews with recently returned migrants in 5 districts



Information on who migrates, as revealed through the migrant household study

- Migration is now so common in Nepal that it involves 25% of the adult male population¹, from around 44 % of households²



1. Source: Nepal Living Standards Survey (2003/04)

2. Source: WFP's Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis Study (September 2005)

3. Due to the relationship between caste and region, this survey can not be considered representative of all regions

Why people migrate

- Food shortages and lack of employment are by far the two most important reasons for migration among the surveyed population
- Lack of access to food is especially important to the very poor, poor and below average wealth groups, but is not a reason for people with above average wealth to migrate

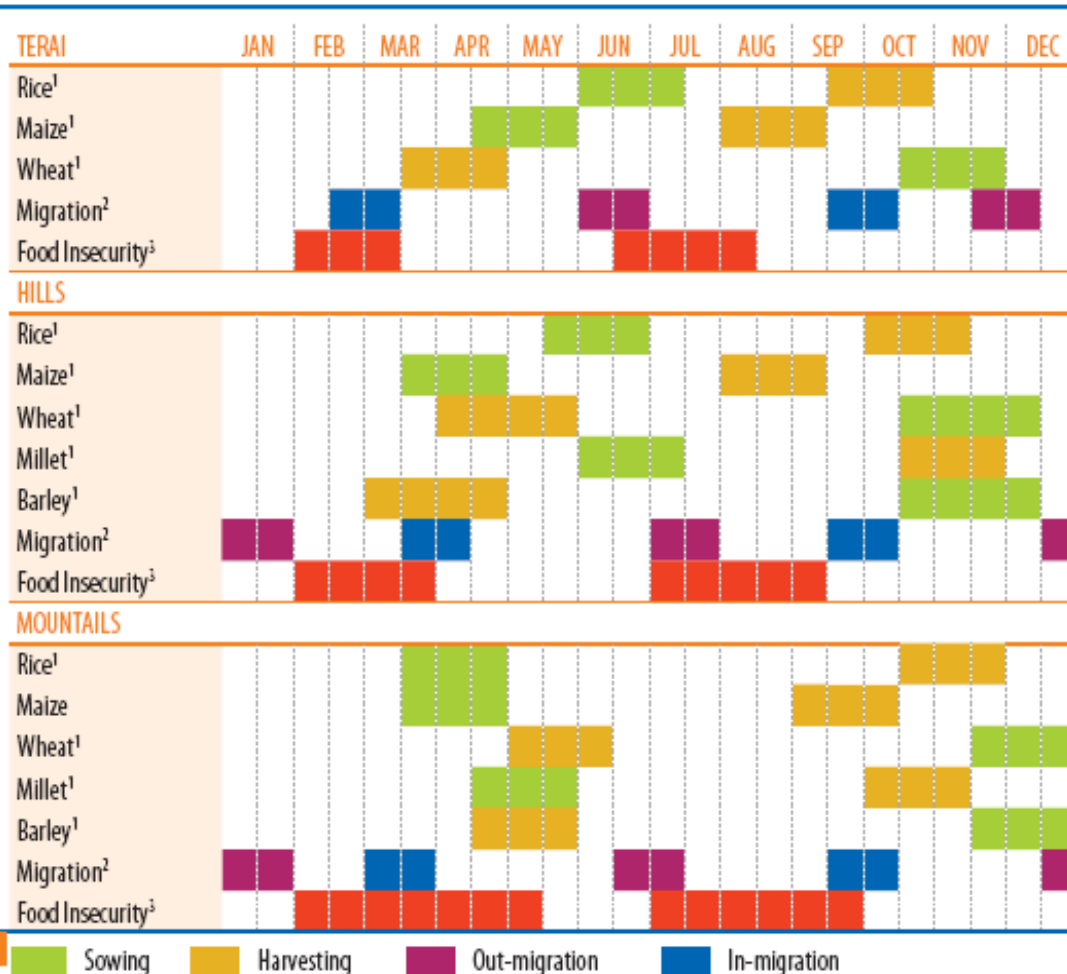
TABLE 10 Reasons for Migration

REASONS FOR MIGRATION	TOTAL		WEALTH CATEGORY							
	NO.	%	VERY POOR		POOR		AVERAGE		ABOVE AVERAGE	
			NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Food shortage	57	29.84	24	36.92	25	34.25	8	21.62	-	-
Lack of employment	99	51.83	28	43.08	30	41.10	26	70.27	15	93.75
Natural disaster	9	4.71	4	6.15	4	5.48	1	2.70	-	-
Conflict and bandhs	2	1.05	-	-	1	1.37	-	-	1	6.25
Need for additional income	15	7.85	5	7.69	9	12.33	1	2.70	-	-
Debt	5	2.62	1	1.54	4	5.48	-	-	-	-
Others	4	2.09	3	4.62	-	-	1	2.70	-	-
Total	191	100.00	65	100.00	73	100.00	37	100.00	16	100.00

Source: Household Survey (December 2007)

Why people migrate – seasonal migration

TABLE 12 Main Months of Cropping, Migration and Food Insecurity, by Ecological Zone



'If a migrant doesn't return in time for sowing, he may as well be dead'
(Local Jumli saying)

Data sources: [1] FAO/WFP, Special Report, Food Security Assessment Mission to Nepal; [2] Focus group discussions (March 2008); [3] WFP Nepal, Food Security Bulletins

Why people migrate – 64% of households which experienced a shock had a family member migrate

“There were so many problems at home. There were three consecutive years of drought. Then a bullock died. I also got married. We had to buy food, which is expensive. My parents became sick and the cost of medicines was very high. We were poor, so every time one of these problems came our way, we had to take out a loan to pay for it. We had debts of Nprs 35,000... There was nothing I could do, but leave for India.” - Santosh Nepali (A 29 year old male from Nuwakot 6, Kudari VDC, Jumla)



The path of the migrant – choice of country destination

- The choice of country destination is influenced heavily by cost and the experiences of other known migrants
- India offers the least financial outlay, flexible travel, and established job markets
- Countries other than Nepal and India offer the most financial reward for migrants, but are unaffordable for the poor

TABLE 14 Average Cost of Migration, by Destination

MIGRATION	COST (NRS)
Within Nepal	3,750
To India	2,553
To a third country	89,847

Source: Household Survey (December 2007)

The path of the migrant – choice of destination within India

- Destinations in India are determined by proximity to border locations, established migration patterns, and by the pull of major local economies

Example Migrant Routes

Routes through Gaddachauki



Routes through Sunauli



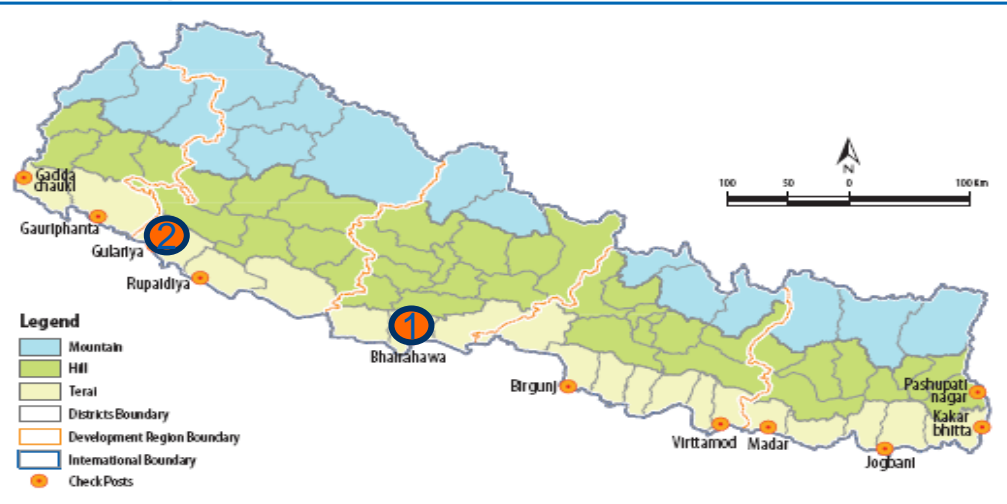
Routes through Kakarvitta



Source: Border Point Survey

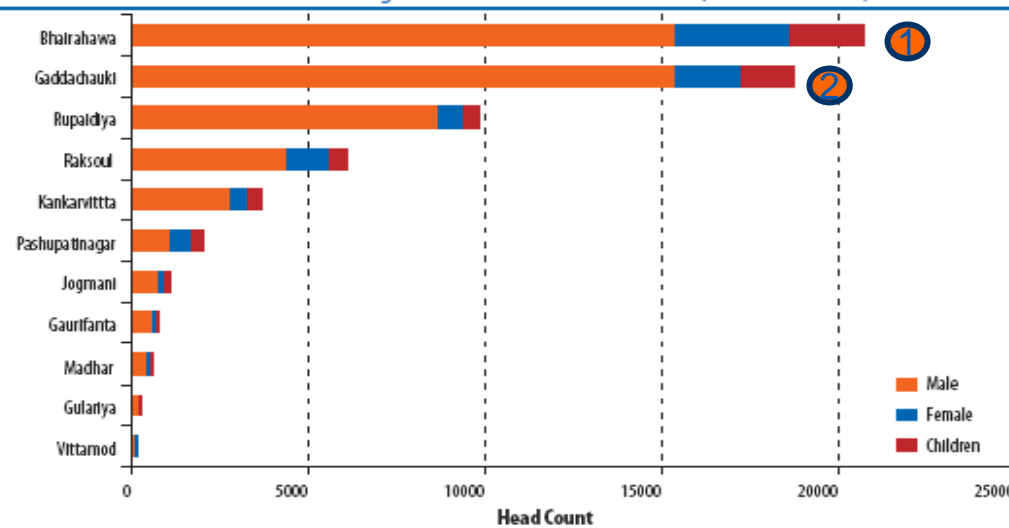
The path of the migrant – route from Nepal into India

MAP 3 Surveyed Border Points



- The most popular border crossings for migrant workers are, Bhairahawa (over 20,000 per week) and Gaddachauki (over 18,000 per week)
- Choice of border is largely based on proximity to home location
- More than 75% of migrants travel to and from their destination in groups
- Around 80% of migrants reach their destination within 2 days

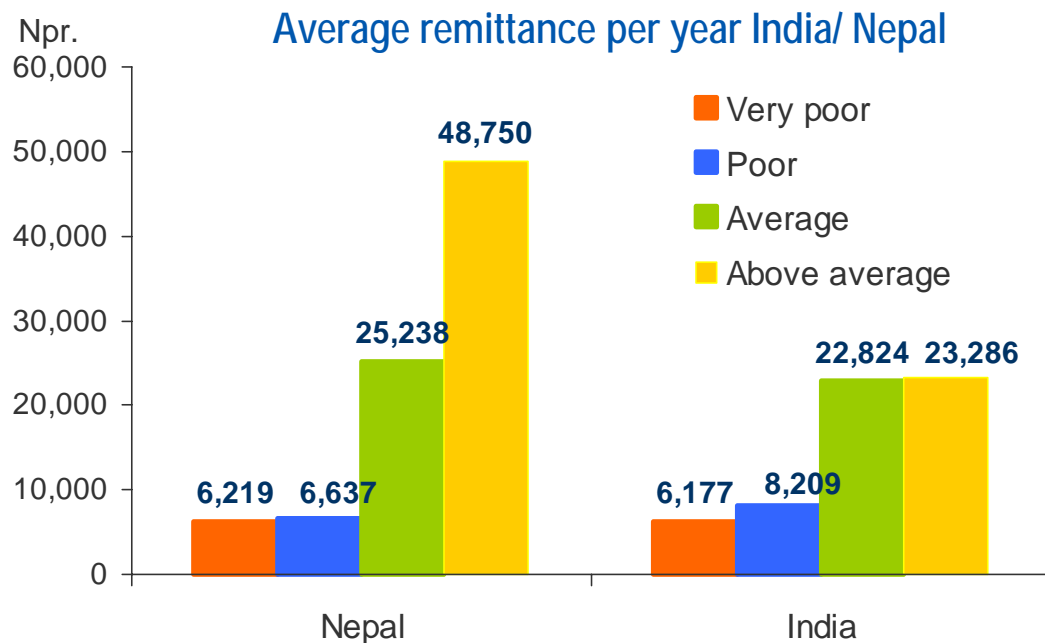
FIGURE 10 Number of Outbound Migrants Within One Week Period (December 2007)



Source: Border Point Survey (October and December 2007)

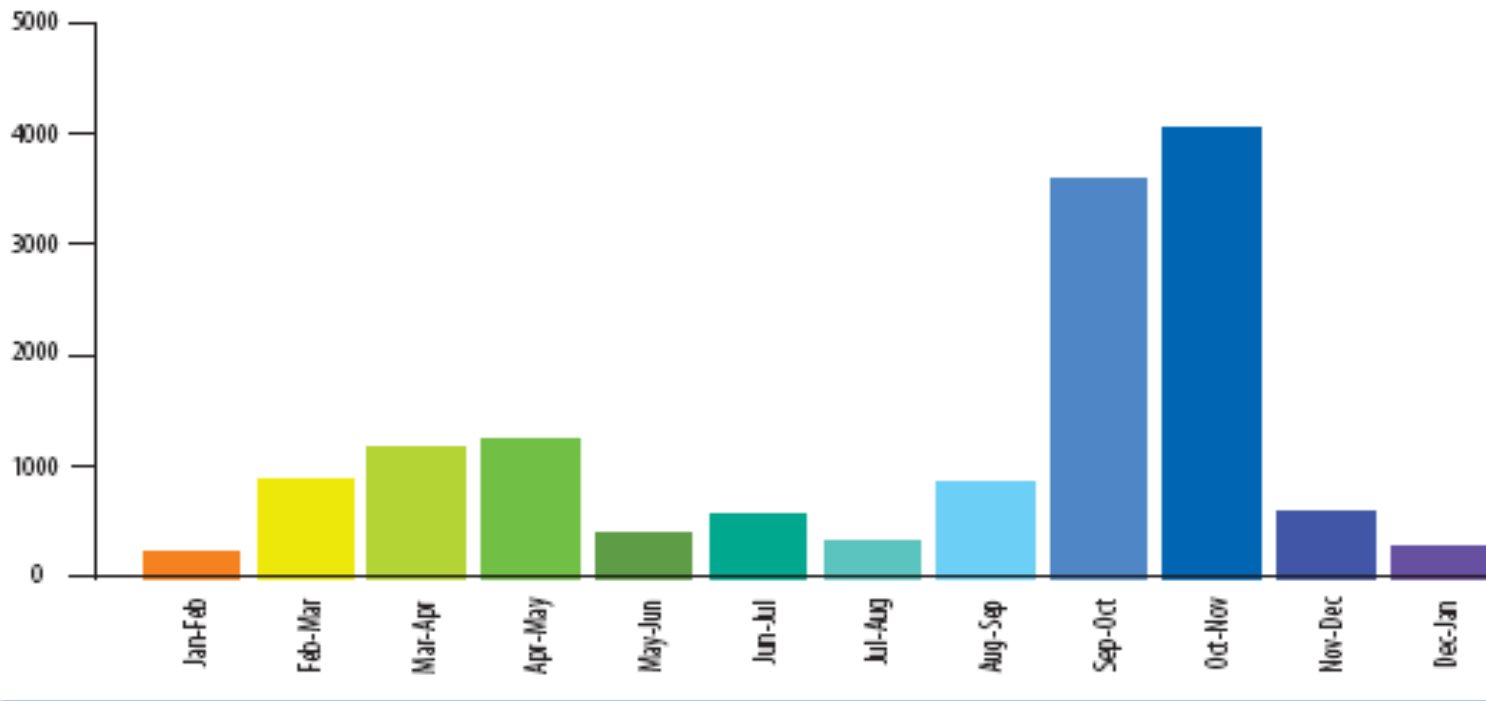
Benefits of migration - a household level perspective

- Remittances were one of the predominant reasons for the fall in poverty from 42% 1995/96 to 31% in 2003/04
- However, household remittance levels vary greatly
- Higher remittances appear positively correlated with skills, education and employability
- Around 70% of interviewed migrants referred to other benefits from migration, including an improved social status, improved skills, new business connections and better patterns of nutrition



Benefits of migration - other variations in household remittance flows

FIGURE 16 Remittances Received by Households from Migrants in India, by Month



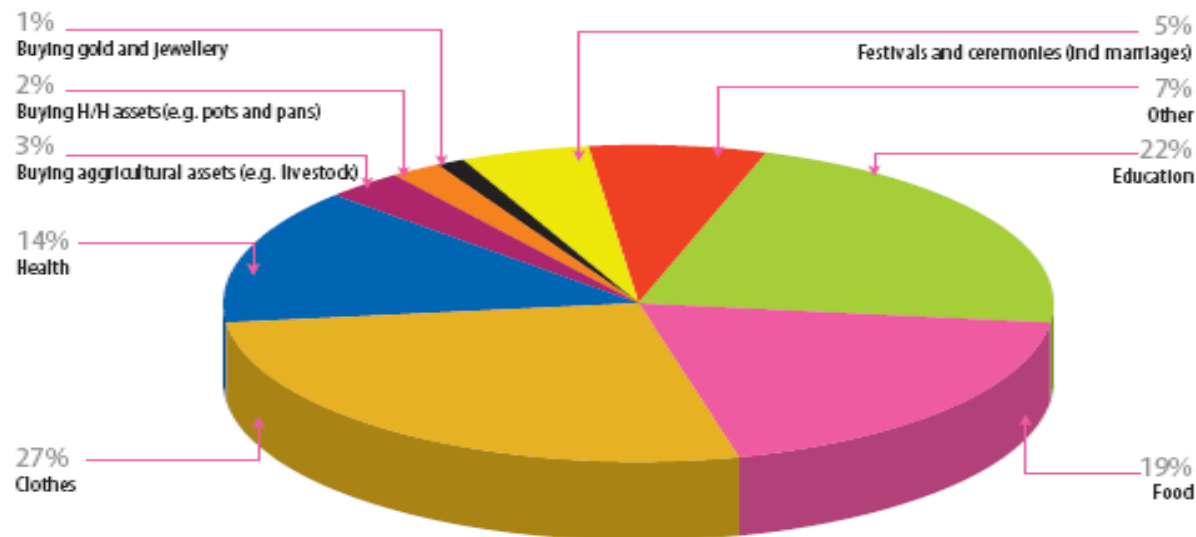
Source: Household Survey (December 2007)

Seasonality of remittance flows is largely due to the common method of carrying money home, and migrants tend to return home around festival periods

Benefits of migration - how households spend remittances

- Fewer than 5% of migrant households were able to use remittances for savings or accumulation of assets
- In kind remittances tend to be clothes and basic foodstuff
- This emphasises the importance of migration as a livelihood strategy
- Respondents stated that non-food essentials must be bought and migration is the only option, as the local economies do not generate sufficient cash

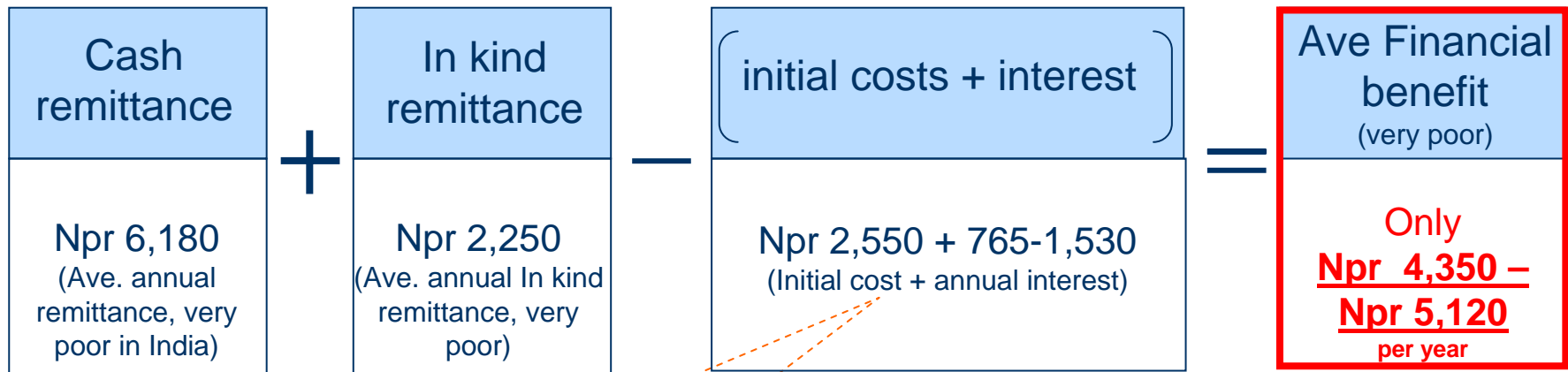
FIGURE 17 Households' Use of Remittances



Source: Household Survey (December 2007)

Livelihood benefits vs. financial costs of migration for the poorest and generally least skilled migrants

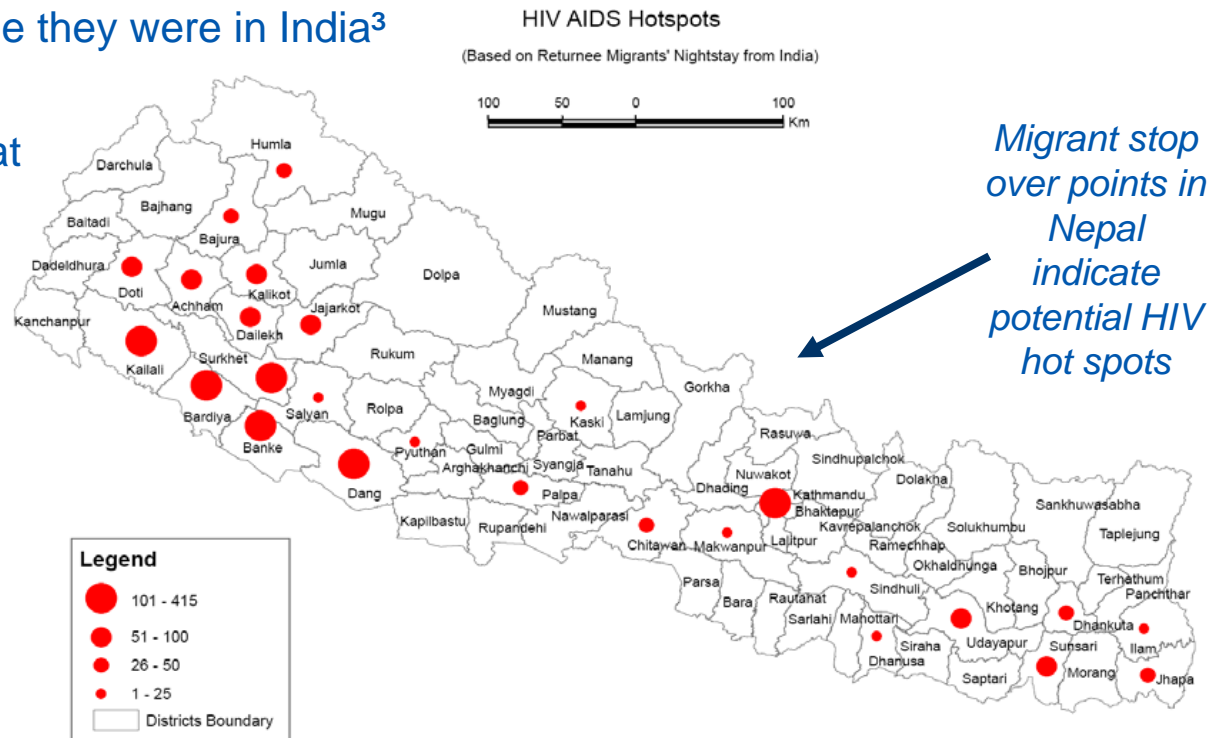
- For many poor and very poor migrants the main benefit reported in the survey was reduced burden on family food stocks rather than remittances



Over 90% of the very poor, and 67% of the poor borrow from money lenders to finance migration, interest rates grossly exceed the bounds of fair profit, focus group discussions suggest the typical range is from 30 to 60%

Migration and HIV/AIDS risk

- A HIV epidemic resulting from increased migration is a very real threat
- In 2007, about 41% of estimated HIV cases in Nepal were estimated to be labour migrants²
- A 2006 UNAIDS study found that 27% of returned migrants in the Far- and Mid-Western districts, had sex with a sex worker while they were in India³
- Surveys of returned migrants indicated that 15% had never heard of HIV



1. Source: Information from district health offices, Accham and Dailekh

2. Source: Discussion with UNAIDS for this report

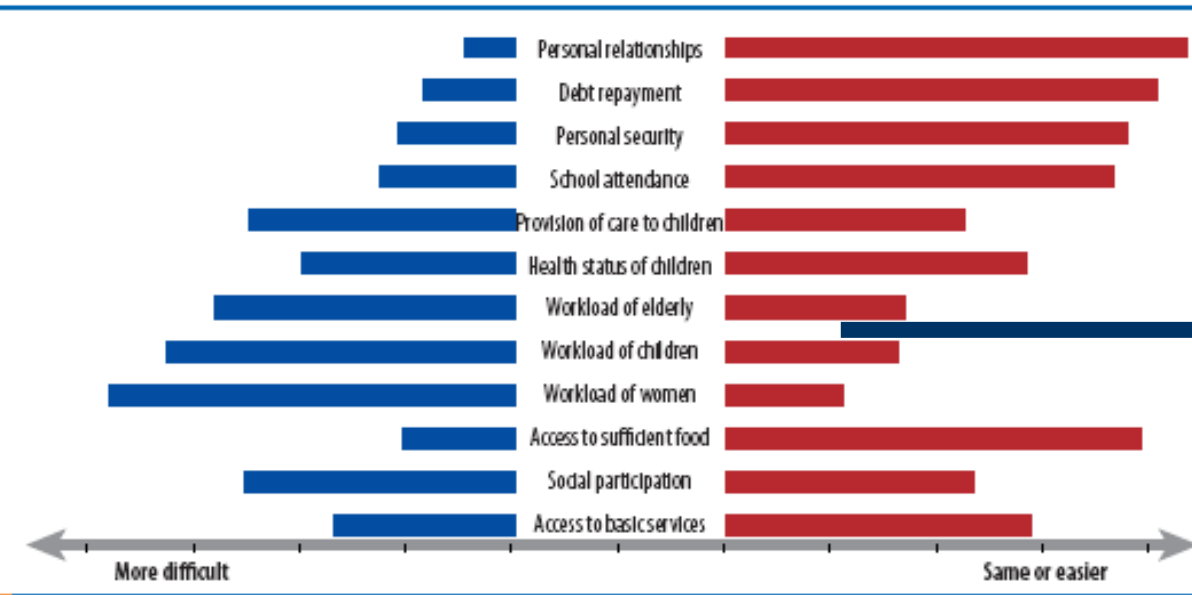
3. Source: Family Health International, Nepal (August 2006): *Integrated Bio-Behavioural Survey among Male Labour Migrants in 11 Districts in Western and Mid-Far Western Regions of Nepal.*

Social implications

- The psychological impact of migration on household members was highlighted through focus group discussions
 - Reduced stability of relationship between husband and wife and absent parent and child
 - Significant stress to wives caused by reliance on uncertain remittances
 - Difficulties with social relationships and community interactions experienced by children

Average length of absence for a migrant worker is 5 months

FIGURE 18 Social Impact of Migration



Source: Household Survey (December 2007)

Household members are faced with the extra work load left by the migrant, plus the financial burden of having paid their journey

Broader Implications and Recommendations

- Migration should be integrated into WFP needs assessments, programming, targeting and timing.
- Nutrition based programmes targeting vulnerable women and children should be extended
- Skills-based training programmes to create additional sources of income through off-farm activities and/ or to improve remittances and conditions as a migrant
- HIV/AIDS education and preventions efforts should be increased
- Extend access to micro-credit
- Introduce labour intensive food or cash for work programme to reduce dependency on migration
- Develop food or cash for work programmes sensitive to the burden on women