

ABROAD MIGRATION INTENTION AMONG NURSING STUDENTS OF SELECTED NURSING COLLEGES OF THE KASKI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Background: Nepal has a long history of nurses migrating abroad, with an estimated 10,000 nurses leaving the country annually. The United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, and Canada are the primary destinations for Nepali nurses seeking better economic opportunities and quality of life. This study aims to explore the intention of nursing students enrolled in pre-registered nursing programs in selected colleges in Kaski District to migrate abroad for employment.

Methods: The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design and selected four colleges out of seven using a simple random sampling technique. The study included only PCL nursing 3rd year and B.Sc. nursing 4th year students, with a total of 164 nursing students enrolled through simple random sampling. Data was collected using a self-developed, structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), version 16. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data in accordance with the study's objectives.

Results: This study found that the mean age of the respondents was 20.22 ± 2.04 years, with 95.7% of them being female. Additionally, 93.3% of the respondents expressed an intention to migrate abroad, with only 6.7% of nurses not willing to do so. Furthermore, 30.1% of the respondents preferred Australia as their destination. The study also revealed that a majority of respondents from low socioeconomic backgrounds were planning to migrate abroad, with 54.9% citing responsibility towards family as a major reason for their migration preference. The study also found a statistically significant relationship between intention to migrate abroad and marital status ($p=0.021$) as well as monthly family income ($p=0.028$).

Conclusions: The study found that a large majority of nursing students expressed a desire to migrate, with Australia being the most popular destination. The main reasons for this intention were a sense of responsibility towards their families and the prospect of higher salaries. Additionally, the study revealed that nursing students who were younger, unmarried, and from lower socioeconomic backgrounds were more likely to have intentions of migrating abroad.

Keywords: Abroad, intention, migration, nurses

INTRODUCTION

Human resources for health are one of the most important components of any country's healthcare system, as the quality of healthcare delivery is primarily determined by the performance of providers.¹ Health workers, like workers in other industries, tend to go where the working conditions are the best. Income is a major motivator for migration, but it is not the only one. Other reasons include increased job satisfaction, career opportunities, management and governance quality, and a shift away from political conflicts, war, and the threat of violence

in the workplace.² According to a World Health Organization report, the migration of healthcare workers has closely followed general trends in international migration.³⁻⁵ Nurses have traditionally migrated in search of professional development opportunities that are not available in their home countries. Nurses tend to migrate in search of higher pay, better working conditions, higher living standards, and personal safety.⁷ Reasons for out-migration, also known as "push" factors, primarily include a poor working environment, heavy workloads, and lack of scheduling flexibility, promotion opportunities, work incentives, and remuneration.

Economic insecurity in some developing countries leads to underfunded healthcare systems, which in turn drives a healthcare workforce exodus. These factors, along with a lack of professional development, are driving this movement because they create vulnerability in the health workforce. This allows developed countries to profit from such insecurity by offering desirable "pull factors" like higher wages and working conditions, as well as opportunities for advancement and benefits. Migration has the greatest negative impact on donor countries due to the loss of skilled personnel as well as economic investment in nursing education, in contrast, recipient countries benefit because they receive skilled nurses who can enter the workforce with the proper preparation and training.⁸ The downside of this phenomenon is the shortage of skilled healthcare professionals in the country leading to inadequacy in the delivery of quality nursing care.⁷

Every year, 250,000 young people are reported to leave Nepal in search of better living conditions, employment, higher income, education, an enticing Western lifestyle, stability, and security, all of which our country appears incapable of providing.⁹ Similarly, from 2011 to 2019, the number of Nepalese students traveling abroad for higher education increased sevenfold. More than 300,000 Nepalese students are enrolled in universities around the world, according to the Nepal Education, Science, and Technology Immigration.⁹ According to Das, the Chief of Nepal's Foreign Education Department, the exact number of Nepali students who applied for permission to study abroad in 2019 was 323,972.¹⁰ According to Nepal Nursing Council records, between 2002 and 2011, a total of 3461 nurses migrated abroad. From 2011 to 2013, the number increased to 4155.¹¹ Nepal was found to have 0.50 nurses per 1,000/population. This represents 0.67 doctors and nurses per 1,000/population, which is significantly less than the WHO recommendation of 2.3 doctors, nurses, and midwives per 1,000/population.¹¹ Rather than opening vacancies, the government is sending licensed nurses to foreign lands. Nepal government is also planning to send 10,000 nurses to the UK.¹²

Although there have been efforts to understand the causative factors associated with the migration of nurses, the root cause of the migration of nurses is not well understood.³ A nation like Nepal must curb or minimize this migration as it means losing valuable human resources. To bring up effective interventions, it is important to understand the factors that impact migration. So, the main objective of this study is to pinpoint the factors that contribute to the migration of nurses and assess an overview of abroad migration

intention of nursing students enrolled in pre-registered nursing programs in selected colleges of Kaski district, Nepal.

METHODS

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted to investigate the intention to migrate abroad and the factors influencing migration among nursing colleges in the Kaski district of Gandaki province, Nepal. A sampling frame was developed from seven nursing colleges affiliated with different universities and CTEVT (Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training), and four nursing colleges were randomly selected using the lottery method. The study focused on 180 students in the PCL nursing 3rd year and B.Sc. nursing 4th year across these four colleges. The sample size was calculated based on a population proportion (p) of 70% (Thapa and Shrestha, 2017) with a 7% error, resulting in a calculated sample size of 164. A total of 164 samples were selected using a simple random sampling method. Each of the 180 slips of paper had either "included in the study" or "not included in the study" written on them, and these were stored in an indistinguishable container. Eligible students were asked to randomly select a slip of paper from the container without looking. Those who pulled a slip labeled "included in the study" were enrolled in the research.

Self-developed, structured questionnaires were used to collect data. The instruments consist of four parts: Part I consists of socio-demographic data, which consists of 12 items. Part II: was related to general information on migration intentions. Part III consists of factors influencing abroad migration. Pre-testing was done on a total of 16 students PCL in the third year of Birgunj Nursing Campus in Birgunj. The ethical permission was taken from Research Management Cell of Birgunj Nursing Campus. Administrative permission was obtained from a selected nursing college in the Kaski district after explaining the objectives of the study. Informed written consent was taken from the respondent. The collected data was used for study purposes only. The confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were maintained throughout the study.

The data was collected from the date 2079/09 /07 to 2079/09 /21. Data was edited, revised, categorized, coded, and organized. It was entered into an Excel sheet and transformed into a statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 16. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics for demographic information (frequency, median, mean, standard deviation, and percentage) and inferential statistics (chi-square) to find out the association between dependent and independent variables. The findings were presented in a table.

RESULTS

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents n= 164

Characteristics	Number	Percent
Age (in years)		
15-19	81	49.4
20-24	80	48.8
25-29	2	1.2
30-34	1	0.6
Mean±SD (20.22±2.04) years		
Sex		
Female	157	95.7
Male	7	4.3
Religion		
Hindu	133	81.1
Buddhist	26	15.9
Muslim	2	1.2
Kirat	2	1.2
Christian	1	0.6
Ethnicity		
Brahmin /Chhetri	70	42.7
Janajati	75	45.7
Dalit	17	10.4
Muslim	2	1.2
Marital status		
Married	14	8.5
Unmarried	150	91.5
Family Type		
Nuclear	116	70.7
Joint	48	29.2

Table 1 shows that Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, almost half (49.4%) were in the age group 15 to 19 years followed by 20 to 24 years 48.8% and the least was 30-34 years 0.6% (Mean ± SD was (20.22±2.04). Similarly, almost all (95.7%) respondents were female, and only (4.3%) respondents were male. Regarding Religion, the majority of respondents (81.1%) were Hindu similarly, only (0.6%) were Christian. Concerning ethnicity, the highest number of respondents (45.7%) belonged to Janajati. Almost all (91.5%) respondents were unmarried, followed by only (8.5%) being married. Most of the families had nuclear (70.7%) and (29.2%) were joint families.

Table 2. Academy program and parental education status of respondents n=164

Characteristics	Number	Percent
Academy program		
PCL 3 rd year	133	81.1
B.Sc. nursing 4 th year	31	18.9
The education level of mother		
No education	8	4.9
Basic education (1-8)	53	32.3
Secondary (9-10)	59	36
Higher Secondary (11-12)	36	22
More than higher secondary (Bachelor and above)	8	4.9
Education level of the father		
No education	3	1.8
Basic education (1-8)	28	17.1
Secondary (9-10)	60	36.6
Higher Secondary (11-12)	47	28.7
More than higher secondary (Bachelor and above)	26	15.9

Table 2 reveals that respondent's academy program and parental education characteristics status, the maximum number of respondents were studying PCL nursing in 3rd year (81.1%) and the remaining 18.9% were studying B. Sc. nursing in 4th year. Similarly, more than the first quarter (36%) of the respondent's mothers obtained secondary education. Concerning the father's education, less than one-fourth (15.9%) obtained more than higher secondary (bachelor and above) level.

Table 3. Parents' occupation and economic status of respondents n=164

Characteristics	Number	Percent
Mother occupation		
Homemaker	102	62.2
Labor	7	4.3
Business	38	23.2
Government employee	12	7.3
Abroad employee	5	3
Father occupation		
Farmer	11	6.7
Business	93	56.7
Government employee	20	12.2
Abroad employee	40	24.4
Monthly family income		
Enough to 6 months	72	43.9
Enough to 1 year	51	31.1
Enough to 2years	27	16.5
Enough to > 2 years	14	8.5

Table 3 shows the parent's occupation & economic status of respondents, more than half of the (62.2 %) respondents' mothers were homemakers, 23.2% were involved in business and the remaining 3% were abroad employees. Similarly, more than half of the (56.7%) respondent's father's occupation was business and less than one quarter (24.4%) were abroad employees. Similarly, less than half (43.9%) of respondents had enough income for 6 months, (31.1%) had enough income for 1 year, (16.5%) had enough income for 2 years, and only 8.5% had enough income for more than 2 years.

Table 4. Respondents' choice of nursing carrier, intention, planning purpose towards abroad migration

n=164

Characteristics	Number	Percent
Choice of nursing carrier		
Self-interest	69	42.1
For abroad migration	45	27.4
For caring for sick people	22	13.4
For earning purpose	18	11
Family pressure	6	3.7
Peer's influences	4	2.4
Intent to abroad migrate		
Yes	153	93.3
No	11	6.7
Started planning for migration(n=153)		
During nursing education	58	37.9
After nursing education	50	32.7
Before nursing education	45	29.4
Abroad migration planning		
1-3 year	101	66
Within year	35	22.9
3-5 year	15	9.8
After 5 years	2	1.3
Purpose of migration abroad*		
Better job and career opportunities	117	43.5
Further Study	97	36.1
Higher living standard	25	9.3
Family expectation	25	9.3
Modern facilities	5	1.9

*** Multiple responses**

Table 4 depicts the respondents' choice of nursing career, intention, and planning purpose towards abroad

migration, almost half of the respondents (42.1%) were self-interested in this profession, while 27.4% chose this career with the ambition of abroad migration. The table also illustrates that almost all (93.3%) intended to migrate abroad while only 6.7% of nurses were not willing for abroad migration. Among the respondents, 37.9% started planning to go abroad during their nursing course. Similarly, the main purpose of abroad migration was better job and career opportunities 43.5% and only 1.9% was modern facilities.

Table 5. Respondents' intention regarding prefer country, settlement planning & its reason n=153

Characteristics	Number	Percent
Prefer Country		
Australia	46	30.1
United States America	39	25.5
United Kingdom	37	24.2
Canada	31	20.3
Settlement Planning		
Temporary	95	62.1
Permanent	58	37.9
Reason to prefer country (*)		
High salary	109	24.4
Better working condition	94	21.1
Family future security	90	20.2
Family expectation	41	9.2
Personal freedom	37	8.3
Modern facilities	36	8.1
Curiosity to practices	23	5.2
Political stability	13	2.9
Peer's influences	3	0.7

*** Multiple responses**

Table 5 illustrates the respondent's intention regarding preferred country settlement planning and the reason to prefer a country. More than one-fourth (30.1%) prefer Australia, the United States of America is preferred by 25.5%, and the United Kingdom is preferred by 24.2%. Meanwhile, the majority of the respondents (62.1%) are planning for temporary settlement while the remaining 37.9% were planning for their permanent settlement abroad. The major reason for preferring the country to migrate was high salary.

Table 6. Respondents' preferred work setting, trend, impact and control measures for abroad migration n=153

Characteristics	Number	Percent
Prefer work-setting		
Hospital	69	45.1
Nursing Home	53	34.6
Home Care of the elderly person	26	17
Social Welfare home	3	2
Training Company	2	1.4
Trend of abroad migration is good		
Yes	99	64.7
No	54	35.3
Intention to return to own country		
Yes	118	77.1
No	35	22.9
Trend of abroad migration should be followed by nursing students		
Yes	90	58.8
No	63	41.2
Impact of abroad migration of nursing students to Nepal		
Shortage of the skilled manpower	118	77.1
Increase in dependency	15	9.8
Increase in remittance	15	9.8
Others	5	3.3
Measures to control abroad migration from Nepal*		
Providing better salaries and wages	140	31.5
Providing better employment opportunities	114	25.6
Providing a better working environment	94	21.1
Family future security	52	11.7
Political stability	45	10.1

*** Multiple responses**

Table 6 portrays the respondents' intentions regarding preference workplace, trends, impact, and control measures for abroad migration. Among the respondents, 45.1% prefer to work in a hospital, while (34.6%) preferred a nursing home and (17%) prefer home care for an elderly person. 64.7% of respondents said that the trend of abroad migration should be followed, while (35.5%) of respondents are against the trend perspective

of abroad migration. At the same time, more than three-quarters (77.1%) intended to return to Nepal while the rest of the respondents (22.9%) had no intention to return. Respondents said that the major impact of abroad migration of nursing students from Nepal will be the shortage of skilled manpower (77.1%) in the country and 31.5% of respondents said that by providing better salaries and wages government to control abroad migration.

Table 7. Distribution of influencing factors (Push Factors) for abroad migration n=153

Characteristics	Number	Percent
Influence of country's status*		
Low salary	131	39
Non-availability of job	74	22
Political instability	64	19
Corruption in country	40	11.9
Non-freedom of expression	27	8
Outlook on environment condition *		
Lack of occupational security	85	37

Characteristics	Number	Percent
Dominant from senior	62	27
Lack of provision of promotions	45	19.6
Poor provision of in-service training and workshop	38	16.5
Personal condition *		
Personal ambition	66	31
Curiosity to practices	63	29.6
Lack of modern facilities	52	24.4
Lack of self-recognition	32	15
Family and relatives condition *		
Responsibility towards family	112	54.9
Family expectation	60	29.4
Family influences	19	9.3
Peer influences	13	6.4

*** Multiple responses**

Table 7 depicts the distribution of influencing factors (push factors) for abroad migration, where more than half (54.9%) of respondents said that responsibility towards family was the push factor for abroad migration whereas only a few respondents 6.45% said that peer influences were push factors for abroad migration.

Table 8. Respondent's opinion on pull factors towards abroad migration

n=153

Variables	Number	Percent
Pull Factors *		
Better job and career opportunities	142	22.4
High salary	122	19.2
Better working condition	101	15.9
Family future security	79	12.4
Higher living standard	74	11.7
Personal freedom	47	7.4
Modern facilities	45	7.1
Political stability	25	3.9

*** Multiple responses**

Table 8 displays that respondents' opinion on the main pull factors towards abroad migration, better job and career opportunities attracted 22.4 % of respondents, while only 3.9% of respondents were attracted towards abroad migration due to political stability.

Table 9. Association between the intention of abroad migration and selected socio-demography characteristics

n=164

Characteristics	Intention of abroad migration		χ^2	p-value
	Yes	No		
Marital Status				
Married	11 (78.6%)	3 (21.4%)	5.301	0.021
Unmarried	142 (94.7%)	8 (5.3%)		
Monthly Family Income				
Enough to 6 months	71 (98.6%)	1 (1.4%)	9.112	0.028
Enough to 1 year	44 (86.3%)	7 (13.7%)		
Enough to 2years	24 (88.9%)	3 (11.1%)		
Enough to >2 years	14 (100%)	-		

χ^2 =Chi-square test, significance at $p<0.05$

Table 9 displays that there is a statistically significant association between the intention of abroad migration with marital status ($\chi^2=5.301^a$, $p=0.021$), and monthly family income ($\chi^2=9.112^a$, $p=0.028$).

DISCUSSION

The study showed that there is a different response from respondents regarding their choice of nursing career where less than half (42.1%) of the respondents are self-interested while less than one-third (27.4%) choose the career with the ambition of abroad migration meanwhile, 11% respondent choose for self-earning. Almost all (93.3%) respondents intend to migrate abroad, while only 6.7 % of respondents are not willing for abroad migration. Other study findings conducted in Nepal are consistent with these study findings. A study conducted by Thapa & Shrestha, in 2017 found that 44.3% of nursing students prefer to migrate abroad after completing their study.¹³ Another study conducted in Nepal found almost all (92.5%) expressed the intention to migrate abroad.¹⁴ Similarly, a study conducted in Jordanian result showed that 85% of respondents intended to pursue residency and 63% fellowship abroad.¹⁵

The present study, it portrayed that different countries are preferred by respondents where less than one-third (30.1%) prefer to Australia, more than one quarter (25.5%) prefer to the United States of America, 24.2% of respondents prefer to the United Kingdom and only 20.3% prefer Canada. Meanwhile, more than half (62.1%) of the respondents are planning for temporary settlement while the remaining 37.9% are planning for their permanent settlement abroad. A study conducted by Kadel and Bhandari, (2019) showed that more than half (56.4%) of respondents prefer to county Australia and 25.5% of respondents preferred the United States, had emerged as the top migration destination & with only 5.5% wanting to relocate to the United Kingdom.¹⁶ Findings by Omar et al.,(2022) reported that there were mainly three destinations which are USA 37.4%, UK 22.3%, and Germany 16.6%.¹⁵

The present study highlighted that more than first quarter (39%) respondents said, due to low salary, 22% of respondents said about non-availability of job, 19% of respondents said about the political instability of the country, 11.9% respondent said about corruption of country and only 8% respondent responded for non-freedom of expression are factors contributing for abroad migration of nurses. Similarly, there are some influencing

factors in the working environment, contributing to migration, these are: lack of occupational security (37%), dominance from seniors (27%), and lack of provision of promotions (19.6%). Some personal factors that also influence nurses' intentions to migrate abroad include personal ambition 31%, curiosity to practice 29.6%, lack of modern facilities 24.4%, etc. The conditions related to family and relatives also influenced for intention to migrate are responsibility towards family 54.9%, family expectation 29.4%, and family influence 9.3% & peer influences on migration 6.4%. Similar influencing factors were reported in the study conducted by Munikar & Thapa, (2018) that the factors causing migration are political instability of the country (90.50%), non-freedom of expression (73.00%), corruption of the country (89.20%), and non-availability of jobs (90.50%).² Similarly, a lack of occupational security (50%), a lack of promotion (68.90%), and a lack of provision of in-service training and workshop (29.70%) are also contributing factors to nurse's intention to migration in abroad.

The present study showed that there is a significant association between the intention to migrate abroad with marital status (p -values = 0.021) and monthly family income (p -values = 0.028). Therefore, the study suggests that there is a meaningful relationship between these variables and the intention to migrate abroad.

These study findings can be generalized to Kaski district of Nepal only. To find out contributing factors of intention to nurses abroad migration, a large scale of study is recommended in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

The study found that younger, unmarried nursing students were more likely to want to migrate abroad. Most of the respondents expressed a desire to move to Australia. The main reasons for wanting to migrate were higher salaries and better working conditions. Factors pushing nurses to migrate included family responsibilities, low salaries, and a lack of job opportunities in Nepal. To prevent this migration, Nepal should focus on improving career development opportunities, salaries, and working environments for nurses. This could help motivate Nepalese nurses to stay in the country.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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