



**Lives, Livelihoods & Diaspora: The Migration  
Experiences & Livelihood Strategies of Professional  
Nepali Migrants & Their Families in the UK**

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PhD

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School of Archaeology, Geography and  
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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions cited from the work of others.

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**Prakash Khanal**

## **DEDICATION**

To my mother **RAMA DEVI KHANAL**, my first teacher.  
She continues to inspire me and remains my great Guru to this day.

## **Acknowledgements**

I consider myself fortunate for having received the opportunity to know and learn from the late Professor Rob Potter, my first supervisor. I did not know him for very long, but I set out on this journey of lifelong learning when he decided to take me as one of his students from his hospital bed in 2010. He also introduced me to his colleague Sally Lloyd-Evans, my second supervisor, who provided her intellectual guidance and support to guide me through the thick and thins of the academic world. I owe her a great debt of gratitude for her thoughtfulness, her attention to detail and her unwavering support without which I would not have succeeded in completing this pedagogic adventure that has made me inquisitive about knowledge in all its manifestations. I would also like to thank all the staff members at the School of Archaeology, Geography and Environmental Sciences (SAGES) for their kind help and support in various capacities.

I would like to give special thanks to my research participants from the Nepali Community, both those who migrated to the UK and continue to live there, as well as those Nepali migrants who have returned to Nepal after living sometime in the UK and other countries in the west. They have shared their experiences as well as details about their personal lives with me; without their support the research would not have been possible.

Finally, I thank my family for their encouragement and patience as I navigated my way through my research, my wife for her professional and emotional support and my sons for their continued confidence in me.

## **ABSTRACT**

This doctoral research is designed around two interrelated aims: Firstly, it aims to explore the livelihood opportunities and strategies of professional first and second generation Nepali migrants and their families in the UK, in order to understand the importance of education, knowledge, social networks and employment in shaping their social mobility and other livelihood outcomes. Secondly, it examines how a small sample of return migrants have transferred their qualifications, knowledge, labour market experiences and social and professional networks to develop new livelihood strategies in Nepal and the research considers how this knowledge transfer may contribute towards the future development prospects of Nepal. Drawing on qualitative in-depth interviews with 40 Nepali participants, 30 residents in the UK and 10 returnees in Nepal, the research draws on livelihoods approaches to explore how the everyday lives and social mobility of professional Nepali migrants are shaped by both tangible improvements in higher education and professional knowledge, as well as more intangible assets, such as entrepreneurship, that have the potential to contribute to Nepali development on return. The research also assesses the important contributions migrants' make towards the future development prospects of Nepal and it concludes with suggestions for further research and recommendations to support the Nepali diaspora. It is hoped that this research will fill a much needed gap in the empirical research and published scholarship on the professional Nepali diaspora community in the UK.

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## Chapter 1

### **Introduction to the Research Agenda**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This thesis explores the livelihood opportunities and strategies of professional Nepali migrants and their families in the UK, in order to understand the importance of education, knowledge, social networks and employment in shaping their social mobility and other livelihood outcomes. Drawing on qualitative in-depth interviews with 40 Nepali participants, 30 residents in the UK and 10 returnees in Nepal, the research draws on livelihoods approaches to explore how the everyday lives and social mobility of professional Nepali migrants are shaped by both tangible improvements in higher education and professional knowledge as well as more intangible assets, such as entrepreneurship, that also have the potential to contribute to Nepali development on return. It also examines how a small sample of return migrants have transferred their qualifications, knowledge, labour market experiences and social and professional networks to develop new livelihood strategies in Nepal and the research considers how this knowledge transfer may contribute towards the future development prospects of Nepal.

In 2020, there are over 70,000 Nepali people residing legally in the UK (ONS 2019). Nepali communities make an important contribution to the functioning of British society and the economy and yet, despite their increasing presence in towns and cities across Britain, very little is known about them and their everyday experiences of living in the UK. Since the 1990s, a culture of migration has gripped Nepali youth and migration has almost become a ‘rite of passage’ or coming of age for two interrelated reasons (Monsutti 2007). Firstly, there is a scarcity of jobs leading to mass unemployment among Nepali youth and secondly, there is increased awareness of the social mobility and economic freedom of returned labour migrants (Kaplan 1982).

It is surprising that in the context of globalisation and increasing international migration, the Nepali people who fought for the British sovereign for over 200 years have only recently increased their presence in the UK. Nepalis were enlisted in the British forces after the Treaty of Sugauli between Britain and Nepal in 1816. According to Hansard, Neil Thorne then

Member of Parliament representing Ilford South, informed the House during a parliamentary session in November 1991 that “there were 500,000 Nepalis in British forces in the World War I and II and over 50,000 of them were either killed or seriously wounded in these two wars”.

There is no mention of migrants of Nepali origin in the UK prior to the census of 2001 (Hampshire County Council 2012). In 2001, there were only 5,943 people recorded to have been born in Nepal (ONS 2001). There were over 60,000 Nepalis living in the UK in 2011 (ONS 2017). The growth of population in England and Wales between 2001 and 2011 has been recorded as largest growth in any 10-year period since censuses began (Simmons 2014). Also, during the census of 2001 and 2011, the proportion of foreign-born residents in England and Wales increased more than in any census over the last two centuries (ibid.).

The population of Nepali people in the UK increased considerably after the 2001 census; especially after the settlement rights regarding British Gurkhas were passed in 2004 allowing those with continuous service of over four years, who retired after 1<sup>st</sup> July 1997 to settle in the UK with their families (Thorp and Woodhouse 2009). Furthermore, the on-going struggle of retired Gurkhas for equal pay and pension took a new turn on 29 April 2009 when the British parliamentarians voted in the favour of the Gurkhas, which compelled the British government to further widen immigration policy that allowed all ex-Gurkhas with more than four years’ service in the British Army to settle in the UK with their families (Thorp and Woodhouse 2009, Pariyar, Shrestha et al. 2014, Bjerre 2017). Thus, the changes in migration policies relating to the Gurkhas between 2004 - 2009 permitted greater residency and pension rights to former Gurkha soldiers and their families, adding to the further expansion of Nepali community in the UK. Furthermore, political volatility and population displacement due to prolonged Maoist insurgency in Nepal between 1996 to 2006 also witnessed increase in number of Nepali asylum seekers in the UK (Thorp and Woodhouse 2009, Hampshire County Council 2012, ONS 2017).

The Nepali population in the UK grew over 63 percent between 2004 and 2009 becoming one of the fastest growing non-EU migrant community (ONS 2017, p 10). More recently the figures released by the ONS between July 2018 to June 2019, shows that the number of people of Nepal origin born in the UK and Wales has risen to 70,000 (ONS 2017, ONS 2019). It is predicted that the Nepali community will continue to grow by the next census as the British

Army has increased the number of recruits from Nepal for the last few years, which is stated in the British Army website. There is great ethnic, religious, cultural and political diversity among the Nepali diaspora in the UK but, in the hearts and minds of the British people, they exist mainly as the serving and retired Gurkha soldiers' (O'Donoghue 2009, Sleight 2015). Notwithstanding the importance of the ex-Gurkha's experiences, rare insights into Britain's Nepali communities reveal a more complex and diverse diaspora that includes numerous others; often professional Nepalis seeking further education, work and better opportunities for their family (Gellner 2014, Gellner 2015, Pariyar 2016).

A gradual increase in Nepali population in some boroughs in the UK such as Rushmoor in Hampshire county, has also created some social tension between the local community and the Nepali community. Rushmoor rose to national attention in 2012 when a local parliamentarian wrote to the British prime minister drawing his attention to failing council services due to the gradual rise in the Nepali population from 2 percent to nearly 10 percent within 10 years, especially after 2009 (Hollingshead 2011, Gellner 2014). There is great diversity among the Nepali population in the UK that is reflected in the 400 professional and charitable organisations, over 300 restaurants and hundreds of small businesses that they have established (Gellner 2014, Gellner 2015). Furthermore, there are also organisations belonging to literary groups, musicians/artists, sports, youth groups and students (ibid.).

The UK has been a prime destination for Nepali people seeking new opportunities abroad because of family ties and existing social networks, that scholars such as Massey and Aysa-Lastra describe as an important asset that encourage emigration (Massey and Aysa-Lastra 2011). Their lack of visibility is largely the result of a gap in empirical research and shortcomings in the way official statistics are collected in the UK, this applies also to other communities such as Latinos (McIlwaine, Camilo Cock et al. 2011). As a result, they are underrepresented in much of the contemporary literature that explores the lives of migrant communities in the UK. In this context, this thesis aims to supplement the published research gap on the migration trajectories, livelihoods and everyday experiences of skilled and professional Nepali migrants in the UK.

## **1.2 Livelihood Strategies**

Rural development research in the 1990s explored how household livelihoods were comprised of five primary ‘capitals’ or ‘assets’: human capital, social capital, natural capital, physical and financial capitals (de Haan and Zoomers 2005, Levine 2014). Human capital refers to education, skills, knowledge, good health and the capacity to ‘work hard’, while social capital highlights the importance of social networks, trusting relationships and membership of formal/professional groups. Natural capital includes land or agricultural resources while physical capital refers to effective shelter, and financial capital consists of financial resources, such as savings, that are needed if people want to fulfil their livelihood objectives (Chambers and Conway 1991, Islam and Ryan 2016). In the case of transnational migration (Blunt 2007, Conway and Potter 2009a, Goulbourne, Reynolds et al. 2010), it has been observed that human and social capitals can play more significant roles in shaping livelihood outcomes than others. For example, social capital plays a vital role in meeting livelihood aspirations in countries like the UK because migrants would have difficulty finding work without their social networks. Further research by Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1986, Woolcock 2001) also highlighted the importance of cultural capital, such as cultural norms, behaviours and language for migrant communities in particular.

This thesis explores the achievements of Nepali skilled migrants in the UK in terms of their social mobility and professional advancement, as well as documenting the struggles and challenges they experienced in their daily lives examined through the lens of livelihoods (Bebbington 1999, Ellis 2003, Wigley and Akkoyunlu-Wigley 2006, Scoones 2009, Levine 2014, Tanle 2015), and network theory, one of the most important theories of migration (Massey, Arango et al. 1993, Thieme 2007, Massey and Aysa-Lastra 2011, Poros 2011). In the context of this research, skilled/professional is a broad term that refers to the educational and career status of the primary migrant in the family, as well as their spouse who may have dependent status yet still be categorised as professionally qualified and will subsequently find highly skilled jobs (Kofman, Phizacklea et al. 2000, Kofman 2011).

The research will also examine and evidence the professional capacity of the UK based Nepali diaspora in order to fill a much-needed gap in the data on the Nepali diaspora, which is particularly urgent in the wake of the devastations caused by the 10 year-long Maoist

insurgency and the 2015 earthquake. The former shook the social fabric, economic and developmental foundation of the country, while the later shook the physical foundation causing immense structural and humanitarian loss (Basnett 2009). The thesis will also endeavour to make suggestions as to how the strength and resilience of Nepali communities in the UK could be harnessed to foster future socio-economic development in Nepal through community investment, diaspora volunteering and knowledge transfer either through returned migrants, circular migration or through diaspora organisations.

### **1.3 Diaspora and Development**

Diaspora has been defined in various ways by various scholars. Generally speaking, the people dispersed from their country of birth and settled in a country other than that of their birth, are called the diaspora. Diaspora is also regarded as a section of population of a country living abroad in another community, 'an ethnic community divided by states,' (King and Melvin 2000, Ragazzi 2012), diaspora constitute invisible nations that reside outside their own country (Beine, Docquier et al. 2009). William Safran in 1991 defined the diaspora as, "people who have been dispersed from a "specific 'centre'" to two or more places; continue to hold a "collective memory, vision, or myth" about the original homeland; continue to believe that the original homeland is their "ideal, true" home and dream of returning; believe that they should remain committed to the maintenance or restoration of the original homeland; sustain a strong ethno-communal bond based on that ongoing relationship with the homeland; and maintain a troubled relationship with the wider society, believing that they can never be fully accepted and causing them to remain "partly alienated and insulated" (Safran 1991, p 83). Cohen (1997), agreeing with Safran's definition, argues that the diasporic communities must show a pull, a sense of belonging to their homeland in their memories so that creation of home away from home or even returning back becomes a part of social mobilisation and the mould in which their popular cultures and political attitudes are formed (Cohen 2008, p 4).

The modern-day diaspora, however, is the product of the interrelationship between migration, migrants, host country and home countries and a real or imagined homeland. The desire of the migrants to remain connected to their roots by carrying on with their socio-cultural and religious practices in the country of their settlement, perhaps an imagined nationalism, or a desire to maintain their different identity among several other migrant communities abroad

gives rise to diaspora (Amrith 2011). Amrith (2011) views diaspora as a form of consciousness that arises from the experience of migration and exile, the duality of their existence; their love for their country of origin and settlement, that the migrants gradually develop, gives rise to diaspora (Amrith 2011). The power, importance and influence of the diaspora community continue to amplify in the host countries as they get more integrated in the globalised world (Amelina 2010). The diaspora are competent individuals who know the country well and care about its future, yet have no stake in local vested interests, can function at a proverbial Archimedean lever to trigger and sustain change without necessarily relocating to it or even belonging to a particular diaspora organisation (Kuznetsov 2013, pp 5-6).

I was developing the feasibility study of a Nepali Diaspora Volunteering Programme (NDVP) in the UK in 2007, when I was exposed to Nepali diaspora comprising of professionals such as chartered accountants, doctors, engineers, nurses, teachers, trainers, academics, researchers and serving and retired Gurkha soldiers (Adhikari, Dahal et al. 2012, pp 24-53). The eagerness among these Nepali professionals to pass on their knowledge, skills and experiences to people in Nepal made NDVP successful. The Nepali government should make effort to engage diaspora professionals to support their development initiatives following on the footsteps of countries like China, India, Taiwan, the Philippines, South Korea, Singapore where diaspora played significant role first initiating trade and investments that propelled the country's development because these countries created special provisions to encourage diaspora professionals to engage in different ways (Newland and Plaza 2013, Saxenian and Sabel 2008, Kapur 2001, Lee 2005, Latapí and Janssen 2006, Saxenian 2006, Faist 2008, Kuznetsov 2010, Chareonwongsak 2013, Kuznetsov 2013, Siar 2014, Song 2014, Hong and Knoll 2016, Lee 2016, Mishra 2016). Such a move would probably save those countries from those fresh international graduates who are frequently deployed as consultants in countries like Nepal by the aid agencies in the global North in the name of technical assistance, a normal scenario until the 1990s, as Mawdsley and others have written about this phenomenon, a common practice among donor organisations until the 1990s, it continues even today albeit to a lesser extent (Mawdsley, Savage and Kim 2014, Mawdsley 2015).

#### **1.4 Personal Motivation for the Research**

I have been promoting Nepali diaspora volunteering since 2007, the year I was offered an

opportunity to develop a framework for the implementation of NDVP when a charity I was volunteering with received funds under Diaspora Volunteering Programme (DVP). The Department for International Development (DFID) provided £3 million in 2008 to the Volunteer Services Overseas (VSO), the UK based international volunteering organisation to facilitate the implementation of the DVP through the UK based diaspora led charities as per the commitment made by the UK government in 1997 (DfID/VSO 2009, Holdsworth 2010, Malfait, Cottrell et al. 2013).

The main aim of the NDVP was to encourage Nepali professionals based in the UK to volunteer in Nepal so as to transfer their knowledge and skills to Nepali people. To implement various activities under the umbrella of NDVP in Nepal some Nepali not-profit organisations in Kathmandu were selected as partners on the basis of their organisational objectives and their experience of managing volunteers. The model of the programme was such that the development partners in Nepal would identify local training needs and select trainees from different local charitable organisations, and we in the UK would recruit qualified and experienced diaspora professionals to run the training programmes in Nepal.

Under the banner of NDVP, over 50 diaspora professionals were placed in Nepal to run a range of training programmes between 2008 and 2011 that benefitted 100s of professionals and thousands of service users and stakeholders. The training programmes covered such areas as, but were not limited to, geriatrics (care for the older people), hospital management, local resource mobilisation, proposal writing, fundraising, mental health, learning disabilities among children, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and monitoring and evaluation. The diaspora volunteering training module implemented in Nepal was successful in transferring knowledge and was appreciated by the trainees and partner institutions.

Among the training programmes, training relating to care of the older people was particularly valued and became very successful because until that time, January 2009, geriatrics had been a completely neglected field in Nepal. There was virtually no infrastructure to provide health care for older people; there were no special care provisions or beds in hospitals dedicated to old age care even though 8.1 percent of Nepal's population is over 60 years of age and their percentage is continuously growing with improvement in health care and standards of living (Shrestha 2012, Ghimire, Baral et al. 2018). Thanks to labour migration and remittances Nepali

people have more funds to spend on health care and education of their children because over 56 percent of the households in Nepal receives remittances (CBS 2012, Yadav 2012, Jones and Basnett 2013). As a result of the work of Nepali diaspora volunteers raising awareness and supporting elderly care related organisations established after the training, geriatrics is now firmly established in Nepal and receives regular funding support from the Nepali government. Furthermore, similar successful stories emerging out of other diaspora volunteering programmes in 25 countries in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean further strengthened my resolve to study and learn about their struggles related to livelihood experiences, professional growth and social mobility among the professional and skilled Nepali migrants in the UK.

The implementation of the diaspora volunteering programme in Nepal, and its relative success, supports an emerging global debate that diasporas could indeed address crucial economic, political and social developmental needs in their country of origin through the professional expertise, social capital and financial remittances (Levitt 1998, Levitt 2003, Levitt 2010, Mohan 2002, Levitt and Jaworsky 2007, Sutherland 2013). Although a lot serious research needs to be done to establish it, the success of the NDVP in transferring skills and knowledge from Nepali diaspora professionals to the local communities in Nepal supports the debate relating to migration and development or the diaspora-development nexus (Nyberg-Sørensen, Van Hear et al. 2002, Pellerin and Mullings 2013, Sutherland 2013). The experimental Diaspora Volunteering Programme (DVP) implemented in 25 countries has been proven to be a successful model to introduce new approaches to development practices as ‘bottom up’ development actors (Nyberg-Sørensen, Van Hear et al. 2002, Gueron and Spevacek 2008 , Vezzoli and Lacroix 2010).

I hope the findings of this research will fill the knowledge gap and help further widen understanding the agency embedded within the existing Nepali diaspora community in the UK. Such understanding would enable the policy makers to formulate appropriate strategies that would encourage diaspora professionals and return migrants to engage meaningfully in development initiatives in Nepal (HDI 2011, Basu 2013).

## **1.5 Research Context**

This research aims to study the opportunities and challenges that professional Nepali migrants

and their families encountered in the UK during their quest for improving their livelihoods and social mobility. What role did their social capital play to help them negotiate with those challenges to meet their livelihoods and to move forward in life? Did the migration meet their expectations? The importance of social capital is very well summed up by a common English aphorism “it’s not what you know, it’s who you know” (Woolcock 2001), reflecting on the networks of friends and families that offers ‘safety net’ at hard times (Massey and Aysa-Lastra 2011), that offers them livelihoods (Giglioli 2019).

The research also aimed to study why some Nepali migrants leading professionally successful lives abroad leave everything and return home at a time when every youth in Nepal dreams of migrating abroad? The research will also explore how these return migrants use their qualifications, knowledge and experiences gained abroad in their daily lives with the help of theories of return migration, reintegration, knowledge development and transfer (Cassarino 2004, Williams 2005, Williams 2007a, King 2012, Siar 2014, Cassarino 2014a, Cassarino 2014b, Tejada 2016, Valette 2018, Baláž, Williams et al. 2019). Besides their remittances, increasing weight is being placed on the knowledge and skills of the migrants or the diaspora for their contributions as a tool to reduce poverty, boost economic growth and their contribution in reducing trade deficit of the home country (Fragile States Unit, African Development Bank 2011, Latapí and Janssen 2006, Fragile States Unit 2011, Newland and Plaza 2013, Ratha and Plaza 2016).

Countries in Asia such as China, South Korea, India, Taiwan have led the way in demonstrating how diasporas could indeed ignite development and transform the face of the nation when the politicians and bureaucrats together adopt policies to engage their diaspora to join development mainstream (Nyberg-Sørensen, Van Hear et al. 2002, Saxenian 2006, Kuznetsov 2013, Newland and Plaza 2013, Hong and Knoll 2016, Tejada 2016). High emigration rates of citizens with higher/tertiary education from low income countries, currently around 24 percent, could lead to the formation of diaspora professionals (Newland and Plaza 2013). The next section of this chapter discusses the aims of the research and highlights the key research questions.

## 1.6 Aims of the Study and Key Research Questions

This doctoral research aims to explore:

- i. The livelihood opportunities and strategies of professional first generation, 1.5 generation (children who accompanied their parents) - and second-generation Nepali migrants and their families in the UK, in order to understand the importance of education, knowledge, social networks and employment in shaping their social mobility and other livelihood outcomes.
- ii. How return migrants have transferred their qualifications, knowledge, labour market experiences and professional networks to develop new livelihood strategies in Nepal that have the potential to contribute to the development of Nepal.

### Key Research Questions

The research seeks to examine the following key questions:

- What has been the impact of migration on the livelihoods strategies, lived experiences and professional development of Nepali migrants and their families in the UK?
- What are the livelihood opportunities and challenges facing Nepali migrants and their families, both those from the 1.5 generation who accompanied them and the second generation who were born in the UK?
- How have return migrants to Nepal utilised their qualifications, knowledge, networks and experiences to develop new livelihood strategies?
- To what extent (and in what ways) can the professional diaspora and return migrants contribute to the socio-economic development of Nepal?

By exploring these questions, the research will gather evidence to complement and widen the small body of the research on the lives of professional Nepali migrants in the UK. The availability of evidence-based information about Nepali diaspora community in the UK may encourage DFID or other similar organisations to consult them to help produce country assistance plan for Nepal, as they have done with India and Pakistan in the past (Holdsworth 2010).

## **1.7 Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis is comprised of nine chapters, including the introductory chapter. The next few pages will briefly introduce each chapter.

### *Chapter -2*

To situate the study within contemporary debates, this chapter critically explores the contemporary literature on global migration, with a particular focus on livelihoods, the development-diaspora nexus, skilled migration and knowledge transfer. The chapter also explores return migration, reintegration and how return migrants transfer knowledge to the home country.

### *Chapter -3*

This chapter provides an introduction to the historical context of Nepali migration and it examines secondary data and published research on the lives and livelihood experiences of the Nepali migrant community in the UK, and also on the Nepali return migration

### *Chapter -4*

Chapter 4 critically discusses the research methodology and outlines the positionality of the researcher, qualitative data collection and data analyses. Towards the end of the chapter challenges and limitations of the research are briefly highlighted.

### *Chapter - 5*

This is the first among the four empirical chapters that present the research findings. The chapter examines the migration history and experiences of the research participants in the UK and examines their demographic profile. This chapter gives an overview of the socio-economic background of the participants of this study and explores the growing professional Nepali migrant community in the UK.

### *Chapter – 6*

The professional diversity among Nepali migrants in the UK and the livelihood strategies that they adopt in order to establish themselves as well as to integrate in the British society is

critically examined in this chapter. This chapter discusses the story of Nepali workers, professionals and entrepreneurs who have migrated to the UK and explores the impact of migration have had on them socially, culturally, economically, politically, behaviourally, and professionally.

#### *Chapter – 7*

This chapter examines and analyses the overall influence; the impacts living in the UK had on the lives of children of Nepali migrants, both the one and half generation who accompanied their parents and the second-generation who were born in the UK. The chapter also critically explores their educational and professional achievements, their social and professional networks and what life chances they had and how they built their professional career in the UK.

#### *Chapter – 8*

Return migration is an interesting reality in Nepal. At a time, when majority of the Nepali youth are exploring ways to migrate abroad, there are also those who are prepared to sacrifice everything that they built over the years to return home. This chapter is about those return migrants who return with a hope to rebuild their world in their own country where they see better prospects to apply the knowledge and the skills that they learned abroad. The return migrants speak highly of their higher qualifications, skills and overall migration experiences which this chapter critically examines.

#### *Chapter – 9*

In the concluding chapter, I revisit the main research questions to present a synthesis of the previous chapters, drawing out the major findings and significant contributions of this doctoral research. The chapter provides a critical discussion of the research limitations and offers some recommendations for policy initiatives and future research.

## Chapter 2

### **International Migration of Skilled Professionals: Reflections on Theoretical Concepts**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

International migration refers to the geographical movement of people, that has the potential to change individuals and the societies in diverse and interesting ways, and has the potential to exploit, to enrich, to bring about competition and to engender change (O'Reilly 2015). International migration comprising of skilled, semiskilled and unskilled women and men migrants, entails crossing the borders that states have created to control their movement, define sovereignty and establish membership (Zolberg and Woon 1999). Migration is an ageless human strategy to improve life and could be defined as a natural behaviour of human beings but processes like nation-state-building, Europeanisation, globalisation and economic polarisation problematise the free movement of people (Borkert, Pérez et al. 2006). Who are the people crossing those borders, what behaviours do they display, what are their qualifications, their skills and their motivations to migrate and why do some chose to migrate while others chose to remain? (Le Goff 2016).

This chapter will start by critically examining the contribution of migration scholarship to understanding the motivations behind international migration in general and Nepali peoples' migration to the UK in particular. It investigates the international migration of Nepali people to the UK with the help of network theory and livelihood frameworks. Migration is perceived to be a livelihood strategy for both poor and non-poor households in the developing countries (Tanle 2015). Among the contemporary theories of migration, social network theory is of particular importance to understanding the international migration trajectories of Nepali professionals to the UK.

Migrants are the hitchhikers of global capitalism, and whether skilled or unskilled, their labour is now vital to the flexibility, competitiveness and dynamism of a host of economic sectors (Borkert, Pérez et al. 2006). The motivation as well as the need for international migration has changed drastically in the 21<sup>st</sup> century which encourages us to look beyond economic gains as

being the sole purpose of migration; something the majority of the migration theories have explored (Massey et al. 1993, Borjas 1989, Hammond 1999). Scholars from different social sciences have developed a range of theoretical perspectives based on a human development capability model that address the deterministic approach, rationalism and ontological individualism, three main critiques labelled against the micro and macro-economic theories of migration (Bonfanti 2014). To fully comprehend the complexity of international migration it is important to examine the different characteristics of migrants, their assets and the multiple socio-economic motives for which they decide to migrate long distances challenging and overcoming the nation state barriers created to monitor, control and limit unwanted migration (Bonfanti 2014, O'Reilly 2015). Besides understanding the lived experiences of migrants, it is also important to study the structural and institutional factors that are pushing them to migrate and have impacted on their livelihoods, including the role of state which is responsible in devising migration policies (Massey 2012, Massey 2015).

For example, the migration motive of Nepali people to the UK is mostly driven not only by economic aspirations and expectation of better livelihoods but also by other factors such as the value placed on higher education of their children, their professional development, their safety from ongoing civil conflicts and their upward social mobility (Chao 1995, Pariyar, Shrestha et al. 2014, Bohra-Mishra 2015, Pariyar 2016). The migration of Nepali people to the UK also needs to be looked at from the perspective that Nepal has neither been a part of the British commonwealth nor does it share an international border with Britain, two of the main causes that encourage migration to the UK from the Caribbean, India and Pakistan (Davidson 1966, Berkeley, Khan et al. 2006, Gamlan 2010).

The migration to a new country does not guarantee a good quality of life and upward social mobility unless the migrants make further investments on themselves to qualitatively and professionally improve their human capital such as obtain new qualifications and skills to bring it at par with the labour market requirements in the destination country. In the majority of the cases, besides making the investment on themselves, migrants have to continue to remit money home by engaging in formal and informal businesses or taking in odd jobs. Migrants also engage in development projects and philanthropy back home as a result some among them develop transnational lifestyles (Portes 1997, Massey 1999, Portes, Guarnizo et al. 1999,

Newland 2003, Portes 2007, Castles and Miller 2009, Glick Schiller 2009, Newland 2009, King 2012).

The study of transnational migration is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, research has shown that migrants continue to go back and forth to their country of origin to engage in philanthropy and businesses deepening transnational linkages with their country of origin giving rise to a phenomenon which researchers call 'circular migration' or 'brain gain' a theoretical concept espoused within a northern discourse and policy framework that evolved to pacify the critique of brain drain from which the developing countries in Asia and Africa suffered heavily (Meyer and Brown 1999, Bean and Brown 2015, p. 69, Datta 2009, Khanal 2013, Bean and Brown 2015). The researchers pushing forward the concept of circular migration argue, unlike in the past, the home country does not completely lose their human capital through brain-drain but instead continue to benefit from a diaspora equipped with advanced knowledge, experience and social capital, as they continue to circulate between home and host country (Hugo 2003, Docquier and Marfouk 2005, Agrawal, Kapur et al. 2008, Hugo 2009b).

According to researchers, circular migration has the potential to contribute positively to economic development in the origin countries provided it is properly evaluated and encouraged by adopting policies (Zweig, Chung et al. 2008, Hugo 2009b, Siar 2014). Migrants also have impact on the destination countries, where they not only contribute economically but also help to create new knowledge and cultural practices (Van Hear, Pieke and Vertovec 2004, Williams and Baláz 2008, Williams 2006, Williams 2007a, Williams 2007b, Baláz, Williams et al. 2019). International migration is an important, and sometimes, the only effective means of transferring some forms of tacit knowledge, particularly those that require long association and exposure across international boundaries but the unusual knowledge that migrants bring with them needs to be learned to use it appropriately (ibid).

Migration is not a one-way traffic; those who migrate also return to their country of origin or re-emigrate to a new destination with new knowledge, skills, with better human capital and expanded social and professional networks. In fact, migration researchers argue that anywhere between 50 to 80 percent migrants return to their country of origin within the first five years of migration (Adda, Dustmann and Mestres 2006, Dustmann and Weiss 2007, Dustmann 2001).

Others refute such claims, arguing that unavailability of statistics on return migration, on the one hand, and the existing ones, on the other, suggest that there has been no increase in return migration in recent times, instead due to various ongoing problems in the low income countries and policies of the host countries settlement, rather than return, has increased (Datta 2009, de Haas 2011, de Haas and Czaika 2013).

Further examination of the debates around the evolution and stages of return migration (Cerase 1974, Glaser and Habers 1974, Gmelch 1980, Cassarino 2004, Cassarino 2008, Kunuroglu, Van de Vijver et al. 2016) will be discussed in the concluding section of this chapter. It will also explore the significance of their qualifications, knowledge and their social capital in their daily lives as they settle back (Conway and Potter 2009a, Siar 2014, Ghimire and Maharjan 2015, Baláž, Williams et al. 2019).

The speed with which people and things move across frontiers today was simply beyond the wildest of imaginations of anyone not too long ago (Robertson 2012). Globalisation is associated with a sense of political fatalism and chronic insecurity in that the sheer scale of contemporary social and economic change appears to outstrip the capacity of national governments or citizens to control, contest or resist that change (Held et al. 1999; p1).

## **2.2 Defining the scope of the literature review**

I have reviewed a broad swap of literature to situate this study, as is evident from above. The literature review helps the researchers to enlarge and widen their knowledge about the topic that they want to research, helps the researchers to use manual and computerised methods to search the literature, gain and demonstrate information seeking skills such as developing the ability to scan the literature efficiently, identify useful research papers, books and other documents as well as skills of critical appraisal meaning developing the ability to applying principles of analysis to identify unbiased and valid studies. In a bid to learn more about the previous research papers published on migration and related issues, I started to read around the topic searching through different relevant database and publications that cover issues related to migration, which will be evident to all those who will read this thesis.

In my search for literature, I started with a critical review of the existing scholarly published knowledge on migration and related issues. In my survey of literature, I was guided by the two main research questions that I had adopted based on the conceptual framework; the professional and social mobility attained by the professional Nepali migrants and their families as a consequence of migration to the UK, and the reintegration and livelihood experiences of return migrants and their application of human, social and financial capital in their day-to-day livelihoods. My research study was guided by my experience of developing and executing the Nepali Diaspora Volunteering Programme (NDVP) in Nepal and in the UK, as explored in previous chapter.

It was my maiden empirical effort to deepen and widen my knowledge about migration related experiences of Nepali professionals in the UK so I undertook a multi-disciplinary approach to exploring this topic. As I read through the literature I gained more knowledge about migration and its relation to livelihoods. I also learned the interrelation between migration and development, the role globalisation played in migration saturation and various other issues related to migration. This led me to the literature on theories related to migration, globalisation and its role in migration, skilled migration, livelihoods, brain drain, circular migration, diaspora and development, dual nationality and the importance of education for migrants. For my own exploration I decided to focus on the migration related themes around livelihoods. After this initial phase of reading and identifying core themes, I extended my review to explore sub-themes that were emerging from published research, such as return migration.

Once I had conducted the interviews and analysed the data, the research participants provided further themes through their own experiences and narratives. These included their motivation to migration to the UK, children's education and their security, problems relating to social values, daily administrative procedures, problems associated with English language and various other challenges they faced after arriving in the UK. Similarly, after reviewing the return migration theories on associated issues relating to return migration, I turned my attention to the relationship on migration and development and diaspora and development. I also attended programmes organised for return migrants in Kathmandu, interacted with many of the participants and interviewed some of the research participants when they further added more themes for me to examine. Although my critique centred on peer reviewed journals to

establish knowledge, I engaged with policy reports and conference papers from Nepali scholars and practitioners. In summary, the critical review of the literature presented in this chapter is grounded in the wider scholarship around migration related experiences and livelihood outcomes of professional migrants and their families but it is also informed by a thematic analysis of participants stories and experiences. The next section starts this review with a critical exploration of how the phenomenon of globalisation has contributed to the global explosion in international migration, including that of Nepali people.

### **2.3 Globalisation and International Migration**

The spatial mobility of people is a very dynamic and complex phenomenon that takes diversified forms and flows in the contemporary era of global movement (Lesińska 2013). People are now living in times that are acutely shaped by the social, political, cultural and economic characteristics of globalisation (Waite and Cook 2011). Scholars such as Held et al. define globalisation as the ‘widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life’ (Held, McGrew et al. 1999, p 2). Indeed, the international migration of people along with global movement of goods and services lies at the core of the ongoing process of globalisation (Kahanec and Zimmermann 2008).

Overall the volume, diversity, geographical scope, spatial mobility and complexity of international migration have considerably increased since the dawn of 20<sup>th</sup> century because of development in speedier modes of air, land and sea transportation, falling costs of travel, increased safety and phenomenal development of modes and tools of communication as well as availability of information promoted the globalisation process. Globalisation should be simultaneously viewed as a technological and political innovation that not only encompasses social, economic, cultural and demographic processes but also geographical and spatial distance because it takes place within and between countries and narrows geographical and spatial corridors that takes short time to traverse them (Czaika and de Haas 2015).

Globalisation has, besides expansion of Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) and consolidating powers in their hands, given rise to increased integration and interdependence of global economy. Economic globalisation has contributed to the growth in global trade, made

available wider variety of consumer goods across the globe in reasonable affordable prices due to increased competition and outsourcing of products to countries with lower labour and infrastructure costs. Economic globalisation has made modern day migration fundamentally different in its geographic scope, frequency and intensity. There is a substantial literature that explores how globalisation impacts the livelihoods of citizens in the low-income countries forcing people to migrate in search of employment. Globalisation takes place on multiple economic, political and cultural levels but much of the scholarship surrounding globalisation primarily focuses on the economic dimensions of globalisation as it fundamentally means international integration in commodity, capital and labour markets (The Economist 2013, Srinivasan 2002, Walby 2003).

Furthermore, scholars are divided over the impact of globalisation because of their focus on economic factors (Srinivasan 2002, Walby 2003, Robertson 2012). The advocates of economic globalisation speak volumes about how globalisation helps to create opportunities for less fortunate people in economically impoverished countries such as India, China, or Brazil where economic globalisation has helped to attain a higher growth rate which has helped to reduce poverty among the general public (Srinivasan 2002). But others argue to the contrary, that globalisation has actually created a larger wealth gap between people in rich as well as low-income countries that are technologically less advanced. Globalisation has adverse impact on the overall economy and people of those low-income countries because the developed countries in the North capitalise on the unemployment and lack of opportunities for professional mobility in those countries by hand-picking skilled and educated people that they require, leaving behind the unskilled by creating barriers to their migration (Li and Opoku-Mensah 2008).

Social scientists also explore globalisation from the perspective of the growth of global institutions or transnational institutions and their role in promoting migration. Economists argue that economic globalisation; free movement of capital, and creation of transnational corporations (TNCs) have contributed to the promotion of international migration, transnationalism, diaspora and development. In all these discussions globalisation is often used as a catch-all phrase to describe a wide variety of things, all of which concern the acceleration of exchange across geographical borders (Wills 2006).

There were 258 million migrants in 2017, 3.4 percent of the global population (UNDESA 2017, Mansour-Ille 2018, Vidal and Tjaden 2018), and of them 48 percent were female migrants (Vidal and Tjaden 2018, UNESCO 2019). The number of international migrants globally in 2019 has increased to 272 million, 3.5 percent of the world's population of which 48 percent are female and 74 percent of all migrants were in 20-64 working age group (McAuliffe and Khadria 2019). Among these female migrants a considerable number of them are primary migrants who migrate independently on their own, not as dependents trailing their parents or husbands (Zlotnik 1990, Boyd and Grieco 2003, Zlotnik 2003, UNESCO 2019). Women have always migrated, either on their own or as part of a family (Oishi 2002). Female migration in search of livelihoods has been a prominent phenomenon of international migration (Boyle 2002, Zlotnik 2003, Silvey 2004, Donato, Gabaccia et al. 2006, Nawyn 2010, Donato and Gabaccia 2016).

In general, female migrants from the global South tend to be perceived as economic migrants who migrate to the global North for livelihoods but these perspectives often underexplore the role played instead by gender inequality and conflict in shaping their motivations to migrate (Silvey 2004, Dyer, McDowell et al. 2008, Piper 2008, Kofman 2014). More recently, more and more skilled as well as semi-skilled women are migrating for their professional development in search of employment for their better future or for better future of their families (Kofman and Raghuram 2004, Kofman and Raghuram 2009, Kofman 2012).

Researchers also argue that hidden inside the increasing number of international female migrants, the number of Nepali female migrants have also increased considerably over the last few years due to increasing poverty, increasing male unemployment and lack of opportunity in Nepal (Adhikari 2010, Budhathoki and Sharma 2012, Parrenas 2012, Simkhada, Teijlingen et al. 2018). Now, they are increasingly prominent among independent migrants, responding to a complex set of push and pull factors (O'Neil, Fleury and Foresti 2016; Castle and Miller 2009; Pedraza 1991, O'Neil, Fleury et al. 2016). The next section will examine further the key theoretical perspectives on international migration.

## **2.4 Theories of Migration – a brief review**

Theories of international migration tend to be anchored around four groups of interdependent factors as the main causality of international migration: economic, social, political and linkages (Jennissen 2007). Migration is a complex process which calls for understanding from these different theoretical approaches to explain contemporary migration regimes (Castles 2000, Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2010, Kunuroglu, Van de Vijver et al. 2016).

Microeconomic models of neoclassical theory focus on migration primarily as an individual decision for income maximisation. Migrants move to a country where they feel that they have the opportunity to have high return on their human capital and personal investment. International migration is conceptualised as an opportunity to invest and augment human capital and maximise lifetime earnings (Todaro 1969, Harris and Todaro 1970, Todaro and Maruszko 1987, Massey, Arango et al. 1993). Neoclassical theory explains the most basic attraction of migration from a lower to a higher economy like the UK where access to media and information via other sources such as networks plays a huge role in the migration decision making process (Summerville, Sriskandarajah et al. 2009), but scholars argue that they are less well equipped to provide reliable ways to analyse and predict migration in the new millennium (Kurekova 2011).

New economics of labour migration (NELM) offers a more sophisticated level of analysis that shifts the focus of migration research from individual independence to mutual interdependence, recognising that migration decisions are family choices for resilience at the time of scarcity (Stark and Bloom 1985). Migration decisions are also made analysing a variety of markets and not only the labour market. Unlike the neoclassical economic theory of migration, the migration decisions such as who in the family moves and who stays back are not made by individual members (Stark and Bloom 1985). The migration decisions are made by the whole family, and at times such decisions even spill over to the wider community. NELM views migration as a household decision taken to minimise risks to family income or to overcome capital constraints on family production activities (Taylor 1999).

NELM has two innovative aspects to it. The first is the recognition of migration decisions as joint decisions taken by the household, even by extended families and wider community groups

(Massey, Arango et al. 2005, de Haas 2010, King 2012). The second is that it acknowledges that decision making involves not only consideration of wage and income maximisation but also takes into account questions of income diversification and risk aversion. Risk aversion is very important in the global South where these migrants originate because they have no protection against sudden unemployment or drought, hurricane, or crop failure by any other environmental catastrophes because in most of these countries insurance schemes, credit or any other protection plans are virtually non-existent (ibid).

For FitzGerald (2014) the answer to the question of who migrates lies in the differences in macro-economic structure and availability or lack of opportunities between source and destination countries but the main sociological contribution has been to explain the critical role of the "world system," social networks, and demographic patterns in shaping migration flows (FitzGerald 2014). Institutional/structural theory highlights the emergence of international trafficking, tightening of immigration regimes and creation of institutions to support migration; migration systems theory identifies crucial role pioneer migrants play in starting new migration flows (Bakewell, de Haas et al. 2011) and theory of cumulative causation explains why once a migration flow begins, it continues to grow depending on the strength of existing network and network theory proposes sustainability and perpetuation of migration (Massey, Arango et al. 1993, Fussell and Massey 2004).

Massey (2015) argued that many scholars had completely overlooked the role of nation state, a key actor which is responsible for the formulation and implementation of immigration policy (Massey 2015). As discussed in Chapter 3, the nation states today play an important role in determining the number and characteristics of migrants flowing from one country to another without visa or a passport introduced only after First World War, except in the cases of migration unions such as Schengen Zone or European Union (ibid.). Massey developed a comprehensive framework that theorised five features of international migration: he argues that structural forces, such as the creation and expansion of markets in sending nations, create mobile population prone to migration, nations that engage in trade also tend to exchange people (Massey 2012, Massey 2015). The persistent demand for migrants to work for the NHS and in other sectors of the economy in the UK have attracted migrants in great numbers (Berkeley, Khan et al. 2006, Kingma 2007, O'Brien 2007, Plimmer 2015). The creation of social structures

and organisations in the wake of globalisation helps to perpetuate flows of people over time and across spaces and the state implement policies in response to these forces and shapes characteristics as well as number of migrants who enter and exit a country (Massey 2012, Massey 2015). As this thesis will highlight, networks play a significant role in facilitating these global migration flows as they lower risks and enhance livelihood opportunities. As the next section highlights, network theory plays an important role in explaining some important aspects of Nepali skilled migration to the UK.

#### *2.4.1 The Network Theory*

Migration networks established by the pioneering migrants helps potential migrants in the origin country to get connected to migration destinations with ample employment and other opportunities as well as higher chances of upward social mobility (van Meeteren and Pereira 2018). Network theory is well established in migration research because it does not look at the determinants that initiate migration but rather what perpetuates migration in time and space because migration itself creates the social structure necessary to sustain it (Massey, Arango et al. 1993, Massey 2012). The importance of social networks in migration decisions making has been endorsed by many scholars since the 1980s (Boyd 1989, Gurak and Caces 1992, Massey, Arango et al. 1993, Lin 2005, Mazzucato 2007, Haug 2008, Castles and Miller 2009, Dolfin and Genicot 2010, Ryan 2011a, Fratzke and Salant 2018, van Meeteren and Pereira 2018).

Researchers define migration networks as interpersonal connections that link migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in the destination country and the country of origin by ties of kinship and friendship (Bauer and Zimmermann 1997). Once established, migrant networks are self-reproducing because each new migrant recruit friends and relatives from his or her own group (Waldinger 2004). The social network theory of migration is further strengthened in recent years by the phenomenal growth and expansion of the internet giving rise to increased instantaneous global connectivity enjoyed by people throughout the world to exchange information (Baláž, Williams et al. 2017). Connectivity factors are believed to be more important than traditional push and pull theories as a determinant of changing spatial distribution of people (ibid.).

As this thesis will explore, social network theory is particularly relevant to the analysis of Nepalis migration to the UK because it does not rely on the determinants of migration such as gravitation model of 'push/pull' factors (de Haas 2010) or wage differentials as explained by the multiple theories of migration as explained earlier. Instead it looks at social network theory that actually encourages migration in space and time and the broader concept of depth and boundaries of social capital (Lin 1999, Lin 2005). Indeed, the network theory of migration suggests that migration is not dependent on wage differentials or recruitment drive alone and that migration is influenced by the presence of diaspora community and their social networks (Vertovec 2002).

Migration researchers also argue that the network theory of international migration is a dynamic theory and that migrant networks often evolve into institutional frameworks that help to explain why migration continues even when wage differentials cease to exist. Initially, the pioneering migrant or first international migrant have no social ties to draw upon and for them migration is costly but once the network is established, it continues to propel migration until migration becomes completely self-sustained or migration becomes no more attractive and becomes altogether non-existent (Massey, Arango et al. 1993, Massey 1999, Massey 2012). Gradual growth in the number of migrants in a given destination, the social, cultural, religious and even political isolation and loneliness they experience give rise to the desire to meet up with fellow migrants to share their problems, their happiness and celebrate religious and cultural festivals giving rise to migrant networks between migrants and non-migrants both in the destination and origin countries (Boyd 1989, Sumption 2009).

Once the migrant network is established in a destination country it gradually expands to the origin country and includes migrant, former migrants and non-migrants further enlarging and establishing the network through kinship, friendship and shared community origin (Portes 1997, Poros 2011). Some researchers argue that having stronger professional, family and friends' network in the home country and the place of residence, actually reduces the tendency to migrate. However, location-specific capital at the place of destination increases the probability of emigration intentions and therefore may increase the probability of emigration (Haug 2008). The existence of social network is vital in perpetuating migration as they play a significant role in helping migrants decide where to migrate, where to settle, finding jobs and

reduce not only the cost but also the risk related to migration helping in the formation of closely knit diaspora community (Waldinger 2004, Meeteren and Pereira 2018, Ryan 2011a). Migrant networks are a form of social capital that people can rely upon to get employment in foreign countries (Massey, Arango et al. 1993, Massey, Arango et al. 2005, Datta, McIlwaine et al. 2007).

As discussed in Chapter 3, the opportunity to settle in the UK offered to the Gurkhas, both retired and serving, by the British government greatly facilitated their migration (Mills 2009, Thorp and Woodhouse 2009), but the decision to actually take that opportunity and settle in the UK is taken within families in Nepal. The migrant network and connectivity play significant role in realising migration desire as it offers easy access to various forms of instant messaging and information sharing that has direct effect not only on the material cost of migration but also on the psychological cost of migration (Baláž, Williams et al. 2017).

In the case of most Nepali migrants, except the Gurkhas, it has been observed that their friends who are already settled in the UK, the US, Australia or Canada influenced them to change their migration destinations to one of these countries. Without an existing network, many would have difficulty migrating to the UK, learning about the systems, finding a job, finding schools for their children and finding homes for themselves. Thus, the migrant network helps to understand the process through which migrants find their way in a destination country. Similarly, it also helps us to find out which factors influence the migrants to choose their destinations, how do migrants gain access to jobs, organise their life at the place of destination and how do migrants solve any problems that they encounter at the destination (Sagynbekova 2016).

The attention of researchers has been caught by a relative lack of empirical mechanisms as to how actually social networks exert such effects (Dolfin and Genicot 2010). Researchers such as Dolfin and Genicot (2010), argue that migration networks can facilitate migration in three different ways. Firstly, by providing information on the migration process itself. Secondly, helping with information about employment availability at the destination and thirdly, assisting with integration and providing credit to finance the migration costs. Assessing the relative importance of these roles is crucial to our understanding of networks, migration, and the design of immigration policies (ibid.).

Similarly, van Meeteren and Pereira argue that the scholarly work on the role of networks in increasing international migration is also strongly influenced by Massey and colleagues' early study of Mexican migration to the USA (van Meeteren and Pereira 2018). They argue that there is a lack of empirical studies dealing with other geographies of migration, the contemporary dynamics of different migration profiles and the role of the internet or social media. In their paper they have examined three of the critiques: (1) the role of other sources of assistance that migrants receive with their migration beyond a strict conceptualisation of 'migrant network', (2) the influence of contexts of arrival in the configuration of sources of assistance received with migration, and (3) the differences in the sources of assistance received by migrants through different types of migration such as students, labour migrants, family migrants (van Meeteren and Pereira 2018). It is particularly important to pay attention to the rise and accessibility of the internet and phenomenal increase in the number of migration and educational consultancies with international linkages which play equally important role as diverse sources of information and migration channel that are available to potential migrants.

Despite the popularity of social network theory, other researches accuse it to be incomplete and unable to fully explain the reasons behind large scale international migration (Krissman 2005). Krissman argues that for international migration networks to be effective in providing answers relating to expanding migratory flows in the destination country and the research to be accurate it must also include the employers that demand new immigrant workers, as well as the smugglers who help them cross the militarized border and all other actors that respond to labour demand (ibid.). Migration has been regarded as a livelihood strategy, as the next section of this chapter explores.

## **2.5 Livelihoods and Migration**

Livelihoods approaches were popularised in the 1990s as a way of highlighting the multiple strategies and assets utilised by households in the global South. Chambers and Conway (1991) define a livelihood as being comprised of capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for 'a means of gaining a living' (Chambers and Conway 1991, p 5). A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (Chambers and Conway 1991). Capabilities are the

resources and skills that people possess, can develop, mobilize and access which allow them to or prohibit them from having more/less control over their livelihood. Households regardless of their wealth status, make use of their assets and capabilities to carry activities to sustain their livelihood. Livelihoods strategies are deemed sustainable or vulnerable depending on their ability to withstand shocks or stresses known as vulnerabilities (Bebbington 1999). Bebbington also argues that assets are not simply resources that people use in building their livelihoods but they should also be regarded as a confidence base that boosts their strength to be and to act.

The livelihoods perspective originally employed in the 1990s by the Department for International Development (DFID) was people-centred and offered a comprehensive framework for understanding rural livelihoods and decision-making in relation to their human, social, financial and natural capitals (Scoones 2009, Levine 2014). The brisk and widening growth of inequality across the world, changing social practices and cultural models, and the multiplication of new demographic factors over the years force people to seek alternate means to improve their financial, social and professional status (Suárez-Orozco, Louie et al. 2011, p xi, Page and Plaza 2006).

Differentiating further between the human capital and capabilities, Amartya Sen argued that if education makes a person more efficient in commodity production then that is clearly an enhancement of human capital. However, if the same education helps the person to benefit financially by having an income besides contributing to their other professional competencies such as communication skills, lead arguments and decision making then the benefit of education exceeds its role as human capital in commodity production indicating the broadening of human-capability (Sen 1997). Sen notes that the expansion of capability plays an instrumental role in bringing about social change; ‘capability serves as the means not only to economic production (to which the perspective of “human capital” usually points), but also to social development (Sen 1997, p 1960). Human capability is directly related to well-being and freedom, Sen argues, human capabilities indirectly influences both economic production and social change (ibid.).

Ellis (2003), also argued that the resources or ‘assets’ or ‘capitals’ such as human capital (labour, knowledge, education, skills, experiences and good health), physical capital (produced investment goods, place to stay), financial capital (money, savings, access to loan), natural

capital (land, water, trees) and social capital (networks and associations) may not suffice to create sustainable livelihoods because their employability may vary depending on the associated risks and policy and institutional context that are determined by the governments, rights and laws (Ellis 2003). Despite reservations over the universal applicability of the sustainable livelihood frameworks, Ellis suggests that there is a core of sustainable livelihood thinking that is accepted by almost all those that utilise the approach, and that is the requirement to understand and act upon the asset limitations of the poor, the risks they confront, and the institutional environment that either facilitates or blocks them in their own endeavours to build pathways out of poverty (Ellis in Hussein 2002, p 11).

People migrate voluntarily in search of better livelihoods to countries with relatively stable political situations and economic prosperity where they think they will have better livelihood prospects. For example, migration has been an important livelihood strategy for both rich and poor people in Bangladesh (Siddiqui 2003). Most international migrants leave home bound for rich nations as they expect to have higher earning (Grogger and Hanson 2011). Generally speaking, people across the globe are more informed about economic prosperity, higher education and human rights in developed countries that pull them thanks due to the smart phones, global connectivity and growth of social media, the social network. In the global South, poorer households use their human agency in coming up with various livelihood strategies such as migration and many others in their efforts to free themselves from the chains of poverty that continue to shackle them (Nzima, Duma et al. 2017). Migration is often perceived to be a livelihood strategy for both poor and non-poor households in the developing countries, but the link between migration and livelihoods has not been clearly established (McDowell and de Haan 1997, Waddington 2003, Tanle 2015, Dotsey 2018). No other force – not trade, not capital flows – has the potential to transform lives in the sustainable, positive ways and on the scale that migration does (Sutherland 2013).

A longitudinal evidence-based research based on extensive literature review undertaken by Migration Policy Institute (MPI) for the Department for International Development found that a number of factors contribute to international migration (Newland and Patrick 2004). For example, a perceived lack of employment or livelihood opportunities or a desire for a higher salary or better career prospects can be a driver particularly for the high-skilled; an increase in

livelihood assets such as greater financial resources to fund migration or more extensive social networks to facilitates more actual migration among those who already aspire to move. Similarly, research also found that tertiary level education may lead to more migration because educated individuals may also have more opportunities to migrate and also in situations of conflicts or environmental degradation or negative environmental shocks and long-term trends migration may be part of a household level adaptation strategy to mitigate risk (Fratzke and Salant 2018).

Other than conflicts, worsening law and order and failing economies, factors such as rapidly changing environment, increasing climate variability, land fragmentation, failing agriculture, lack of social and institutional support has been known to force poor people to migrate, either from rural to urban areas or internationally, in order to manage risk, meet personal and familial aspirations and to escape from increasingly hopeless situation (Kothari 2002, Singh 2019). Every migrant moves with different objectives, but at the core of migration is safety and better quality of life (Massey, Arango et al. 1993, Riddle 2008, Newland and Tanaka 2010). A sustainable livelihood is often the outcome of a combinations of factors comprising of personal assets such as educations, skills, experiences, savings, social and professional networks, personal capabilities in the form of interpersonal skills, language abilities, self-confidence, good health that allows the migrants to work long hours. These assets and abilities that help develop strategies to execute activities in the face of various vulnerabilities including new system, cultural shocks, local laws, discrimination, devaluation of qualification, skills and experiences. Each migrant whether they are highly educated skilled professionals, semiskilled or unskilled they encounter a range of vulnerabilities in the destination country in the form of institutional practices, sociocultural practices, organisational operational procedures, local rules and regulations, English language so on and so forth in achieving livelihood outcomes, the primary objective of their migration.

In addition to the assets and capabilities of individuals and households, access to livelihoods are also shaped by institutional migration policies/legislation adopted by different nations that either encourages or discourages migration, often disrupting their aspirations to enhance their quality of daily existence (Dotsey 2018). Giglioli's (2019) research on Tunisian migrants in Sicily, Italy, explores how immigration legislation is an instrument which allows nation states

to produce highly exploitable workers, vital to key sectors of the economy under differential inclusion, depending on their migration status, and facilitates understanding relationship between immigration legislation, labour exploitation and precarious livelihoods. According to researchers differential inclusion generally refers to the manner in which people are subjected to varying degree of subordination, rule, discrimination and segmentation (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias et al. 2015). Likewise, research on Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands emphasises the significance of legal status and the existence of kin networks; their legal status significantly related to livelihood security which is possible only if the migrants have a secure employment, secure housing and their ability to solve a crisis either at the host or home country and kin network helps them when all else fails (Mazzucato 2007).

Dotsey (2018), in her study of Ghanaian migrant's quality of life post-migration to Italy through the lenses of employment, housing, business activity and necessary legal residency documents, argues that migrants show a surge of new confidence once they have the residency. In the difficult times the migrants rely heavily on their social networks developed through personal connections, friends, relatives and migrants' churches, diaspora associations - the larger the network better off they will be at the difficult times. Indeed, international migration comes with a cost, and reaching the destination does not guarantee automatic livelihood improvements. Although having a legal status does not guarantee a job but without it, they are not even in a position to access labour market or access other livelihoods opportunities (ibid.). Many migrants often find their access to jobs and sustainable livelihoods restricted by legal, social, economic and other barriers (Mansour-Ille 2018). Migrants face a series of hardships in a destination country to improve their economic and social livelihoods but the dearth of information and research makes it even harder to understand it (Siddqui 2012).

As the next chapter on the migration of Nepali people to the UK will highlight, migrants achieve or aim to achieve sustainable livelihoods outcomes by carrying out prioritised activities based on the assets that they have, their capabilities and other available resources such as their social/professional network as permitted by local processes and institutional requirements. Researchers concede that instead of achieving the sustainable livelihoods the outcomes could be negative, neutral or even benefit the second-generation instead of the primary migrants due to temporal dimension of some livelihood outcomes and the poor migrants must possess at least

some forms of capital such as social network with prospective employer (Kothari 2002, Siddiqui 2003, Waddington 2003, Tanle 2015). Migrants and their families make various efforts to secure a sustainable livelihoods based on their human and social capital amidst rapidly changing sociocultural, religious, political and economic circumstances that they face in the destination country (Lin 2005); the impact of migration on migrant's livelihoods has become more significant at the present time (Sagynbekova 2016).

For the Nepali migrants, the livelihood in the UK assumes a new meaning. Amidst various challenges such as a new unknown country, unknown culture and unknown language, unknown people, with unknown rules and regulations, unknown processes and unknown requirements in terms of knowledge, skills and qualifications, experiences – in other words, unknown vulnerabilities which is further exacerbated the discrimination they face. It is their extended networks that helps them. Although data is not available for the UK any migrants who manage to migrate from a developing economy to a developed economy in the West would have direct, immediate and sustainable effect on their poverty due to increase in their income which would increase by over 260 percent to over 1,400 percent (Hagen-Zanker, Postel et al. 2017).

## **2.6 Skilled/Professional Migration**

Migration is more common among skilled professionals, those people who have tertiary level education or professional qualification and are young, because they are confident about return on their human capital in a new country in the global North. Their socioeconomic background enables them to bear the financial costs of migration and they possess the social networks that could make it happen or could afford to migrate long distances in search of livelihoods as they meet the criteria set by migration authorities (Beine, Docquier et al. 2011). Virtually all the developed countries wish to attract and retain skilled migrants, while at the same time restricting the inflow of the less skilled (Skeldon 2020).

Kerr et al. (2016) argue that the demand and supply of high-skilled migrants and the resulting flow are shaped by the labour market, educational and migration policies adopted by the destination countries. Destination countries typically adopt one of two broad migration policy regimes; the first one is based on the demand driven policies that requires the incoming migrants must first get a job in the destination country where they are filtered on the basis of

employer's need and labour market condition. The other policy being supply driven requires incoming migrants to be evaluated by awarding points to age, education, professional experience and earning, occupation, language proficiency and so on (Kerr, Kerr et al. 2016). Most countries, however, implement many other policy instruments such as quotas, skill shortage list, labour market tests, supplementary point-based tests, post-entry rights besides combining the elements of both approaches discussed above (Kerr, Kerr et al. 2017).

Professionals do not migrate only from lower economies in the global South. Both the UK and Germany are two countries now seen as the net-immigration destination in Europe, but it is less well known that both are also in fact the largest suppliers of skilled migrants themselves (Skeldon 2020), and additionally, receive large share of skilled migrants and international students (Faist, Aksakal et al. 2017). In fact, the term 'brain drain' was first coined with reference to the migration of skilled professionals such as doctors, engineers, scientists from the UK to the US, Canada and Australia from the late 1950s (Hatton and Price 1999). Skilled British people emigrated but at the same time highly skilled people from Japan and Germany helped to meet a growing demand for high-skilled workers in the UK (Spence 2005, quoted by Datta and McIlwaine et al. 2007). Individuals with valuable skills have higher propensity to migrate both internally and abroad due to exceptional return they can earn; these individuals frequently have the option to select from a menu of destinations (Kerr, Kerr et al. 2017). Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK are four Anglo-Saxon countries that attract the highest number of high-skilled migrants because of their point-based migration policy (ibid.).

However, in post-industrialised countries skilled migration is an increasingly important phenomenon that promises to become more so with the implementation of new policies in many OECD countries including the UK (Nagel 2005). For example, Britain had instituted the first explicitly pro-labour migration policy to encourage controlled migration in over four decades in 2000, known as Highly Skilled Migration Programme (HSMP). The HSMP allowed people with certain qualifications and with certain earning level to apply for independent work visas but later on in 2008 some amendments were made to it as the government said that some of those with HSMP visas were not doing highly skilled job (Byrne 2007). In order to entice doctors and nurses, which the UK has been relying on ever since the 1950s, to come to work for the National Health System (NHS) the British government plans to introduce a Points-

Based Immigration System (PBIS) of visa for doctors and nurses (PTI 2019). There is a special place for skilled people in every country as they want to continue with their competitiveness in the globalised world. Whereas the skilled migrants continue to migrate for livelihoods to places they think will best to maximise benefits for their human capital but the destination country equally benefits. Skeldon (2020) argues it is axiomatic that the destinations of skilled migrants benefit from skilled migrants because the concentration of people with brains and abilities brings economies of scale and the exchange of knowledge stimulate enterprise.

Today, nearly two-thirds of skilled migrants move to America, Britain, Canada and Australia because, as discussed earlier, most skilled migrants are the most mobile and face few barriers because most nations want them so they travel farther. The OECD countries record 130 percent rise in high-skilled migrants from 12 million in 1990 to over 28 million in 2010 (Kerr, Kerr et al. 2016). The number of female high-skilled migrants to the OECD countries during 1990-2010 period rose by 157 percent compared to 106 percent for males.

According to the Economist (2019), 80 percent of the refugees and 50 percent of the low skilled migrants move to a neighbouring country, only 20 percent of the highly skilled migrants do so. Similarly, without skilled migrants from Italy, India, Indiana (USA), both London's financial industry and the US would have lost their technological edge because 45 percent of that country's fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants or their children including companies like Apple, Google and Levi Strauss (The Economist 2019). Migrants are three times likelier to file patents than non-migrants and two-fifths of America's Noble science prize-winners since 2000 have been immigrants (ibid.). Thus, big countries such as India, China and Brazil would benefit in different ways by sending more skilled migrants but if a country loses more than 20 percent of its university graduates that would have impact on its growth as in the case of some small African countries do (The Economist 2019).

There are some high-skilled migrants who uses family or other channels to migrate because they know they will find employment without much problem and also assimilate easily because they are more likely to have better linguistic, cultural as well as professional knowledge of the destination society (Kerr, Kerr et al. 2017). Highly skilled individuals have better social and professional networks which they tap for information about available opportunities and also,

they have better access to financial resource and credits. However, skilled migrants still face many challenges and discrimination on arrival to the host countries.

### *2.6.1 De-skilling and discrimination*

As this chapter has shown, migration can have a positive impact on human capital as migrants invest in education and skill development training to increase their chances of a better livelihoods in host countries (Cruse 2010). However, many migrant workers with tertiary levels of education, including doctors and nurses, fail to find jobs in their field of expertise. They get de-skilled because they are left with no choices but to take jobs with much lower pay because their academic qualifications and professional skills are not recognized in the destination countries (Slade 2003, Getachew 2012, Kofman 2012, Malit and Oliver 2013, Siar 2013, Premji, Shakya et al. 2014, Azar 2015, Meraj 2015, Sethi and Williams 2015).

In many cases, professional migrants are found to be filling jobs that are way below their academic and professional level, not to say Difficult, Dangerous and Degrading (3 D) jobs such as office cleaning and construction industry that, in most cases, are reserved for unskilled workers with lower or no academic qualifications (Datta, McIlwaine et al. 2007). Those among the de-skilled include people who had formerly worked as doctors, teachers, engineers, nurses and many other managerial positions who were confined to low-paying menial jobs because of a combination of factors such as language problem, the non-transportability of their qualifications and discrimination (ibid.). They are thus often found to land in jobs that are demeaning and dangerous when they move out of their home countries (Van Hear, Pieke et al. 2004). Chapter 6 will highlight, the challenges Nepali skilled migrant face in the UK when they enter the labour market for livelihoods.

Many migrants live with a hope that one day they will be able to return home. Migrants also return home after realizing that their initial decision to migrate was based on erroneous information about opportunities (Borjas and Bratsberg 1996). Their ties with the home country may become strained and stretched, yet they keep alive their aspiration to return home someday (Dumont and Spielvogel 2008). According to migration researchers, anywhere between 20 percent to 80 percent of migrants return home within five to 20 years of their

migration history (Borjas and Bratsberg 1996, Dustmann and Weiss 2007, Dumont and Spielvogel 2008). Next, I examine the benefits of migration to the host and home country.

## **2.7 Benefits of Migration**

### *2.7.1 Benefits of migration to the host country*

Despite the fact that migrants are often accused of stealing local jobs from different groups of people in the host country including in the hands of ultra nationalist ideologues, international migration benefits the host country economically (Goldin, Cameron et al. 2012, pp 99-100). Criticism aside, it would not be wrong to say that globalisation did not only facilitate international migration of people but has also substantially contributed to multiculturalism and community cohesion among some migrant groups and host community by allowing them the opportunity to know and understand each other's sociocultural practices (Riddle 2008, Newland, Terrzas et al. 2010). Migrant communities are seen as engines of poverty alleviation for the home country and policies that lower the costs of migration, eliminate discrimination against migrants and protect their rights can reap even bigger gains for development (Sutherland 2013).

Migration has important impacts on our societies, and these can be controversial, but it is certain that migration has direct impact on the labour market, the public purse and economic growth. For example, in the past ten years migrants accounted for 47 percent increase in the workforce in the US and 70 percent in Europe (OECD 2014). Migrants filled important niches both in fast-growing and declining sectors of the economy. Compared to previous generation of migrants, the young migrants are better educated like the native born and in Europe, the migrants contribute significantly to labour-market flexibility (OECD 2014). According to OECD, labour migrants have the most positive impact on the public purse because they contribute more in taxes and social contributions than they actually receive in terms of benefits or even wages. In terms of economic growth, migrants boost the working age population, they have qualifications and skills that contribute to human capital stock of the host country and also contribute to the technological innovations (OECD 2014).

Migrants may be filling the unattractive, low paying jobs but many of them have also risen to leading positions in tech firms and have established many successful businesses and support

the local economy and enrich the local community by sharing their socio-cultural, culinary and religious practices. They not only help in the creation of new knowledge but also support the community by providing highly specialised professional services which is relatively insufficient in the UK (Williams 2005, Williams 2007a). For example, they work as specialist medical doctors, specialist nurses, subject teachers, engineers, accountants, researchers, scientists, technicians (Cruse 2010). Migrants, particularly highly skilled ones, are credited with being responsible for broader economic processes of global restructuring and development. The migrants who are perceived to be attractive on economic grounds are admitted into the country to benefit from them (Koser and Salt 1997).

International migration could be having a myriad of influences and impacts on local host communities, but local host community should not be taken as homogenous. De Haas argues that migration could be a global phenomenon, but it has to be looked at as (1) a process which is an integral part of broader transformation processes embodied in the term “development”, but (2) also has its internal, self-sustaining and self-undermining dynamics, and (3) impacts on such transformation processes in its own right (Orozco 2008, de Haas 2010).

### *2.7.2 Benefits of migration to the home country*

Migrants could bring enormous benefits to the home countries, but the opportunity has to be recognised and tapped by the home country with appropriate policies. Discussions regarding diaspora communities playing important roles in supporting the development of their country are increasingly taking central stage in development circles in the UK, the United States and other countries. Governments do not want to lose valuable source of funds, the remittances, which has turned out to be the most important and reliable contribution of the migrants (Kofman and Raghuram 2009, Swing 2015). The World Bank forecasts that migrants will send £435.65 billion (\$550 billion) to their countries of origin in 2019 and remittances to the developing countries are expected to grow by 9.6 percent over 2017 (KNOMAD 2019).

Remittances generated by the diaspora have played a significant role in keeping the economies of countries like Nepal afloat at a time of global recession although, the experts say that remittances have increased income inequality in the country and fuelled consumption habits of the recipients as well as increased dependency (Seddon, Gurung et al. 1998, Kapur 2004, Ratha

and Plaza 2016). Nepal sends a huge number of labour migrants and is rightly the 5<sup>th</sup> largest recipient of remittances in its category where 56 percent of the households receive remittances (Lokshin, Bontch-Osmolovski and Glinskaya 2010, Brinkerhoff 2009). Remittances contribute around 28 to 33 percent of the Nepali GDP and has been hailed as the main contributor to reducing the incidence of poverty to within 20 percent from 34 percent only in 2010 (Lokshin, Bontch-Osmolovski and Glinskaya 2010, KNOMAD 2019).

Both remittances and the diaspora community have caught the attention of intergovernmental development agencies like the DFID and the World Bank. In 2004 DFID commissioned a scoping study which covered policy and practice of countries of origin towards their diaspora and diaspora engagement strategies pursued by some countries of origin. The researchers recommended to invest heavily in a stronger knowledge base for policy making through research, analysis and rigorous evaluation of diaspora involvement in development and its impact on poverty alleviation in the countries of origin as well as credit the diaspora for their contributions (Newland and Patrick 2004). As a result, in 2008 DFID provided £3 million to engage diaspora communities in their integration in the UK as well as to encourage them to contribute to the growth of their country or region of origin through diaspora volunteering (DfID/VSO 2009, Malfait, Cottrell et al. 2013). The funding from DFID enabled 22 UK based diaspora led organisations and their in-country partner organisations in countries of origin to engage thousands of diaspora professionals from 25 Asian, African and the Caribbean and over 650 volunteers in 25 developing countries between March 2008 and March 2011 (DfID/VSO 2009, Khanal 2013, Malfait, Cottrell et al. 2013).

As explored earlier, the diaspora community is not only important for the home country as their role in the home country is continuously being explored and expanded but they are equally important for the host country for their role in making contributions to the local society and local economy. As discussed earlier, the nature of their engagement in the host as well as home country the migrants become circular between the home and the host country but in the process some among them develop multiple domiciles becoming transnational diaspora (Schiller, Basch et al. 1992b, Vertovec 2004b, Vertovec 2005, Patterson 2006, Vertovec 2007, Quirke, Potter et al. 2009, Skeldon 2009, Tejada 2016).

### *2.7.3 Development potential and diaspora*

Diasporas have been regarded as the forerunners of change, creators of new knowledge, innovators, facilitators of technology-knowledge transfer and even ambassadors of the countries they originate from. Vertovec (2005) argues that the diaspora not only send financial remittances, but they also send social remittances in the form of human rights, democratic values, knowledge, new sociocultural values as they learn new cultural practices which they transmit when they visit their country of origin (Bruslé 2010, Thieme and Ghimire 2014). As discussed in the previous section, every migrant brings with her/him some form of cultural practices and knowledge and when this mixes with the local cultural practices and knowledge they create new knowledge (Vertovec 2005).

Riddle, Hrivnak and Nielsen (2010) also argue that members of the diaspora learn new skills and acquire new knowledge which they transfer when they visit their home country with which they continue to make all social and cultural contact even when they are physically not in their countries of origin (Riddle, Hrivnak et al. 2010). In a research based on in-depth interviews among migrants from the Dominican Republic in the U.S. and in Dominican sending communities, Levitt (1998; 2004) argues that migrants can transmit political values learned in their host countries to family members in their countries of origin which, in many ways, help to transform the society. These “social remittances” comprised of ideas, behaviours, identities and social capital are transmitted via return visits, phone calls, and other forms of communication. Social remittances contribute to formation of migrant enterprises, community and family formation, political integration and transforming social and political life in sending-countries (Levitt 1998, Levitt 2004).

Social remittances are equivalent to social and cultural resources from North to South that migrants transfer which also eases their own transition from immigrants to ethnics. The social remittances play an important role in transnational collectivity formation and bring social impact of migration to the front. Social remittances are also regrade as potential community development aid because they travel to specific audiences and policymakers through identifiable pathways and planners can plan to disseminate specific information to particular groups (Levitt 1998). The emigrants also influence social protests, elections and calls for greater transparency and reform (Lacroix, Levitt et al. 2016). Indeed, social remittance has

gained a central position in the literature on the effects of emigration on home countries (Boccagni and Decimo 2013).

Diaspora entrepreneurs are an important subset of foreign investors in many emerging markets as they are motivated to invest in their country of origin for more than just pecuniary reasons. The diaspora view their investments as way to contribute to the economic development and stability of their country of origin, to provide friends and family back home with opportunities or to enhance their social standing in their country of origin or in the diaspora community (Nielsen and Riddle 2009). Many countries, such as Israel and Armenia, regard their diasporas as strategically vital political assets, while others, such as India, Bangladesh, China, Mexico, Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, Ghana and other migrant-sending countries, have recognised the massive contributions their diasporas make through remittances (Kapur 2001, Saxenian 2002, Williams, Baláž et al. 2004, Lee 2005, Ionescu 2006, Latapí and Janssen 2006, Saxenian 2006, Delgado-Wise and Eduardo Guarnizo 2007, Zweig, Chung et al. 2008, Riddle, Hrivnak et al. 2010, Newland and Plaza 2013, Nicolas 2014, Siar 2014, Lee 2016, Mishra 2016).

Scholars remain convinced that strategies adopted by the home country governments encourage or discourage the diaspora to engage in the development initiatives of the home country. Mohan (2002) argues that the relationship between the diaspora and development takes three forms: (a) development *in* the diaspora, b) development *through* the diaspora, and c) development *by* the diaspora. In the first instance, he refers to diaspora networks in the country of residence, which includes the formation of ethnic businesses, cultural ties, and social mobilization. In development *through* the diaspora and development *by* the diaspora, he refers to how the diaspora use their localised connection within the host country to secure economic and social wellbeing and in the process also contribute to the development of the place where they live. Mohan calls it diasporic development ‘in place’ (Mohan 2002, Ellerman 2004).

The diasporans engage in social and economic wellbeing beyond their locality by utilising their wider global networks which Mohan calls diasporic development ‘through space’. And, their continued link with home country gives rise to diasporic flows resulting in investment and development which is recognised by Mohan as diasporic development ‘across space’.

However, depending on the activities of the diasporans in the host and home country, these categories may become fuzzy (Mohan 2002). Returning to the three phenomena highlighted by Mohan, for diaspora to be able to contribute something both to the destination country and to the home country, first they have to be something, which means they have to invest in their own human capital to raise the value. Thus, development in the diaspora is a prerequisite, which will enable them to make development happen either through them or by utilizing their local and global social capital (Mohan 2002). As discussed in introductory chapter and will be highlighted later in Chapters 6 and 8, this thesis will evidence the importance of development ‘in’ and ‘through’ the diaspora in the Nepali context, highlighting the link between diaspora-development, which has also been observed during the implementation of the Nepali Diaspora Volunteering Programme (Khanal 2013).

Furthermore, other scholars argued that three areas that affect the relationship between migration and development, namely, the immediate and long-term impact of the emigration of people including the loss of skills and the potential for circular migration leading to the creation of opportunities for investment, creation of jobs, creation of markets for home products and the impact of financial flows (remittances and investments); and the role that diaspora populations can play (Macpherson and Macpherson 2009, Conway and Potter 2009a, Conway, Potter et al. 2009b).

The phenomenal growth of excellent digital communication technology even in countries like Nepal, free access to most of the modern tools and channels of communication such as Facebook, Messenger, Skype, Google Hangouts, WhatsApp, Viber, and email has brought the world much closer and helps the migrants to deepen family ties and friendship. Such digital technology not only helps in maintaining transnational connections between geographically separated destinations but also constitutes good tools for learning new things (Reed 2013). The Nepali diasporans are connected to their home country more than several other migrant communities in the UK and they continue to revive and maintain their cultural practices and feel pride about their heritage (Gellner 2014). The next section will explore the role of dual citizenship.

#### *2.7.4 Provision of dual citizenship*

Many countries who lost their citizens through brain drain have found ways to connect with their diaspora communities through the provision of dual citizenship, a firm commitment of the home country that reflects their interest on the diaspora. Diasporas need to be considered not only for the remittances that they bring but also because of the important role that they could play in the economic transformation of the home country (Opiniano and Castroa 2006, Saxenian 2006). Besides skill and knowledge transfer, the diaspora could play equally important role in other prominent areas such as influencing policy relating to foreign affairs, international relations, international bilateral trade as the home countries are waking up to the realities relating to benefits brought home by migrants (Ratha 2004, Van Hear, Pieke et al. 2004, Cohen 2005, Vertovec 2005, de Haas 2006a, Grossman 2010). Making provisions for dual nationality and opening up organisations to provide support to the diaspora community in the country of residence as in the Philippines (Cheung 2004, Li and Opoku-Mensah 2008), have been ways to reach out to the diaspora community to engage them in the development projects back home. Diaspora could itself be energised to lead the bottom up approach to the development of the home community. There is now an upward global trend in the prevalence of dual citizenship/nationality, both in terms of people having it and states allowing it.

Following in the footsteps of India and several other countries, Nepal first introduced the provision of Non-Resident Nepali ID cards to all those Nepali people who have naturalised in the country of their residence. This card allows them all the rights of a Nepali citizen except voting rights and rights to engage in politics and accept government posts. The cardholder can enter Nepal without visa for 10 years. However, the new constitution of Nepal, voted unanimously by Nepal's parliament in September 2015, has made the provision of non-resident (dual) citizenship (Shrestha 2015). The provision of non-resident citizenship is only available to Non-Resident Nepalis living outside South Asia. The details relating to Dual Citizenship Act and other regulatory provisions has yet to be endorsed by the Nepali parliament. The provision of dual citizenship attaches the torn citizens together but still, according to the migrants, they experience many disadvantages amidst several advantages of migration.

### **2.8 Return Migration**

Return migration is defined as, 'a situation where the migrants return to their country of origin

of their own free will after spending a significant amount of time abroad' (Dustmann and Weiss 2007, Kunuroglu, Van de Vijver et al. 2016). Migration decisions are reversible and return migration is a common phenomenon within international migration (Borjas and Bratsberg 1996). Borjas and Bratsberg argue that outmigration could be a targeted move, planned initially to return home after few years after accumulating certain financial resources and other types of capital prior to returning to home where they could lead a comfortable lifestyle, invest to strengthen existing businesses or start a new one. Or, the other reason for return could be the erroneous information about economic and other opportunities at the destination, on which migration decision was actually based (ibid.).

There are many migration researchers who argue that 'outward and inward' migrations are both strategies of survival that people choose depending on their situation (Massey, Arango et al. 1993, Cassarino 2004, Wahba 2015). Policy makers and research scholars have focussed for far too long on understanding and analysing decisions of departure, failing to acknowledge that migration is a multidimensional process involving not only emigration, but also different stages which includes settlement in the host country, the possibility of return and reintegration into the home country. Like departure, return also entails a complex decision-making process involving a wide array of factors (Oomen 2013). Scholars argue that theories relating to return migration remains incomplete as the theories fail to provide complete explanation of the phenomena of return migration (Dustmann and Weiss 2007). They argue that despite being a part of the migration process, return migration has remained out of scholarly scrutiny for far too long because return is the most difficult aspect of migration to quantify (Gmelch 1980, Stark, Helmenstein et al. 1997, Cassarino 2004). The status of research relating to return migration remains neglected even today probably because of the dominance of rural-urban migration research and the narrow geographical domain where research relating to return migration is carried out and the methodological difficulty associated with tracking return migration (Ghimire and Maharjan 2015, Gmelch 1980).

Some researchers have argued that return migration can be beneficial to the origin country, with case studies presented from Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines and India, if the returnees can be recognized and utilized as valuable human resources. A review of recent research relating to high-skilled migration finds that about half of high-skilled migrants engage

in business exchanges with their home countries annually or with even greater frequency and that 80 percent of high-skilled migrants share technical information with their home countries (Agrawal, Kapur et al. 2008, Kerr, Kerr et al. 2017). Where the home country offers returnees proper space, institutional support and incentives to encourage them to fulfil their potential, they see significant development outcomes (Saxenian and Sabel 2008, Brinkerhoff 2009, Ghimire and Maharjan 2015). The potential for return migrants to benefit Nepal has been studied by a number of researchers by investigating Nepali migrants who went to study in the UK, Denmark and Sweden and student returnees in Nepal (Ghimire and Maharjan 2015).

### *2.8.1 Theoretical concepts relating to return migration*

This research addresses return migrants who have returned home of their free will in the prime of their professional career due to various reasons. The returnee migrants are looked at as not being successful in turning their life around or failing to meet the aspiration of emigration (Conway and Potter 2009a). Return migration may include among the returnee's members of large extended families, children and grandchildren, because the return migration normally takes place many years after settlement in a country (Kunuroglu, Van de Vijver et al. 2016).

Return migration remains an undertheorized field of study because most attempts to develop theories of return migration remain attached to the general theories of migration (Cassarino 2004). The desire to establish reasons for return migration can nourish the research on the migration itself (Stark 2019). One of the biggest hurdles relating to the study of return migration is the availability of data because many of the countries do not collect data when the migrants leave the country of residence or enter their country of origin (Collier, Piracha et al. 2011, Battistella 2018). The question of returning back to one's country of origin is closely linked to feelings of belonging and identify (Carling, Bolognani et al. 2015).

Lack of any holistic theoretical framework to address return migration, the scholarly debate on return migration needs to be studied through the lens of the theoretical framework proposed by, among others, Jean-Pierre Cassarino (2004) and typology of return migration provided by Cerase with further improvement to it added by Gmelch and Stark (Cerase 1974, Gmelch 1980, Cassarino 2004, Stark 2019). There is a greater need to study return migration in the light of today's globalised context including social, economic or political changes that their origin

country has experienced over the years. According to Cassarino patterns of return migration to their country of origin is shaped by three interrelated elements such as context in home country, the duration and type of migration experience lived abroad, and the factors or conditions in the host and home country such as pre- and post-return conditions (Cassarino 2014a).

Contrary to the earlier belief today's return migrants are younger and more diverse, in terms of age, life-course transitions, class and gendered social positions, family networks, and migration histories (Conway and Potter 2007). Using the conceptual approaches to return migration and related issues such as return preparedness developed by Jean-Pierre Cassarino (2004, 2014), structural theory which looks at the relationship between the individuals and the social institutions and network theory, the chapter examines return migration of Nepali migrants, the knowledge they carry and use in the process of reintegration as well as the contributions they make to local society (Cassarino 2004, 2014). International development experts are looking at return migration with renewed interest and enthusiasm as it may hold the key to development prospects in many developing countries (Valette 2018). With the implementation of development policies that offer institutional support and create an environment which may attract return migrants and encourage knowledge transfer, return migration could be a considerable force for change in many countries (McGregor, Siegel et al. 2014).

Despite being studied since the 1960s, the research on return migration has not progressed much in the absence of holistic data (Koser 2000, Cassarino 2004). The theory of return migration developed by Cassarino is known to be the most comprehensive to date in explaining the process of return migration. Cassarino (2004), in his pioneering paper, extensively discusses return migration through the lenses of the four major theories of migration. According to neoclassical economic theory, return migration is viewed as failure at the individual level because its primary hypothesis has been higher return on their human capital in the host country. Migrants return home when they fail to meet their initial goal of earning a higher income either due to miscalculation about the higher earning they expected to gain out of their human capital, or the market wage differentials, but the fact remains that they fail to earn higher wages as the migration stops being profitable. Or, as argued by Borjas and Bratsberg the migration decision itself, in the first place, could have been erroneously done based on incomplete information or wrong expectations (Borjas and Bratsberg 1996). Furthermore, the

neoclassical economics theory looks at the migrants as individuals who, in the event of being successful, would try to maximise not only their earnings but would also try to extend the duration of their stay to gain permanent settlement and bring their families. Thus, return migration could only be motivated by failed migration experience in terms of employment and expected earnings (Cassarino 2004).

There are also those returnees who migrated as students to the global North who return home after completing their studies or after a few years' work experience. Many Nepali migrants who emigrated for work or for studies have returned, set up their own successful businesses, and successfully transferred their skills, knowledge, professional experience and benefitted from their social capital to lead a meaningful, satisfying and a rewarding life (Adhikari 2010, Ghimire and Maharjan 2015). Migration researchers argue that it is not always easy for return migrants to transfer their experience and human capital due to the difference in level of technology at host and home country and is a complex phenomenon (Rogers 1983, Ammassari and Black 2001, Bref de, Davids et al. 2010, Gmelch 1987).

### *2.8.2 Return migration and knowledge transfer*

Migrants are the bearers, carriers, translators and producers of knowledge in their old and new homelands (Gerlach 2016). Every migrant is a carrier of knowledge, when people emigrate to a new country, they bring along their knowledge (Williams 2005), to the destination country in the form social and cultural values, cultural practices and introduce new knowledge about food, family values and lifestyles which gradually seeps into the society they settle. That knowledge thus gradually becomes a part of that society, as in the case of the UK where great culinary varieties and cultures from across the world has been introduced and welcomed by the people living in the UK. When the migrants settle in a new society various forms of local knowledge and practices in the form of tacit knowledge are transferred to localities and mixes with local knowledge to produce new knowledge that give rise to cultural sensitivity, productive knowledge that does not only include explicit but also tacit knowledge (Sillitoe 1998, Williams 2005, Suter and Jandl 2008, Williams and Baláz 2008, Grossman 2010, Valette 2018). It is also possible to investigate how, and to what extent, migrants were able to connect the knowledge that they brought along into usable cultural capital in new social, economic and cultural context.

The UK, particularly London, has its fame as one of the greatest cosmopolitan cities in the world thanks to a combination of factors including a multi-cultural society enriched by various forms of knowledge, particularly tacit knowledge – understood as knowledge that cannot be easily expressed in explicit forms, and which are transferred only through interpersonal communication (Williams 2007a). The tacit knowledge thus exchanged between people gradually give rise to new social and cultural practices. William and other researchers highlighting migration and knowledge transfer focusing, however, on the various forms of knowledge that emigrants bring with them. However, when discussing return migration and knowledge transfer, the focus shifts to innovation and technological knowledge that many migrants themselves develop (Kerr, Kerr et al. 2017), not tacit but some forms of explicit knowledge that the migrants gain when they migrate. Physical proximity does mediate knowledge transfer (Williams 2007b). Due mainly to different levels of economic growth and advanced technological infrastructure in the host country migrants' qualifications, experiences and skills may not simply be sufficient to do the jobs (Siar 2014). Due to the discrimination that they face in the host country (Siar 2013), migrants may not be able to implement or benefit the host society and themselves from their knowledge, experiences and skills, a topic that is further explored in Chapter 8. However, when one talks about knowledge transfer, perhaps both tacit, explicit or implicit, is almost always associated with return migration. As explored above, emigrants also transfer or bring along their tacit knowledge and other forms of knowledge to a destination country. Thus, knowledge transfers both ways but more emphasis has always been placed on return migrants transferring knowledge and innovation to their home countries.

This study also examines knowledge transfer through return migrants as parts of their social capital analysing the wider concept of different types and kinds of knowledge, knowledge transfer and return migrants as the vector that perpetuates the act of transferring knowledge from the developed western nations in the global North to the global South in the process of reintegration in the home country (Baláž, Williams et al. 2019). Researchers are resolute that not all return migrants are capable of transferring knowledge because many of them land in odd jobs much lower than their qualifications, skills and experiences actually become deskilled and earn much less as compared to people with similar or even lower human capital (Raghuram and Kofman 2004, O'Brien 2007, Siar 2013, Azar 2015).

Return migrants who chose to return to the country of origin on their own start very important process of personal transformation with the assets such as higher qualifications, knowledge, skills and experiences that they bring home. Some of these themes were also observed among the Caribbean youth who returned to small island societies from Canada, Hong Kong, the United States and the UK (Conway and Potter 2007, Potter 2005). It is not easy to contest the argument that return migrants are the carriers of knowledge as they accumulate explicit, implicit and tacit knowledge and technical skills during their sojourn in a host country. The return migrants transfer their knowledge and skills to the local context on their return or by developing transnational networks. However, the transfer of knowledge and skills is affected by the contextual and structural determinants, institutional policies, country's capacity to utilise this knowledge and skills in the local context (CODEV-EPFL, ILO et al. 2013; Tejada 2016).

## **2.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has critically explored the literature relating to international migration, the interrelationship between globalisation and international migration, and key theories of migration that have helped advance our understanding about the determinants of migration. Furthermore, it has highlighted the importance of migration for skilled workers and their families and critically examined the role human capital, knowledge and social networks play to establish a sustainable livelihood. The chapter argues that livelihood strategies for many skilled migrants are comprised of assets, capabilities and their abilities to withstand shocks and it highlights gaps in the data on the role of community capital in enhancing the life chances of migrant households. It also explored return migration and knowledge transfer and has stressed the importance of the tacit knowledge and experiences in benefitting the home nation when migrants return home. The next chapter will focus on the historical context and background on Nepali migration in the UK.

## Chapter 3

### **Nepali Migration to the UK: Background and Context**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores the history of Nepali international migration, and migration to the UK, in order to provide a context for the empirical research presented in Chapters 5 to Chapter 8.

Once, I was waiting to buy a train ticket at Weybridge Station in Surrey. When my turn came, I looked at the badge of the station master who was serving me and noticed that he had a Nepali name. At the risk of being a nuisance, I politely enquired about his origin in Nepali language and he replied politely, also in Nepali, that he was indeed from Nepal. Episodes like this are no longer rare in the UK as they were just a decade or two ago. It has become increasingly commonplace to come across Nepali people in buses, trains, train stations, or in shopping malls across different cities and towns in the UK, as the number of Nepali migrants in the UK has increased many folds over the last 30 years. One finds restaurants and other businesses owned by Nepali people in almost every city and towns in the UK.

The growth in the Nepali population is in large part a result of the changes in British immigration and settlement laws in 2004 and in 2009 which granted settlement rights to current and ex-Gurkha soldiers and their dependents (Kirkup 2009, Mills 2009, Sparrow 2009, Thorp and Woodhouse 2009). Nepalis have long been well known to the British people as for over 200 years Nepali men have fought for the British sovereign as soldiers in the Gurkha regiments of the British army (Gellner 2014). However, until recently these soldiers were required to retire in Nepal. When settlement rights were finally granted, many who were eligible took the opportunity presented and migrated to the UK. Yet it would be wrong to characterise the Nepali population in the UK as made up predominantly of retired soldiers.

Among Nepalis who have migrated in the past decade, there are many highly experienced professionals such as doctors, nurses are engaged to provide health care services to the British people (Adhikari 2009, Adhikari 2010, Lakshamba 2015). There are other professionals such as engineers, journalists, teachers, accountants, security guards, interpreters, university

professors and lawyers who also contribute to British society in their own way (ibid.). Nepali entrepreneurs, too, are engaged in expanding their restaurant, groceries, tea exports and other businesses in the UK, boosting the UK economy, and also supporting Nepali farmers by incentivising them by paying a better price for their crops. Nepali people have a reputation for being fearless, gallant warriors on the battlefields, but they are equally respected, in the mainstream workforce, for their easy-going humble nature and dedication to work. They are one of the highest employed communities of migrants in the UK (Gurung 2011).

### **3.2 History of Nepali Migration**

Nepali people have a long history of migration because for over 200 years they have been migrating away from home and sending remittances (Yamanaka 2000, Thieme and Müller-Böcker 2004), but they have started to migrate to the UK in greater numbers only very recently (Gurung 2011, Adhikari 2012, Gellner 2014). Prithvi Narayan Shah has been credited as the founder of modern state of unified, strong and independent Nepal, its first ruler, in 1769 by winning and uniting many smaller principalities (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica 2020). The earliest record of international migration of Nepali people shows that they were serving in the army of Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh in Lahore (present day Pakistan) much earlier than they were enlisted in the British Army after 1816 (Bista 1980, Kansakar 1984, Yamanaka 2000). According to the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA), according to their website, more than four million Nepalis are currently living and working in over 78 countries.

In addition, Nepal is a land locked country surrounded by China and India, two of her most populous dominant neighbours in Asia. These countries are not only the most densely populated countries in the world but also massive in size as compared to tiny Nepal. Thus it was not easy for Nepalis to traverse these two giants to get to a third country and were mostly content to migrate either to Tibet in the North for salt and other trade when Kathmandu Valley had three different rulers and Kathmandu was in the centre of trade route (Bista 1980), and later South, to India, for better livelihoods (Adhikari 2010a).

Migration is not new to Nepal, as discussed earlier in the Chapter 1 and 2. Indeed, immigration to Nepal has been extensive through much of the country's political history. The cultural richness, ethnic diversity, endowment of a wide variety of intricate artistic carving skills,

metallurgy and the abundance of different styles of architecture, arts and crafts and businesses in Nepal is a reminder of how far the country has been shaped by years of international immigration with people from the north as well as from the south migrating to Nepal during different periods (Kansakar 1984).

Nepal is one of the countries in South Asia beset by unemployment, failing industries, failing economy, falling agriculture production, unstable political system, worsening law and order since February 1996 when the Communist Party of Nepal – Maoists launched peoples' war that claimed lives of over 14,000 people, destroyed developmental infrastructures and uprooted thousands of people from their ancestral homes (Sunam and Goutam 2013). At present 32 percent of the people in Nepal are unemployed and around 400,000 youth join the job market every year (The World Bank 2019, The Kathmandu Post 2018). With the reinstatement of democracy in 1990, Nepal entered into a new phase of globalisation when people started to migrate beyond the traditional destination of India in search of livelihoods (Jones and Basnett 2013). Some of these Nepalis have also managed to migrate to the affluent countries in the global North such as the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia and several other countries taking advantages of various available opportunities because many among them are also high skilled (Sijapati 2009, Bohra-Mishra 2011, Kerr, Kerr et al. 2017). Between 2007 and 2016, over 3.5 million labour permits have been issued in Nepal, one in three working age men in Nepal are employed abroad and the household receiving remittance has increased from 23.4 percent in 1995/96 to 55.8 percent in 2010/2011 (ILO 2018).

In Nepal, immigration is currently governed by the Immigration Act 1992, Immigration Regulation 1994, Immigration Working Procedure 2009, Non-Resident Nepalese Act 2011 and Non-Resident Nepalese Regulation 2013 and the Nepali Government do not have any specific laws relating to return migration and integration. The current Director General of the Department of Immigration confesses that the existing laws and regulations relating to immigration are rather archaic and ineffective and calls for new and more timely immigration laws suitable to dealing with current challenges facing the world such as refugees and terrorism (Poudel 2015).

Over 400,000 Nepali youth join the job market every year and nearly all of them migrate in search of work. The majority of them migrate as labour migrants to the Persian Gulf countries in West Asia or Malaysia, South Korea and Hong Kong (Bruslé 2009, Bruslé 2010). After Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997, the headquarter of British Gurkha Rifles was moved to the UK and its size was reduced to 3,500 but the attraction among Nepali youth to join British Army has not diminished a bit (Pariyar 2011). It is estimated that around 68 percent of the Nepali migrant population in the UK belongs to those that are directly or indirectly linked with British Gurkhas (Adhikari et al. 2012, Gellner 2014).

### *3.2.1 Nepal opens up*

The democracy that Nepalis experienced in the 1950s was short-lived (Snellinger 2005, Kantha 2008, von Einsiedel, Malone et al. 2012). Nepali people only had a very brief experience of multiparty democracy from 1951 because in 1960 the Nepali monarch stepped in and took control of the government. He mobilised his loyal Nepal Army to imprison the elected Prime Minister and the members of his cabinet in 1960. Thus, the fate of Nepal and Nepali people was completely sealed by a royal coup d'état engineered by the monarch who replaced multiparty democracy with his choice of a one-party governing system, which he called the 'Partyless Panchayat System' and started to rule the nation directly. The party less Panchayat era lasted for 30 years, from 1960 to 1990, during which time the king governed Nepal with absolute authority by introducing a new constitution in 1962 (Government of Nepal 1962).

While travel to India remained possible for ordinary Nepalis, as passports were not required to cross the border, other overseas travel was again restricted. Passports were very strictly controlled during the Panchayat hey days. It was virtually impossible to obtain a passport if one did not know someone in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or have access to some influential political leaders, as Bourdieu would call social capital that you could benefit from if you know the influential people (Huang 2019). People sent abroad for higher education were discouraged to overstay and had to even pay the government a certain amount, if they choose not to return tendering their resignation from abroad. The situation gradually improved after 1980, a crucial period in Nepal's political history, when the government's highhandedness in quelling a student protest caused the protest to flare up into a people's movement against Panchayat dictatorship. This forced the King to announce on 24 May 1979 a referendum, allowing people

to choose between the Panchayat system and multiparty democracy. However, at this time, voters chose to retain the Panchayat system by a slim majority.

In 1989, once again a student movement gave rise to a people's mass protests in the country, which ultimately forced the King in April 1990 to end the 30-year-old Panchayat era. The political situation in Nepal changed drastically after 1990, leading to great social changes including much increased international migration. Nepal could not remain isolated from the globalisation and the political storm that was sweeping through the world; changes were going on in India and rest of the world. The collapse of communism, disintegration of Soviet Union and felling of Berlin wall all had its impact on Nepal because education had gradually improved, and mass media were liberalised after the referendum of 1980 which had contributed to political awareness of Nepali people. Those who could not read were served by a very wider coverage of community radio and television across the nation (Thapa and Mishra 2003). A new constitution was written in Nepal and was promulgated by the King in November 1990, which brought the king within the boundary of the constitution as a constitutional monarch and people felt freer and empowered (GoN 1990).

Travel documents such as passports were made relatively easily available to people who had valid reasons to travel abroad such as higher education, employment, family reunion or participation in training programmes, seminars and conferences. The gradual development of the modern transport and communication infrastructure in the country exposed the youth and the ambitious population to a host of things such as western values, western culture and opportunities, on the one hand, and availability of information, affordability of services and existing network of friends and families reduced the opportunity cost and further facilitated migration of Nepali people, on the other (Massey, Arango et al. 1993, Jones and Basnett 2013, Piotrowski 2013, Brøgger and Agergaard 2019).

Initially, the majority of Nepalis migrated to countries in the Gulf or to Malaysia for employment rather than to developed Western Europe or the US, Canada or Australia. The countries in the Gulf and Malaysia needed cheap manpower to support their booming construction industry and economy so they engaged the services of employment agencies to recruit Nepali skilled as well as unskilled workers for whom work visas were made available by these countries. Today, however, the situation is completely different, and Nepalis can be

found across the globe. According to the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) website nearly 4 million Nepali people are spread across 78 countries - Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Global Presence of Nepali Migrants – Countries where National Coordination Councils of Non-resident Nepali Organisation exists.		
<b>ASIA (15)</b>	<b>AFRICA (13)</b>	<b>AMERICAS (2)</b>
Brunei Cambodia China East Timor Hong Kong Indonesia Japan Korea (South) Macau Malaysia Myanmar Philippines Singapore Taiwan Thailand	Botswana Congo Ghana Kenya Lesotho Libya Mozambique Nigeria South Africa South Sudan Tanzania Uganda Zambia	Canada United States of America
<b>EUROPE (27)</b>	<b>MIDDLE EAST (11)</b>	<b>OCEANIA (3)</b>
Austria Belgium Bulgaria Belarus Cyprus Czech Republic Denmark Finland France Greece Hungary Ireland Ireland Italy Luxembourg Netherlands Norway Portugal Poland Romania Russia Slovenia Spain Sweden Germany Switzerland UK Ukraine	Bahrain Iraq Israel Kuwait Lebanon Oman Qatar Saudi Arabia United Arab Emirates Yemen	Australia New Zealand Papua New Guinea

### **3.3 History of Nepali Migration to the UK**

Nepal is Britain's 'staunch ally' and 'oldest ally in Asia', states the British Army webpage on Gurkhas. No other ethnic group or country has the distinction of having supported Britain in both I and II World Wars the way Nepal did. In 2014 marking the centenary of the outbreak of WW I (1914 – 1918), the German international broadcasting house Deutsche Welle (DW) looked at the contributions made by the Gurkhas to the British war effort, fighting alongside Allied forces on European soil (Mazumdaru 2014). Similarly, the Gurkhas also fought in World War II as a part of Allied forces led by Britain. Despite this special relationship, the number of Nepali migrants in the UK remained remarkably small until the political changes took place in Nepal in 1990, when peoples movement against the King forced him to give way to multiparty democracy by a Royal decree on 8 April 1990. The King removed the ban on the political parties and Nepal evolved from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy (The New York Times 1990, Asian Democracy Campaigning 1990, Hachhethu 1994).

Unlike some other South Asians or even Caribbean migrants, Nepalis were probably too poor or too far to finance their trips across the seven seas, as they say in Nepali; meaning to move far far away (Portes 2008). Nepali people only started to migrate to the UK towards the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Manandhar 2008). As well as limited finances, another reason for minimal Nepali migration before this time was government restrictions. After the Anglo-Nepali treaty of Sugauli was drawn up in 1816, Nepal became virtually closed to rest of the world except for the British. Nepalis were legally prohibited from emigrating except to India (Dhungel 1999, Gellner 2008). According to Dhungel the restriction on emigration outside India further tightened after the establishment of the Rana family autocracy in Nepal in 1846, which lasted for over a century. The close alliance between British India and the autocratic Rana rulers in Nepal became a barrier for Nepalis seeking contact with the western world (Dhungel 1999). The Ranas deliberately kept the country isolated, forbidding contact with westerners except the British or those sent by them (Gellner 2008).

A more recent aspect of international migration from Nepal is the emigration of ex-British Gurkha soldiers and their families; students and their families; nurses and doctors and their families as well as irregular migrants to the UK (Adhikari 2010, Paudel, Tamang et al. 2011, Adhikari 2012, Gellner 2014). Nepali people have been serving in the British Army after the

treaty between Nepal and East India Company in 1816. It is estimated that 243,000 Nepalis worked in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Gurkha Rifles in India during the I World War and Nepal sent over 350,000 people to support the British Army during II World War. Nepalis suffered the highest per capita deaths among the troops (Gurung 2009).

Although small, the Nepali community is gradually getting the attention of Nepali and other researchers. Until recently only very scant data relating to Nepali people in the UK was available. However, a huge information gap relating to the Nepali people in the UK has been filled by an extensive survey conducted by the Centre for Nepalis Studies UK (CNSUK) in 2008 (Adhikari 2012). According to the CNSUK, the Nepali community is comprised of various professional groups, besides the retired and serving Gurkhas and their families. For example, there are doctors, nurses, engineers, teachers, software engineers, journalists, research scholars, businessmen, carers and others among them (Adhikari et al. 2012, Gellner 2014, Gellner 2015). The highest presence of Nepali people in relation to local population is in Aldershot in the Borough of Rushmoor, Hampshire where Nepalis account for 6.5 per cent of the total population of over 95,000.

A study of ex-Gurkhas living in the UK carried out by a research student from the Kent University in 2011 (Gurung 2011) highlighted that among the migrants in the UK, Nepali people, both male and female, had the highest employment ratio, and several media coverages helped the politicians and wider British public to know more about the Nepali community, their contributions to British society as well as their plights (O'Donoghue 2009, Sparrow 2009, McClatchey 2011). Similarly, research on Nepali migrants and their religious affiliations and practices conducted by Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Oxford University highlighted various religious practices followed by Nepali people in the UK (Gellner and Hausner 2013).

Although Nepali people gradually started settling in the UK in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, their number remained relatively small. There is no record of Nepali migrants to the UK prior to the population census of 2001. The population census of 2001 reveal that there were only around 5,943 Nepalis in the UK who were recorded to have been born in Nepal (Adhikari, Dahal et al. 2012). Their number increased further after August 2009 when the Gurkhas with over four years of continuous service to the British Army since 1948 were offered settlement

rights by the British government (Thorp and Woodhouse 2009). Thus, the Nepali population in the UK grew over 63 percent between 2004 and 2009 becoming one of the fastest growing non-EU migrant community (ONS 2017, p 10). More recently the figures released by the ONS between July 2018 to June 2019, shows that the number of people of Nepal origin born in the UK and Wales has risen to 70,000 (ONS 2017, ONS 2019). The figure, however, does not include the population of Nepalis living in Scotland and Ireland, which is estimated by local community leaders to be around 1000 in Scotland and around 500 in Ireland. A more reliable estimate of the total number of Nepalis in the UK in 2020 is 150,000 based on Nepali community leaders and officials in the Nepali embassy in London.

After the establishment of multiparty democracy in Nepal, retired Gurkhas launched a campaign demanding that the British Government grant Gurkhas equal pensions and other employment benefits on a par with British soldiers, including the right to settle in Britain if they should wish to (Gillan 2008, Mills 2009, Thorp and Woodhouse 2009). The campaign succeeded in putting considerable pressure on the British government, and in 2004 the government announced changes in Gurkha settlement rights. The new legislation allowed any British Gurkha who had served continuously for four years, and had retired after 1997, to apply for indefinite leave to remain in the UK with their wives and dependents (ibid.).

The campaigners were not satisfied with this concession, however, and continued lobbying, achieving further success on 29 April 2009. On that day, the British government was defeated in parliament, as MPs supporting the Gurkha Justice Campaign, including those from within the ruling party, voted in favour of the Gurkhas. As a result, the government was forced to extend settlement rights to all Gurkhas, including those who had retired before 1997, who had worked for four continuous years in the British Army. This change in legislation prompted further waves of Nepali emigration to the UK.

The volume of Nepali civilian migrants also rose gradually after the introduction of High Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP), a point-based controlled immigration programme initiated by the labour government in January 2002 discussed in Chapter 2. HSMP was implemented to attract professionals, such as nurses and doctors, to the UK because of the shortage of these professionals and the UK reliance on importing such professionals after the 1950s (Solano and Rafferty 2007, Adhikari 2009, Adhikari 2010, Siddique 2014, Boffey 2015,

RCN 2015, Marsh and Loudon 2016). The NHS continue to suffer from the shortage of nurses and had a huge deficit of nurses in the UK around 2000, as a result a large number of nurses were recruited from different countries between 2001 and 2010 (RCN 2015). Thus between 2000 and 2010, a huge number of Nepali nurses and Nepali students arrived in the UK (Adhikari 2009, Hausner 2011). More than 21,000 Nepali students went abroad in 2008, a 12-fold increase over the 2003 levels (Asian Development Bank 2009).

Thus from 2009 through to 2011, an unprecedented number of Nepali Gurkhas and their families, nurses, doctors and Nepali students migrated to the UK. However, many student migrants who predominantly belonged to the middle class, and most of whom had already paid their tuition fee for one year, returned to Nepal when the British government tightened visa rules and working provisions relating to international students in 2011/2012 was reduced to 20 hours per week. Many colleges felt to be substandard were closed by the British government and the students who had paid their fees lost it and were forced to return home if they could not afford to enrol in other colleges. However, the number of retired Gurkhas arriving in the UK to settle still continues, if at a much slower pace when they realised that leaving the comfort of their home in Nepal and migrating to the UK was not as lucrative and beneficial as promised by the ex-Gurkhas who have been campaigning for equal pay and pension (Reid 2010, Jones 2014).

A detailed population survey of the Nepali migrant population, the first of its kind in the UK, was conducted in 2008 by the Centre for Nepalis Studies UK (CNSUK), a research organisation led by Nepali and British scholars. Their study was based on a sample of over 7,000 people, which revealed the population of the Nepalis living in the UK to be over 80,000. There are also many irregular Nepali migrants, visa overstayers living in the UK whose numbers cannot be known unless they come forward or are arrested by the immigration officials.

Nepali people in the UK have settled in 110 counties, boroughs and official unitary authorities with London, Hampshire, Kent, Reading, Surrey, Swindon, Bracknell Forest, Warwickshire, North Yorkshire and Wiltshire representing, in descending order, the top 10 areas with the their highest numbers (Adhikari 2012). Adhikari suggests out of 75 districts in Nepal, population of Nepalis in the UK represents 69 of those districts. The population of Nepal is extremely diverse.

The 2011 Nepal census records 125 caste/ethnic groups and 123 languages spoken as a mother tongue. Ten different types of religion are recorded, with Hinduism reportedly followed by 81.3 percent of the population while Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity are followed by 9, 4.4 and 1.4 percent respectively (CBS 2011a).

Among Nepali migrants in the UK, there is a similar mix of religious representation and an overwhelming majority of the migrants belong to the retired British Gurkha community and are therefore predominantly from the Gurung ethnicities who mostly follow Buddhist religion. However, scholars such as Gellner and Hausner (2013) argue that the question of larger following of either Hindu or Buddhist comes not because many people follow these religions in Nepal but because the state machinery forced them to choose one or the other. The Nepalis in the UK experience religious freedom so instead of worshipping just Buddhism or Hinduism they express multiple choices of following more than one religion (Gellner and Hausner 2013). Pariyar disagrees that Nepalis in the UK have total religious freedom to practice their religion their way (Pariyar 2016). Besides the retired Gurkhas, Nepali migrants in the UK also include doctors, nurses, engineers, teachers, trainers, journalists, accountants, travel agents, social carers, businessmen and entrepreneurs who migrated taking advantage of HSMP, work permits, international training schemes, or marriage, family reunion, higher studies and employment opportunities (Adhikari 2010). These professionals and skilled workers are the focus of this research.

The Nepali migrants who have been migrating to India for generations are predominantly economic migrants (Thieme and Müller-Böker 2004, Bhattarai 2007). However, those who emigrated to the global North in the early 70s and 80s primarily are neither labour nor economic migrants (Manandhar 2008). Their purpose of migration was for higher studies, professional training (students and professionals), international employment, family reunion, highly skilled migrants such as doctors and nurses coming for training, and government employees posted in foreign missions. Migration theories need further extension to study many of the topics mentioned above. Migration of Nepali people to the UK, to a great extent, is facilitated by the settlement rights extended to ex- and serving Gurkhas and their families to settle in the UK, training opportunities offered to doctors and other professionals by the British government under government aid as well as educational opportunities created by British higher education

institutions for fee paying students. The development of digital technology has brought us all Instagram, WhatsApp, Messenger, Viber and Facebook - an era of instantaneous communication with the increase in internet coverage in Nepal reaching to 60 percent of the population and adding 250 new users every hour with estimated 9.3 million Nepalis using Facebook has increase their connectivity and knowledge about the world.

Many Nepalis who migrated to the UK to study taking advantages of the opportunities offered by the colleges in the UK between 2007 to 2009 could not complete their studies, lost their tuition fees, lost their deposits and some also lost their mental balance when the government forcibly closed over 450 colleges in the UK (Travis 2011). As will be discussed in Chapter 7, the primary motivation for many Nepali people to migrate to the UK is to obtain higher education because of the global recognition of British degrees (Ghimire and Maharjan 2015). However, there are also those Nepali people who migrate for family reunion, children's education and safety (Gellner and Hausner 2013, Gellner 2014, Pariyar, Shrestha et al. 2014, Pariyar 2016).

### *3.3.1 Family migration/reunion*

Family reunion has been one of primary reasons for migration of Nepali people to the UK. According to migration statistics produced by the House of Commons library and report produced by the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, family migration has fluctuated but changed little overall as a similar number of people came to the UK to join families or accompanied family members in 2014 as in 1991. However, the proportion of family migration fell from 27 percent in 1991 to 14 percent in 2014 (Blinder 2016, Hawkins 2016). In 2015, 37,000 people migrated to the UK either accompanying a family or to join a family and 3,500 family extensions were offered to the families of students between 2011 to 2014 (Migration Watch UK, 2016). Without showing any clear trend family migration to the UK has fluctuated between 60,000 to 105,000 since 1991. According to Migration Observatory the proportion of family migration in the UK fell from 27 percent of total inward migration in 1991 to 14 percent in 2016 probably due to increase in other categories of migrants.

Family reunion is one of the major policy concerns across Europe because family reunification has been viewed by most policy makers as a powerful immigration multiplier as every migrant

is suspected to be someone who would ultimately want to bring the whole family to Europe (Baiza`n, Beauchemin et al. 2014). In the US, the majority of new immigrants each year enter through family reunion and family reunion is among the four major avenues through which individuals qualify for legal permanent residence (McKay 2003).

In the UK, regular changes in the rules from 2011 to 2014 has significantly restricted the opportunities for families to reunite, the path to settlement and UK citizenship. In the UK, the separated families now face the least 'family-friendly' immigration policies in the developed world. However, this does not apply to many Nepali migrants in the UK, especially those who belong to the families of ex- and serving British Gurkhas (Thorp and Woodhouse 2009, Mills 2009). Besides the ex-Gurkha families there are also students whose families come to join them in the UK, especially those who migrated to the UK prior to 2010.

### *3.3.2 Intergenerational Impact of Migration – deepening of family bonding*

The interactions between individuals of different generations such as parents, grandparents, and their children or between aging parents, adult children including grandchildren are known as intergenerational relationships. People are living longer in majority of the countries in the global North as a result even in individualistic societies in Europe or the US intergenerational relationships among aging parents, adult children and their grandchildren has considerably increased over the years (Brubaker and Brubaker 1999). Most research indicates that it is the relationships and expectations of adult family members that have the greatest impact on intergenerational transmission (Lasota 2015). According to Social Bond Theory of Hirschi humans have a natural tendency to delinquency but for him the interesting question was to what prevents people from deviating from norms (Wickert 2019). Hirschi believes that stronger the degree of social control and the denser the network of social bonds that include attachment to the family, commitment to socially accepted norms and institutions, involvement in activities and belief that these things are important (ibid.).

In general, Nepali people live together in large extended families comprising of several generations, a collectivist culture so they rely on each other and enjoy strong intergenerational relationships in the family and society as a whole. Other researchers argue in general that there is increase in multiple generational contact in families because people are living longer and

that intergenerational relationships are characterised by four 'Rs' - respect, responsibility, reciprocity and resiliency (Brubaker and Brubaker 1999). The researchers argue four Rs are evident within the relationships and are foundations that ensures and further strengthen intergenerational bonds (ibid.).

The Nepali migrants in the UK reflect intergenerational bonding between the parents and children. Could it be happening because of the cultural orientation, a collectivist culture that promotes joint extended family, a family comprising of grandparents to grandchildren and even uncle and aunts living together and supporting each other? It may also happen they migrate to a new country they live in a nuclear family so they start reaching out to each other because there is no one else from the family.

### *3.3.3 Children's education and international training*

The educational system in Nepal has considerably improved over the last five decades but education in public schools is still far from satisfactory. The education sector suffers from a chronic shortage of learning and teaching materials, trained teachers and above all, funding. Increasingly, majority of Nepali parents feel it is their primary responsibility to providing opportunity to their children to get a good quality of education. These sentiments of Nepali parents are also echoed by some Polish parents because the education in the UK also seem to be a significant determinant of family migration decisions among Polish families, Chinese families in the US, with children's age crucial in affecting the choice about whether to move (Chao 1995, Ryan and Sales 2011, Pariyar 2016).

Nepal had a major setback in the education system because of 104 years of Rana family rule. Before 1951, education in Nepal was only the privilege of a few ruling elites (Dahal and Bajracharya 2015). However, over the last 65 years the education system in Nepal has continued to expand and improve. There are a few good schools and colleges, but these are oversubscribed and out of bounds for many because of tough competition to get in, their high fee structure and their location in major towns of Nepal such as Kathmandu, Pokhara or Biratnagar which are again out of bounds of many due to high cost of living in these cities (ibid).

The number of new colleges established as constituent of, or those just having affiliation with Nepal's six universities and three medical colleges, expanded between 2005 and 2010 from 571 to 1087. Out of these 83 colleges are under the umbrella of universities (constituent); 302 are publicly funded and 702 are private (Dahal and Bajracharya 2015). Higher education is offered in 11 broad areas namely agriculture and animal sciences, Ayurveda, education, engineering, forestry, humanities and social sciences, law, management, medicine, science and technology, and Sanskrit. However, the education system has failed to modernise as per the need of the times so parents who pay very high fees for the education of their children feel that they are not getting a good and timely education in return.

Many Nepali professionals envy the reputation of British higher institutions in the area of financial, legal and medical education and migrate to the UK to undertake professional training. For example, some medical doctors and dental surgeons migrated to take international training leading to membership of the prestigious Royal Colleges and other higher professional bodies (Hausner 2011). They receive higher training and hone their professional experience and communication skills by working in National Health System (NHS) under the supervision of specialists to prepare for examinations to become a member of various branches of Royal Colleges (Sapkota, Teijlingen et al. 2014). Similarly, the nurses who choose to migrate to the UK either for higher training or for livelihoods also say they migrated to the UK because they wanted to work in NHS to learn advanced skills (Adhikari 2010, Hausner 2011, Adhikari and Grigulis 2013).

#### *3.3.4 Student migration*

In the recent years there has been strong growth in students studying abroad as the developed countries with advanced economies are creating new ways to attract and retain qualified highly skilled people (Docquier and Marfouk 2005, Kuptsch and PANG 2006, Kerr, Kerr et al. 2016). Europe currently attracts 45 percent of all international students worldwide. Globalisation has brought countries in the global North and South closer; speed of travel coupled with affordability, and hyper-connectivity between individuals and institutions made possible by global expansion of internet and availability of information is in the heart of global student migration (Baláž, Williams et al. 2017). The growth in information and communications technology has not only increased connectivity and networking among prospective students

and their peers but has also played role in informing the prospective students about the reputation of colleges and universities in different countries as well as other ancillary factors such as cost of living, student employability, work visa after completing education (ibid.). In general, France, Germany and the UK have largest share of international students in Europe with the UK having the largest share amongst them all in terms of education. The share of foreign student in the UK is 19 percent, Australia 22 percent and Canada 8 percent (Kerr, Kerr et al. 2017). The researchers argue that students select countries depending on the opportunities for education that would allow them to take their skill level to a predetermined level prior to their migration with the possibility getting employed afterwards that would allow them to settlement (ibid.).

The reputation of higher education, booming education businesses of private colleges in the global North, their need to attract high fee paying students from the South and their agents in the form of educational brokers in origin countries in the South has helped many colleges and universities in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the UK and USA to find students in countries such as Nepal (Dhungel 1999, Graner and Gurung 2003, Thieme and Müller-Böker 2004). Apart from migrating to the newly industrialised countries in Asia as labour migrants, Nepali youth also compete with each other to migrate to developed countries in the global North. A large number of them have been successful in migrating to the global North for higher qualifications and have gradually settled permanently in those countries (Dhungel 1999, Gurung 2009, Gellner 2014). Many among them are the students who are the best and the brightest who could change the fate of their nation with their qualification and experience, yet they choose to settle abroad (Economist 2019), but their settlement abroad also raises the hope for their country as they share their knowledge with experts in the country of origin (Agrawal, Kapur et al. 2008).

According to the Nepali Ministry of Education, Nepali students are found spread in 55 countries (Ghimire 2011), and according to UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) there are over 15,000 Nepali students in the UK along with their nearly 5000 dependents. Another researcher argues that skilled and semi-skilled people are migrating internationally as students, a dominant yet little studied phenomenon hampered by lack of data (Subedi 2007). Most Nepali officials would say that they have difficulty keeping the accurate data about student migration because of the

seemingly porous border with India and open access to international migration enjoyed by Nepali migrants via Indian cities (Subedi 2007). India has been one of the countries in the world where Nepalis people have enjoyed travelling to from pilgrimage to study and even for livelihoods.

Significant numbers of Nepali international migrants have returned home after completing their studies and professional experiences abroad in industrialised global North, but it is difficult to quantify returnees among the Nepali migrants in the absence of any study. However, Ghimire and Maharjan who have studied Nepali student returnees and students studying in the UK, Denmark and Sweden from the perspective of their abilities to create and spread knowledge to contribute back home, warn that this perspective risks return migrants being portrayed as one homogenous group while ignoring the factors which may limit their contributions to development at the individual or social level, including personal motivations and their social context (Ghimire and Maharjan 2015).

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This chapter explored the historical background relating to Nepali migration to the UK in order to provide the geographical context for understanding the lived experiences of professional Nepali migrants and their families in Chapters 5 to 8. As we learned from this chapter, Nepalis started migrating to the UK only in the 1990s when settlement rights were offered to the serving and retired British Gurkhas in 2004 and in 2009 and they have settled through the UK. The chapter focused on international migration trends, the livelihood strategies of skilled Nepali migrants, return migration and how Nepali society benefits from the resources and knowledge transferred by the returnees. The next chapter discusses the research methodology employed for this study.

## Chapter 4

### **Methodological Considerations**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores how the research questions and the objectives of this study have been addressed through the philosophical and methodological approaches. It also explains the rationale behind the recruitment of participants, data collection process, data analysis and interpretations, and the conclusions drawn thereafter. The research consisted of 40 qualitative in-depth interviews with male and female Nepali participants, 30 undertaken in the UK and 10 returnees in Nepal.

#### **4.2 Research Philosophy**

As discussed in previous chapter, Nepali people started to migrate to the UK in greater numbers only when immigration policy changes were introduced in 2004 and in 2009 relating to the serving, as well as retired, Gurkha soldiers. This research hopes to make an effort to fill the gaps by complementing those studies about the Nepali people in the UK by producing some evidence based new knowledge about their lives and livelihood experiences. It draws on previous qualitative research on migration in other geographical context (Thieme 2008, Grogger and Hanson 2011, Nzima, Duma et al. 2017).

As this research was exploratory, due to the lack of wider research on the Nepali experience, I wanted to develop a research paradigm that allows the research participants to relate their experience in their own words without the pressure of time following the subjectivist/phenomenological or interpretivist research paradigm where the researcher plays the role of a main research tool taking advantage of reflexivity to derive meaning from textual data. This research makes an effort to foreground the voices of the participants by asking them to evaluate their own migration decisions, particularly in terms whether they feel satisfied with the way things have worked out or perceive their current quality of life to be better than their pre-migration quality of life (De Jong, Chamratrithirong and Tran 2002). The relevant epistemological stance that this research takes is that knowledge cannot be discovered, as it is

subjectively acquired – everything is relative. Indeed, the notion that findings are created through the interaction of inquirer and phenomenon (which, in the case of social sciences, is usually people) is often a more plausible description of the inquiry process than is the notion that findings are discovered through objective observation as per objectivist research paradigm normally applicable in the area of laboratory based scientific research that follows quantitative research methods (Chilisa and Kawulich 2012).

This research focuses on understanding why skilled and qualified professional Nepali households chose to migrate to the UK in order to improve their livelihoods, social status and their family's general wellbeing. The research calls for an ontological and epistemological approaches and assumptions to capture the complete picture relating lived-in as well as diverse and complex ways in which migrants make livelihood. Published research on transnational migration in search of livelihoods divides families leading multi-local lives (Datta, McIlwaine et al. 2007, Thieme 2008).

Of all the research paradigms, the ones that would allow the migrants to share their experiences on their own and allows the researcher to interpret the data derived in the form of words subjectively would make a natural choice as a research methodology for this study. Subjective interpretivist approaches have been successfully utilised to produce and establish new knowledge as regards to lives and experiences of migrants (Lincoln and Guba 1985, Creswell 2014, Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz 2018).

The lack of data on return migration makes it a challenging choice of research for many scholars, nevertheless, return migration is an equally important phenomenon within the grand phenomenon of transnational migration that needs to be studied (Gmelch 1980, Rogers 1983, Cassarino 2004, Stark 2019). During the implementation of Nepali Diaspora Volunteering Programme (NDVP), I was exposed to a vast array of people who had returned home after spending some meaningful time abroad; some had returned after fulfilling their migration ambitions and second-generation professionals among them had returned to know the country of their parents better (Potter and Phillips 2009, Conway, Potter and Bernard 2009b). It was interesting to research about how the returned migrants had employed their human and social capital to establish themselves on their return.

It is challenging to study the migrants in the UK as well as the ones who return to Nepal who accept that they had to make a living and yes they employed various livelihood strategies based on their human and social capital and capabilities but they had not migrated with the objective of higher income. The information they provide defy all the known theories of migration that are mostly based on higher return on their human capital and capabilities. How do we conceptualise such motives of migration theoretically when the migrants confess for having migrated for the safety and higher education of their children? Where do we place these migrants who seem to be driven by the dream to provide better future for their children than economic rewards for themselves?

### **4.3 Researcher's Positionality – Insider/Outsider Perspective**

Other than myself being a recent migrant and belonging to shared ethnicity and nationality with that of research participants, the other relationship I had with this topic was my involvement with the Nepali migrant community during the implementation of the Nepalis Diaspora Volunteering Programme (NDVP). However, I was also aware that my position as insider and familiarity also carried the risks of blurring boundaries; unknowingly imposing my own values, beliefs and perception of biases on the research participants (Drake 2010). The entire conceptual framework, research questions and the research philosophy that I employed to investigate migration experiences among the Nepali minority migrants in the UK has actually been shaped by my dual identity as a researcher and a member of the same community which is succinctly described by two native American scholars Brayboy and Deyhle (2000) and Delgado Barnal (1998) citing their own research experiences.

The insider/outsider dichotomy has become increasingly important in social science research, and it is now expected of researchers to clarify their personal motivations for their research and their position with respect to their subjects, especially for those utilising qualitative methodologies that require reflexivity, interpretation and interpretivism (Breen 2007). There are many advantages of being an insider researcher and they have been thoroughly discussed in the literature. For example, speaking the same language as the research participants, understanding the local socio-cultural and religious values, knowledge and taboos, knowing the formal and informal power structure, cultural etiquettes easily facilitate the research process (DeLyser 2001, Coghlan 2007, Dwyer and Buckle 2009, Unluer 2012).

Bonner and Tolhurst (2002) has identified three key advantages of being an insider- researcher working in the same institution such as (a) having a greater understanding of the culture being studied; (b) not altering the flow of social interaction unnaturally; and (c) having an established intimacy which promotes both the telling and the judging of truth, which could also be applied in social units such as families. The insider researchers know how best to approach people. In general, the insiders have a great deal of knowledge, which takes an outsider a long time to acquire (Smyth and Holian 2008). Scholars Ganga and Scott (2006) argue that positionality has been conceptualised by the social scientists as a central component in the process of qualitative, and to a certain extent, quantitative data collection. They also argue that being insiders in the social interview is much more complex and multifaceted than is usually recognised (Ganga and Scott 2006). To conduct such an academic empirical exercise as an insider is never an easy task and I, as a researcher, face numerous challenges. Ryan (2015) and many others suggest that the insider status associated with shared ethnicity and nationality, instead of narrowing the scope of the research looking at it through the ethnic lens further widens it.

Although there are various advantages of being an insider-researcher, there are also problems associated with it. For example, greater familiarity can lead to a loss of objectivity. Unconsciously making wrong assumptions about the research process based on the researcher's prior knowledge can be considered a bias (DeLyser 2001, Hewitt-Taylor 2002). Insider-researchers may also be confronted with role duality. Researchers often struggle to balance their insider role such as instructor, nurse, geographer and the researcher role (Geirish 1997, DeLyser 2001). DeLyser quoting Robert Bogdan and Sari Biklen (1998) warn that starting with an insider's perspective can make research harder rather than easier since qualitative researchers regularly focus on the taken for granted (DeLyser 2001). Kitchin and Tate warn that the researchers may fail to notice pertinent questions or issues because of the in-ability to step back from a situation and fully assess the circumstances (2000; 29).

Carrying out research on one's peers as an insider researcher is not without problems (Hockey 1993). My work and related social life being a migrant and known among the Nepali migrant community didn't distract me or detract from the research as much as they made me realize that, as an insider researcher, I myself was a necessary part of my own research (DeLyser 2001). The researcher is an instrument in her/his research and cannot conveniently tuck away the

personal behind the professional because fieldwork is personal (England 1994). England argues that insider researchers explicitly study not just others but also themselves to attempt to gain insight through everyday life truly lived along with the rest of the community.

The onus is on the insider researchers like me to be aware of the biases during data collection, collect and use the data/information in a credible way remaining aware of any biases that may infiltrate as the insider researchers like myself may get access to sensitive personal information about the participants, their families and their businesses. Researchers argue that as an insider, the problem is not just that the researcher may not receive or see important information but the risk is that the insider-researcher gains access to sensitive information. To conduct credible insider research, insider-researchers must have an explicit awareness of the possible effects of perceived bias on data collection and analysis, respect the ethical issues related to the anonymity of the organization and individual participants and consider and address the issues about the influencing researcher's insider role on coercion, compliance and access to privileged information, at each and every stage of the research (Smyth and Holian 2008). The researchers who choose to study a community of which they are not a member must go through the process of learning the language of the group that they want to study as well as getting to know their culture and often face problems of trust (Smith, Chen et al. 2008, Squires 2008, Aneas and Sandín 2009). Interpreters can help them to overcome the language barrier but language is not merely a tool of communication but also a part of the overall identity and bigger part of the culture which the researcher doing qualitative research will miss out as the cultural essence may be lost in transition (Smith, Chen et al. 2008, Squires 2008, Aneas and Sandín 2009).

For people with English as second language, the issue of language as a barrier becomes particularly critical during intercultural service encounters, especially when the customers and the service providers are from different cultural backgrounds so because of the language problem they may struggle to communicate what they actually want or what services are on the offer (Kyoo Kim and Mattila 2011). I agree that some of my research participants represented wider ethnicities who have their own dialect, but Nepali language is spoken and understood by all the research participants. I had the advantage of being a Nepali with good command of both Nepali and English languages.

It would probably have been more difficult for me to find research participants who would be willing to invite me to their homes and share their personal feelings and experiences of migration to the UK, if I was not a Nepali myself. Or, if I did not speak Nepali with them and empathise with their circumstances, sharing with them my own personal circumstances as a migrant like them and my motivations for the research. I do not claim that I speak all the languages spoken by over 123 ethnicities that live in Nepal or over 30 or so Nepali ethnicities that are cohabiting in the UK. However, by and large, most of them speak and understand Nepali language. Thus, my work experience in Nepal and my role as administrator of NDVP, my affinity with the Nepali community allowed me to interact with them naturally and to develop natural affinity with them without much effort (Bonner and Tolhurst 2002).

Justine Mercer (2007) stressing the disadvantages related to being an insider researcher argues greater familiarity can make insider researchers more likely to take things for granted, develop myopia and may assume their own perspective to be far more widespread than it actually is (Mercer 2007). The insider researcher may not explain the shared experiences and may not challenge assumptions and shared norms may not be articulated as a result data may become thinner (Platt 1981, Hockey 1993, Kanuha 2000, Mercer 2007).

I too would like to think my research participants as my co-investigators, co-learners, facilitators, or advocates without their full support my research would not make much sense. This concept of co-investigator has been described as an effort to minimise the power differential between the researchers and the research participants (DeLyser 2001, Harklau and Norwood 2005). When meeting the research participants, I acknowledged their importance for the research and listened to what they wanted to say attentively. I was able to warm them up by talking to them about myself, by replying to questions that some among them asked me about me and my family, and my motivation for the research.

Nepal is quite a hierarchical society where power relations such as social standing, official position, wealth, education, family background and who one knows matters a great deal. Similarly, there are many issues that Nepali contemporary men and women do not like to discuss openly. However, during the interview I felt that those hierarchical prejudices and even the gender differences did not exist, it all felt so natural and spontaneous probably I was not researching any sensitive issues or asking them deeply personal questions. The only limitation

to me being an insider and my passion for diaspora engagement could have influenced the questions that I prepared as primary tool to extract information from them. However, they had complete freedom over to reply or no to reply to those questions, the way they choose to reply and the time they took. The research experience in the case of second generation was different. They felt closer to the UK than to Nepal unlike their parents because UK was their home, the UK is where they said they were born and had taken the identity of.

#### **4.4 Research Design and Methodology**

As discussed earlier, a qualitative methodology based on interviews was deemed to be the most relevant approach as qualitative studies enable scholars to study people in their own social world (Carter and Fuller 2015), and also allows the researcher to use own experience (Ellis and Bochner 2000).

The research also relied on secondary data sources such as survey of the Nepalis population carried out in the UK in 2008 by CNS UK (Adhikari 2012, Adhikari 2012a). Similarly, research papers, books, pamphlets, legal statutes and newspaper articles were also reviewed to corroborate research findings and to develop a general understanding as regards to the lives and experiences, growth and expansion of the Nepali migrant community in UK. The next section will explore qualitative research methodology and its importance for this study.

##### *4.4.1 Qualitative Methods*

Qualitative research is particularly good at answering the ‘why’, ‘what’ or ‘how’ questions that the researcher has in mind (Lacey and Luff 2009). Qualitative or natural methods are used to address research questions that require explanation to understand social phenomenon and their contexts (Snape et al. 2003, Iosifides 2003). Qualitative research has some distinctive qualities because it aims at providing an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories (Snape et al. 2003, p 5).

Having some experience of working with Nepali migrants in the UK for several years, I chose to study their lives and their migratory experience to gain more knowledge about it (Drake 2010). Researchers suggest six commonly used approaches to doing qualitative research such

as basic qualitative research also known as basic interpretive study, phenomenology, grounded theory, narrative analysis and qualitative case study (Merriam and Tisdell 2015). Of these common qualitative methods this research follows basic qualitative or interpretive and exploratory approach. The qualitative research helps us to understand how people interpret their experiences and how do they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experiences (Merriam and Tisdell 2015, p 6).

Ricard Zapata-Barrero and Evren Yalaz argue that qualitative research bears a particular importance for migration studies considering its potential for producing rich and in-depth data as the research participants are allowed time to explain their experiences leading to nuanced analysis that allows for conceptual refinements with higher validity. It allows them to redefine the existing categories generating new hypotheses and even theoretical paradigms; exploring complex, conjunctural, multi-faceted dimensions of the migration dynamics; and last but not least, being better tuned for understanding the voices of social actors and immigrant groups, especially the ones who lack means of participation and representation in mainstream society and politics (Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz 2018; p 2).

An important characteristic of qualitative research is being inductive, that is, researchers gather data to build concepts, hypotheses or theories (Braun and Clarke 2013, p 3-4). Qualitative inquiry accepts the complex and dynamic quality of the social world. Research tools or data collection tools used in qualitative research methodologies have the virtue of capturing, in some depth, the lived experience, beliefs, and identities of those being studied (Foner 2003). A central tenet of qualitative research is that individuals construct reality in interaction with their social world. Constructivism thus underlies what we call qualitative study (ibid.).

Ritchie and Lewis (2003) view qualitative research as a blend of empirical investigation and creative discovery. Qualitative research also encourages the use of research methods that usually involve close contact between the researcher and the people being studied, it allows the use of a pragmatic research strategy and tools of data generation that are sensitive to the social context in which the data is produced and is flexible so as to allow naturalistic inquiry in the real world rather than experimental or manipulated settings (Ritchie and Lewis 2003, p 7).

Lincoln and Guba argue that human being has certain characteristics that make them “instrument of choice” for naturalistic inquiry. For example, humans are responsive to environmental cues and are able to interact with the situation instantaneously (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Humans have the ability to collect information at multiple levels simultaneously and are able to perceive situations holistically. Human beings are able to process data as soon as it becomes available; they can provide immediate feedback and request verification of data. Last but not the least, human being can explore and simultaneously analyse atypical or unexpected responses (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

Qualitative methodology is also useful to identify recurring patterns of information and helps to reconstruct people’s everyday experience, both the inner and outer aspects of it, with the meanings those social actors attach to their situations and pursuits (Morawska 2018). Qualitative methodology allows the researcher, who acts as the main research instrument, to obtain the information in a natural setting in the process of natural conversation that allows the research participants to describe freely their experiences, feelings and frustrations.

It is for all these reasons I believe that in-depth interview of research participants will be most useful for this study because interview as a qualitative research method is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experience of the people being studied (Marshall and Gretchen 2006). I adopted qualitative research methodology also because it is: (a) naturalistic, so it will reveal the lived experience of the research sample, (b) it allows us to draw on multiple methods that respect the participants in the study, (c) it focuses on context, (d) it is emergent and evolving, and (e) it is fundamentally interpretive (Rossman and Rallis 2003).

The objective of this study is to establish reasons of migration of the participants of this study to the UK, did it go the way they had imagined it would and how? What has been their experience and how their lives have changed over the years because of their decision to migrate to the UK?(Hendriks and Bartram 2018). During the whole process of data collection, I was an avid listener because there was a need for the researcher to be a disciplined listener who notes the paradoxical, the contradictory, and the marginal as well as emotion and intensity (Opie 1992). This research has adopted subjective interpretivist/reflexive research paradigm relying on in-depth semi-structured interview of research participants (Baxter and Eyles 1997). The

researcher hopes that the findings from this study would be generalisable to other minority migrant communities in the UK and other economically buoyant economies in Europe.

As a researcher, I was interested to understand: (a) how the research participants interpret their experiences of migrating to the UK, (b) how they construct their world, and (c) what meaning do they attribute to their livelihood experiences? The overall purpose of the research was to understand how people make sense of their lives and their livelihood experiences through semi-structured interviews (Braun and Clarke 2013, p 24-25).

#### *4.4.2 Recruitment and Sampling (UK and Nepal)*

An open encouraging advertisement offering volunteering opportunities in Nepal for professional people of Nepali origin settled in the UK was published in the UK during the implementation phase of Nepali Diaspora Volunteering Programme (NDVP) in 2008. As a result, many professional people submitted their application offering their time and skills. Each interested candidate was asked to submit two-page curriculum vitae along with two referees and a page long concept note about their planned activities. The stacks of CVs and concept notes submitted by these professional Nepalis was highly useful in purposively selecting the research participants from first and second generation. It was important for me to recruit research participants from one and half as well as second generation to find out how they were doing. Some among them were selected using snowball purposive technique bouncing back the idea of more suitable research participants from those who were already selected. The referees and charity leaders whom the researcher knew were approached for assistance in locating more appropriately qualified research participants.

The respondents were selected carefully based on snowball purposive sampling technique, meaning the samples that most appropriately fit the parameters of the project's research objectives and purpose were purposefully chosen for the research (Tracy 2013). Also called judgemental, selective, convenience or subjective sampling; purposive sampling is frequently applied in conceptually driven approach and it involves researcher deliberately and purposefully selecting the sample they believe can be most useful in finding answers to research questions (Farrugia 2019).

In the similar way, the partner organisations in Nepal who were responsible for hosting the volunteers were highly helpful in recommending different people who had returned back from abroad. During research trips to Nepal to organise training programmes, the researcher also had the opportunity to meet several professionals and return migrants who returned back and settled in Nepal. The recommendation for the research participants in Nepal came from the programme leaders who were either managing programmes to help settle return migrants or those who indirectly supported the concept of the programme.

Keeping with the tradition of qualitative research sample for this research study was kept at manageably small because compared to quantitative studies, the qualitative research generally needs much smaller sample because, as per Ritchie and Lewis there is a point of diminishing return attached to qualitative sample because more data does not necessarily lead to more information (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). Besides, qualitative research is very labour intensive because transcribing an hour-long in-depth interview takes up to six hours and analysing a large sample can be time consuming and often simply impractical.

#### *4.4.3 Interviews – semi-structured interviews*

Nepalis are ethnically as diverse in the UK as they are in Nepal and there are professionals, businessmen, medical doctors, nurses, accountants, financial experts and others. Altogether 30 in-depth interviews were conducted in the UK, of which first generation male and female were 14 and 10 respectively. Both, first and second generation male and female participants belonged to different families. Having been a study that wanted to learn lives and livelihoods experiences of Nepali migrants, it was felt important to interview the first-generation migrants. Many of the first generation participants described their main reason for migrating to the UK being the education, social mobility, life chances and security of their children because they valued British education and had confidence that their children will have better life chances with British education and other opportunities they will receive in the UK. I felt it was important to interview those children of migrants, the second generation, to know about their lives, their education and their career prospects. Altogether six 2<sup>nd</sup> generation migrants were interviewed of which 3 were male and 3 females. Similarly, to learn more about knowledge transfer and other innovative aspects of return migration, as well as to learn how their foreign qualifications, skills, experiences and their social capital had contributed towards their new livelihoods on

their return to Nepal, 10 return migrants, three female and seven male, were interviewed in Kathmandu, Nepal. During the interview the migrants shared their varied yet unique lived in experiences in a candid way. Some among the respondents were students who were about to complete their professional qualifications and launch their professional career.

Interviews are discussions that usually takes place between two people, one-on-one, the interviewer and the interviewee with the purpose of gathering information about a set topic (Harwell and Bradley 2009). Interview is one of the mechanisms to collect primary data, the questions asked is as important as the findings; the answers given (Campbell and Bunting 1991). For an interview to be successful and for the interviewee to open up to the questions, participants need to believe that the interviewer can indeed relate to their experiences (Wuest 1995).

Of three different types of interviews such as unstructured, semi-structured and structured; semi-structured interviews were found to be most ideal approach to collect primary data from the research participants. The semi-structured in-depth interviews are focused, as well as conversational in nature, thereby allowing two-way communication. The interviewees provided answers that are important to them, but further explanations, clarifications and examples were obtained by follow-up closed questions. Semi-structured interview facilitates rapport, empathy with the respondents, allows greater flexibility of coverage and enables the interview to enter novel areas, and it tends to produce richer data and during the whole process the interviewer only facilitates it rather than dictate it. I did not face any problem asking questions to some of the research participants in Nepali language or with some of those who frequently oscillated to Nepali and English, as they choose, as the literature suggest (Smith, Chen et al. 2008, Lee, Sulaiman-Hill et al. 2014).

The first key feature of the in-depth interview is that it is intended to combine structure with flexibility, as has been explained earlier in the chapter. The in-depth format also permits the researcher to explore fully all the factors that underpin participants' answers: reasons, feelings, opinions and beliefs. The researchers should have a logical mind and quick thinkers to distil essential points made by the participants, make mental note of some important points in order to return to it at a judicious moment during the interview to seek further clarification or ask for elaboration so a good memory is an important attribute of the researcher (Legard, Keegan et al.

2003). Interviewing, observing, document reviewing, and analysing are activities central to qualitative research and humans are best suited for this task. Interestingly enough, unlike in the case of quantitative methodology which uses numbers as data, the qualitative methodology uses information provided by the research participants in the form of words, ‘their opinions and the experiences that they share during in-depth interviews’ as data and is analysed manually or with the help of a software (Chilisa and Kawulich 2012, Berger 2015, Morawska 2018).

The semi-structured in-depth interviews I conducted with participants were mostly focussed on themes (see Appendix I), as this offered the research participants to provide unlimited number of possible answers in greater detail allowing them the opportunity to address complex issues with adequate detail. Before the actual interview began, I explained to the research participants about the project and they were informed that they were free to answer or not to answer the questions and they can take as long as they want to reply to the questions. The open-ended questions also permit creativity, self-expression and richness of detail about the lived-in experiences, which this study aimed to know. Uninterrupted answers took a bit long to transcribe but were rich with details which helped to explore how interviewees interpreted different everyday life events, how they perceived, understood and experienced them, and how their natural everyday practices were affected by their interpretations (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009).

The participants were also informed that the interview will take up to one and half hour and they were not in a rush to go anywhere as most of the interviews were conducted at their own home, a familiar setting where they feel most comfortable. The interviews were digitized with the permission of the research participants and were later transcribed verbatim which took up to six hours to transcribe each interview.

#### *4.4.4 Interview Questions*

The questions that I had designed were based on the academic literature and covered such areas as general background, family related, profession related, challenges and difficulties, professional affiliations, diaspora and development, dual citizenship, impact of migration. There are different types of questions that are used by different researchers during interviews but are not confined to any distinct parts of the interview. Legard et al. (2003) broadly describe

the questions into two different types such as content mapping questions and content mining questions. Content mapping questions are designed to open up the research territory and to identify the dimensions or issues that are relevant to the participant. Whereas, content mining questions are designed to explore the detail which lies within each dimension, to access the meaning it holds for the interviewee, and to generate an in-depth understanding from the interviewee's point of view (Legard et al. 2003). Both types, but particularly content mining questions, also involve probes. Probes are responsive, follow-up questions designed to elicit more information, description, explanation and so on a simultaneous basis during interviews.

Other researchers such as Kvale and Brinkmann (1996) and Spradley (1979) describe interview questions differently. Kvale and Brinkmann (1996), has described ten different types of questions; introducing questions, follow-up questions, probing questions, specifying questions, direct questions, indirect questions, structuring questions, silence, interpreting questions, throw away questions. According to Spradley (1979) main tool for discovering another person's cultural knowledge is ethnographic question and has described 30 different types of them throughout the book. However, Spradley describes descriptive questions, structural questions and contrast questions as main questions. For example, descriptive questions help the researcher to collect sample information about informant's language in an ongoing way; information about research participant's mundane daily routines, office work are captured by descriptive questions. Structural questions help the researcher to discover information about domains, the basic units in a participants cultural knowledge and how they have organised it, and finally contrast questions enable the researcher to discover the dimensions of meaning that informants use to distinguish the objects and events in their world (Spradley 1979).

For this research, an interview guide, a checklist of issues/themes were prepared for the three different groups of respondents: first and second generation and the returnees. Jargon free, neutral rather than value-laden or leading questions were framed and majority of them were open ended that allowed the research participants to speak freely without intervention from the interviewer (Smith 1995). The remit of the questions developed for this research (please see Appendix I, II, III) could broadly be classified as those that include the different types of questions mentioned by the researchers as they were designed to elicit information from the research participants in a cordial manner.

Each set of the questions contained eight different segments related to different topics, namely general, family related, profession related, challenges and difficulties, membership and affiliations with professional or social organisations, their possible contribution to the development prospects of Nepal, their contribution to local economy/society and investments that they have made in Nepal or the investments that they want to make in Nepal, and the overall impact of migration on them, on their family, on the society where they are settled and on Nepal. Each section contained three to 17 questions, and in the course of interview, follow up questions were asked prompted by participants' responses. Points gleaned through informal observation, informal discussions and from their answers were brought up during the follow up questions. The interviews went seamlessly but took a long time to transcribe verbatim as most of the interviewees were willing to share their experiences and had access to unlimited time as they were allowed to speak freely.

#### **4.5 The Study Area**

The main focus of the study has been on Nepali migrants living in the United Kingdom. A survey of Nepali migrants conducted by the Centre for Nepal Studies UK (CNSUK) in 2008 revealed wide spatial and geographical distribution of Nepali migrants in the UK (Adhikari, Dahal et al. 2012). However, because of their higher concentration in the South East of England and also the researcher having been based in the South East and also for practical and economic considerations, majority of the research participants came from the South East of England. The research also considers the experiences of returned migrants in Nepal. The research participants in Nepal were living in different cities within the Kathmandu Valley.

The research is a multi-sited study with research for the study carried out in the UK and in Nepal. I collected data in both the countries myself through in-depth interviews carried out in the familiar natural environment of research participant's homes or their offices, where they felt at ease. Multiple techniques were used to collect the data, primarily in-depth interview, informal discussion and informal observation of the places where they lived, the decor of the house they lived in and people with whom they lived in. This furnishes the explanatory evidence that is an important element of qualitative research (Snape, Spencer et al. 2003). The field work in Nepal and in the UK was carried out between the months of June 2011 to February 2012. Prior to the main fieldwork, a pilot study was undertaken.

## **4.6 Pilot Study**

A pilot study can be defined as a ‘small study to test research protocols, data collection instruments, sample recruitment strategies, and other research techniques in preparation for a larger study (Abu Hassan, Schattner et al. 2006). A pilot study is one of the important stages in a research project and is conducted to identify potential problem areas and deficiencies in the research instruments and protocol prior to their implementation during the main study. The pilot study also helps the researcher to become familiar with the procedures in research protocol and can also help her/him to decide between competing study methods (Lancaster, Dodd et al. 2004). After completing the initial discussion with my supervisors regarding the quality and comprehensiveness of the interview questions I had developed, I was advised to conduct a pilot study prior to conducting the main study to test the semi-structured interview protocol.

During the course of the pilot study, seven in-depth interviews were carried out with the selected respondents in the UK to test the validity, comprehension and depth of the interview and the data they generated. The pilot interviews helped me in a number of ways such as rapport building with the research participants. I had no problem asking them the questions and they had no problem understanding or replying to those questions. It was a great experience but there was no need to change any questions. After completing the pilot interviews, I transcribed the interviews verbatim so as not to omit or miss out any important points that the interviewees made. The other thing I learned was it took a minimum of five to six hours to transcribe each interview. The interviews were done in both English and Nepali language as some of the research participants, mostly first-generation, felt comfortable giving parts of the replies in Nepali and parts in English. Although the interview guide was in English, and questions were mostly asked in English as well, some among the research participants oscillated between English and Nepali languages as they felt comfortable dealing with certain aspects of their professional lived in experiences. They felt comfortable speaking Nepali with me as they knew that I too was a native Nepali speaker. The findings of the pilot research and interviews were later used in the main research.

## **4.7 Fieldwork in the UK**

For the main study, 33 more in-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out of which 23 were conducted in the UK and 10 were conducted in Nepal. The concentration of Nepali

population is significantly higher in places known to have a base for Gurkha garrisons or those in the vicinity of these military bases, such as Aldershot, also referred to as Little Kathmandu by local residents (The Economist 2018), Sandhurst, Farnborough, Maidstone, York and Glasgow. More recently, the retired Gurkhas and their family have been more widely disbursed within the UK with, in addition to the above-named towns, higher concentrations in Bracknell, Reading, Harrow, Woking, Woolwich, Plumstead, Edinburgh, Aberdeen (Adhikari, Dahal et al. 2012).

My personal acquaintance with the community leaders in the UK allowed me to meet Nepali people from a very wide social, political and professional backgrounds, an opportunity which I was able to exploit to engage in selecting three sets of research participants based on the snowball purposive sampling methods as explained earlier. The first set of 24 first generation research participants is comprised of 14 male and 10 female migrants between the ages of 23 years to 70 years and they were largely employed in professional careers (see Table 4.1).

The entire research experience of interviewing the research participants, transcribing the interviews, coding them, thematically compiling, analysing and interpreting the data during the main research was highly enlightening. Snowball purposive method of sample selection was extended to find more research participants in the UK and in Nepal. Thus, the existing list of research participants interviewed during the pilot study was updated with more experienced and knowledgeable Nepali migrant research participants, bringing the total number to 40. A description of three groups of research participants including their social, professional and gender profile have been presented in Table 4.1, Table 4.2 and Table 4.3. The names of the participants have been changed to respect their anonymity.

Table 4.1: Socio-demographic & Professional Profile of First-generation Research Participants						
S. N.	Pseudonym	Profession	Sex	Age	Interview Date	Place of Interview
1	Ramesh	Chartered Account	M	59	25/06/2011	London
2	Harendra	Businessman	M	56	30/09/2011	Berkshire
3	Shyam	Businessman	M	56	23/11/2011	Berkshire
4	Sanjay	Businessman	M	42	04/10/2012	Berkshire
5	Binay	Businessman	M	40	15/07/2012	London
6	Santosh	Businessman	M	42	08/07/2011	Berkshire
7	Laxman	Businessman	M	58	14/09/2011	Berkshire
8	Laxmi	Medical Doctor	F	50	11/06/2011	Surrey
9	Gaurinath	Medical Doctor	M	60	02/10/2011	Hertfordshire
10	Pranita	Nurse	F	23	06/08/2011	Surrey
11	Anuradha	Diner lady	F	55	24/07/2011	Surrey
12	Surendra	Manager	M	54	15/07/2011	Surrey
13	Sudhir	Chartered Account	M	42	22/07/2011	London,
14	Ananta	Banker	M	46	23/07/2011	London
15	Deepa	Nurse	F	23	06/08/2011	Surrey
16	Gauri	Carer	F	50	22/04/2012	London
17	Kamal	Dental Surgeon/ Businessman	M	46	12/11/2011	Berkshire
18	Prahladh	Medical Doctor	M	70	25/02/2012	London
19	Guman	Manager	M	58	22/11/2011	Berkshire
20	Bandita	Researcher	F	39	26/04/2012	London
21	Sangita	Nurse	F	42	31/03/2012	London
22	Anjali	Nurse	F	39	04/04/2012	London
23	Samjhana	Nurse	F	44	14/03/2012	London
24	Padma	Nurse	F	32	04/04/2012	London

Similarly, the second group of six-research participants, the second-generation migrants, comprised of three male and three female migrants. They belonged to such professions as medical doctor, banker, businessperson, policy officer and belonged to age group of 31 years and 33 years. (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Socio-demographic and Professional Profile of Second-Generation Research Participants						
S. N.	Pseudonym	Profession	Sex	Age	Interview Date	Place of Interview
1	Ambika	Policy Officer	F	32	26/03/2012	London
2	Rabi	Medical Doctor	M	32	24/10/2011	London
3	Pushpanjali	Travel Trade	F	32	18/04/2012	London
4	Jayanti	International Business Manager	F	31	25/02/2012	Wales
5	Amar	Banker/Chartered Accountant	M	32	22/12/2011	London
6	Amrit	Medical Doctor	M	32	01/01/2012	Sussex

A third group of 10 research participants between the ages of 23 and 65 years representing returned migrants were selected in Kathmandu following snowball purposive sampling with the help a researcher and some returnees that I met in Nepal when attending a programme organised for the return migrants by the Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM). They belonged to such professions as entrepreneur/business, banker, engineer and educationists (Table 4.3).

S. N.	Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Profession	Dare of Interview	Place of Interview
1	Bidur	28	M	Entrepreneur/ Consultant	19/10/2012	Kathmandu
2	Bikram	47	M	Businessman/ Entrepreneur	26/01/2012	Kathmandu
3	Renuka	56	F	Educationalist	14/02/2012	Kathmandu
4	Suraj	65	M	Professor of Political Science	27/01/2012	Kathmandu
5	Amir	23	M	Electrical Engineer	07/11/2012	Kathmandu
6	Sumitra	60	F	Mathematician Entrepreneur	08/02/2012	Kathmandu
7	Jeet	32	M	Entrepreneur –	24/01/2012	Kathmandu
8	Arpana	27	F	International Relations	20/11/2012	Kathmandu
9	Sagun	38	M	Banker	21/01/2012	Kathmandu
10	Shalini	56	F	Educationist/ Nutritionist	24/02/2012	Kathmandu

#### 4.8 Fieldwork in Nepal

During my field work in Nepal, besides interviewing the selected interviewees, I had extensive discussion with Nepali government officials working in different ministries as to how Nepali international diaspora could support and contribute to the Nepali government's development plans. I also attended one event organised in Kathmandu by the Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM), a programme initiated by the German Ministry of International Development (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit - GIZ) GmbH and the German Federal Employment Agency. The programme has been rolled out to encourage and facilitate the return of foreign students who studied in Germany to their respective home countries (BMZ 2014).

The initial exploratory visit to Nepal also allowed the opportunity to have frank discussions with a number of academics, researchers, public servants, leaders from civil society organisations, NGOs, students and journalists. Many of them were involved in the study of diaspora or who had a particular interest in the issue because of the nature of their work and profession. The experience and insight gained through multiple, multi-layered discussions with multiple stakeholders in Nepal as well as in the UK helped me to have a better understanding about the whole process of migration, issues relating to international migration, growth of Nepali human capital abroad, the scope of diaspora mobilisation for national development and limitations regarding openly inviting the diaspora to engage in development mainstream in Nepal. Reflections and learning from these visits and discussions will be further highlighted towards the end of this thesis when the researcher will return to talk about specific lessons learned and points raised by the research participants in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

#### **4.9 Interview Transcription**

Transcription of recorded interviews is a lengthy, tedious yet necessary aspects of the in-depth qualitative research process (Loubere 2017). Each interview was at least one and half hour long and took around six hours to transcribe. Each interview was listened to several times while transcribing in order to avoid missing vital information; however, by the time each interview was transcribed, I had already learned a great deal and had noted the significant points mentioned in each interview. Qualitative data are gathered primarily in the form of spoken or written language rather than in the form of numbers (Polkinghorne 2005), and takes up to one hour to transcribe 15 minutes of interview talk (Robinson 2017). After completing transcription each interview was read several times and then was manually coded, based on the recurrence of information patterns which became the basis for the identification of emerging themes of the study. Transcribing interviews is such an intimate and repetitive process that it should be considered as part of the analysis process, because listening carefully to what people say in interviews recorded in natural settings is the first step to meaning-making and interpretation (Robinson 2017). Undertaking careful and thorough transcription of the interviews, qualitative researchers come to know their data immediately which also enhances analytic sensibilities and helps the researchers to think about and formulate research findings (ibid.).

Transcription of in-depth interview is not without criticism, though. Over reliance of social science researchers on data collection through qualitative methods such as unstructured or semi-structured interviews, informal conversations makes the data subjective, unscientific and lacking transparency when compared with positivist approaches that seek to emulate the natural sciences by producing research that is generalisable, verifiable, and reproducible (Loubere 2017). Charmaz (2006) argues that transcription of verbatim interview and coding full interview transcription gives the researcher ideas and understandings that the researcher may miss otherwise (Charmaz 2006).

The benefit of personally transcribing 40 interviews was that I had to listen to all those wonderful experiences shared by the research participants several times in the process of transcribing the interviews that proved very useful and helped develop fairly good understanding of the content of the interviews. Each transcript was read several times, scouting for recurring words and phrases and flow of information that led to identification of several important themes. The structure of the interviews allowed free flow of information allowing participants are to share their experiences without interruption. Thorough study of the interview revealed the strength of the interview content in meeting the research objectives. It was very easy to recognise the recurrence pattern of information imbedded into the text, code them, analyse and narrate them. The pilot study was instrumental in deciding the saturation point in terms of number of sample and the time it took to transcribe and analyse the data (Ritchie and Lewis 2003, Merriam and Tisdell 2015).

All the digitised interviews were transcribed verbatim. All the questions were asked in English and in some cases, explained in Nepali as well for clarity. Some of the respondents, particularly from the first generation, felt comfortable replying the questions in Nepali language but some of them switched between English and Nepali languages. However, the professionals mostly replied in English. Whereas the second-generation were comfortable and preferred to reply in English and were less comfortable in Nepali language. While transcribing some of the interviews or some portion of the interview in Nepali language, sometimes the researcher had to struggle to find exact words in English because there are many such words in Nepali which could not be directly translated word by word into English, as is the case with other languages (van Nes, Abma et al. 2010). In those circumstances, the English sentences were carefully

structured in a way that represented the exact meaning. The researcher being of Nepali origin was useful in conducting some of the interviews in Nepali language and later transcribing them into English as every expression was properly captured.

#### **4.10 Data Coding and Analysis**

This research followed inductive approaches, particularly thematic content analysis to analyse the data. Thematic analysis of informant's experiences in the form of words, in-depth interviews, is just one among several forms of data analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). A thematic analysis strives to identify patterns of themes in the interview data. Grouping repetitive ideas and information that emerge when research participants share their lived experiences can be better understood under the control of a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis focuses on identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or behaviour (Aronson 1995). The first task in the processing of qualitative data is to get the information into a format suitable for classifying and ordering (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Seidel categorises the coding process in two parts – objectivist and heuristic. For him codes are heuristic tools, the tools that facilitate discovery and further investigation of the data. Heuristic codes are primarily flags or signposts that point to important things in the data and help the researcher to reorganise the data and present different views of the data. Heuristic codes facilitate the discovery of things, and they help open up the data to further intensive analysis and inspection (Seidel 1998). Coding of the interviews helped to clarify, classify and streamline different sets of information falling under each theme. Data coding relies on having solid data; how and what is coded affects what have to be coded and coding full interview transcriptions gives ideas and builds understanding (Charmaz 2006, p 69). The process helps the researchers to condense the bulk of the data sets into analysable units by creating categories with and from the available data (Coffey 1994, p 26).

Early transcription of the interviews was followed by in-depth studying of the information collected, and coding of that information. Early analysis of the transcribed interview helped to confirm and clarify any points made by the research participants that were not clear at the outset. The data was coded, analysed and interpreted manually. Important points were noted during interviews for further elaboration and confirmation so complete attention was paid to

listening to the participants' recorded conversation so as not to miss out any important points. Visual information recorded during the interview were further clarified and observations were duly transferred to the transcribed interviews.

My first reading of the transcribed interviews flagged up emerging themes. I made notes by longhand in a notebook as well as on the margins of the interview sheet, before entering the data into the computer. I followed the usual procedure of coding the data by assigning different tags and labels to the data based on the research concepts. I made a summary of all the interviews and where possible linked them to the main interview, making the notes in the computer. This was my first step in organising the data into manageable chunks and sections, allowing me to look up references for themed data.

Some of the main points were marked as bold, different colours that were tied to different themes. For example, their experience related to education was marked in blue colour text. Their work experience was marked black bold text, where they talked about their initial difficulties, the challenges, their frustration after arriving in the UK, their fear of English language, their exposure to British social and cultural practices, their insufficient knowledge to meet the expectation of their employers, the support they received from their friends networks so on so forth all were clearly marked by different colour coded text, written on the margin, then entered into the computer. I was thus able to construct several tables with different themes on computer, using my manual data analysis.

Right from the pilot study, important information contained in the transcribed interviews were highlighted and coded with numbers and identifiable themes. The same process was used with all the transcribed interviews and once this process of data segregation was completed, the marked information/data was collated in the form of a table under different themes. All the marked data were then gradually placed in each themed table one by one redacting the entire bulk of the data. Then the whole transcribed interview was read several times, making notes and picking up the data that closely matched the theme and these were placed under the appropriate tables and columns, wherever they fit under different themes. This process of cross-checking the content of the interview for any missed important data was repeated with all the interviews until all the useful information and meaningful expressions were fully extracted from each interview. Once the process of thematic collection and extraction of data was

completed and arranged in the tables, the available data was then reduced to a broader category and gradually, data that represented same line of thought were grouped together and further analysed. The process was applied to each and every transcript until completely exhausted. The process of data coding and theme identification helped to reduce the themes that were more relevant to the research.

As discussed earlier, many interviews were conducted in Nepali language to facilitate the flow of information and were translated into English during transcription with great care. Translation was not always straightforward, and it was at times difficult, and time consuming, to find suitable vocabulary to accurately convey the exact meaning that the interviewees wanted to convey, as normally happens with studies with research participants and the researcher having the same non-English native language, because thesis has to be written in English (van Nes, Abma et al. 2010). I had to rewind the tape several times to listen to the exact words to transcribe the data verbatim into English, which did not pose any problem because, as argued by van Nes, Abma et al., the research participants and I, the researcher, spoke the same language so there is no language difference in data gathering and transcription (ibid.).

#### **4.11 Ethical Considerations**

Qualitative research often results in face to face interactions, observations and participation in research participants' lives which imposes particular ethical challenges on the researcher (Drench, Iphofen et al. 2004, p 31). Liempt and Bilger (2012) argue that it is important to acknowledge that ethical questions need to be raised and reflected from the very start of a project when conceptualising the research until placing the results in the public arena and need to be balanced against methodological and practical issues (Liempt and Bilger 2012). Ethical guidelines also offer protection to researchers, providing them with a source to quote if pressured by others to adopt unethical practices (Drench, Iphofen et al. 2004). This research was guided by and adhered strictly to the research guidelines set by the University of Reading's Research Ethics Committee. Ethical standards in social science are generally based on three basic principles: respect for human dignity, justice and beneficence (Liempt and Bilger 2012). These standards also emphasize four guidelines through which these principles should be applied: informed consent, non-deception, privacy and confidentiality, and accuracy (Christians 2005, p 144).

The researcher was guided by the Departmental research guideline to evaluate risks associated with my research study such as matters relating to the subject of the research, that is, whether the topics of research is controversial, contentious, sensitive, embarrassing, or upsetting subject matter. Sometimes there might exist conflict of interest among the researchers themselves depending on the subject of the research, pre-planned research agenda or research biases. The insider-outsider positionality of the researcher also belongs to ethical considerations which has been explored in section 3.3 above in this chapter. Or, the confidentiality could be related to issues such as covert observation of participants, recording or filming, lack of anonymity and security of personal data.

In the case of this research, the participants were thoroughly briefed about the nature and purpose of the study and the importance of the information that they were requested to share. They were asked to go through the questions before the interview began and were encouraged to ask any questions that they may have. Prior to the interview, the research participants were assured of confidentiality of the information provided by them and also assured that their identity will be anonymised and all the information that they give will be used only to study the migration of Nepali people to the UK as well as other destinations in the world, following the ESRC guideline (ESRC 2015).

#### **4.12 Limitations and Challenges of the Study**

The empirical findings presented in this thesis should be considered in the light of the limitations and challenges that are highlighted herein.

##### *Research design and Recruitment*

In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the migratory phenomena of the Nepali people in the UK, I adopted a qualitative research methodology that draws on a subjective interpretivist research paradigm which may have influenced the findings of this study. The first challenge was to select 30 Nepali male and female research participants belonging to first and second-generation skilled migrants in the UK from among a pool of over 100,000 who are thinly spread across the length and breadth of the country. Guidance from my supervisors and experienced Nepali community leaders living and working in the UK helped me to overcome this challenge.

Recruiting research participants was a major challenge and I relied on snowball purposive sampling methods (Cohen and Arieli 2011) to identify research participants which can be restrictive. Although the sample size was sufficient for an in-depth qualitative study (Baxter and Eyles 1997), it is not sufficiently large enough to be representative of the wider Nepali population in the UK or of Nepali returnees. A larger, and more diverse, sample that incorporated other geographical locations from elsewhere in the UK could have produced different findings but resource limitations prevented more extensive fieldwork.

#### *Sub-categories of Migrants*

The ambitious decision to include three different subcategories of research participants, including first generation, second generation and returned migrants was based on my aspiration to fill a much needed gap in the knowledge on both first and second generation migration experiences and how this might impact on the livelihoods of returnees. I believed that gathering the life-stories of a diverse range of participants would provide valuable insight into the Nepali migration cycle that would start to fill the existing knowledge gap and encourage further larger and extensive confirmatory research. On critical reflection, a larger sample size would have enabled the findings to have wider applicability but my time and resources constraints did not allow me to do so.

#### *Time management*

Finding the time to speak to the participants, who were largely busy professional and working people and managing my own work responsibility as a freelance linguist working for the Home Office and looking after my family also presented a considerable challenge and restricted the number of interviews, I was able to undertake. Many of my research participants worked even during the weekends as well as night shifts, so I had to work around their schedules and availability. I travelled to their homes, restaurants and businesses to speak to them.

### **4.13 Conclusion**

This chapter explored the methodological approaches adopted within this research study. The aims and research questions of this thesis are informed by the gaps in research and knowledge on the livelihoods of professional Nepali migrants in the UK. The use of semi-structured

interview offered the opportunity to obtain new qualitative data on the lives and experiences of a small sample of first- and second-generation migrants and returnees. It was an exploratory research journey that encouraged the research participants to explore the livelihood opportunities and challenges that migration to the UK, and for some their return to Nepal, had presented to them and their families, as attending to my positionality as a researcher and the limitations of the study. A snowball purposive sampling approach was used to engage with potential participants, but it was challenging to recruit larger number of participants, particularly amongst busy second generation and returnees. Nevertheless, the empirical research produced offers insightful new knowledge on the lives and experiences of an important diaspora that will hopefully help scholars, and policy makers, particularly in relation to integrating the diaspora into development planning in Nepal.

The following four chapters present the empirical findings on a series of livelihood related themes led from the data analysis around socioeconomic and professional backgrounds of the research participants, the importance of social capital in their livelihood strategies, educational and professional mobility of the second generation and return migrants, knowledge transfer and their livelihoods. The next chapter, Chapter 5 provides socio-economic, demographic and professional profile of first, 1.5 and second generation and the returnee Nepali migrants.

## Chapter 5

### **The Demographic and Socio-economic Background of Nepali Migrants in the UK**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the professional, socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the first and second generation and return research participants interviewed for this study, placing them within the broader context and examining their reasons for migrating to the UK; their lives and their livelihood experiences through their own voice.

#### **5.2 Demographic Background to the Research Participants**

The migration motivations of the 24 first generation research participants, including two female 1.5 generation who have since grown up, were largely related to educational and work-related factors. Five participants belonged to the British Gurkha community, six of the migrants were either nurses themselves or children of nurses, four were doctors who came to improve their careers, four had migrated as students, four migrated as professionals the remainder came for family reunion. Their current employment is shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: First Generation of Migrants and their Professional Profile (n=24)			
Migrant's Profession	Male (M)	Female (F)	M+F
Businessman/Trader	6	0	6
Nurse	0	6	6
Medical Doctors	2	1	3
Chartered Accountant	2	0	2
Administration/Management	2	0	2
Carers	0	2	1
Dentist	1	0	1
Banker	1	0	1
Researcher	0	1	1
Dinner Lady/cleaner in a hospital & housewife	0	1	1

The gender composition of the 40 research participants includes 14 males and 10 females from the first and 1.5 generation in the UK who lived around London, Wales and Aberdeen. Three males and three females research participants, the second-generation, were children of first-generation migrants born in the UK. Those belonging to the first-generation male migrants were in the age bracket between 40 to 70 years but they had migrated within the last three years to over 40 years ago. Similarly, the female first and 1.5 generation migrants were aged between 23 and 55 years and four among them had migrated as dependents. Two among the female research participants had migrated to the UK to join their parents or had migrated with their parents.

As discussed in Chapter 3, many migrants were settled in the UK as a result of their role in the British Army as Gurkha soldiers. Joining the British Army has always been popular for many Nepali youth but until 2004 it was exclusively reserved to some selected races in Nepal described as 'martial' that included mainly Gurung, Limbu, Magar, Rai and ethnic sub-groups belonging to one of these races. After 2004, changes in the rules opened up recruitment to youth irrespective of ethnicity although many came from a long lineage of military families.

There are thousands of other retired Gurkhas who have migrated to the UK taking advantage of British governments resettlement policy offered to those who have served in the British

Army continuously for over four years backdating it to 1947. But unlike Guman and Laxman, they are not in the same position (Thorp and Woodhouse 2009). Laxman's concerns relating to working hard is also shared by other ex-Gurkhas who migrated to the UK taking advantage of the new legislation (Pariyar, Shrestha et al. 2014). British media are filled with their troubled stories (Gellner 2014, Sleight 2015). The following statement by an ex-Gurkha, in another research, epitomises their reasons for migration to the UK "It would be foolish if a Lahure [soldier in a foreign army] did not have any children and yet came here to toil for survival" (Pariyar, Shrestha et al. 2014, p 4).

In selecting the sample (as discussed in Chapter 4), it was evident that, in contrast to Nepali migrants going to the Gulf countries or to Malaysia, most Nepalis in the UK were married couples with one or more children and only very few young and unmarried people were encountered. Of the 24 first and 1.5 generation participants, 11 male and five female migrants were married and had two or more children. One quarter, or three male and three female first generation migrants were married and had just one child. The female migrants belonging to 1.5 generation were unmarried.

From among the first and 1.5 generation of migrants, the highest number among the participants were businessmen/traders and nurses who represented one quarter percent of the participants. The third largest group within the sample were medical doctors and the fourth were accountants and administrators or managers. Other participants were bankers, researchers, carers and cleaners. Thus, it is clear that the research participants from the first and 1.5 generation represented a fairly large group of people who broadly came from professional backgrounds ranging from health and medical services, social research to financial services. Although the sample of this study is fairly small for first, 1.5 and second-generation migrants, it is evident that medicine, banking, the civil service and business were popular careers.

Among the second-generation research participants there three male and three female participants in 31 to 34 years age bracket. There were doctors, bankers, entrepreneurs and bureaucrats among them as table 5.2 below shows.

Migrant's Profession	Male (M)	Female (F)	M+F
Medical Doctors	2	0	2
Businessman/trader	0	1	1
Chartered Accountant/Banker	1	0	1
International Business Manager	0	1	1
Policy Officer in Local Council	0	1	1

A third group of research participants were six males and four females selected in Kathmandu, from among those who had returned to Nepal after spending some years abroad who had a wide range of professional backgrounds. The returnee male migrants ranged in age bracket of 23 years to 65 years and female returnee migrants from 27 years to 60 years. Looking at the professional profile and endowment of human capital among the migrants who returned to Nepal, a rich blend of higher education, international exposure and professional experience become visible as reflected in Table 5.3 below.

S. N.	Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Profession
1	Bidur	28	M	Entrepreneur/ Consultant
2	Bikram	47	M	Businessman/ Entrepreneur
3	Renuka	56	F	Educationalist
4	Suraj	65	M	Professor of Political Science
5	Amir	23	M	Electrical Engineer
6	Sumitra	60	F	Mathematician Entrepreneur
7	Jeet	32	M	Entrepreneur –
8	Arpana	27	F	International Relations
9	Sagun	38	M	Banker
10	Shalini	56	F	Educationist/ Nutritionist

The return migrants confirm having received a very distinct advantage through international exposure when they attained international education and resided abroad. Of the ten returned migrants interviewed in Kathmandu, six were males and four were females. Each of them had returned to Nepal after spending around two to 10 years abroad. All of them were still maintaining professional contact and social network with their friends and colleagues to facilitate educational and professional opportunities for themselves, their children or for their spouse.

### **5.3 Socio-economic Profile of the Research Participants**

On the basis of the information provided by the research participants, their migration to the UK should be looked at differently from other economic migrants, partly because the ex-Gurkhas interviewed for this study, are economically quite well-off compared to other migrant groups with savings and pensions from the British government and other overseas jobs and are neither purely economic migrants nor refugees (Pariyar 2016). For many of the research participants part of the reason for emigrating to Britain was to ensure a better prospect for their children.

Among the research participants belonging to the first-generation of Nepali migrants, particularly those with children give their reasons for migration to the UK is for the better future, higher education and safety of their children. Nepal is among the smallest and yet is one of the 10 most populous countries in the world with a population of 28.5 million (CBS 2011b) and more than half of the population is under 25 years (World Bank 2013). Nepal's working age population (aged 15 to 59 years) has increased from 54 percent in 2001 to about 57 percent in 2011 reflecting the shifting population structure in the country (CBS 2011a).

Many of the Gurkha soldiers including some of the research participants of this study who had retired in Nepal, decided to take the opportunity to settle in the UK for the sake of their children and spouse when the British government extended to them the right to retire and reside in the UK in 2004, with further widening of the policy in 2009. Guman, Laxman and Anuradha whose case study has been included in page 142 in this thesis say they all had a good life in Nepal but decided to migrate for higher studies, security and social mobility of their children.

The ones migrating to the UK are neither unskilled labourers nor are they the cash cows of Nepal. Instead, many retired Gurkhas have sold all their properties in Nepal to migrate to the UK to take residency and buy houses paying cash. One such study of Nepalis living in Oxford shows that 40 percent of them live in their own houses (Pariyar, Shrestha et al. 2014). They reverse the flow of remittances plus a large chunk of their pension which was paid by the British government directly in Nepal now returns back to the UK (Jolly 2009). As a result, Nepal stands to lose some of the over £30 million paid in British Gurkha pensions in Nepal every year plus the funds generated by selling property which migrating Gurkhas take with them and buy property in the UK. In addition, Nepal stands to lose a substantial proportion of its human capital in the form of skilled British Gurkhas and their young children who have the opportunity to get a British higher education.

From among the first-generation male migrants, 12 out of the 14 had attained higher education and professional training and were working as medical doctor, dental surgeon, nurse, chartered accountants, banker and researchers and academicians with doctorate degrees, as shown above in table 5.1 towards the beginning of this chapter in page 107. Those without higher education were still engaged in private businesses. Looking at the socioeconomic profile of the research participants it became evident that they are professionally qualified with higher than average levels of education and training.

#### **5.4 Motivations to Migrate to the UK**

The civil unrest in Nepal during 1996 through to 2006 in the form of violent armed clashes between the Maoist guerrillas and the government forces such as Nepal Army and Armed Police Force (APF) deployed to eliminate Maoist's decade of terror in Nepal cost 13,000 to 16,000 lives (Tamang 2009, Khatiwada 2012). Lack of employment opportunities, an increase in social and political uncertainty, continuous deterioration of law and order leading to social insecurity, rise in crime and lawlessness and loss of social harmony, transport strikes, rise in corruption compounded the troubles of ordinary Nepalis, and forced many to search for alternate opportunities outside the country (Gurung 2008, Khatiwada 2009). During this period thousands of people became homeless and some sought security in other countries.

One of the research participants was a political refugee in the UK as per his accounts, he was very closely associated with the Maoists leadership and the Maoist movement but later decided to leave them and claimed asylum in the UK when he got an opportunity to travel to the UK with the help of a British volunteer. As per the definition of Cohen (2008), this migrant is a victim diaspora because he feared prosecution from the government and asked for political asylum when he got an opportunity. Whereas King would classify him as a political refugee because he was granted refugee status by the British government when he was able to supply documentary and physical evidence to back his claim of fear of prosecution by both the government forces as well as the Maoists in Nepal (King 2012). An effort to find out reasons for migration of Nepali people to the UK from among the first and 1.5 generation participants yielded the following result – Table 5.4.

Factors/Issues	Male (M)	Female (F)	M+F
a. Life Chances/Quality of life	7	4	11
b. Children’s Education and their better future	7	3	10
c. Higher Education	5	3	8
d. Job Opportunities	5	3	8
e. Security	3	2	5
f. Advance Training/Scholarships	2	3	5
g. Family Reasons	1	2	3

Closer scrutiny of the reason for migration provided by the respondents in Table 5.4 revealed that seven male and four females migrated for better quality of life and to give better life chances to themselves and to the members of their family. Out of 30 migrants, seven male and three females, said they migrated to provide better educational opportunities and for a brighter future of their children. Eight migrants, five male and three females, said the main reasons to migrate to the UK was to look for better professional opportunities and to obtain higher education. Similarly, three male and two female research participants said they migrated for children’s security reasons and two male and three females for higher human capital through

education and professional opportunities for themselves and their families. The other three people, one male and two females said they migrated for family reunion; to join the husband or to accompany parents. Further details on their motivations to migrate will be explored in great detail in Chapter 6 and 7.

Many of the research participants are highly qualified and professionally trained people such as nurses, computer specialist, IT professionals, engineers, qualified teachers, qualified trainers and development specialists who could have chosen to migrate to any Western country in the global North because there is great demand of their skill sets, but they decided to migrate to the UK for family reunion, further education, livelihoods and professional training, as explained in Chapter 6 and 7. The cost of migration hugely varies depending on whether one is migrating long or short distance and legally or illegally, as it would include the cost of human traffickers besides the regular cost of travel. Long distance migration is a costly affair so mostly people with financial capital, social capital and professional networks, close families, employability or a job offer migrate to countries that are far (O'Leary 2009).

Most people from the poor countries in the South cannot afford to migrate to the rich countries in the global North because migration is an expensive endeavour and the difficult and selective visa regime they operate (Kerr, Kerr et al. 2016, Kerr, Kerr et al. 2017). As a result, a high number of people end up migrating from one poor country in the global South to another. For example, migration between Nepal and India, is simple because no visa required and is cost effective because they can travel by bus and is fuelled by the existence of traditional networks (Bruslé 2010). It is not easy to migrate to the UK and the cost of travel is not the only obstruction for many families, but despite the difficulties a considerable number of Nepalis have migrated to the UK under various pretexts as we have seen above.

The UK was too far and migrating to the UK was expensive for any ordinary Nepali to migrate for economic or livelihood reasons unless there were some special provisions, as we have seen above. Ishwar Manandhar, who migrated to the UK in 1967 on a work permit to work in an Indian restaurant, wrote in his memoir that first Nepali to travel to the UK on a work permit was a chef known as Krishan Bahadur Thapa who migrated to the UK in 1965 (Manandhar 2008). Manandhar also acknowledges that there were some Nepali students at that time.

Since 2000, over 1000 Nepalis nurses have migrated to the UK (Adhikari 2010). In the course of in-depth interviews for this study, first generation migrants were asked if they could have migrated to the US, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand, all English-speaking countries which are actively promoting a point-based immigration system. From among the first-generation migrants eight had migrated to the UK through HSMP because it was very easy and quick, unlike being a lengthy and unaffordable visa processing and professional examinations adopted by other developed countries (Bodvarsson and Van der Berg 2009). The other major motivations for migration to the UK shared by the research participants are family reunion, higher studies, employment.

In 2002, the UK government had rolled out High Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP), a point-based controlled immigration programme which encouraged many professional people from around the world including around 500 Nepali people, as per the information provided by the Nepali people who migrated to the UK through HSMP route but joined an organisation fighting against the government decision to scrap provisions within it. The HSMP had been a popular migration route for many of the Nepali emigrants, as shown in the table 5.6. below.

Reasons/Factors	Male (M)	Female (F)	M+F
High Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP)	3	5	8
Family Reasons	2	4	6
Work Permit	1	3	4
Attraction of British Educational Institutions	3	0	3
Government Scheme which allowed ex-British Gurkhas to settle in the UK	1	2	3
Others – asylum	3	0	3
Government Scholarships	1	0	1
Memberships of the Royal College	0	1	1

As per the table, out of a total of 24 migrants eight (three male and five female), had migrated to the UK under the HSMP scheme. One among them was Sangita who migrated to the UK taking advantage of the HSMP. Sangita is a nurse by profession. She said:

*“I had also thought about migrating to the US and had actually given TOEFL exams and got good marks but later dropped the idea of migrating to the US because it is not as easy to migrate to the US as UK. It takes too long and you have to pass too many exams to work there as a nurse. I was in London within 3 months of initiating the migration process,”* Sangita, 38.

A few other professionals like Sangita coming from nursing, medical, academic, scientific, engineering, teaching, project management, computer science share the same sentiments because it was easy to migrate using HSMP route. According to the Nepali professionals who migrated to the UK through HSMP scheme it was much easier to migrate for professionals such as doctors, nurses, IT specialists, development trainers to obtain a work permit based on their qualifications and experiences. For example, Padma had completed her basic degree in nursing and was working in a hospital in Kathmandu as a staff nurse. Her father, a teacher by profession, encouraged her to go abroad to broaden professional skills and intellectual horizon but she did not know where to go until she learned from some friends that they had applied to migrate to the UK through HSMP through which they will get work permit within three months. Sharing her migration experience, she said:

*“To be very frank at that time one of my friends had already applied for UK visa and she told me that everything would be processed with two to three months. I was interested in going to a developed country for my career prospect but I could have considered going to any other developed country, which you can see and follow up or find out in the Internet. I would have happily gone to America if I had received an opportunity to go there. I wanted to go somewhere for my career prospects but I had no clue about what lied ahead for me in store here before I came here,”* Padma, 32.

Within six years of arrival in the UK and after going through some initial difficulties due to her ignorance about what lied ahead in the UK for her Padma is now happy. She has not only found a dream job but also got married and had a new-born baby when she had agreed to speak to me to share her experiences and her struggles of migration to the UK. Speaking to me she shared the following:

*“I am working as a Staff Nurse in the Critical Care Unit/Intensive Care Unit and I have been working in this hospital for the last three years. For the past four years I have been working as a nurse here in the UK. Truthfully speaking, since I have a child, I am exploring the ways to stay here permanently. We may go back in future after doing something in life but I never thought that you will be worried more about the future of your children than your own future. I am thinking about how we as a parent could improve the future and life chances of our children here?”* Padma, 32.

Several migrants who used HSMP to migrate to the UK said they really did not know what lied ahead or that they came to the UK without finding out whether they will find a job, how things worked here or what sort of social and cultural practices they will be exposed to.

### **5.5 What others say**

There are first generation participants such as Guman who is now settled for over 20 years in the UK with his wife and three grown up children, was only 18 years old when he decided to follow his father’s footsteps and joined the British Army, following series of educational strikes in Kathmandu. He confirmed that many others like him came from a background of military service and found it relatively easy to get recruited into the army. Speaking about his service in the British Army, he said:

*“My father was posted in Singapore where I was born. I left Singapore in 1964 when I was 10 years old. Then I went to Kathmandu for studies and was admitted to St. Xavier’s School and lived in the hostel where I spent another 10 years. After completing A level, I then studied for a year at Trichandra College in Kathmandu. Regular strikes there frustrated me, so following on the footsteps of my father I joined the British Army in 1972. I served for 24 years in British Army during which I was stationed in Brunei, Hong Kong and the UK and retired as Captain in January 1997,”* Guman, 58.

After retirement Guman attended a resettlement course in Kathmandu for reorientation back into civilian Nepali society. He was selected for a job interview and was offered the post of General Manager in a security company in the UK because of his long years of experience, his qualifications and his advanced training in a number of areas including the teaching of English language. So, in May 1997, Guman moved to the UK and has been living here ever since.

Laxman, another ex-serviceman has become a successful businessman, as well as a social worker and was elected in 2018 as Deputy Mayor of a local Borough in London. He had joined the British Army in 1980 and was trained as a Radio Telegraphist in the Signals Regiment, has been living in the UK with his three children, two daughters and a son since 2005. He claims to have served in many countries before finally retiring in 1998 in the rank of Staff Sergeant. He received Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (LSGC) award in 1995 for his exemplary Service to the British Crown.

Guman and Laxman are just two examples of retired British Gurkhas that represent almost around 68 percent of the Nepali community in the UK. However, many ex-servicemen still find life tough here compared to Nepal. Speaking about his life in the UK and whether he regrets having migrated and settled in the UK, Laxman said:

*“I feel that way sometime because living here is not as easy as living in Nepal. You have to struggle here. Life is hard here because you need to support your children financially for them to do good in their education. Had I been living in Nepal life would probably been easier and I may have spent a retired life. But it is not so here because I have to work harder for my children, that is the only concern I have, rest is fine,”* Laxman, 58.

Although Nepali migrants are relatively new, but they are quite well established in the UK and are in full time employment or running their own businesses. Some of these migrants are so dedicated to advance their children’s success, that many not only put up with long working hours every day but also worked extra shifts during weekends to earn extra income in the hospitals where they work. Some of them maintain links with the care homes where they were once employed when they first arrived in the UK and continue to work weekend shifts for extra income. Some among the research participants consider themselves socioeconomically better off in the UK as compared to Nepal. For example, Anjali, a nurse by profession states:

*“I am happy. Of course, I can maintain my life. I don’t have to worry about the basic needs here but I don’t think I will be able manage my life in Nepal with the salary I will receive there,”* Anjali, 39.

But others such as 23-year-old Deepa, a 1.5 generation migrant who came along with her mother who works as a nurse here and herself being a trainee nurse in a local hospital, misses social life in the UK. She said:

*“I think life is good in the UK apart from social life, which is very poor here. Everyone is so busy here. Even if you invite them for food or to meet them at a party you have to take an appointment with them. My Mum and Baba will then say that we can’t go because on that day we will get double pay. There are a lot of things like that and also people are not being together. It is not like that I don’t have relatives here but they are spread so far away some live in London and others far away in other cities and travelling costs money as well plus you have to have time to go visit them. It is not that I don’t like to socialise but time and money causes problem,”*  
Deepa, 23.

Family reunion is another reason to migrate to the UK. Under British immigration policy, individuals may apply to join spouses or other family members already settled in the UK as a retired British Gurkha or a work permit holder or students who came to the UK for higher studies, as their dependents. The immigration policy as regards to migration non-European Economic Area (EEA) citizens has changed since 2010 onwards and sponsoring of spouse of even British citizens depends on their earning over £18,600 or £22,400 if the partner sponsored is bringing one child, plus £2,400 for each of any additional children (Walsh 2019). Thus, migration for family reunion is not as easy as it used to be before 2010. Around 25 percent of the migrants in the sample quoted family reunion as a reason for migrating to the UK. In 2017 family migration made up 17 percent of all non-EU long-term migration to the UK and 95 percent of them were either partners or children and South Asia was the most common region of family migrants (Walsh 2019).

Another reason cited was scarcity of certain professions in the UK and the relative ease to obtain work permits to doctors, nurses, social carers and other skill-based professionals such as cooks and chefs. Thus, gaining a work permit is another popular route to migrate to the UK. Settlement rights extended to the ex-Gurkhas and to the members of their families in 2004 and in 2009 are also popular among the Nepali migrants and are applicable to three out of 24 respondents. Anuradha belongs to the ex-Gurkha family. As result of his 15 years of British Gurkha service he was able to settle in the UK with his wife and four daughters. Anuradha migrated to the UK in 2005 to join her husband who was already settled in the UK. She said:

*“We have four daughters whom we wanted to give good education, which was possible in the UK. In Nepal education is very expensive and then you may not be able to study what you want but in the UK our daughters have the freedom to choose what they wanted study. I am really glad that all our four daughters are doing well now in their studies here. Two of our daughters have already left University. The middle one is doing aircraft engineering with pilot training. Younger one is in year 10 and will give GCSE next year. We also wanted better life for ourselves and for our children so we came here,” Anuradha, 55.*

Other reasons presented for migrating to the UK by the Nepali migrants include attraction of the British higher education institutions for the world class education and professional training they offer for which three respondents migrated to the UK. Anjali is one of the nurses who migrated to the UK as a student nurse to take advantage of higher professional training and develop her skills by working as a nurse in the UK. She had her share of trouble when she arrived here and she also worked as a care assistant in a nursing home in the beginning before qualifying to enter NHS as a nurse. However, she is one of those who realises the importance of professional relationships which continues to build with her previous employer by taking some shifts during the weekends, when they need extra help. Unlike the story of several other nurses from Nepal, Anjali who came from Kathmandu decided to migrate to the UK when she had problem with her job placement in Nepal. After completing a bachelor’s degree in nursing in 2005, she wanted to get back to his career but she had problem finding a job in Kathmandu and was asked to rather take a nursing teaching job around 400 kms in a place called Janakpur. When she was preparing to go to Janakpur she heard from her friends that there was a shortage of nurses in the UK and many of her friends had already migrated. She said:

*“If I have to travel from my hometown then why don’t I try to migrate to the UK where many of my friends had already migrated. Everyone talks about how easy it is to get a work permit but they do not tell you anything about the struggles that you have to do to enter into your profession, they do not talk about the living expenses, cultural shocks and the difficulty with speaking and understanding English language even when you pass your IELTS and start working as a nurse after obtaining membership of Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and Nursing and Midwifery Council,” Anjali, 39.*

She further added, *“When I was in Nepal, I always dreamt of further study, which I wanted to continue but I haven’t had the opportunity to fulfil that dream yet. I have realised that UK is expensive for study for people like us, as we have to sustain our life as well. Despite the problems I faced initially it was relatively easy for me compared to lots of my friends. My*

*conversion course was fixed within one week of arriving here and I had no problem settling here because I have lots of relatives here, ”.*

Less common reasons include the award of British scholarships and training for membership of the Royal College, which represented one each from first generation male and female research participants. Nepali research participants of this study who have legally migrated to the UK taking advantage of various available options depending on their situation such as family reunion, education, professional qualifications, HSMP, membership of the Royal College, government scholarships, international employment have done relatively well in the UK by adopting a suitable sustainable livelihoods strategy.

Nepali people live in joint extended families collectively and share one kitchen in the family. They meet in big groups and share sociocultural events such as festivals together. There are many festivals in Nepal that are observed throughout the year by different races and ethnicities. Every festival in Nepal encourages participation of extended families. One of the things that the participants say they miss in the UK is the festivals which they try to celebrate here, they are often organised by one of the several hundred community groups in rented community halls or even in their own homes.

The Nepali participants also live in their own property, which they have bought outright with money brought with them from Nepal or bought on mortgage. They say local banks trust them and they had no problem getting finances for their property because they are professionals with permanent employment. Five migrants lived in rented accommodation and three were in the process of taking out a mortgage to acquire their own properties. The socioeconomic profile of the return migrants is different as compared to other migrants, which I explore next.

## **5.6 Socio-economic profile of the return migrants**

The story of return migrants, as shown in Table 5.3 above in page number 109, is quite different. They migrated abroad for further studies belong to middle class to affluent upper-class families with extensive family networks and good standing in the society. The successful socioeconomic profile of the research participants including their present occupation reflects how their educational qualification, experience, skills they learned and their social network and

their hard work during their sojourn abroad has contributed to their livelihoods and social status.

The return migrants who migrated with parents or with husbands appreciate their education and the training they had, the people they met, the places they worked and friendships that they developed and the networks that they created. Talking about the usefulness of social circle and professional network that he had established while studying in Germany, Amir, who obtained the degree of electrical engineering and returned to Nepal after three years said:

*“If I need any help here with my project say, for example, if I am developing a robot or if I am making an energy metering devise then I can consult my friends in the States who is also working in the same sector as I am about his experience. I think it is because of the networking that I have created I can get information faster from international network of friends. My reach has considerably widened because of that. Information travels faster and because of that I can get new ideas and information from anywhere which I think is an added advantage for me compared to my general colleagues who live here. The professional network created while studying in Germany have been immense help,” Amir, 23.*

The basis of social networking and deepened relationship among the returnees and their network who continue to support them whenever the need arises as in the case of Amir who because of the nature of his profession continues to maintain his professional contact with those whom he had met during his period of migration. The deepening of social network depends on the previous act of support and friendship. For example, Renuka says she met a lot of people from all over the world. She has had friends from Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and many other countries because she lived with her husband, a medical doctor and her two children, in a hospital accommodation where families of doctors and health workers from around the world lived. She talks about the hospital community where they cooked and share food and used to go on outings together. Talking about her friends in the UK where she spent 12 years with her family since 1984 before returning to Nepal in 1995, she said:

*“That experience I cherish forever in my mind. Nice people I met there. I never experienced racism or anything like that, although I did not work there,” Renuka, 56.*

She added, *“I had a very good Indian friend who came and stayed with me for 7 days when I gave birth to my son. That I cherish forever. She had a small child of her own but she came and stayed with me for seven days to look after me. After that I was on my own”*.

Out of the four female returnees in the sample, three said they followed their husbands when they went abroad for higher studies. At the time of emigration, they did not know what awaited them abroad, but they came along to support their husbands with their studies. They confess taking advantage of being in a society where equal opportunities were available to everyone including women to further improve their education and choose a career. Talking about what advantage she was able to get out of her presence in the United States where her husband had received a government scholarship for higher studies Shalini, one of the return migrants who returned after about 10 years with her husband and two children said:

*“We went for studies to the United States. My husband and I, we both went as students. We had never thought that we were going to settle down in the States so every year we felt that we were going to go back the next year or whenever and so I started studying and I finished my undergraduate and then did my Masters, then my Doctorate in public health so it took almost 10 years to do that. My husband, in the meantime, was working at the UN. And maybe if he was happy to work with the UN we may have stayed on. I would have probably gotten a job but he being a journalist felt that his needs for creative writing and honest delivery and constructive criticism and not being able to play a role in the United Nations. He wanted to come back to his country. So, he said let’s go back then I quickly finished my doctorate and then we came back with two children after having stayed 10 years in the US,”* Shalini, 56.

The female returnees also said that they had the opportunity to improve their own professional profile, besides looking after their husband and later their children without the support of their parents or in-laws, something they would have never imagined doing in Nepal. From the very beginning they were on their own which made them very confident and independent in life. Their emigration to a developed country and the opportunities they were able to take advantage of richly endowed their life professionally. The female migrants who returned to Nepal confess having missed the independence on their return to Nepal as they had to either live in a joint patriarchal or matriarchal extended family or return to live with parents, in either case they had to live within the family norms. However, the professional grounding they received in the West also helped them to build their professional career on their return to Nepal.

Another of the return migrants, Arpana had migrated to Germany in 2008 to complete master's degree. She decided to return to Kathmandu in 2011 leaving a stable job that she had despite her parent's repeated request not to do so because she wanted to give back to the society in some way. On her return she chose to work for a charitable organisation providing health care to the rural people in a remote area of west Nepal in partnership with the Nepali government. Talking about her experience of working for this charitable institution in remote area of Nepal she said:

*"I had amazing experience of working for this charitable institution in remote area of Nepal but the one thing that I realised while working there was that I became very sceptical of development that comes with aid. I am not very sure about the sustainability of aid dependent development. That was one thing that I questioned while I was working there,"* Arpana, 27.

Relating her experience of living in Germany independently alone and in Kathmandu with her parents she says:

*"I miss the independence that I had while I was living abroad alone. Although my parents are very liberal and they allow me to do whatever I want to do but I still feel that there are certain restrictions that I need to keep up with when I am living here, whether I like it or not. I don't really have a choice on that so I miss that freedom somehow"* Arpana, 27.

Not all those who followed their husbands when they went abroad for higher studies had similar easy experiences. Although young and newly married, Sumitra had completed a master's degree in mathematics in 1970 when her husband got a scholarship to pursue higher studies in the area of engineering in Germany in 1971, and she accompanied him. Once in Germany she too applied for scholarship and completed yet another master's degree in mathematics from the Technical University of Aachen, Germany. They returned to Nepal with two sons and German degrees in 1984, after 13 years. It took them many years to really complete their degrees as they had to do German language course for six months, her husband had to go through practical exam to determine his level, study came only afterwards. Leaving behind two sons they both went back to Germany for another nine months to complete practical experience. Relating her experience in Germany and how she began her studies Sumitra said:

*"I started my study in 1972 and during the first year of my study, I had my first child after the so called Ford Diploma. Then after my Diploma, which is equivalent to a master's degree, I*

*had my second child. Before I had my second child, I started working in a software company, which was later acquired by the Siemens Company. I think it took us almost 7 or 8 years to complete our education. After coming back to Nepal, we went back to Germany for about a year to do middle scale management training relating to industry,” Sumitra, 60.*

Although Sumitra and her husband wanted to stay a bit longer to save some money in order to build a fine building in Kathmandu as her husband had inherited huge plots of land in Kathmandu. She said three things played the role in their decision to return home. First, their kids were growing and they had no intention to stay longer but, actually, together they planned to extend their stay by five years so that they could save some money. However, the kids were growing fast and her mother-in-law in Kathmandu told them that however hard they worked in Germany or however long they stayed there they can never earn enough to compete with the property that they already had in Nepal. Remembering it Sumitra said:

*“That was a very valid point. It was obvious that in Nepal you had lots of things to challenge yourself as well as lots of opportunities but in Germany you had nothing like that so we decided to return,” Sumitra, 60.*

Most of the female returnees pursued professional degrees such as nutritional science, mathematics, computer science and geography and worked in various professional capacities in institutions such as university, private businesses or just did volunteering as and when opportunities arise. On their return to Nepal, their training and experience abroad allowed them to choose and adapt to whatever professions they chose. An analysis of the professions that returnee migrants had adopted on their return revealed that three men and one woman, had chosen to engage in some kind of business where they could best use their migration experience and had become entrepreneurs. Two female returnees had gone into full time education/teaching. The remaining returnee research participants had chosen a career such as teaching political science in the university, banking, renewable energy, international relations and research that was supported by the education, training, experience, exposure and knowledge that they had gained abroad.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the demographic and socio-economic background of the research participants and it examined their migration motivations. Within a short span of 30 years the

size of the Nepali diaspora community in the UK has grown substantially coinciding with the establishment of multiparty democracy and political freedom in Nepal in 1990, demand for equal pay and pension by the ex-Gurkhas leading to changes in HM Governments resettlement policies regarding Gurkha veterans. Many others within the Nepali community came for British degrees for its global recognition. The skilled professionals took advantage of High Skilled Migration Programme which offered the quickest route to migrate to the UK.

Whatever reasons they might give for migrating to the UK, their determination to migrate to the UK reflects their confidence in the British system whether it is the buoyancy of British economy, recognition of British degrees and its worldwide fame, social security, confidence in human and other capital formation leading to higher earning and its impact on their livelihoods and social mobility. There is also some evidence of knowledge acquisition and human capital development among the migrants in the form of development of confidence, independence, understanding of British sociocultural practices, development of respect for others and religious tolerance, knowledge of social system, respect for law and order, development of democratic values and respect for any type of work as they are prepared to take many jobs in the UK that they will not do in Nepal.

The next chapter will closely look at the research participants from the perspective of their professional/technical qualifications, skills and their social capital which they exploit for their professional development, livelihood strategies and social mobility in the UK.

## Chapter 6

### **The Livelihood Experiences and Strategies of Professional Nepali Migrants in the UK: Work and Careers**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The Nepali diaspora community in the UK has substantially grown over the last three decades and is now comprised of migrants of many different professional backgrounds as has been briefly examined earlier (Adhikari 2010, Adhikari, Dahal et al. 2012, Khanal 2013). The migration histories of Nepali varied greatly as did their life stages, ages, professional, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds, discussed earlier in Chapter 2 (Gellner, Hausner et al. 2014). This chapter examines the livelihood strategies of the skilled and professional Nepali men and women who participated in this research and it focuses on their qualifications, skills and experiences and the social capital that they employ to strategize their livelihoods.

Drawing on the migratory experiences of the participants, the chapter will explore how the first, 1.5 and second generation participants adopted sustainable livelihood strategies based around increasing their human capital through employment, and their social and cultural capitals gained life experiences, assets and their capabilities to take advantage of available opportunities in the UK (Chambers and Conway 1991, Ellis 2003, Sagynbekova 2016).

Of the research participants, combining both first and second generation, 7 out of 30 were involved in running some kind of business of their own such as restaurant in Farnborough, cash and carry in Aldershot, travel agency in London, chartered accountancy service in London. Out of 30 participants, 6 each were doctors and nurses working for different hospitals. Compared to the doctors, all the nurses had to struggle for an initial period for their livelihoods ranging from a few months to up to two years to get into their chosen profession, because of the human-capital and human-capabilities or lack of it, as explained earlier. The next section will explore the livelihood experiences of the research participants.

## **6.2 Livelihood Experiences of the First Generation**

As discussed in Chapter 2, livelihood frameworks have focussed on the diverse resources, 'assets' or 'capitals' that individuals and/or households possess (Chambers and Conway 1991, p 5; Ellis 2003). Key assets or capitals include human capital (education, skills, experiences and health), physical capital (produced investment goods), financial capital (money, savings, access to loan), natural capital (land, water, trees), social capital (networks and associations) and cultural and ethnic capital comprising of people from same ethnicities, same place of origin, people following same religious and cultural practices and distant relatives. Besides their assets, the employability of anyone may vary depending on the associated risks and policy as well as the institutional context that are determined by the receiving countries' legal provisions, rights and laws (Ellis 2003).

The livelihoods of the first generation of Nepali migrants in the UK who participated in this research were often constrained by their assets; human capital such as their qualification, skills, experiences, fluency and command of English language and their health. Their livelihoods could also be constrained or facilitated by their access to savings and access to loan if they wanted to make investments in businesses and also impacted by their social capital, particularly their professional networks. Internal or transnational migration is one of the sustainable livelihoods strategies (Chambers and Conway 1991, Ellis 2003, Sagynbekova 2016).

Research argues that in an effort to improve better livelihood outcomes, migrants inherently develop and implement strategies to ensure their survival (Hertz, Bhatia et al. 2010). Drawing on the livelihood approaches of Chambers and Conway (1991) and Ellis (2003), this chapter focuses on the human capital and the human-capabilities of the Nepali respondents and it explores how their lived experiences and human capabilities indirectly includes social changes and social development (Sen 1997, Scoones 1998, Bebbington 1999). For example, capitalising on their assets and capabilities the ex-British Gurkhas have attained world fame for their work in the area of security industry. The research also revealed that not all the ex-Gurkhas would opt for security work. Some of them have launched their own import and export businesses aimed at the Nepali community, especially the food commodities included among them are the nostalgic products that they missed in the UK, taxi service, cleaning agency, hotels, restaurants and others among them became 'driving instructors'. Some of them have even entered politics

supporting either Conservative, Labour or Liberal Democrats. One of the ex-Gurkha even got elected as a deputy mayor in a London borough. Professionals such as doctors and nurses entered National Health System (NHS) or private hospitals and nursing homes for their livelihoods and avail their services to the people in the UK. Similarly, academicians, accountants, lawyers, bankers, engineers, teachers have all entered their respective disciplines for their livelihoods to take advantage of the available opportunities and to benefit the community with their knowledge and experience.

During the long inter-personal interviews and analysis, it became clear that with the exception of the four qualified doctors, the first generation had to change or adapt their careers paths to match existing opportunities in the UK. In the majority of cases, their new jobs were of much lower status than their qualifications, or human capital, would merit in Nepal. Over time, however, they gradually adapted to the UK culture, developed English language proficiency, improved their UK qualifications and skills by investing in themselves. However, it is not the same with second generation who are born here and take advantage of available opportunities. I would now briefly examine the choices that those first-generation professionals, workers and entrepreneurs from among the Nepali migrants have made in terms of building sustainable livelihoods in the UK.

Analysing the livelihoods options adopted by the first-generation Nepali migrants through a livelihood framework analysis, a number of factors seem to play significant role in their choice of livelihoods. Firstly, it was apparent that the value of their human capital, in terms of their existing education and professional experience, didn't easily translate into the UK system. Some professionals, like doctors, seemed to have easy access to their professional careers not only because of their asset and capabilities but as a result of the demand for their skills in local labour markets (BBC 2003, Ellis 2003, Hatzidimitriadou and Psinos 2014). Others, however, such as nurses and non-professionals who wanted to enter into economic mainstream faced considerable challenges in the beginning. The education they had received back home was simply not good enough to meet requirements expected of them in the UK, so they were required to take adaptation courses or go for new professional training programmes. Their weak English language and socio-cultural shocks that they felt at the beginning did not help them in their

career choices as they had expected, as argued by Chambers and Conway (1991), Sen (1997), Bebbington (1999), Ellis (2003).

### *6.2.1 Livelihood Experiences of Nepali Doctors*

The Nepali migrants with medical degrees from the first generation have done relatively well in the UK, as compared to other professions. The National Health Service (NHS) in the UK and even privately-run nursing homes depend largely on overseas trained doctors, nurses, clinical staff and carers to provide health services to the British people. According to the General Medical Council (GMC) 90,000 medical professionals from overseas are registered as its members (Simpson and Snow 2014). An article published in the Guardian in January 2014 revealed that 14 per cent of the clinical staff and 26 per cent of the medical doctors currently employed by the NHS come from over 200 countries (Siddique 2014). This figure has now grown to 53 percent amidst shortages of doctors in NHS that has soared to over 11,000 across England (Donnelley 2019).

Nepal also contributes to the supply of doctors to the NHS. Some have come directly from Nepal with various objectives but there is also steady supply of Nepali doctors from the second generation of Nepalis in the UK. According to the Nepalese Doctors Association UK (NDAUK), over 300 Nepali doctors and dental surgeons are currently either employed by the NHS in the UK or run their own private practices as General Practitioners (GPs) and Dental Surgeries. Medical practitioners such as doctors and nurses of Nepali origin have been active in the UK over the past 40 years. Today there are several charitable organisations in the UK that are either established by the Nepali doctors themselves or by their British colleagues who work in Nepal. The first such association of Nepali doctors in the UK is credited to be NDAUK, established in 1985 by Nepali medical doctors as a community organisation, rather than a professional one, to encourage regular contacts between medical practitioners in the UK and their families.

Unlike in the case of other skilled professionals, doctors have easier access to the UK labour market due to a scarcity of British doctors in the UK since the Second World War (Butler 2008, Snow and Jones 2011). As we have seen above, 53 percent of doctors working in the NHS are of foreign origin, as the doctors interviewed in this research found that migrants such as them

face fewer hurdles getting into professions that have shortages in the UK such as doctor and nursing.

### *6.2.2 Livelihood Experiences of Nepali Nurses*

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) states in its website that Britain has a history of relying on nurses from overseas to compensate for the shortfall of nurses and nurses from overseas have always made a valuable contribution to the NHS and care settings in the UK. In 2013 the World Health Organisation (WHO) released a report that said the world will be short of 12.9 million health care workers by 2035 and that the short fall was 7.2 million at present. Health workers shortfall in the developed countries has directly encouraged migration of health care workers from the developing countries further depleting already weak health care services in developing countries such as the Nigeria, Philippines, Nepal (Adhikari 2010, Prescott and Nichte 2014). Developing countries have contributed towards the health services of developed countries like the UK by providing their trained doctors, nurses and other allied health professionals but it has negatively impacted the already poor health services in those countries (Guru, Siddiqui et al. 2012).

Nepali nurses are among the top five nationalities who are engaged in providing geriatric care to the elderly and allied health care to others in the UK (Hausner 2011). Nepali nurses started migrating to the UK in 2000 when the shortage of nurses in the UK came in the news and an international recruitment drive for nurses was launched in the UK (Adhikari 2010, Hausner 2011, RCN 2015). Many of the nurses in this research who had basic nursing education and some years of experience in Nepal, seized the opportunity and migrated to the UK with ease taking advantage of HSMP. Six of the nurses in the study currently living and working in the UK said that they were in the UK within three months of initiating the process to migrate to the UK. The number of Nepali nurses working in NHS and care homes in the UK has considerably grown over the past few years. In a bid to support the professional needs of Nepali nurses in the UK, to provide a forum for continued professional growth and to offer mutual support, the Nepalese Nurses Association UK (NNAUK) was established in 2008. According to NNAUK there could be as many as 2000 Nepali nurses working in the NHS and other health care related institutions in the UK.

Getting into the nursing profession in the UK proved to be much harder than getting to England for many Nepali nurses. The nurses report being frustrated and discouraged on their first encounter with the labour market in the UK as they attempt to construct a professional identity as a nurse and build a career in the UK (Allan and Larsen 2003, Adhikari 2009, Batnitzky and McDowell 2011, Walani 2015).

### *6.2.3 Livelihood Experiences of Nepali Care Workers*

In the context of this thesis, care work is the provision of health-related care to senior citizens, and supervision of vulnerable, infirm and disadvantaged elderly people either in nursing homes or in private homes. The definition of care worker that has been used in this chapter is someone, female or male, who is not normally trained as a nurse and who is not part of the family but provides basic health related care to the elderly and disabled people and is a low paid work undertaken mostly by the migrants (Dyer, McDowell et al. 2008). However, an increasing number of trained and experienced nurses from Asia, Africa, South America and Oceania are also entering the care industry either temporarily, until they complete their conversion course and pass the qualifying English language test, or permanently. Unlike doctors and nurses, most care workers are recruited locally from within the migrant community in the UK and 76 percent of them are women (Shutes 2012, Shutes and Walsh 2012, Cangiano 2014, Cangiano and Walsh 2014).

The increasing feminisation of migration which has resulted from the availability of feminised work, along with their increasing unemployment, unemployment of their husbands and a desire to better their economic and social status, has not only attracted women with no particular professional qualifications but has even attracted physicians to take nursing qualifications and qualified nurses to take domestic family care jobs (Salami, Nelson et al. 2014). Prescott and Nichter suggest that physicians in the Philippines go for nursing degrees in order to get employed overseas (Prescott and Nichte 2014). The Filipino nurses and nurses from other countries around the world migrate to Canada as domestic help encouraged by the Canadian Live-in-Caregiver Programme, a two-step immigration avenue that encourages domestic workers to migrate to Canada (Salami, Nelson et al. 2014).

The next section critically examines the livelihood experiences of entrepreneurs who have established their own businesses as their means of livelihoods in the UK.

#### *6.2.4 Livelihood Experiences of Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs*

Many Nepali migrants in the UK have been involved in a range of businesses including restaurants, food and beverage import and export, travel and tours, handicrafts, taxi services and driving schools so on and so forth. Out of a total of 30 research participants, six men and one woman were involved in running a range of private businesses such as food import and export, restaurants, travel trade, accounting in the UK. They have gained a wealth of experience setting up and running their own businesses in the UK. Many of them did not have any previous experiences of running a business prior to migrating to the UK.

The 1960s saw an increase in Nepali migration to the UK, particularly in the hotel and restaurant sector, as discussed in Chapter 3. Nepali people working in restaurants and hotels were among the first to arrive in the UK on work permits in the 1960s. Other Nepali migrants in the UK in those days were the students who had come for higher studies either on government scholarships or at their own private expense (Manandhar 2008), and also based on personal discussion with some early Nepali migrants in the UK.

The restriction placed on the commonwealth citizen's immigration to the UK in the 60s proved beneficial for Nepali hotel and restaurant workers as the owners of Indian restaurants soon started arriving in Kathmandu in search of chefs and restaurant workers (Manandhar 2008). The first Nepali to enter UK on a work permit was a chef named KB Thapa. He came to the UK with another chef called Shyam Maharjan in (Manandhar 2008). According to Manandhar, who himself was one of the restaurant managers, by 1967 there were 10 Nepalis working in an Indian restaurant where he was a manager. In those days, the number of Nepali people in the UK was negligible so the British government provided work permits to the Nepali people willing to work in the UK without much difficulty. Manadhar shares his experience of how the chefs and restaurant workers who had arrived in the UK in early days with the help of Indian restaurant owners gradually became restaurant and other business owners themselves.

Except in the case of people who have been involved in businesses prior to migration, factors such as weak educational and language base, problem with recognition of their qualification and experiences, their unwillingness to subject their wives to menial labour encourages migrants to establish their own small businesses that could be run by the family. One of the main reasons for self-employment or starting their own family business is deeply connected to the feeling that self-employed business ownership is a virtually assured antidote to the discrimination suffered by racialized minorities in Western urban society (Jones and Ram 2013).

Entrepreneurship among ethnic minorities is quite common and has already attracted the attention of scholars (Acs and Szerb 2007). However, scholars remain divided about ethnic enterprises and offer scathing remarks suggesting that those small businesses run by the ethnic minorities are no more than waste of valuable capital, energy and talent. They argue that by establishing such small enterprises, migrants often waste their human capital and their capabilities, patently self-harming themselves and settling for disappointingly light weight returns on punishingly heavy effort (Aldrich, Carter et al. 1981, Aldrich, Zimmer et al. 1989, Jones and Ram 2013). However, in the absence of extensive research it is difficult to relate the experiences of Nepali entrepreneurs with other minority ethnic group entrepreneurs but the Nepali migrants participating in the research who established their own businesses claim to have done well socially and financially.

There are over 300 restaurants in the UK today owned and operated by the Nepali migrants that employ more around 3000 people, in personal conversation with the chair of Association of Nepalese Restaurants and Caterers (Gellner 2014, Gellner 2015). These are not the only types of businesses launched by Nepalis in the UK. Of the first-generation Nepali migrants in the study sample, more than 33 percent opted to launch their own small businesses rather than look for a job, citing both difficulties in finding employment with their limited skills and qualifications and the availability of start-up capital through community networks.

Entrepreneurship among migrants, opening small businesses and working in family businesses, has been regarded as a strategy to escape discrimination (Gmelch 1980, Sepulveda, Syrett et al. 2011). Many of research participants opted to establish their own businesses in the UK

because of their own interest but there are also those who choose to establish their own small business because of their weak English language, lack of experience in the new country, on the one hand, and strong community affiliations and access to community funding, on the other (Herlitz 2005, OECD 2010). It has been observed in the case of research participants who do not possess higher qualifications, has problem to communicate in English language and who have access to financial support find self-employment and establish their own small business rather than taking jobs they consider lower status or degrading such as cleaning.

#### *6.2.5 Livelihood Options of Other Professionals*

Compared to professional groups such as medicine or nursing, there were a few participants who work in other professions such as accounting, banking, teaching and research in the UK but their number has considerably grown over the years because many students who came for higher studies settled in the UK after achieving their qualifications. Thus, the number of Nepali academics in the UK who have joined universities for teaching and research or work in voluntary and charity sector has grown over the years as the number of those passing out of British universities is gradually growing. It may further grow as the Nepali community in the UK is a relatively new and unlike other professions Nepali migrants still prefer to get professional degrees leading to a secure profession such as doctor, nurse, pharmacy, law, accountancy.

### **6.3 Livelihood Experiences of the Second Generation**

There are intergenerational differences in the migration and livelihood experiences of first-generation and second-generation migrants (Attias-Donfut and Cook 2017). The first-generation participants were forced by their circumstances and discrimination they may experience in their day-to-day life in a new country where they also lack social support and other assets that avail the opportunity of better livelihood options. However, unlike their parents, the second-generation research participants were born and grow up in the UK, are better qualified, have good command of English language, are well grounded in local social and culture practices and have access to other support structures as well as assets and capabilities that allow them access to descent jobs.

As compared to the first generation, finding a career of their choice was not much of an issue in the case of second-generation migrants. The second-generation equipped with British qualifications, improved human-capabilities such as fluency in English language and with wider professional and social networks, who regard themselves as Asian British or a 'Londoner', did not particularly face problems as regards to their professional developments. Many are successful in getting their first step on the professional career ladder through graduate employment opportunities when they are still in the midst of completing their courses in the universities.

#### **6.4 Experiences of Livelihoods Shared by Migrant Professionals**

This section will explore and analyse experiences of migration and livelihoods experienced by different groups of professional research participants.

##### *6.4.1 Doctors' experience*

Prahlad, a medical doctor, is a first-generation male migrant who worked for over 40 years in the NHS after honing his medical expertise in rural hinterlands in Nepal. After his training in the UK, he went back to Nepal. He chose to re-migrate back to the UK when he had difficulty getting along with Nepali bureaucrats. Speaking about his long service to British society, years of living among British people and years of experience in the UK. Sharing about his training and further development, he said:

*"I migrated to the UK for further studies and training in 1977. I received practical training from the specialists besides doing various training courses with my own money because in those days NHS did not cover your training costs as now. I was interested in cardiology so I got a lot of training in this area. After 5 years of study and training in the UK, I went back to Nepal in 1982. Although, I had done a lot of good work in Nepal before going to the UK but they did not give me work because I was a staunch critic of how bureaucrats in the Ministry of Health worked. I even offered to create a whole cardiology department at Bir Hospital because at that time there were no cardiologists in Nepal. I offered to create a whole cardiology section with facilities to have pacemakers, Cath lab, stenting and things, which were just beginning in the west at that time. They didn't want to give me any opportunity. When I was not able to get into my profession in Nepal then I emigrated back to the UK," Prahlad, 70.*

The Nepali doctors' confess having received many training opportunities to learn about adolescent medicine, safeguarding by working under the able guidance of specialists to

improve their skills and develop their competencies especially because of the emphasis on continuous professional development through audit presentations, grand rounds which avail the further opportunities to advanced training in medicine. The procedures that are done by British doctors are well known so people across the globe regularly visit the UK for complicated treatments or organ transplants. The Nepali doctors who receive the opportunity to work in NHS and to train under the able guidance of British specialists gradually achieve the same merit and are well recognised for their specialities (Lagakos, Moll et al. 2016).

Prahlad was bitter for not being able to get into his profession and offer his advanced skills and knowledge to the benefit of Nepali patients who had to travel to India or abroad for specialised treatments such as cardiology, neurology, neurosurgery. Speaking about his experience of living and working in the UK as a medical doctor, Prahlad said:

*“In the UK I received personal dignity. My greatest achievement has been, I have been true to myself, to my family, to my profession. I found respect in the UK. I found that it was easier for me to be recognised in British society than in Nepal. Just like in Nepal, people used to greet me here also on streets and in shops. I was living within the community as one of them,”* Prahlad, 70.

Laxmi is a medical doctor who migrated to the UK after practicing medicine in Nepal for over a decade. Laxmi, like hundreds of Nepali doctors, joined NHS in a junior position. She was pleased that there were facilities for investigations, that there is budget for each patient, and that she does not have to constantly compromise with her care like in Nepal because everything is free for her patients once they come to the hospital. Talking about her own personal experience of working in the NHS for over 15 years, she reflected:

*“I have finally seen patients who have rare diseases being diagnosed here. Sometimes, when I get the chance to present a complicated case, when you go through the notes you realise that most complicated diagnosis are not arrived at in one day. I have the privilege of going through the notes and finding out the thought processes that were behind making each of those diagnosis, so that is one of the advantages of working here. Another advantage is to focus on your treatment plan because everything will be available for the patients. You just have to request at the end of the telephone. I think these are real advantages and another aspect of medicine,”* Laxmi, 50.

She shared her experience of learning something which she had not seen in Nepal. She added:

*“The type of problems you have here is different and certainly some things were eye openers. Like, I had no idea that children would self-harm. I had never seen that before in Nepal. May be something that is part of the pressures of modern life. I haven’t heard of people taking overdoses for minor problems in teenagers, which they do here. So those are new things as well and child protection is another big issue. This is something we hardly ever think about in Nepal,” Laxmi, 50.*

Nepali doctors appreciate the opportunity to work in NHS and train under British specialists, which has considerably improved their human capital and build on their professional capabilities that would not have been possible if they had not taken the trouble to migrate to the UK. Compared to nurses and other auxiliary professions, as will be examined in the next section of this chapter, medical doctors both, male and female, confessed facing less barriers to their professional growth and career advancement in the UK .

#### *6.4.2 Nurses’ experience*

Sangita, one of the nurse participants who opted to work for non-governmental organisations after completing her studies in nursing because there were very few employment opportunities in the nursing sector in Nepal in those days. So, after finishing a nursing degree in community nursing Sangita did not join a hospital and chose to work instead in health-related development sector for different NGOs where she spent over eight years working on HIV and AIDS Prevention Programme. Sangita migrated to the UK in September 2007 taking advantage of HSMP. Sharing the challenges, she faced after migrating to the UK, she said:

*“I faced many challenges in the beginning and actually wanted to return back. The first difficulty was to look for a job. I never had to look for a job in Nepal. The other thing to look at is the newspapers but I had no idea that there are Job Centres here where you could go and register. Plus, I didn’t know that I could also look for a job online. I found very simple things very difficult and strange. It took me time to learn all these small things. I was not able to adjust immediately. I even found it difficult to use telephone here, as they were all new for me. The most-simplest things here such as opening an account in the bank and getting the credit card was new to us. Plus, despite my ability to write English correctly in the beginning I found English language extremely difficult here. I felt that I was not able to communicate with them clearly and was not also able to understand them clearly as well. I was restless here because I had left my six-year old son behind. It took me three months to get in terms with these new things here and took me almost four years to know how things work here,” Sangita, 42.*

They had expected that on arrival in the UK they would be able to enter into nursing jobs but that did not happen. Instead, they were asked to find a college for conversion courses and required to obtain an overall score of 7 in International English Language Testing System (IELTS), however a score of 6.5 in writing will be accepted. Some of them said that they wanted to return to Nepal and had packed their bags a few times in the first few months of their arrival, but their friends managed to convince them that they all had similar experiences in the beginning. Nurses who migrated from the Philippines, India and Nepal to work in the UK also found the discrepancy between work experiences and their expectation of the work environments in the UK as they do not get appointed as nurses and are asked to take conversion courses because of professional standards and cultural differences (Withers and Snowball 2003, Hausner 2011, Guru, Siddiqui et al. 2012, Adhikari and Grigulis 2013, Sapkota, Teijlingen et al. 2014).

The nurses, such as Sangita, who had initially planned to stay just two years in the UK and then return home had to spend four years to getting to know the system and to obtain 6.5 scores in all subjects in IELTS test to enter nursing profession, which has changed to a score of 7.0 in each of the reading, listening and speaking sections of the test whereas 6.5 score in writing section of the test will be accepted from 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2018. Speaking about her initial thoughts on migration to the UK, Sangita said:

*“In the beginning when we came here, we had not thought that everything would be so hard here. Frankly speaking, in Nepal I had thought that I know so much about these countries so it would be easy for me to settle or to find work here. But on arriving here, I felt that I knew nothing here. Everything was new to me. So, we had to invest two years to learn things here. If you ask me, I had done nursing so long ago but I am entering in nursing profession here just now. I have just started to work as a nurse that means I have invested four years of my valuable time to learn about things here,”* Sangita, 42.

Many of the Nepali nurses had poor English language communication skills so they also needed to enrol in language schools and take English language course for several months before they could attempt to pass the IELTS exams. Migrants from other countries in the UK have also experienced similar problem associated with English language communication skills. For example, first generation Muslim women from Pakistan in Reading area experienced difficulty in accessing jobs because of poor English language (Lloyd-Evans and Bowlby 2000). In the

case of Nepali nurses, many of them had difficulty getting the grades required to apply for the registration in Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) even after taking the English language course for several months. When their money runs out, many are forced to accept jobs in care homes and sandwich factories, which saps their confidence to work as a nurse and gradually, as the time passes, many of them experience deskilling (O'Brien 2007).

All the research participant nurses interviewed for this study shared more or less similar experiences. As explored above, for them it was easy to migrate to the UK but challenging to get into a nursing job so many of them with decades of experience working as specialist nurses in Nepal had to settle for being a health care assistant in hospitals or even as care assistants in privately run nursing homes, an experience also shared by other researchers such as Adhikari (2010), Hausner (2011), Adhikari and Grigulis (2013) and Sapkota, Teijlingen et al. (2014).

A case relating to the hardships faced by Nepali nurses is presented here to highlight the extent of challenges they faced in the UK.

#### *Case Study 1: Reflections of hardships of Nepalis nurses*

*Samjhana is a first-generation female migrant with over 10 years of nursing experience, a gold medallist in her batch. She was managing a very well subscribed private nursing college in eastern Nepal before she decided to migrate to the UK to fulfil her dream to learn new skills by working in a hospital in a developed country like the UK. She said, "I have worked in different hospitals and in different sector for over 10 years. I decided to fulfil my childhood dream of seeing the nursing care in the developed countries as well as to update my knowledge and skills so without any planning, I came to the UK thinking I will get a nursing job but things did not happen as I had expected."*

*She faced many difficulties on arrival in the UK in January 2006 because the government was introducing some changes in employment rules and entry requirements to enter NHS for foreign nurses from April 2006. The changes introduced regarding employment in the UK added several other hurdles on top of already existing difficulties for Nepali and Filipino nurses who started pouring to the UK in hordes. She said, "One of the hurdles was to enrol in the university to do the conversion course. The other was to score a minimum of 7 marks in IELTS in all subjects. Apart from these setbacks, I really felt very bad about working as a care assistant in NHS but there was nothing I could do so I continued".*

*After about 18 months of hard work as a health care assistant to support herself and her eight-year old son, Samjhana scored enough in IELTS and completed a revalidation course to get a nursing job in a hospital. However, her problems did not end with the job but it became more complicated because the standard of care in the hospital she was working in was very high. She said, “The things that I had learned in Nepal were not enough in the context of my new job responsibilities. I had to face professional challenges again to learn to use the high technology that the hospital used. It took me two years to pick up the working pattern, learn to use the technology and maintain the service standard. I had to pass several competency tests as I progressed. Now professionally I feel settled in the UK.”*

The case above is an eye-opening example of the lack of preparedness on the part of the Nepali nurses who migrate to the UK taking advantage of a managed migration system of HSMP to fulfil their dream of expanding their knowledge and experiences by working in NHS as professionals. Their frequent expression of challenges adjusting in the UK or finding a job or obtaining sufficient score in IELTS to enter their professional career probably reflects the difference in standards of nursing education as well as difference in standards of health care service delivery in Nepal and the UK. The difficulty they face in getting sufficient grade to clear the language barrier could also be because of their lack of practice of reading, writing and speaking English in Nepal because they do not need it to fulfil their professional responsibility in Nepal. On the one hand, they talk about the availability of information about opportunities to work as a nurse in the UK. On the other, they forget to use the same information channel to prepare themselves for their life in the UK. Their lack of preparedness compels them to live in misery because they can't return back for many reasons including shame of not being successful.

They are not informed by the migration agents who help them fill their forms and write their personal statements to apply for a work permit or for higher studies. Their lack of preparation for their professional life in the UK lands them in extremely difficult situation in an unknown country and contrary to their expectations of getting into NHS jobs after landing in the UK and start building their professional career and bank balances; they have to find ways and means to survive for months and even years prior to completing the mandatory conversion courses and obtain sufficient scores in IELTS to unlocks the NHS doors for them. They could have easily prepared and given IELTS conducted by the British Council in Nepal before migrating to the

UK which could have minimised their struggle in the UK. Their struggle, however, does not end with their entering an NHS career ladder. As the case study above in which Samjhana shares her life story, they continue to face hurdles in the form of latest technology at use in the hospitals they work at, the training they have to undergo to learn the operational procedures and face racial discrimination on the hands of their supervisors. Their social network of friends supports them through thick and thins of professional struggles in the initial stage, helps them find a place to rent, accommodate them in their own homes in the beginning and even find them jobs.

Many qualified nurses from the research sample reported that spending time working in unskilled positions in care homes and factories eroded their confidence in their nursing ability. Nurses among the research participants confided that working in nursing homes and care homes, or even working in the NHS as care assistants, they were regularly discriminated because of their colour of skin, level of English and therefore did not get to use their professional skills and experiences much. Migrant nurses from India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Africa and the Caribbean countries all share having the similar experience of subtle discrimination, deskilling and erosion of professional confidence (Withers and Snowball 2003, Taylor 2005, David and Cherti 2006, Alexis, Vydelingum et al. 2007, Larsen 2007, O'Brien 2007, Raghuram 2007, Batnitzky and McDowell 2011, Hatzidimitriadou and Psoinos 2014).

Padma is another Nepali nurse who had migrated to the UK when her father encouraged her to migrate abroad to experience different aspects of professional life. She was young and unmarried when her father, a teacher, succeeded in encouraging her to emigrate to the UK for professional training because a developed country like the UK with high standards of health care, strong economy offered good life prospects. Prior to migrating to the UK, she had worked for a year as staff nurse in Critical Care Unit/Intensive Care Unit (CCU/ICU) in a hospital in Kathmandu. On arriving in the UK, she had to work as care assistant for two years while completing NVQ because she had not completed diploma in nursing in Nepal, like many other Nepali nurses who migrate to the UK. Sharing her migration experience, she commented that:

*“After arriving I had to face lots of challenges because around that time, they had also changed the rules regarding IELTS scores. In the UK, I learned from my friends about the possibility of extension of my visa, registering as a nurse and employment opportunities when I was*

*completing my NVQ. I had already started the process of registering as a nurse while still completing my NVQ so I had no problem getting the job in the hospital but before that for almost two years I worked as a care assistant. I was worried that I may forget the skills that I had learned working in ICU in Nepal,” Padma, 32.*

Now she works as a nurse in London and has married a Nepali student in the UK. When I met her, she was on maternity leave as she had recently had a baby. She said:

*“Frankly speaking, I had heard from friends that you get good experience and exposure abroad. I came to put into practice what I had learned in Nepal as a nurse and to further develop it including my professional prospects,” Padma, 32.*

Although also as trained nurse, Sangita, was working in a health-related charity in rural Nepal after completing a bachelor’s degree in nursing. She had not thought about migrating herself, but her family encouraged her to migrate. Replying to my question about her motivation to migrate to the UK, Sangita, a first-generation female migrant said:

*“I actually had family pressure to migrate because almost everyone from our family had been abroad and had done something in life. They thought we should migrate too because we were capable of doing something nice abroad,” Sangita, 42.*

Indeed, Sangita was being encouraged by her family to migrate because all her brothers had either migrated and returned or continue to work international institutions. Although Sangita was encouraged to migrate by her family, it was not part of a family strategy to encourage one or another member of the family to minimise risk and to create capital that could be invested to improve family production mechanisms as suggested by the New Economics of Labour Migration (Stark and Bloom 1985). However, Sangita was merely advised to migrate for her professional growth as a ‘rite of passage’ because everyone of her family members had gained some experience of migration (Kaplan 1982).

Sangita further added:

*“I lost many of my friends because of migration as well. Many of my friends with whom I went to school and college, and even work colleagues, just disappeared from Nepal. They advised me to migrate to the UK because of the better work opportunities here for people like me”.*

Sangita's experience sums up the experience of many professional nurses like herself. Their primary motivation to migrate came from their friend's social networks who had already migrated to the UK. Indeed, social networks of friends, families and communities continue to occupy an important place and should be called one of the most important capitals for the role its members play to support those in need from providing information and guidance about migration, job search, housing to emotional support as in the case of Sangita whose friends shared their own experience with her every time she packed had bags to return home when she missed her six year old son and used to sleep with pillow thinking of him. Speaking to nurses from Nepal one gets the sense that each of them had their share of struggle in the beginning and each had their share of discrimination due to their phenotype, socio-cultural differences, devaluation of their professional experiences and educational qualifications, and their English language abilities, loss of confidence and deskilling, factors also identified by scholars of other immigrant communities (Raghuram and Kofman 2004).

Nurses in Nepal, except in exceptional cases, come from lower socioeconomic background because girls from richer middle class families would not normally enter into nursing profession (Adhikari 2010). They would rather want to become a doctor. Although it is gradually changing in Nepal, the majority of nurses did not go to good schools and did not always speak good English. People who went to government schools in Nepal did not have very good command in their English language unless they took extra tuitions and worked to improve it. Problem with English language abilities is a common problem among Nepali nurses because bulk of them did not go to private schools which use English language as main medium of instruction (Sah 2015). The nurses often talk about their unplanned migration and dependency on friends and family networks once they arrive in the UK.

The nurses interviewed in this research, argued that their problem begins after their arrival in the UK. Firstly, they faced problems relating to living and adjusting to the new and unknown environment, sociocultural norms and adapting to British values, learning to navigate around, finding work, learning and adapting to British way of life, learning how the system functions from opening a bank account to registering with a GP. The other problems begin when, or if, they are successful in overcoming all the inter-related hurdles the biggest of which is passing the IELTS with overall 7 scores in all the subjects, registering as a nurse with NMC, finding

job and adjusting to the work environment. The problems associated with English language proficiency chases them all through in both social sector as well as in professional sector. One of the nurses from among the sample said she feels very tired by speaking English all the time with her patients and others in the UK.

Almost all of them find it difficult to adjust to the working system and talk about facing cultural and technical difficulties such as lack of technical skills and knowledge as to how the system operates, lack of confidence, anxiety relating to their professional work that they will make mistakes while performing their duties and feeling of incompetence. Daughter of an ex-Gurkha Pranita and her sister migrated together from Nepal after she finished school, just a few months after her parents. A student of adult nursing in a local university she feels lucky for being able to study in the UK where all her friends from Nepal wanted to come for studies. She is doing inhouse practical training in a local hospital and does part time work in a local McDonalds to support her parents. Talking about her professional experience in the UK, she shared the following:

*“Initially in the beginning I had difficulty understanding when patients spoke to me and I am so scared of pronouncing anything wrong so I always spoke in a very low voice that people had difficulty hearing. I get tired of speaking English all the time,”* Pranita, 23.

Weakness in the English language is invariably one of the main challenges nurses coming from Nepal face in the UK despite having studied nursing primarily in English as the main language of instruction. The other problem they face is studying for the conversion course. Even gaining entry onto this course can be a problem, as it is extremely difficult to find places and many of them have to wait for a long time to enrol. The process of requalification, the cost associated with it, need to learn or pass English language test, need to learn technical terminology and adapting to different clinical practices are all challenges that all the Nepali as well as international nurses face in the UK (Kingma 1999, Chandra and Willis 2005, Kingma 2007).

Many experienced Nepali nurses who came to the UK in 2003 and afterwards were unable to get into hospital employment for two years or more. Some among them who were a bit mature with many years of nursing experience gave up completely after being unsuccessful in passing IELTS and ended up taking employment in care homes as carers. Despite their Nepali

professional qualifications, nurses face language and socio-cultural barriers to entering the nursing profession in the UK, something they never expected. They end up in low paid, care work like many other female migrants despite their Nepali qualifications. Many female migrants from Africa, South and East Asia and Caribbean or from Black Minority Ethnic (BME) community face similar problems in London when professionally trained doctors are forced to work as a carer as Datta, McIlwaine, Evans et al. (2007) explore. The women with no particular skills or education who migrated to the UK as dependents of their husbands easily found job in care homes through existing networks.

#### *6.4.3 Carers' experience*

A supervisor working in a care agency in London estimates there could be 5000 or so care workers of Nepali origin in the UK. Some among them have now risen to the status of supervisors and managers in care homes in England. Gauri, a first-generation female migrant, is one of them. A bank employee in Nepal, Gauri migrated to the UK with her two young daughters in 1999 to join her husband, a student who had already migrated to the UK in 1998. She found work in a care home with the help of a friend before she was properly settled in the UK. Relating her work experience in the UK, she said:

*"I found work with the help of a Nepali friend who was working in a care home in London. In the beginning it was not easy to work in the care home but I received many in-house trainings and was also sent out for training, which helped me settle in the job and get promoted," Gauri, 50.*

Gauri is now a supervisor in a nursing home where 30 Nepali women work as carers and majority of them got the job through her which establishes the importance of social network as a livelihood strategy for Nepali migrants. However, it is difficult to say whether social networks would play an equally important role in finding employment in more regulated employment sectors such as nursing in hospitals. It is very difficult to know but Gauri guesses that over 5,000 Nepali women work in the care homes in the UK comprising of fully qualified nurses and unskilled or semiskilled housewives. The care industry in the UK is probably the third largest employer of Nepali migrants in the UK after the British Gurkhas and the security industry. The care industry, cleaning and nursing sectors are probably the largest employers of Nepali women migrants in the UK. However, apart from doctors, nurses, ex-Gurkhas and carers there are also businessmen and entrepreneurs among Nepali migrants in the UK.

Gauri, a young mother of two girls, had perceived England to be a 'rich and powerful country' where lots of people went for higher studies. She too migrated with her children's future and family life in mind. Coming from a modest middleclass family background, she was able to spend only very little time with her two daughters when they were growing as they were left with her parents in another city in Nepal when she and her husband worked in Kathmandu. In the UK she works in a care home, a lower status position but has gradually risen to the level of a supervisor and has attended several in-house and external training to further improve her supervisory skills and is very happy. She said:

*"We actually came for our daughters. We thought if we could live in the UK our daughters will be able get British education and then with good education, they will become something in life,"* Gauri, 50.

She thinks migration to the UK gave her more than she had expected. The family are together and they are all very happy. She has experienced greater bonding among them in the family as they are able to spend more time together in the family. Her children graduated from British universities, including in English literature from Oxford University.

Migration to the UK seem to meet the expectation of many parents whose sole purpose of migration to the UK have been for the brighter future of their children and so that they could live together in the family. Anuradha and her husband, an ex-Gurkha, were not particularly young when they decided to take advantage of the settlement right offered by the government to the ex-Gurkhas and their families. Despite having minimal education and living as a housewife in Nepal, she had been happy. However, they decided to leave the comfort of their life in Nepal for the sake of their four daughters, thinking that they would get a better opportunity to study and become something in life. In the UK, one of acquaintances of the family who was a cleaning supervisor in a hospital recommended her to his superiors for a cleaning vacancy. As explored earlier, social networks play a crucial role in meeting their livelihood expectations. Without the support of her Nepali acquaintance Anuradha would not have known about the vacancy in the hospital and would not have received the job, a source of pride and livelihood for her.

## Case Study 2: Inspiring parents

*Anuradha's husband is a retired Gurkha soldier. During his 15 years of service to the British Army, he spent the majority of his time in Hong Kong and was posted in various places such as Brunei and the UK. For 15 long years, he could only see his daughters and wife for two months every two years during his holidays, when he came to visit them in Nepal or took them to Hong Kong.*

*Anuradha was not particularly young when she migrated to the UK in 2005 to join her husband in the UK, with her four daughters. The decision to migrate was made when the UK allowed ex-servicemen and their families to settle in the UK, as the family could finally live together, and their four daughters would have better opportunities with British education and training.*

*Anuradha had a happy life in Kathmandu. She said, "We were very happy in Nepal and I was very busy in Nepal but coming to the UK is different. In the UK our children are getting a good education, we all live together and we have a better life. In the UK we all live together which was not possible before and there is great bonding in the family".*

*In Nepal she was a housewife with very little responsibility other than her immediate family. She however liked to do social service so spent a lot of time helping people in hospitals and visiting people's homes to join them in religious ceremonies. She said: "I used to give out money to help people; money that my husband had earned by working in difficult conditions away from home and country. It is only after migrating to the UK that I have realised the value of money and how difficult it is to earn it. I am not very educated so to earn that money I have to work as a cleaner and dinner lady in a hospital in UK. I am very happy with my job. People like me in my job, and they support me so much. But initially when I had to clean toilets, I felt very bad. That was something I had never expected that I will be doing in the UK and I felt really sorry for myself".*

*However, she now feels proud that she has a job which she found within three weeks of landing in the UK with the help of a Nepali whom they knew from Nepal. Talking about her life in the UK she said: "I am happy with my life here because I have gained so much by coming to the UK. I hardly spoke any English then. When I was interviewed for the job the person interviewing was laughing all the time and gave me the job. Later they told me that I had given all the replies wrong, but they still gave me the job because they told me that they liked my honesty and sincerity".*

*She said in the beginning she slept only for three hours as she had to work very hard to learn English and many other things. She worked long hours, then went to college to learn English. She would return home around 11 pm, then she would sit with her daughters as they did their homework, and she also learnt a lot from them. She said it was struggle but on looking back she feels proud as they like and support her at work.*

*She said their migration to the UK has given them many things which is not easy to explain in words. Her children have received good British education and are employed. Her life has transformed completely in the UK. She feels entirely like a new person with a completely new life and greatly values her independence and identity. She said:*

*“I have become very independent. Although I have a small job this job is very important for me and people value me because of the work I do. I feel very good when they call me “Dinner Lady”. I have learned to live like a professional. I have developed an independent personality. I can communicate with people and I drive which has added new confidence in me”.*

*Talking about her work, she said she works 12 hours shifts six days per week, including weekends, and she has one day off on Friday. Having come from a relatively relaxed life in Nepal, she was shocked by the hard work and long hours, something that she had not imagined. “I never expected life would be so hard here. I have to work long hours, my husband who has some health problems, had to work nights because we want our children to do better in life”. She also said: “I am not young anymore but even at this age I went to college to learn English language. I had to walk for hours to get back and then do the homework with my daughters”.*

*She added, “It is a great satisfaction to know that our daughters are happy, they are doing well and importantly, we are now all together as a family.*

Anuradha’s story is an inspiring journey of an ordinary, not highly qualified but hard-working female migrant. Her story tells us the transformation and upward social mobility of an ordinary migrant housewife to confident hospital personnel. Migration to the UK has brought her social recognition, professionally empowered her as she has become an important member of her home where she plays the role of an inspiring mother and wife and in the hospital where she works, she is an important member of the chain who keeps the hospital clean and contributes to the effort of health professionals in ensuring the total health care and progress of patients who come for treatment.

Anuradha is an example of how female migrants fulfil their social and family responsibilities that also contributes to their personal development to an independent and confident professional, who inspires not only the members of the family but also the society by being an example for others. As explored in Chapter 2, migration is a livelihood strategy of poor households and migration to a developed country such as the UK in global North not only increases the chances of higher earnings but employment opportunity also offers the chances to further develop their human capital as in case of Anuradha who went to college to learn English language, learned to drive and has gradually risen to a position of Dinner Lady, who brings dinner to the patients. Her livelihood in the UK, despite not having higher education, despite being not high skilled also shows the importance of her capability to work hard as permitted by health which means capability to put in hard labour and being healthy is part of migrant assets besides the social networks. She is an example of how migration increases women's access to education and economic resources and can increase their autonomy and social status in the family and society (O'Neil, Fleury et al. 2016).

#### *6.4.4 Entrepreneurs' experience*

Sanjay was only 18 years old when he migrated to the UK in 1993. He stayed with his friends and members of the extended family for some time and worked in restaurants owned by them. He had a good family network and circle of friends in the UK and a brother who worked in the British army. He did not speak much English because he did not have to: within his circle, Nepali language was used by all. He had some experience working in a hotel in his hometown of Pokhara in west Nepal, and after working in restaurants for a number of years in the UK, he decided to establish his own restaurant with help from relatives and friends. Speaking about his experience of establishing his business in the UK he said:

*"I wanted to start a restaurant business in the UK. I found every information regarding establishing my business online. I found banks that were willing to provide me with loans and work with me to help set up my business. It was very easy for me to establish my business here in the UK. I am financially better off now as compared to Nepal from where I emigrated 18 years ago," Sanjay, 42.*

Sanjay has been involved in a number of initiatives now as he has established himself financially and socially in the UK. He helps local charities supporting old age people and police. He says his restaurant is a place from where local people and his clients learn about Nepal and Nepali

people, Nepali culture. Posters reflecting scenic beauty of Nepal and brochures filled with travel tips to Nepal are on display at his restaurant. Sanjay's story resonates with that of several other migrants from Nepal and many other countries who exploit the niche market to established their businesses as a livelihood strategy saving themselves and members of their family from competing in the labour market, saving themselves the embarrassment of doing jobs they loathe and saving themselves from associated discriminations but, in the same time, has also exposes British society with their culinary and other socio-cultural traditions thereby creating new knowledge.

According to the six research participants, establishing businesses is also comparatively easy in the UK not only because the legislation and the guidelines regarding establishing businesses is clear and but also the capital needed to establish the business is relatively easily available, either through the banks or through family and friends and community, when they experience difficulty sourcing loan from the banks. The Fair Finance, a social enterprise located in East End in London, has targeted its services to financially excluded minority communities and provides 60 percent of its personal loans and 83 percent of business loans to them.

Majority of migrants are financially excluded in the host country and had difficulty accessing loan from local banks due to lack of credit history, transfer of credit history from other countries as experienced by entrepreneurs in Canada (Atallah and Robelo 2006). Herlitz argues that migrants have difficulty obtaining loans from banks because they lack a credit history, collateral against which they can borrow or a co-signer who could support their application (Herlitz 2005). McIlwaine shares similar experiences of the Latino community in the UK (McIlwaine, Camilo Cock et al. 2011). The financial exclusion faced by the ethnic minorities not only sap their strength from establishing a foothold in a new community but also prevents them from contributing economically and socially to the local community (Khan 2008, Khan 2013, Cornell 2016).

Sanjay has given employment to 14 part-time and full-time staff, pays tax to the government and supports the local economy. Talking about his contributions to British society he said:

*"I am happy that we are not only selling Nepali food but also promoting Nepali culture and tourism. We provide very good hospitality to our guests, which sends a very positive message*

*about Nepali people in the society here. We are not only making economic and other contributions to the local community but also connecting Nepal to the local community,” Sanjay, 42.*

Globally, there is a higher proportion of self-employment among immigrants than the local population and this is also true of the UK (Clark, Drinkwater et al. 2015). A report produced by Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2010 confirms this. For example, OECD found that the self-employment ratio of immigrants was 13.4 percent in the UK as compared to 11.9 percent for natives (OECD 2010). The research done by OECD also found that the self-employment rate among immigrants in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Poland, the United States and some other countries was higher than that of the natives (ibid, p 5). A literature review done for the Home Office in 2005 by Herlitz also suggests that immigrants find it easier to establish small enterprises in counties where they have strong community organisations through which they can raise the necessary funds (Herlitz 2005, Clark, Drinkwater et al. 2015).

As discussed earlier, the entrepreneurs among the participants improve their human and social capital by adapting to livelihood strategies dictated by the time and to a certain extent, supported by the extended community capital which has impact on their financial/economic capital and standard of living. As discussed in Chapter 7, migrant’s families take advantage of existing education and other opportunities in the host country by working hard. They also adapt to living in a new social environment, adapt to a new culture, make new friends, learn new social and cultural values. In the process they also share their own socio-cultural and religious values and personal experiences with the people in the community helping to create new knowledge and greater understanding leading to social cohesion and social integration (Van Hear, Pieke et al. 2004, Williams 2007b, Vertovec 2011), an important aspect of migration which builds and deepens in the process of livelihoods, but is completely overlooked as important outcomes of migration by the proponents of livelihoods framework focussing mostly on the different forms of capital, vulnerabilities, institutional processes, local laws and capabilities.

#### 6.4.5 Other professionals' experience

Bandita was a master's level student in Nepal when she got married and decided to leave her studies to emigrate to the UK in January 1998 to join her husband who himself was a student. She worked very hard in the UK to support her husband to complete his studies. Without her sacrifices he would never have completed his master's degree with distinction, which opened up the way for his further education and eventually led to him to obtaining a PhD. Remembering her earlier days in the UK Bandita said:

*"We faced many challenges. The first one was financial because we needed to pay a £10,000 fee to the University for my husband's education. Then we needed money for our own subsistence. We had to work harder than we had never done in our life. We worked at that time thinking about our future career prospects. We had no friends, no relatives who could support us if we needed any help,"* Bandita, 39.

However, they are well settled professionally and financially in the UK now as Bandita herself obtained PhD after completing BSc nursing which she considers a great achievement. She currently works as an Associate Professor and divides her time between the UK and Nepal. In Nepal she has started a charitable organisation through which she plans to channel knowledge and skill transfer. Education was very important for her husband because he had migrated to the UK for higher studies as a fee-paying student. Although Bandita was herself a student but she left her studies to join her husband in the UK because she wanted to support him so that he could complete his studies without any worries. Explaining their reason to their prolonged residence in the UK, she commented:

*"Just when we were making plans to return to Nepal, my husband got the opportunity to pursue PhD and because of his PhD we stayed here another three years. During those three years I didn't want to stay idle either, so I started studying. In between my husband was offered a job and all the opportunities started piling up one after another so we thought okay, let us see where it takes us, and here we are,"* Bandita, 39.

Nepalis migrants are also found to work in finance sectors such as chartered accountancy firms and banks. According to [prospects.ac.uk](http://prospects.ac.uk) the finance sector employs over 2 million people, contributes around 12 percent of the UK's gross domestic product (GDP) and accounts for more than 7 percent of total employment. A recent study of 86 cities by a financial think-tank Z/Yen found that London leapfrogged New York for the top place in the financial sector in the world.

Finance sector in the UK employs a very high percentage of people in the 25 years to 39 years age bracket and fewer in the older age range (Metcalf and Folfe 2009). People working in accountancy, banking and in the financial sectors throughout the world are attracted to the UK. Nepali migrants are very well represented within this sector and because of the nature of the profession many of them run successful private accountancy firms.

Ananta was working in banking sector in Nepal before migrating to the UK in 2002. He was not able to get onto the professional ladder for over a year despite having over 20 years' experience in the banking sector. Talking about his experience he said:

*“Knowing someone who you could ask for advice is very important in a new country. I was not able to find a job I wanted because I did not know whom to ask or where to look for it,”* Ananta, 42.

Examining the livelihood experiences of the first generation, as examined above, one can very easily establish the relationship between human capital such as the professional qualifications that the participants had need to be extended to include fluency in English language. Except in the case of medical doctors, Nepali migrants with nursing degrees, with several years' experience of practical work and despite having a huge demand in the NHS were not able to enter their chosen career because of their poor language and to a certain extent also because of weakness in Nepali nursing education. The experience of nurses and others with no particular qualifications or skills further reinforced the importance of social and professional networks from helping with emigration to finding accommodation and job as well as offering professional and emotional support at times when the migrants encounter trouble finding job or start missing families. The importance of social and professional network for consultation regarding professional career advice and guidance has also been firmly established by the experience of some participants. Furthermore, experience of some of the migrants finding work and gradually developing their human capital by their sheer dedication and resilience also shows that both their ability to work for long hours permitted by their health compels me to think about adding both capacities to work for long hours and their good health as very important assets that the migrants possess.

#### 6.4.6 Migration experiences of second-generation

The research participants themselves express happiness about the turn their life has taken in the UK. Rabi, child of a Nepali medical doctor and a Filipino nurse and his brother had a very comfortable life growing up in the UK and they had a very easy childhood. At home Rabi and his brother learned about both Nepali and Filipino culture because their parents often referred to Hindu and Catholic culture. Talking about his parents and their influence on him, Rabi said:

*“My parents came from different religions and very different backgrounds and yet they were very sure in their relation. They wanted to instil their cultural influences on us so I knew lots about Nepal, about history of Nepal and religion as well. And same about the Philippines,”* Rabi, 33.

Rabi’s father wanted him to become a dental surgeon but his mother wanted him to become a lawyer. He studied medicine and when he had to choose his specialities, he chose to become a surgeon. Talking about his career choice, he said:

*“I choose to become a surgeon, one of the hardest specialities. The determination comes from the fact that, we were always told, we should appreciate the opportunity. We were taught to take the opportunity and appreciate them. Our father used to tell us how many miles he had to walk every day to go to the school, not in a passive way but in a nurturing way. He used to say to us how lucky we were having been born in the UK,”* Rabi, 33.

An increasing number of second-generation migrants freshly graduating out of British universities are working for financial giants such as Goldman Sachs, Merrill and Lynch or JP Morgan. There are several others who are also successfully running private firms or working in computer programming and for online sales giants such as Amazon and internet giants such as Apple and Google. Second generation migrants regard themselves as “Londoners” or Asian British and do not want to be called a migrant or migrant’s children.

Ambika is a second-generation female who lives in London with her husband, who works as an accountant for an American bank, and a child. Replying to a question regarding growing up as a child of a migrant, she said:

*“I did not know that I was a child of a migrant. I grew up in a multicultural cosmopolitan place like London with lots of Asian, Black and oriental people. I like to be called a Londoner above anything else because London is where I was born and brought up and London is where I have*

*spent my life, London is where I live and London is where I have a career. I am a creature of London, a Londoner and that's my identity,"* Ambika, 32.

The second-generation migrants have better social and professional networks of school and college friends and work colleagues. While talking about social and professional networks Ambika put a lot of emphasis to mention that she and her husband had good social and professional network of people comprising of Nepali as well as British and other nationalities whom she referred as 'Londoners' and with whom they are frequent contacts. The second-generation display the confidence to branch out into new careers, rather than following the professions most common within the Nepali community. Amar is another second-generation migrant, who comes from a family of medical doctors. He rebelled and decided not to follow the footsteps of his father, a GP and brother, an eye specialist, because 'he didn't want to be the sheep that followed'. He was interested in economics, so he got his first degree in economics. He wanted to ask for guidance from someone about his decision to study economics because there was no one at home but he did not find any among the Nepali community. He said,

*"I have been successful in my career choice. I have worked for two different American investment banks and before that I worked for a global accountancy firm. I am trying to build my own credentials, so I plan to keep working there for a few more years,"* Amar, 32.

Lacking the networks to ask for guidance about entering new sectors, many successful second-generation Nepalis are now offering their help to those who seek it. Amar had no one to ask for advice regarding job prospects in the financial sector before deciding to take the offer. He said:

*"I only knew doctors and their children whom we met during NDAUK annual meeting or other similar community events. To be able to ask someone about the profession that you want to go into before you commit anything would be such an enormous help. I have decided that I will offer all possible help to anyone who ask for it,"* Amar, 32.

Some successful second-generation migrants are also putting effort into helping their peers in Nepal. Jayanti is a second-generation female migrant whose parents were both medical doctors settled in Wales, where she was born and brought up. She thinks she is very lucky to have brought up in the UK. Speaking about her childhood she said:

*“I grew up in the UK within a community, which is very welcoming. I think that had a big impact on me. Also, my parents were very keen to integrate so they learned Welsh and they were insistent that we were educated in Welsh as well. So, both my sister and I took local language classes and I think that made a big difference because as soon as you show signs of wanting to adapt or wanting to integrate then other people will also be welcoming towards you,” Jayanti, 32.*

A student of social anthropology, international development and management, Jayanti wants to divide her time between the UK and Nepal. Jayanti has volunteered for a social science institution in East Africa researching on female circumcision. Reflecting on her childhood and growing up in the UK she said:

*“There are many advantages of being born and brought up in the UK. Growing up in the UK firstly English becomes almost like your first language and in the modern world, whatever is said and done, that’s a big advantage. The other thing is access to western educational institutions. I do think that they are of high quality. It has also given me access to travel freely wherever I like and opened up those doors for me I suppose,” Jayanti, 32.*

She has regular contact with Nepali youth some of whom have returned after studying abroad. In her opinion, many of the returnees can be just as talented, just as able to change things in Nepal but it is up to the policy makers to recognise their strength. She said:

*“I think young people in general are a force that is really worth channelling, especially for Nepal. There are a lot of great young people who are coming back to Nepal having studied abroad and lived there. I think it would be a really good thing if Nepal is able to retain these people. They bring so many new ideas and new enthusiasm, I think, to change things here,” Jayanti, 32.*

Further analysis of the interviews reveals that whether highly educated or with minimal education, the second generation exhibit entrepreneurial drive and a desire to work hard. More dynamic entrepreneurial work like running active small or medium-sized businesses such as travel agencies or a call centres fall within the domain led by second-generation migrants who have the backing of British qualifications but who rely on social and community networks established by their parents. It is extremely important to note that the social networks established by the first-generation help shape the livelihood opportunities of their children. For example, Pushpanjali, a second-generation migrant studied health science management after doing A levels but later went back and studied travel management, ticketing, fares for a year and now

operates her own travel agency in Central London which her father partnered with a Malaysian businessman. She said:

*“My Daddy always said that I should have an ambition in life, that I should be career oriented and that I should try to become independent as soon as I could. After studying travel management, I went to work for Travel Pack, a massive company in Wembley. I was there for a year or two then I went to work for our own company. Within few years I took over the management and now I have been successfully running it for over 7 years,”* Pushpanjali, 34.

It is normal for Nepali parents to have their preference as subjects that their children should take in the university or a career that they should follow. Medicine or engineering, computer science would always be on the top of their priority list. However, further analysis of the interviews of the second-generation participants reveals that more and more of them are breaking away from the tradition of following on the wishes of their parents or following on their footsteps. For example, medical and health related professions, contrary to their parents thinking, are no longer regarded as more respected and secure professions that enhance social prestige. Parents with medical backgrounds would, in the past, want their children to follow in their footsteps. However, this is changing because unlike in Nepal, parents are no longer able to dictate their children what subject to study or not to study in the UK. Unlike in Nepal, the free atmosphere in which they study in the UK encourages them to make their own decisions about the subjects they would like to study and the careers that they would like to pursue.

According to the participants, they need not be a doctor or an engineer to become successful in life. Sharing his growing up experience in the UK, Amar who comes from a family of doctors as his father owns a General Practice and his brother is a successful ophthalmologist, a consultant, he chose to break away from family tradition. Speaking about his decision to study something else, he said:

*“I would have had the opportunity to go into medicine but I chose that it was not for me. I guess it was partly because at that time when I was 16, the reason why I liked economics because it helped me explain the real world. I had an interest at that time in development and I think, partly also, because I had already had two family members who were doctors. That also put me off a little bit because my older brother was a doctor so I didn’t want to be the sheep that followed him. I wanted to try something new. And more than 10 years on from that decision, it was definitely the right decision for me,”* Amar, 32.

This clearly indicates how the thinking pattern of the second generation has been influenced by their being born and brought up in the UK, which could be an indication that they are confident on the livelihood choices that they will make and life chances that are available to them in the UK. The second-generation is very different from their parents, the first generation of migrants in terms of the assets in their disposal, combined with their human capital that they have developed with hard work and their enhanced capabilities not only increase their efficiency in commodity production but also helps them in making informed decisions, as explained by Sen (1997) Ellis (2003) and Bebbington (1999). Second generation, the British Asians are very different compared to their parents as they attain higher studies and work had to take advantage of other available opportunities in the UK. They no longer see the importance to follow on the footsteps of their parents to become a doctor. It could also mean that the younger generation is diversifying even further and feel capable of making decisions regarding their career choices because of their heightened capability (ibid.).

The next section will explore what are the constraints of migration and how it affects livelihoods of Nepali migrants in the UK.

### **6.5 Livelihoods Affected by Constraints**

The research participants have been relatively successful in financial terms but migration to the UK had not been without difficulties and stress for many. They talk about the problems that they faced when they first arrived in the UK. Many of them faced language difficulties because of their limited command of English language. They could not understand what the people were saying so will not be able respond appropriately. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) enforced linguistic competencies in people, particularly internationally educated nurses intending to work as registered nurse in the UK by increasing IELTS scores.

Insufficient command of English language among the nurses and other health workers could lead to social misunderstanding causing potential risk to patient's safety and health outcomes (Editorial 2014). Nepali migrants were not the only ones who faced English language and other socio-cultural and professional challenges (Adhikari and Grigulis 2013, NMC 2015). Besides facing English language, there were many other disadvantages that the research participant

confesses to have also experienced. Some of the respondents talked about the high cost of living in the UK and associated stress and how life goes on from one pay cheque to another.

Ananta, a banker by profession, regrets migrating to the UK with his wife who was a British citizen. He confided that he decided to migrate to the UK in 2002 for the future of his only son leaving his senior managerial position in a bank in Kathmandu because of increasing violence led by the Maoists and the government forces. He and his wife wanted to avoid the risk as well as educate their child in a risk-free environment so they decided to migrate to the UK. He shared his thoughts on migrating to the UK:

*“We emigrated simply because of my son’s education because of Nepali political situation was not good. Kids were going to school just for 50 or 60 days out of 250 school going days because of the conflict in the country. We had the opportunity here so I moved. It was not for financial reason but you have to live here from a pay cheque to another,”* Ananta, 46.

Others talked about how loneliness grips them as they are alone, away from their country, their village and their neighbourhood, away from their family, their childhood friends the feeling of which becomes very daunting. On top of that there is whole range of cultural aspects such as food culture, football culture, and drink/pub culture which takes time to learn, the migrants said. Speaking about loneliness one experiences by migrating to a country where they know no one, one of the first-generation migrants, a medical doctor with a very successful career in the UK talked about feeling lonely, missing friends and members of family. He said:

*“Sometimes you feel alone. You miss your childhood friends. You miss your family. You miss your mother and father. You are so far away from your family. You won’t be able to go there when you wanted to. Now we have Skype, Internet, email and everything is there but at that time we had to rely only on letters. Even telephone was difficult and that was the age of telegraph. Because of all these things you felt a bit distant. The other thing is my son he could not get the affection and blessings from his grandparents. It was difficult for him to understand his heritage. These thoughts used to emerge in my thoughts sometimes. But there were no difficulty relating to anything else,”* Prahlad, 70.

Talking about the negative aspect of migration, 21 respondents mentioned there are several disadvantages of migration. One of the major disadvantages has been distancing from your loved ones and your friends which was mentioned by 22 out of 24 research participants in the UK. Similar experiences are also shared by other migrants from India, Bangladesh, the

Philippines, African countries in the UK as well as in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. The migrants feel lonely and isolated because of being a migrant, being not like the majority of the population in these countries or not speaking English the way they speak or for following different socio-cultural values (Lancellotti 2008, Jenkins and Huntington 2015, Pung and Goh 2016).

The other negative aspect that Nepali migrants experienced differ widely among different groups. Six of them, four male and two female migrants said they fear there would be gradual loss of cultural consciousness and identity among their children. They were concerned that children feel confused when parents practice Nepali culture at home, but they spend a considerable amount of time outside the home or in schools where they are exposed to a different culture which clashes with what they learn at home.

Three male research participants said they miss everything connected with their village where they were born and where they grew up. Two others said there is too much red tape and bureaucracy in the UK that not only delays the work but also makes them deskilled in the long run said they have difficulty adapting and settling in the UK because of the cultural difference. Besides missing the friends, families and the festivals, migrants also highlighted that they miss the respect they receive from their patients in Nepal. From among the research participants, there are those who talk about missing their friends, families or villages where they were born and other talk about deskilling as a disadvantage of migration. What we can learn from their expression of negative experience of migration is that Nepali people live in extended joint families and that they need their friends and families to share their success as well as their failures.

Both first and second generation talk about negative consequences of migration, explaining that they are not known here in the UK and feel merely part of the crowd whereas in Nepal people recognise them. A second-generation migrant highlighted that he misses the opportunity to be something in Nepal by being born and brought up in the UK. Amrit is a medical doctor, a GP by profession and was born in Scotland when his father was posted there. Speaking about his parents migration to the UK, he said:

*“I think you have to speak to my parents but the reason that many people came to the UK is not because of the weather. They came for their economic prosperity and their lack of opportunity back in home for whatever reasons whether it is the political stability or the jobs they did, because they wanted a better life for themselves,” Amrit, 32.*

Amrit accepts that there might have been some element of economic prosperity for being born and brought up in the UK, but he thinks money does not buy happiness. He says:

*“You have to offset that with how you feel like, if you are close to your grandparents, living round the corner, your family round the corner that would have been possible life in Kathmandu and being a bigger fish in a small pond, and having more influence where they stay,” Amrit, 32.*

There were no differences in the experiences of being brought up in the UK shared by the children who accompanied their parents who were not older than seven years at the time of migration, known normally as one and half-generation (1.5 generation), and the second-generation who were born and brought up in the UK. They all received equal opportunity but some succeeded more than others by remaining focussed and working hard like many of the children (who are now grown up and are successful professionals), who have managed to find highly prized professional jobs in the UK. Some among them have taken advantages of the social and professional networks established by their parents to launch successful livelihood strategy. Yet, there are others who express dissatisfaction of being born and brought up in the UK despite being successful professionals. They feel that if their parents had not migrated, they would probably be a bigger fish in a small pond and enjoyed their life more by being close to their grandparents and extended families of relatives. It comes with no surprise that more and more second-generation migrants are interested in their ancestral place of origin.

## **6.6 Livelihoods and Community Support**

One of the themes that repeatedly emerged from the analysis of interview of first-generation research participants is the importance of community support and community funding. As discussed in Chapter 2, traditional livelihood perspectives tend to focus on household capitals and although they highlight the importance of an individual’s social capital, they underexplore the importance of collective, community networks. Several researchers have argued that community networks and community funding help the migrants to establish their own

businesses and this study confirmed that this is the case within the Nepali community. For example, Latinos in London also turn to friends and families or members of community associations to borrow to tidy up things or launch small businesses (McIlwaine, Camilo Cock et al. 2011).

One of the interviewees, Santosh, a civil engineer by profession, migrated to the UK in 2008 taking advantage of High Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP) when he had difficulty running his successful engineering college with 700 students in Kathmandu due to frequent demands for donations and threats from criminals for bodily harm on his failure to meet their demands. He did not feel comfortable naming the criminals behind the donations and the threat. Around 2008, Nepal was reeling under burden of lawlessness when the Maoist group led armed insurgency was at its peak and people did not feel safe in Kathmandu especially after the Inspector General of Police was murdered in Kathmandu on 25 January 2003.

Santosh wanted to start a real estate business in the UK. Talking about his aspirations to migrate to the UK he said:

*“I am not here to settle permanently. I came here purely to do business. I had thought that once you come to the UK under HSMP, you will be recognised and treated differently but there was nothing like that. My expectation of migrating to the UK was not met. If there were no HSMP then I would not have migrated to the UK or may not have migrated to any country at all,”* Santosh, 42.

Santosh has since returned to Nepal with his family and is engaged in large construction projects partly funded by the community funding from Nepalis in the UK and other countries. It shows that migrants like to take advantage of available opportunities created by the government and in return they are prepared to work hard to fulfil their aspirations. Santosh’s plan to start a real estate business in the UK failed when the UK was hit by recession in 2008, which severely affected property market forcing him to change his business plans. Unable to engage in real estate business he shifted his attention towards education and explored the possibility of establishing an engineering college. His plan had to be shelved again when the UK government introduced new immigration rules relating to student migration (Brokenshire 2015). Thus, he was left with very few options, so he decided to be a partner in an existing grocery business group in Rushmoor Borough with a large Nepali population. He said:

*“I started searching a proper investment opportunity and came to the conclusion that food would be a good sector to get involved in because, whatever may happen, food will always be needed. I wanted to serve Nepali people with authentic Nepali food by importing Nepali agricultural products,” Santosh, 42.*

Santosh argued that migrants normally spend 20 percent of their earnings on food every month, so he wanted to offer an opportunity to the Nepali people to spend that 20 percent of their money on authentic Nepali food products. In return, Nepali farmers would also benefit from this trade.

Being new to the UK without a credit history, Santosh would have had difficulty getting any business loan approved from the British banks so instead of going to a bank for business loan, he took his proposal to the Nepali community with an investment proposition offering a high interest incentive. Lacking investment options, unable to get interest from the British banks for their savings, and encouraged by his offer of higher interest rates, the Nepali community in the UK agreed to provide him the finances that he needed. His success in raising funds from Nepali community in the UK to start his business proves the relative importance of social capital as compared to human capital as a source of livelihoods but the livelihood framework places more importance on human capital and do not even recognise community funding as a component of migrant’s social capital on which they can depend and take advantage from at the time of need as Santosh did.

Similar practices has been observed by researchers in the case of other communities who are new to the UK, fail to get into high paying jobs or lack credit history such as Latinos in London or immigrants in Canada, the Nepali also rely on their social capital among their community network (Atallah and Robelo 2006, McIlwaine, Camilo Cock et al. 2011). The example thus supports similar findings among other immigrant communities, as discussed in OECD (2010), Herlitz (2005), Acs and Laszlo (2007) Levie, Hart, Anyadike-Danes, and Harding (2007), McIlwaine (2010), Clark, Drinkwater and Robinson (2015).

The case studies presented above demonstrates the way in which Nepali migrants have adopted different livelihood strategies in the UK guided by their personal circumstances and

experiences, the assets, capitals and capabilities (Chambers and Conway 1991, Ellis 2003, Sagynbekova 2016). The participants, whether they were nurses or less skilled female migrants, were able to engage in sustainable livelihoods with the help of their social capital in the form of social networks of friends and families. The research participants of this research were all regular migrants with valid work visa but migration to the UK for many of the research participants was just one small percentage of their migration and their entry into the labour market was reliant more on their social capital than their human capital. Thus, the success of the research participants in meeting their migration objective of a sustainable livelihood and enhanced social mobility depended on their social capital, their ability to sustained long hours of work and their health which should actually be considered as part of migrant's human capital because as seen in many cases the migrants establish their livelihoods without much of human capital, financial capital. Indeed, those who engaged in business and entrepreneurial activities in the UK made use of and sought to further develop their social, cultural, financial and human capital by engaging in businesses that also promoted nostalgic cuisine and products that directly supported farmers and producers in their respective countries. To a certain extent, those who wanted to start their own businesses in the UK were able to exploit their extended community network to benefit from a range of support structures including obtaining finances.

Researchers such as Jones and Ram (2013) and Virdee (2006) see self-employment less of a voluntarily chosen occupation and more of a reactive survival mechanism for newly arrived migrants suffering from job discrimination, social support network and lacking viable options elsewhere in the economy (Virdee 2006, Jones and Ram 2013). One of the major drawbacks of livelihood frameworks in the context of migrants from black minority ethnic (BME) groups is that they continue to face discriminations based on the colour of their skin, their ethnicities and their English language. The discrimination that they face supresses their human capital and capabilities and creates some kind of barrier to their entry into job markets and inhibits their upward social mobility. Indeed, first generation face more barriers to livelihoods not only because of the insufficient assets and capabilities and shocks or vulnerability context but also because their experiences and credentials or their qualifications are not adequately evaluated when they apply for a job.

The Nepali migrants face different types of challenges depending on their qualifications and the career they choose to pursue in the UK. The livelihood approaches, as explained earlier, highlights the importance of ‘assets’ or ‘capitals’ such as human capital, physical capital, financial capital, natural capital and social capital because the employability may depend on some or all of these assets (Ellis 2003). Ellis argues that employability of a migrant also varies depending on the associated risks and policy and institutional contexts determined by the government’s legal provisions, rights, and laws. As seen in the case of Santosh who migrated to the UK in 2008 taking advantage of HSMP with intention of investing in real estate but the collapse of housing market due to economic meltdown experienced by the UK forced him to change his business plan. Similarly, the nurse participants who migrated to the UK taking managed migration route of HSMP had difficulty passing IELTS when government changed rules relating to entry in nursing profession for migrants with a score of 6.5.

More or less along the same lines Bebbington (1999) and Scoones (1998) suggest that livelihoods should be understood in terms of people’s access to five types of capital assets such as production, human, natural, social and cultural capital and the ways in which they combine and transform those assets in the building of livelihoods. The research participants, however, talked about losing confidence and being deskilled as a result of the detour that they have to take from their chosen profession in order to survive the initial hardships but none of the scholars include it as one of the risks within the reaches of livelihoods distributed and transformed in society (Bebbington 1999)

## **6.7 Conclusion**

The analysis of the interviews of the research participants as examined above reflects the diversity and dynamism existing within the professional Nepali diasporic community in the UK and their livelihood strategies as dictated by their assets, social capital and capabilities. In terms of enhancing their human capital, there is a marked difference in work and career strategies of first, 1.5 and second-generation Nepali migrants in the UK leading to different career choices and their professional developments influenced by their assets but also by the institutional contexts, vulnerabilities and their capabilities to take advantage of the available opportunities. Their livelihoods efforts are also shaped by invisible yet powerful forces of discrimination they experience at work because of their phenotype, the way they look, their

command of English language and the way they speak (Shutes and Walsh 2012, Cangiano and Walsh 2014). The life stories and experiences of the participants explored in this chapter also highlights the resilience, confidence and commitment that they exhibit to take advantage of every opportunity even in the face of adversity.

More than their human capital, their social capital such as social networks play a huge role in the lives of Nepali migrants in the UK because that helps them secure livelihoods. The role of community networks and funding is particularly significant here. Not only the semiskilled or unskilled but even skilled professionals like doctors, nurses, engineers would have faced problems migrating to the UK without the help of existing networks.

Capability to speak English is important but it is their determination to succeed that enables them to withstand extended hours of work even during weekends, without much rest, in their efforts to supplement their income. The ability to work long hours and their health that allows them to do so should therefore be included as assets. Members of the diaspora are known to provide not only financial contributions and their value added services but also remittances of their social capital as they learn new cultural practices, and democratic values which they transmit when they visit their country of origin (Levitt 1998, Van Hear, Pieke et al. 2004, Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2010, Dustmann and Frattini 2013).

During interviews and interpersonal discussions, they have shared their innate desire to do something back home. The passion for development is also shared by the second generation of migrants whose desire to do something useful in Nepal is not diminished by the fact that they did not spend more than six weeks during their summer holidays in Nepal during their childhood. They say that their parents, and in some cases their grandparents, played a crucial role in keeping them connected to Nepal and the Nepali language through regular circular visits, regular communications with family members through Skype, Facebook, emails and telephone. Some even learnt Nepali language after school.

In this chapter, I examined the livelihood strategies adopted by the professional Nepali migrants in the UK. I found how some migrants despite being professionals encounter different forms of challenges and how they strategized their day-to-day existence in an unknown social,

economic, political and professional environment where they face socio-cultural barriers as well as English language problems which greatly reduces their chances of further improving their human capital and capabilities. I also found and discussed how they steer their life by engaging in self-employment and entrepreneurship with the help of the community.

They pursue their professional career, unaware of the subtle discrimination shadows them throughout their professional career but they, having no options to avoid it, continue to ignore it as they step into professional careers. The children of migrants, both who accompanied their parents or those who were born in the destination country who are hence grown into adolescent youth, recognise how they are subjected to racial and other discrimination but their British qualifications, their resilience, their command of English language, their extensive network of friends with whom they grew, went to school and university with, and with whom they played football and went to pubs and clubs, all these links help them overcome these barriers.

I also found that the second-generation migrants view themselves as Londoners and British Asian, instead of Nepalis. The second-generation faces less adversity and hostilities as compared to their parents because they grow up in the community along with other migrants and adjust better to British culture. The participants did not complain of any experience of racism, discrimination or other hostilities towards them which could be because of the smaller sample size and their professional backgrounds. The second-generation Nepali migrants in the UK do not work in elementary professions. The ambition their parents instilled in them from childhood with their guidance and support illuminate majority of their livelihoods path.

The young professionals interviewed in the UK express gratitude to their parents for having brought them to the UK where they could compete, achieve and flourish. Almost everyone interviewed for this research said they had to work much harder compared to in Nepal, but their life has changed positively, and their children have benefitted from their migration. The next chapter examines how the migrants and their children, the younger generation and their spouse have taken advantage of the available opportunities and what has been the outcome of the career choices they made, and what life chances they received as a result.

**The Life Chances and Livelihoods of Migrant's Children:  
Education, Careers and Social Mobility**

**7.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the life stories of two 1.5 generation participants born in Nepal and six second generation participants who were born to Nepali migrants after migration in the UK. Having dealt with the work and career strategies of the participants in the previous chapter, this chapter primarily focuses on the role of education and knowledge in enhancing the social mobility and quality of life for migrants and their families. Education is often perceived as the main factor in social mobility and creation of life chances for youth thus it is of utmost importance to study how children of migrants fare in education systems (Valk 2008). The chapter focuses on the life chances for the second-generation of Nepali migrants and how they make social and professional choices in a society where sliding down is more common than upward social mobility (Goldthorpe 2016).

The desire to go somewhere safe with their family was probably the most prominent motivation for migration for parents with young children in Nepal during 10 years of bloody armed struggle between the Maoist guerrillas and the Nepal government from 1996 to 2006 (Basnett 2009, Gellner 2014, Aryal 2016). During this decade of devastations in Nepal over 14,000 people lost their lives, thousands were seriously wounded and disabled, billions worth of national infrastructure got destroyed and over 200,000 reported to have fled their ancestral homes in search of protection. Nepali parents who managed to emigrate to the UK knew that besides protection their families will have access to educational, economic and professional opportunities and had the possibility to considerably increase their life chances with British qualifications. Many parents who migrate to the US from Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia have varying skills and educational backgrounds at the point of entry but typically share a common objective of providing their children with access to better economic opportunities, political freedom, and social mobility (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco et al. 2008, Roubeni, De Haene et al. 2015).

Suárez-Orozco et al (2008) argue that schooling has been recognised over the last five decades to be the surest way to wellbeing or status mobility globally. They argue that education is now powerfully associated with such beneficial development as better health, smaller families, and greater economic security. Solving the serious problems of the day whether deep poverty, infectious disease, environmental degradation, global warming, or terrorism will require the active engagement of well-educated, cognitively flexible, and culturally sophisticated individuals able to work in groups (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco et al. 2008). Researchers emphasise the responsibilities of the educational institutions, mostly schools, where these children spend the first few formative years of their lives because these institutions will need to nurture and prepare youngsters make them able to synthesise knowledge derived from various academic disciplines, wrestle with social and ethnic dilemmas, and work across cultural boundaries with individuals of different races, religions and cultures to deal with the increasing complexity and diversity that categorises their lives.

Out of 22 first generation migrants Nepali participants, 21 said that their children's wellbeing and better quality of life was the most important factor behind their decision to migrate among others such as better livelihood opportunities and better quality of life for themselves. This chapter considers the experiences of children of Nepali migrant who have since grown, both those who migrated with their parents and those born in the UK, assessing how far they have been able to avail themselves of such opportunities and benefit from their migration to the UK. In this research, the children who accompanied them and those who were born to them in the UK, the second-generation, have been called 'first and second-generation migrant' for simplicity, but I want to make it clear that when they were interviewed for this research they had already grown up, left universities and were professionally active in the UK.

This chapter draws heavily on in-depth interviews with eight, first and second-generation migrants, who had no role in making the decision to migrate and it examines their migration outcomes in relation to their educational and professional success. The chapter examines the importance of assets, social and ethnic capital and also parental sacrifices that play important role in building life chances for migrant's families and children. Traditional livelihoods strategies, as presented in Chapter 2 (Chambers and Conway 1991, Bebbington 1999, Ellis 2003), lack analysis of the importance of ethnic capital and social networks of people from the

same diasporic communities and the parental sacrifices that greatly shapes the livelihoods outcomes of their children. The intergenerational transfer of assets and life chances is an important component of the livelihood strategies of skilled migrant families.

The chapter also examines the experiences of young people, migrating without their parents, for higher studies as a step onto a professional career ladder and a professionally successful life. Student migration, especially from upper middle-class families who have resources, is increasingly common in Nepal. Most of them explore various options for higher studies in reputed universities abroad including obtaining scholarships on their own merit prior to requesting their parents to help with initial expenses such as return airfare and some out of pocket money (Sijapati 2009, Bohra-Mishra 2011). Many Nepali students seek educational opportunities abroad rather than in Nepal for two reasons: the demand for higher education outstripping the supply and a general lack of capacity and quality in the tertiary sector (British Council 2015). Such is the status and reputation of higher education in countries such as the UK that parents who may be well settled in Nepal opt to migrate for the sake of their children's bright future, as explored in previous chapter. Their valuation of the relative quality of a British versus Nepali education has some basis, as I explore in the next section of this chapter.

## **7.2 Historical Context of Education in Nepal**

The history of modern education in Nepal began only about 65 years ago with the liberation of the country from Rana tyrants in 1951, after 104 years of autocratic rule. Prior to 1951, Nepali people had very limited opportunity to study because there were only a few schools which were specially opened to educate children from a few selected families; the Rana rulers did not allow the general public to study. Tribhuvan University, the first university of Nepal, was established only in 1959 when Nepal's gross enrolment in secondary education was less than 10 percent; at university level it was less than 1 percent (Dahal and Bajracharya 2015). Literacy in Nepal was around just one percent (1%) at that time (Adhikari 2010).

Higher educational institutions expanded considerably only after the establishment of multi-party democracy in 1990 (von Einsiedel, Malone et al. 2012, Aryal 2016). Ten new universities and many new colleges affiliated with these universities have been established after 1990. The number of new colleges established as constituent of, or those just having affiliation with

Nepal's ten universities and four medical academies (universities), expanded between 1990 and 2015 from 571 to 1276. Out of these, 96 colleges are under the umbrella of universities (constituent); 429 are publicly funded; and 751 are private (British Council 2015, Dahal and Bajracharya 2015).

Education is an expensive commodity in Nepal, and thus unobtainable for many poor people, for several reasons (British Council 2015). The higher and tertiary educational institutions such as colleges or universities are established mostly in bigger cities away from the rural villages where the poor Nepali people normally reside. It is very expensive for poorer families to send their children for higher education to cities because they do not only face higher fees but also high living expenses (Agergaard and Broegger 2016). In addition, many destitute children from poor economic backgrounds fail to reach the standards required for entry to higher education because of the poor quality of education they receive in rural villages where majority of the schools are funded by the government and taught by the teachers who are neither qualified nor trained. However, remittances sent home by international migrants are making some difference in the lives of poor people (Lokshin, Bontch-Osmolovski et al. 2010, Thapa, Basnett et al. 2013). The remittances have not only helped receiving countries reduce the level of poverty - in the case of Nepal from over 40 percent to around 30 percent within a decade between 1995 to 2004 - but are also lifting families from the scourge of poverty, illiteracy and disease (Lokshin, Bontch-Osmolovski et al. 2010)

More middle-class parents in Nepal are found to be concerned about their children's education as they link the attainment of higher education with higher social status. Increasingly educational credentials play an important role in the status attainment process, enabling upward social mobility and increasing social prestige and improving quality of life (Stash and Hannum 2001). Goldthorpe (2016) conceptualises social class as that form of social inequality that is most consequential for individuals' material well-being and in turn, for a wide range of their life chances and life choices (Goldthorpe 2016). Education is a highly valued commodity in today's knowledge society, higher education leads to high paying top jobs and is linked with higher socio-economic standing in society which is clearly visible in developed industrialised societies such as Australia, Canada, the UK and the US (Papademetriou, Somerville et al. 2009, Liu and Xie 2016, Söhn 2016).

### 7.3 Children's Education as a Motivation for Migration

This chapter focuses on the stories of those research participants who were children when they accompanied their parents to the UK and also those children who were born to these migrants after migration in the UK. As discussed previously, the opportunity to be able to enrol their children in British schools, colleges and universities has been an important motivation for migration for Nepali migrant parents (Pariyar 2016). The 21 parents interviewed for this study were keen to discuss the importance of education, as the chance to educate their children in Britain is considered one of the most important advantages of migrating to the UK. Parents remain assured that if their children receive higher education in the UK their children will be able to 'follow their dreams'. They know that British qualifications are respected by employers and academics worldwide and comes with a price.

In a study of US migration, nearly 70 percent of the immigrant parents from Central America, China, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Mexico representing Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia, the source of nearly 80 percent of all new migrants in the US, said primary motivation of their migration was to provide better opportunities for their family, with 18 percent explicitly saying that their primary motivation for migration was to give their children a better education (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco et al. 2008).

Out of 22 first generation parents interviewed, 10 frequently mentioned the low quality of education and high fee structures that had troubled them to educate their children in Nepal. They were doubtful of the quality of education their children were receiving in the schools and colleges in Nepal even after paying hefty fees. This is how they express their motivation for migration:

*"The education in Nepal is very expensive, but you are not sure of the quality of education they will receive even after paying very high fees. On getting the opportunity, I brought them here where they are doing very well," Surendra, 54.*

The views expressed by Surendra reflects the views of many research participants of this study. Among the research participants, those who had higher education were more likely to express concern about the kind of education their children received (Johnson and Kossykh 2008, Williams 2009, Taylor, Borlagdan et al. 2012). Migrating to an urban centre for the sake of

children's education is common among Nepali parents living in rural areas of Nepal. Urban centres such as Biratnagar, Birgung, Nepalgunj, Bhairahawa and the capital Kathmandu also present migrants with the opportunity for better livelihood options as compared to the constricted opportunities in the rural areas (Agergaard and Broegger 2016). Over two-thirds of foreign-born residents (over 5 million people) arrived in the UK when they were between 15 to 44 years of age and almost two million of them were children under the age of 14. This partly explains the fact that a substantial number of migrants came to study and work here on receiving the job offers and many of them had children accompanying them or joining them at a later date (Dustmann and Theodoropoulos 2010, Gamlan 2010).

The first generation parents interviewed for this research express confidence that, equipped with a British qualification their children will have wider intellectual horizon and have a better life wherever they may choose to live in future. Lately, research on the educational achievements of the children of immigrants in Europe and the US has attracted great deal of scholarly attention and public interest. Recent literature highlights parental ambitions, expectations, aspirations and specific types of parental support as being the driving force for the successes of young adults of immigrant origin (Schnell, Fibbi et al. 2015). The available literature confirms that immigrants children are achieving considerable success for a variety of reasons. However, published research is not yet available to show whether children of Nepali immigrants are doing equally well as those of other migrant groups but this research, to a certain extent, will aim to fill this gap.

Table 7.1 highlights the research participants' (first generation migrants), prime motivations for migration to the UK and it reflects the aspirations of Nepali first generation migrants to secure a better quality of life, higher education opportunities, advanced training and a more secure future for their children.

Factors/Themes	Male (M)	Female (F)	M+F
a. Life Chances/Quality of life	7	4	11
b. Children's education and their better future	7	3	10
c. Security (Safety)	3	2	5
d. Family Reunion	1	2	3

As discussed in Chapter 5, when Nepali migrants started to enter the UK in the early 1960s, the first to arrive were the students and professionals who came for higher studies or for higher professional training at their own expense or having received government sponsored scholarships (Manandhar 2008). Many of them chose to return to Nepal after completing their education and training. However, there were some among those early migrants who decided to remain to pursue a professional career. Hence, these early migrants are credited with having established the initial networks that have played a pivotal role in the migration and settlement of Nepali migrants later on.

With the onset of globalisation and development of digital communication networks such as television and radio, and interpersonal communication facilitated by internet connectivity and affordability played a decisive role in facilitating Nepali migration. As discussed earlier, the armed rebellion against the state and the politicians started by the Communist Party of Nepal – Maoists (CPN-M) in 1996 affected all aspects of everybody's life in Nepal and further aggravated problems relating to employment, education, security and livelihoods. Furthermore, development of international channels of communication such as online networks as well as development and expansion of social networks among the people made them aware of available opportunities for education and work in the developed world. Many parents found it an easy option to migrate to the UK taking advantage of HSMP. Not only the parents with younger children but even the unemployed educated youth who wanted to migrate somewhere to escape the political, socio-cultural, security and economic instability created by the Maoists found applying for higher education in the UK, a perfect way to leave the problems behind by migrating to the UK for higher studies.

### *7.3.1 Parental aspiration and children's education*

Nepali parents interviewed for this research in the UK have very high expectations of their children so they encourage them not only to try to excel in the class but also go on to the university for higher studies in difficult subjects like medicine, engineering, computer science or law degrees. As in the case of Indian diaspora, Nepali parents too dream of their children getting a good education giving them better life chances, perhaps leading to a career as doctor, engineer or other respected professions, which in turn will bring social status, social recognition, wealth and fame which the parents equate with being successful (Singh 2016). These parents not only dream of their children succeeding in life but are prepared to work very hard and spend all financial, cultural and social resources at their disposal to help their children retain a competitive edge in the system and in the labour market to achieve their goals, as the case study two in Chapter 6 highlights (please see 147).

Many of the participants of this study, when given the opportunity to settle in the UK, migrated for the sake of their children. Such batch of Nepali migrants included even those who had a relatively comfortable life in Nepal. Many of these migrant parents sacrificed their own comfortable life and their hard-earned savings for the sake of their children. However, some ex-Gurkha migrants were not aware that settlement rights did not extend to children above 18 years of age or those not in full time education and not supported by their parents (Thorp and Woodhouse 2009, Mills 2009, Gurung 2011).

Some parents who had young children, defined by scholars such as Potter and Conway as 1.5 generation (Conway and Potter 2009a, p 3), migrated to the UK with their family with the objective to obtain the membership of the Royal College. Migration to the UK also provided safety for the children, especially at a time when the armed rebellion led by the CPN-M had greatly affected daily life in major urban centres including the capital Kathmandu. The ongoing Maoist led armed rebellion had planted fear in the minds of parents for the safety of their children and who looked for ways to escape to somewhere safe along with their children for their safety (Armed Conflicts Report 2009, Basnett 2009). For most participants, the migration decision was mainly propelled by a desire of providing higher education to their children or taking them to a place which was safe. The statements of some of the parents sums up their concern:

**Box -1: Worries for children’s education**

*“Schools were frequently being closed for various reasons and children’s education was completely disturbed. You would always be scared about the safety of your children. So, when I got this opportunity to come for training in the UK, I brought all my family along. We had a good quality of life in Nepal but life here is more secure plus my children are getting a good education” Laxmi, 50.*

*“I have cleaned toilets and floor in the UK, which I would never have to do in Nepal. I have worked for up to 18 hours every day and my husband did night shifts because we wanted to give a good education and good life to our four daughters” Anuradha, 55.*

*“I have got two daughters and a son. I wanted them to have a good education that is the reason I migrated to the UK. If I can be their guardian and look after them while they receive their education that would be so good as I will be around if and when they need me” Laxman, 58.*

Box – 1, Laxman’s desire to offer his children good education, look after them well and be around if and when they need his parental guidance and support is every parent’s dream but not all parents get such opportunities.

One common thread running through and binding the majority of the Nepali parents like respondents in this research, 21 out of 22 interviewees as explained above, with children who migrated to the UK together is the importance they attach to their education and their safety. Migrant parents almost always frame their decision to move as a chance to provide better opportunities for their children as they recognise education as essential for their children’s success in the new country and new culture (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco et al. 2008). The first generation of Nepali migrant parents understand the value of good education to succeed in life and realise that migration to the UK could make it happen. Furthermore, the prolonged worsening law and order situation in Nepal leading to frequent national strikes which they called “chakka jam” meaning “no moving wheels” or transport disruption, frequent school closures, frequent explosions in the cities, fear of harm to their children and the murder of a serving Inspector General of Police in Kathmandu put a final nail to their decision to migrate.

The lives of these Nepali parents in the UK have not been an easy one as compared to their lives in Nepal. They tell the story of their dedication and hardships that they are prepared to undergo in order to help their children to make progress and succeed in life. In the next section of this chapter, I will examine the kind of hardships and the sacrifices that these first generation of Nepali parents made for the sake of their children.

#### **7.4 Parental Sacrifice**

Migration, is not for those faint of heart, it almost inevitably involves feelings of dislocation, and at least, temporary loss of status, difficulty communicating and most significantly, leaving behind loved ones (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco et al. 2008). Many voluntary migrant parents believe that the sacrifices they make and the hard work they put up with in the host country to support their children in the beginning will help boost their children's social mobility as well as their own social advancement because their children will receive viable opportunities to further their social advancement in the host country (Roubeni, De Haene et al. 2015). During interviews, migrant parents frequently talked about the difficulties they faced in the beginning, getting onto the professional ladder or finding proper work in the UK as discussed in Chapter 6. Parents interviewed for this research described putting up with 18 hours of work every day to finance extra courses they had to take such as English language lessons and driving lessons as well as fulfil the daily necessities of their children. Many research participants said that they worked seven days a week as they got double pay when working during the weekends.

Talking about the challenges he faced in the early days of his migration, Prahlad, a successful first-generation medical practitioner in the UK, said:

*“We had financial difficulties as we had small child, I needed to support the family. I was the junior most doctors whatever we earned was barely enough to survive, to pay the rent, to provide for the child and to pay for our own courses and examination fees. To meet the expenses, we had to do over time and that too was not like what it is now. In those days when you worked for four hours that would be one-unit time and we used to receive 1/3 pay. Now it is different. If you work now for one hour you will receive pay for one hour prorate. Junior doctors were exploited in the UK in those days. It was not only I. Even the British junior doctors were exploited the same way as me,” Prahlad, 70.*

Even someone with medical degrees worked for NHS as a medical doctor had financial problems to provide for the children and family in the UK. One can imagine the situation other migrants who had no proper qualifications or technical degrees or skills would be when their degrees and skills were frequently devalued and their experiences unaccounted for when they applied for work. As examined earlier, the life stories of majority of migrants who lacked proper qualifications or who spoke the language well, were all in the same boat. Anuradha, one of the parents who migrated to the UK with her husband and four daughters with a dream to offer opportunities of British education to her children was determined to do everything to make that happen, because the most important hurdle was to migrate legally had already been taken care of by the British government by extending serving and ex-Gurkhas the right to settle in the UK. Anuradha was very excited that she got a job as a cleaner in a hospital within three months of arriving in the UK. She was excited about her own prospects besides that of her daughters so was always willing to do extra hours as that means extra cash to support and encourage her daughters. She said:

*“I worked all seven days a week including weekends because on weekends we got double pay. Many days I worked for 18 hours. Before I passed the driving test, I used to walk for almost two hours to my work. After work I went to learn English language but my life became much easier after I passed the driving test and bought a used car,”* Anuradha, 55.

Others who worked as health care assistants in nursing homes, caring for the elderly and vulnerable, share Anuradha’s daily experience of doing extra shifts, odd and long hours because of which they were not able to attend many social gatherings organised by community organisations on weekends or Bank holidays. As discussed in Chapter 6, many first-generation research participants felt socially, racially and academically discriminated for a number of reasons. For example, their professional experiences and their tertiary qualifications obtained in Nepal were not adequately evaluated when they entered the job market, something other immigrants such as Afro-Caribbean’s and Africans faced in the US but their children have succeeded in the US schools (Rong and Brown 2002, Roubeni, De Haene et al. 2015). Such job-related disparities were also experienced by migrants from other countries (Carmichael and Woods 2000, Heath and Cheung 2006, Rafferty 2012).

Spouses, especially bureaucrats who worked in high posts in the government ministries or those who worked as trainers, had no options but to settle for jobs as security guards or take menial work in the supermarkets. Some went back to university or took English language courses to enable upward social mobility (Papademetriou, Somerville et al. 2009, Reyneri and Fullin 2010). Ultimately the economic success of the migrants in the destination country is to a large extent determined by the educational background and the amount of time and resources migrants spent on furthering their skill sets that are applicable in the destination country labour market (Dustmann and Glitz 2011).

Despite facing a wide range of hardships and discrimination, the participants still expressed gratitude for having been able to work and look after their children because what they earned in the UK was comparatively much higher than what they would normally earned in Nepal. Sharing her pleasure of being able to get into her own profession and brushing aside the discrimination she faces in her job, she said:

*“There is discrimination also in Nepal so I feel quite used to it so I have learnt to ignore it and focus on the job. It is really a rewarding experience to be able to get into your own profession. Besides, I earn more here as compared to Nepal but it is expensive to live here so you spend most of what you earn but even then I feel grateful to be able to get into my own profession a dignified profession in the UK and make enough money from which I also bought a small plot of land in Nepal. There is no way I would have been able to do that if I was working in Nepal,”* Anjali, 39.

Similarly, Laxmi did not remember experiencing any work-place discrimination while working in the UK probably because she was a medical doctor, had a good schooling background, had command in English language and came from a good family background in Kathmandu. Although she did not earn a huge salary working in a hospital as a doctor but feels happy to be able to support her family, being able to go on holidays to Nepal or elsewhere every year. She shared her experience like this:

*“I was never able to earn more than my husband in Nepal but here I feel good to be able to support the family as a main bread earner,”* Laxmi, 50.

For these parents, the only consolation for their hardships is the schooling and expected social mobility of their children in the UK. Life in Nepal became so unbearably difficult and

dangerous that people started thinking that life would be better in any other country other than their own but many of them had not expected theirs' would change in such a way; hard and expensive. Life may be difficult for parents, but they shield their children from the hardships they face in order to encourage them to pursue a professional career of their choice, providing them all the necessary resources they could. Migrants from EU member countries reportedly work on average one hour more compared to local British people who work for 40 hours per week (Spreckelsen and Eeleib-Kaiser 2016). Some participants, meanwhile, claim to work more than 12 hours a day including weekends and they do this so that their children might have a better chance in life, as explored in the case study presented in the previous chapter in page 162.

#### *7.4.1 Children's safety and wellbeing*

The political situation in Nepal between 1996 and 2006 was highly unstable, insecure and scary for everyone but particularly for rich and middle-class parents who had small children of school going age because of the gradual extension of armed rebellion launched by the Communist Party of Nepal - Maoists (CPN-M) from the rural areas to the cities. Parents were increasingly concerned with the safety of their school children, not only for their safety but also for their education as schools were gradually being targeted by the Maoist rebels. Security of children was added to the concerns of parents at a time when schools were frequently being disrupted at the call of the Maoist leaders. The parent's primary concern was to take the children to some safe place where they could continue with their education. As one parent said:

*"Kathmandu was getting scarier as there would be frequent terror incidences which had impact on the children's education because schools were frequently being closed for their protection. Children's education was completely disturbed. You would always be scared about the safety of your children. We had a good quality of life in Nepal but life here is more secure plus my children are getting a good education,"* Laxmi, 50.

Approximately 25 percent of the Nepali migrant community in the UK are believed to be under 15 years of age and 20 percent among them are of school age (Lakshamba, Dhakal et al. 2012). Lakshamba, Dhakal et al. also found that children below 4 years formed only about 3 per cent of the Nepali population in the UK (ibid.). The parents who were able to migrate to the UK with their children, who have since grown up, completed their education and set out on their careers as Table 7.2 reflects.

Table 7.2: One and Half Generation and Second Generation Children's Education				
Profession of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation Migrants	Education	Male (M)	Female (F)	M+F
Medical Doctors	MBBS GP & MBBS, PhD	2	0	2
Businessman/trader	Graduation - Health Science and Travel Management	0	1	1
Chartered Accountant/Banker	MA - Economics & Accounting	1	0	1
International Business Manager	MA International Development & Management	0	1	1
Policy Officer in Local Council	MSc Political Science	0	1	1

The first-generation participants express satisfaction for the professional turn the lives of their children have taken in the UK. They also confess about experience of growth of closeness in the family between sibling and parents. What parents hoped to get out of migration for their children was a quality education and successful career which would ultimately uplift their own social status in the society besides that of their children. One of the unexpected outcomes of migration to the UK have been increase in bonding in the family. The children also have become very affectionate and caring, the next section explores this intergenerational phenomenon of bonding in the family.

#### *7.4.2 Growth of intergenerational bonding in the family*

One of the unexpected outcomes of migration, as experienced by some of the participants, has been the increase in intergenerational familial bonding between parents and children and

among siblings. This is an interesting finding of this research which is supported by studies in Europe that has produced evidence of strong attachment, evidence of higher intergenerational solidarity among migrants, among older parents and adult children (Bordone and de Valk 2016). Growth of intergenerational bonding experienced by some of the participants could perhaps be because in Nepal they mostly live in extended joint families, something which is also common among Turkish, Moroccan, Tunisian, Portuguese and African migrant families (Glaser, Tomassini et al. 2008, Waite and Cook 2011, Ramos and Rodrigues 2019).

Like any other migrant families, the Nepali migrants in the UK also live in a nuclear family comprising of parents and children with occasional visits by grandparents and other members of the extended family but they speak of increase in their affection to the grandparents and other members of the joint family with whom the migrant and their children are used to living with prior to their migration. In many households, both parents migrate or relocate within the country for work leaving their young children in the care of their parents, in-laws or aunts which can have a negative effect on parent-children relations. Unlike in the UK, education being privately funded and expensive, the question of affordability to put children in few pre-schools or day care centres plays a big role. Besides, there is always the issue of trust and security. Working parents are left with no option but to leave their children with their parents or in-laws or, in the case of female migrants, with husbands (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova et al. 2002).

Nepalis are known to live in extended families which has its own benefits but sometimes living in large extended families also becomes problematic, dealt with in the next chapter on experiences of return migration. Researchers working on Welsh-Irish migrant community in Wales, argue that Italians wherever they may be, they are characterised by strong emphasis on family culture and greatly value the contributions made by their parents which is reflected in the intergenerational closeness in their families (Bianchera, Mann et al. 2019). Theory of social learning assumes that children learn norms and values from their parents by means of instruction, confirmation and role modelling (Bandura 1971).

According to the research participants, migration to the UK has brought families closer and they experience deepening of their relationship between them as compared to Nepal. They share their experience as follows:

### **Box – 2: Experience of intergenerational familial bonding**

*“Migration to the UK has also brought us all very close to each other, unlike in Nepal. My husband used to remain very busy in Nepal and would hardly spend much time with us but here we are all together. We do things together which has helped to develop a very intimate bond between us,” Laxmi, 50.*

*“My daughters and myself lived apart from my husband for 15 years when he worked for the British Army. Emigration to the UK has allowed us to live together,” Anuradha, 55.*

*“I have two daughters and a son. I was posted outside Kathmandu. My wife and daughters were living in Kathmandu and my son was doing schooling in India. We lived in three different places. Our migration to the UK has given us the chance to live together besides providing many other opportunities to my children and wife,” Surendra, 54.*

Unlike in the case of migrants from many other countries to the UK, majority of the research participants were able to bring their young children along because they said the primary purpose of their migration was the education and safety of their children, as has been explored above. Deepening of the intergenerational familial bonding and emotional ties within the Nepali migrant families is an interesting finding of this empirical research. This is an evidence-based finding but warrants further deeper research with much bigger sample covering wider geographical coverage and also sample representing wider socio-economic, cultural, demographic and professional backgrounds. Could the deepening of the intergenerational bonding in the family be regarded as recognition of the parental sacrifices and the high educational aspirations that parents inculcate in their children or could it be an extension and representation of cultural capital, cultural practices that facilitates access to information networks and social support systems? (Throsby 1999).

A finding such as this is interesting at a time when researchers are putting forward the argument from a sociological perspective that changes in family and personal relationships are a consequence of post-industrialisation, which has led to the de-traditionalisation and individualisation of social life when families become less important and bonds in the family

less strong (Gillies 2003). The nature of the relationality between migrant children and their parents or grandparents, and the obligation they feel towards them may depend on their country of origin, their cultural practices back home and their successive generations in a country (Fuligni 2006, Papademetriou, Somerville et al. 2009). Indeed, the deepening of emotional ties within families may be the result of their migration to industrialised society away from the care and support of extended families.

It could be argued that when migrant families move to a new place, they lack the social support and extended family structure present in their country of origin, and as a result start reaching for each other giving rise to deeper intergenerational familial bonding. In contrast, when migrants leave their children behind with their extended family or in-laws the children can sometimes struggle a lot due to the separation from their parents. They can develop various psychological problems and can become depressed or resentful towards their parents as a result their studies can suffer. They may struggle to rebuild relations with the parents while the parents themselves may experience difficulties reasserting control over their children when they reunite with them (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova et al. 2002). The importance of these relational and familial factors on livelihood strategies have been somewhat overlooked within the literature on migration motivations and experiences.

For the parents in this research, education is the most important human capital that paves the way in the life to economic success and other opportunities for their children (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco et al. 2008), but their education experiences are closely shaped by access to social networks and ethnic capital. In the next section of this chapter, I explore this in the context of the educational achievements and professional growth of the first and second-generation children of immigrants in the UK. Have they been able to get the life chances and enjoy the life that their parents wanted to give them in the UK?

### **7.5 Issues Affecting Success of Migrants' Grown-up Children**

The second-generation children of migrants interviewed for this study were mostly in their early 30s. The interviews revealed similarities between the migration experiences of first-generation parents and the children who accompanied them. Those parents who took the opportunity to migrate to the UK sacrificed their own comfortable life so that their children

could have a good education and a good life, besides their personal safety. Despite their efforts and the sacrifices that they made in order to provide their children all the resources they needed to facilitate the best educational opportunities some children were more successful than others. I am now going to discuss what factors made success more likely.

#### *7.5.1 Importance of socio-economic status and home learning environments*

Parents' family background in terms of their Socio-Economic Status (SES) has been a primary focus of research on children's cognitive development and schooling and suggests that children of middle-class well-educated parents who have a good standing in the society are likely to do well in school (Pong and Landale 2012). In the course of data collection and interview, I was frequently welcomed into family homes where I had the privilege of witnessing first-hand how parents took an active interest about their children's lives and education, by asking about their day at school, about home-works; every action reflected parental concern about their children's education. The parents participating in this research made their children work extra hard and arranged for private tuition to prepare them to apply for grammar schools.

Sudhir is a chartered accountant by profession who runs his own private firm in London. He has two young daughters but when he migrated in January 2006, he had just one daughter. One the reasons for him to migrate to the UK was to provide an opportunity to his daughter to get good British education. He has to work long hours unlike before when he worked for Allots Chartered Accounts in Doncaster or HW Chartered Accounts in Farnborough in Hampshire but he makes it a point to check with his daughter about her school activities, her friends in the school, her studies and home-works. He said:

*“When I came here in 2006, I left a good job to come here. My colleagues used to say that I could really excel in that organisation because I was young and I had a good degree. I worked very hard to achieve things in life. I want my daughters to get good education. My eldest daughter is brilliant and is doing good in her studies. I am worried about her studies so I keep checking with her whether she has any difficulties with any subjects. She has three years to go to secondary school, but I am already making her work hard so I have already arranged private tutor for her in maths, science and English. I hope she will be successful in getting a place in a grammar school,”* Sudhir, 42.

I was able to observe first-hand how the educational and recreational needs of their children took priority in their lives, by providing everything children needed to succeed academically as well as creating a Home Learning Environment (HLE) at home. Researchers have highlighted the importance of sensitive and loving caregiving and that development of secure relationships are central to optimal child development (Roberts 2009, Hunt, Virgo et al. 2011). Another migrant Anuradha who also migrated to the UK to provide good education to her four daughters works extra hours every week so that she could earn some extra income to support her daughter. She said:

*“In Nepal education is very expensive and then you may not be able to study what you want but in the UK our daughters have the freedom to choose what they wanted to study. I am really glad that all our four daughters are doing well now. Two of our daughters have left University. The middle one is doing aircraft engineering with pilot and she has to fly plane for pilot training which is very expensive,” Anuradha, 55.*

It is evident that among Nepali migrants, from among the research participants, even middle-class families with current lower socio-economic status (SES), lower income and where both parents are not very educated, parents manage to create HLE to motivate their children to achieve good educational qualification leading to better life chances. Some scholars argue that it is the pre-migration education of parents that counts in SES and is more strongly associated with children’s academic achievements than their SES in destination country where their qualifications are not duly recognised, and they do not fare well economically (Pong and Landale 2012).

### *7.5.2 Ethnic resources and social capital*

Lee and Zhou (2014) have quoted Kasinitz (2009) and Zhou (1988) to advance their argument that ‘ethnic capital’ and ‘ethnic resources’ play a very important role in the academic achievements of some second generation Asian migrants in the US despite their parents having arrived with little or no English proficiency, with minimal formal education, with few labour market skills and financial resources, and little understanding of middle-class American mores (Lee and Zhou 2014). They critique the social scientists for putting too much emphasis on the association between low family socio economic status (SES) and cultural capital on educational successes of the second-generation Asian migrants while ignoring the contributions made by ‘ethnic capital’ and ‘ethnic resources’ in their success (Lee and Zhou 2014).

In the case of research participants, the ‘ethnic capital’ extends through their membership to one of the ethnic organisations depending on their ethnicities which builds inherent trust and advantage arising from simply belonging to a certain ethnic group such as Tamu Dhi, an ethnic network of Gurungs living in and around London; Sherpa Samaj is another ethnic network of Sherpas in the UK. During a Nepali beauty pageant competition in the UK, Anuradha was very actively involved on texting Nepali people to vote for a candidate that she had known. Talking about her activities in community events, she said:

*“I used to participate in the community programmes in the past but these days I have to work till late and by the time I reach home I am very tired. Most of the community events are organised on Saturdays or Sundays and I have to work on those days because we get a bit more pay by working on holidays. Because of this I have not been very active in our community now but in the past, I was very active. It is important to belong to our community organisation because it gives us our identity, allows us to meet each other, speak Nepali language, celebrate our festivals together, share out Nepali food. By becoming a member, we can also support each other at the time of trouble,” Anuradha, 55.*

In the UK, there are many other ethnic groups representing migrants from their ethnicities, cities, villages and professions and have kept the identity of belonging to those very many groups in the form of these ethnic networks or Home Town Association (HTAs). Other migrants such as Laxman who is a deputy mayor is actively involved in doing something in his village of origin in Nepal, talking about his programme, he shared:

*“We have done a lot of work in our village in Nepal such as opening of hospitals, schools, and provided scholarship to bright students and hydroelectric project has been going on in our village. We have trying to promote tourism in Nepal and have already sent a lot of tourists in the past,” Laxman, 58.*

The ethnic capital leads onto ‘ethnic resources’ which may be comprised of not only the ethnicities of the migrants but also their professional, the place of their origin that extends to include social capital such as resources linked to possession of personal networks that one can mobilize for various things, such as finding jobs or arranging accommodation or even childcare, where personal networks can identify people who can offer to pick children from school and look after them till their parents come to collect them. Lee and Zhou (2014) argue that existing ethnic resources comprising of close ethnic ties and social networks of friends and families

helps their children to gain higher social mobility in the case of migrants lacking visible SES (Lee and Zhou 2014).

This study itself does not cover a large sample of research participants belonging to first, 1.5 and second generation, from different professional background and representing many different geographical locations. Having said that, what I can reveal from this research experience is that first generation migrants themselves, their children (1.5 generation migrants) who accompanied them and the second-generation born in the UK, have done relatively well professionally, socially and financially. They have attained both professional recognition and social mobility. For example, children of Nepali migrants participating in this research, two were medical doctors, one was working for a renowned US bank in the UK and others were either running their own successful businesses or working for local government. It could be said that Nepali migrants in general, and the second-generation migrants in particular, have taken advantage of the existing opportunities to carve out a successful career due to the opportunities they received as a result of their own hard work and their parents' sacrifices.

From the analysis of information given by the research participants it is clear that parental sacrifice has paid off in the case of Nepali migrants. It is clear that the second-generation migrants in the study achieved career success and social mobility because their parents instilled ambition in them by sharing their own stories of hard work with them. One of the second-generation research participants confessed:

*“When I was a child my father often told me how lucky we were to be studying in London. He had to walk for 10 kilometres each way to get to his school and return. He told us not to take anything for granted and work hard for it. I was not particularly a very bright student, but I worked hard to get where I am today,”* Rabi, 32.

Rabi is a medical doctor who has specialised to become a surgeon. When I interviewed him in London, he was in second year of PhD.

In particular, those who worked hard in their early life, in pre-school, high school, college and universities have done relatively well in adult and later life. Nepali migrant parents managed to instil high ambition in their children from early childhood so that they did not lose sight of the ambition to obtain good grades to enter professional careers. As mentioned above, first

generation Nepali migrants may not have proficiency in English language, may not represent a high family SES, but they display a very high ‘ethnic capital’ and have access to ‘ethnic resources’ which they are able to capitalise on to maintain their identity, finding jobs and accommodation to helping their children which makes us to think besides the desire to work hard and work long hours allowed by their health as well as the ethnic resources availed by their extensive ethnic capital towards helping them to achieve sustainable livelihoods forces us to recognise them as migrant assets.

### *7.5.3 Immigrant paradox*

This research has revealed that the children of Nepali migrants, those who were very young at the time of migration and those who were born in the UK, have done relatively well in terms of professional development, higher earning, capital formation and social mobility. The participant parents express satisfaction from the professional development of their children. Talking about his daughters who have completed their studies and were working in London, Laxman said:

*“My eldest daughter did graduation in business management and accounting. She did her internship in an international business company in London, where she is working now. My younger daughter did PhD in biochemistry from Imperial College and she is also working in an international company in London. They both are earning well,”* Laxman, 58.

This is a common occurrence among the children of research participants. For example, daughter of Surendra has joined Amazon as a manager after completing a degree in petroleum engineering from University of Aberdeen. Talking about her success, he said:

*“They had called her for interview but she told me that they took tests whole day but at the end of the day they offered her a managerial position with responsibility to supervise 100 employees,”* Surendra, 54.

There is growing interest among scholars in intergenerational social mobility and in the economic as well as social assimilation of migrants’ children. Studies in high immigration countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia have revealed that children of migrants excel academically and earn in average 5 to 10 percent better than their ancestors (Borjas 2006). However, scholars such as Suárez-Orozco, Rhodes and Milburn (2009) argue that the scholastic achievement of immigrant children is affected by a number of

factors. For example, poverty, parental education, socio-economic status of parents, composition of the family (whether single parent, two parent or extended family support to children), school environment, school neighbourhood, relation with peers and teachers, and resources in the school (Suárez-Orozco, Rhodes et al. 2009). As a result, the educational outcome of migrant children drops gradually from the second year of schooling and goes on worsening after the fourth and fifth years, findings which contradict those of many other scholars such as Borjas (2006), Suárez-Orozco, Rhodes and Milburn (2009), Dustmann and Theodoropoulos (2010), Lee and Zhou (2014).

Researchers such as Suárez-Orozco, Borjas, Lee and Zhou remain divided about the children of migrants educationally and socially outperforming the children of host nations population, especially Indian, Chinese and Vietnamese migrants in the US (Lee and Zhou 2014), and Indian and Chinese in the UK (Dustmann and Theodoropoulos 2010), that the scholars argue as the immigrant paradox. However, scholars have found mixed results relating to other communities such as the Latin Americans in the US (Crosnoe 2013). These communities may depart from the migration paradox because the children of migrants appear to be more at risk of health problems during their preschool and elementary school years. If the children have health problems, then they are likely to miss out schools or have poor concentration in the class which ultimately affects their education (Crosnoe 2013). Health problems among ethnic minority children affecting preschool and elementary education in the US as discussed by Crosnoe (2013) needs further corroboration and further studies because it does not seem to affect other ethnic minorities in the US, which could be because of lack of empirical evidence.

Contrary to findings in the US, analysis of British Labour Force (BLF) survey data from 1979 to 2005 belonging to Indian, Pakistani, Black Caribbean, Black African, Bangladeshi and Chinese ethnicities have found that some ethnic minority immigrants and their children are on average better educated and do better at school and universities in comparison to their British-born White peers. In terms of life chances and educational attainment, children of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Afro-Caribbean migrants are found to performing at the lowest level as compared to children of Indian and Chinese migrants (Rothon 2007, Crosnoe 2013, Lee and Zhou 2014, Stokes, Rolfe et al. 2015).

Rothon (2007) argues that as compared to Pakistani and Bangladeshi migrants, children of Indian migrants do much better (Rothon 2007). In the case of children of Indian migrants belonging to the lower than average social class status in the UK, their class background did not appear to be associated with poor achievements and life chances (Stokes, Rolfe et al. 2015). Looking at the educational attainments and career progressions of children of Nepali migrants, it becomes clear that both first and second-generation children have done well. Based on the evidence gathered during this research and despite having any comparative studies among the Nepali and other communities in the UK, it could be suggested that the socioeconomic status of their parents, their ‘social capital’ and mobilisation of ‘ethnic resources’ or other factors contributed to their educational attainment, professional development and social mobility.

The reason for their relative success in the UK could probably be attributed to Nepali migrants following similar sociocultural practices to Indian parents such as adherence to family values, speaking of native language at home and with members of family, high emphasis on doing well in the schools, emphasis on studying prestigious subjects such as medicine, engineering, law and their preference of grammar schools and prestigious universities. Indian and Chinese parents have high expectations of their children so they inculcate high ambition in their children from early childhood, show certain attitude and behaviours which may raise their children's attainment, make them work hard to achieve their targets in life including show greater involvement with their child's school and use of private tutors and be strict with them. One of the Chinese mothers, a professor in a prestigious university in the US, has even been branded as a “Tiger Mother” for being strict with her daughters regarding their daily routine (Cochrane 2014) .

While the educational attainment, such as success in achieving professional degrees of their choice, of British born minorities (second generation immigrants) such as Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Filipino and Caribbean is higher than that of their parents, similar success is not seen when they come to enter the job market (Dustmann and Theodoropoulou 2010, Schnell et al. 2015). The findings, however, is based on the small sample size and is not generalisable to the entire population of Nepali skilled migrants in the UK.

#### *7.5.4 Acculturation and sociocultural adjustments*

During an interview, one of the parents with two second-generation children mentioned the confusion her children experienced when they started going to school. She said that her children felt confused because the sociocultural and religious practices and language spoken at home directly clashed with the sociocultural values and language spoken at school, such as the eating beef during school dinners. They felt confused about a whole lot of things including not eating beef at school dinners. Hindu parents tell their children not to eat anything containing beef at school dinners because it is against their cultural values and religion. The researchers suggest that to deal with such issues a positive school climate will help; to promote safety and positive relationships among students and between students and teachers; promotes students' wellbeing as well as reduces psychological and behavioural problems among the immigrant children (Schachner, Noack et al. 2016). Immigrant children have to constantly negotiate between their own sociocultural, socioeconomic and linguistic boundaries and adapt to contexts that are usually characterised by the cultural norms and practices of the mainstream society (Horenczyk and Tatar 2012).

The children who accompanied their parents had to make adjustments and compromises, including being bullied at school, as they adjusted to the new environment that they were brought into. They were required to learn a new language and new way of speaking. Pranita is a nursing student and is about to complete her course from a prestigious university. At the time of interview, she was doing her clinical attachment in a hospital in Surrey. From among the research participants she represents 1.5 generation of migrants who migrated with her sister to join her parents who were already settled in the UK. She is one of those diligent students who want to move to medicine from nursing, so she is very focussed. She has no Facebook accounts like here friends, and she is not used to going to pubs and drinking or returning home late. She said about adapting to life in the UK:

*“In the beginning I had some problems with English language and understanding youth culture particularly when they discussed about television programmes, movies and songs. I was not able to participate in their conversation because I could not follow what they were talking and I could not join them when they went to a pub because drinking and coming home late at night is not part of our culture,”* Pranita, 23.

Having discussed educational achievement and shown that, somehow, Nepali migrants have created encouraging environment at home and provide all the resources to their children helping them to become successful educationally and professionally. The next section of the chapter will explore and analyse the impact of educational successes on career progression and whether they were able to attain the kind of future the parents envisioned for their children when they chose to migrate.

## **7.6 Life Chances and Success Stories of Migrants Grown-up Children**

Life chances are a range of opportunities that people experience during the transition in their life from childhood to adult and into their later life. Life chances refer to the opportunities open to individuals to improve the quality of life of themselves and their families (Aldridge 2004). Life chances are opportunities such as the likelihood of being in fulltime employment throughout their life, the chances of obtaining higher educational degrees, chances of good physical and mental health, chances of leading a successful professional career that people have as they become adult and into their later life (Johnson and Kossykh 2008). The probability of successful transition of migrant's children from children to adult and later life rests on a number of visible or tangible and intangible factors such as their education, knowledge, their personality and other tacit factors (ibid.).

For over a decade, social scientists have been debating whether individual's professional success and economic prosperity in life are determined by their own abilities and hard work or are reliant on or linked with the socio-economic characteristics of their families, such as parental income, socio-economic status (SES), parental education and parental behaviours. For example, children from low-income families are more likely to earn below-average wages when they grow up, compared to children from more affluent families, a phenomenon the social scientists call 'intergenerational persistence' (Johnson and Kossykh 2008).

Contrary to the arguments put forward by some scholars about life chances and social mobility (Hogan, MacMillan et al. 1996, Aldridge 2004, Söhn 2016), a policy document issued in 2011 by the British government, 'Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Social Mobility', stresses that neither the circumstances of their birth, the schools that they went to nor the jobs their parents did should prevent anyone from attaining their full potential and the

only thing that should count is her/his hard work, skills and the talent they possess (Her Majesty's Government 2012). In practice, however, the successive governments have failed to back up its own strategy that would allow children from poor vulnerable families to have a successful career and better life chances. The truth is, besides parental SES prior to migration, their continued support to the children during childhood and the creation of HLE, and positive and supportive government policy helps children to have better life chances (Pong and Landale 2012).

Among the first- and second-generation Nepali children from among the research participants, many had finished higher education, were employed in good institutions and were leading successful professional lives as compared to children of some other minority ethnic migrant groups in the UK such as Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Caribbean (Haque 2000, Dustmann and Theodoropoulou 2010, Stokes, Rolfe et al. 2015). The professional background and current professions of migrants' children interviewed for this study, out of eight research participants, two were medical doctors, two were in the final stage of their nursing study and were doing attachment in a hospital during the final year of their nursing course and the others included a successful businesswoman, a banker, a chartered accountant, an international business manager and a policy officer. Not only the second generation of migrants who were born in the UK but also the children who followed their parents to the UK have benefitted from the British education and available opportunities. The migrant children described how it never occurred to them that they are any different than other children and they always considered themselves part of multicultural British society. One of the second-generation migrants related her experience like this:

*"I did not know I was a child of an immigrant because I grew up in London where there were many like me. I am a Londoner that is my identity,"* Ambika, 32.

The children of migrants were grateful to their parents for the sacrifices they made for them and for providing them with everything they needed to succeed in life. Everyone in the sample said they succeeded in taking advantage of the available opportunities and have been able to follow a professional career path but they had to work very hard to fulfil their and their parents aspirations. They explain how being born and brought up in the UK has improved their social and professional life but each of them perceived the available opportunities and life chances differently.

Amar, a second-generation male migrant was born in the UK to migrant parents. His father is a doctor, a GP who runs his own practice and his brother too is a doctor, an eye specialist. Amar is young but has already completed his university education and has a few years of experience of working in the financial sector in London. He is grateful to his parents who emigrated to the UK for their education. He thinks that the difference between him, and other people of his age in Nepal, is that they do not normally get the opportunity to get the high standard of education that he had in the UK. He does not believe that just being born in the UK is everything because a strong family support structure is also very important. He thinks that he was very lucky to have good family support. He thinks the biggest influence come from his parents but also his grandparents played an important role in guiding him and his brother. He said:

*“Here, if you work hard your background does not matter. You have equal opportunities. I think the state education system here to some degree is still quite strong. You can send your kids to any schools and education is free at the point of delivery as is health, so you have those opportunities. The university system is globally known, and I think that has its benefits. It’s not that things are handed to you on a plate. You still have to work very hard, but I think, if you work hard here you have an opportunity to shine,”* Amar, 30.

Whereas Pranita, a young student in the UK hails from the family of ex-Gurkhas. She migrated to the UK with her younger sister after finishing her school leaving exams in Nepal because her parents were already settled in the UK. Her parents too were concerned about their education and wanted them to complete their education in the UK. Pranita finds living in the UK rewarding and scary at the same time. She feels very independent and lucky to be able to study in the UK and feels grateful to her parents. She is also a bit scared as she finds speaking English stressful and avoids socialising with her local friends because of not knowing their sociocultural practices. She shared her experience of coming to the UK:

*“I can’t join their conversation when they talk about English movies and TV programmes and talk about actors and when they talk about music because I know nothing about them. I think there is so much to learn here. There are plenty of opportunities. I am so lucky to be studying nursing in the UK, where all my friends from Nepal want to come for studies,”* Pranita, 23.

In contrast, Jayanti, a female second-generation migrant, gives credit to her parents for their efforts to assimilate in the local society in Wales where she was born and where her parents were settled. She considers herself very lucky to be living in the UK because it gives her so

many advantages. She has travelled widely, done volunteering in Kenya and travelled across Europe, taking advantage of the opportunities provided by her British citizenship. Jayanti shared her feeling about being born, brought up and educated in the UK like this:

*“Well, growing up in the UK has several advantages compared to growing up in Nepal. Growing up in the UK firstly, English becomes almost like your first language and in the modern world whatever is said and done, that’s the big advantage. The other thing is access to western educational institutions. I do think that they are of high quality. So that’s another big benefit. It has also given me access to travel freely wherever I like and opened up those doors for me I suppose”* Jayanti, 30.

Amrit is a second-generation male migrant, a General Practitioner (GP) by profession. He opines that mainly professional affluent people moved out of Nepal. He thinks the attitude of Nepali people has been that England is great and Nepal is bad and that he thinks is very unfortunate. He said,

*“I think you have to speak to my parents but the reason that many people came to the UK is not because of the weather. They came for their economic prosperity and their lack of opportunity back home for whatever reasons, whether it is the political stability or the jobs they did, because they wanted a better life for themselves,”* Amrit, 30.

Amrit, however, thinks that his parents may have made some sacrifices. He agrees that there has been an element of economic prosperity and other opportunities largely as a result of being born and brought up in the UK. But he argues that money does not buy happiness. He thinks that if he was in Nepal, he may even have more opportunities relative to everyone else, being a bigger fish in a small pond.

The second-generation immigrants that I have interviewed and observed give credit to their parents, grandparents and other relatives for their intergenerational support. They were able to obtain a good education and professional exposure leading to a stable professional career all because of the home learning environment (HLE) they were offered, the parenting styles and parenting practices their parents adopted to raise them and to socialise them (Schnell, Fibbi et al. 2015). They also talk about a wide range of opportunities such as good pre-schooling, good higher education leading to a professional career and other opportunities such as being able to freely travel around the world without the trouble of applying for visas which they have access

to by being born in the UK. It is a combination of factors including the higher socio economic status (SES) of their parents, the high quality of home learning environment (HLE), the role played by their social capital, parental support and their own hard work to achieve good academic qualifications that explains their ability to excel in life even at the most difficult times (Taylor, Borlagdan et al. 2012).

Harmonious relationships within the family and positive, loving environment at home makes a lot of difference in children's abilities to learn and succeed because what children need is encouragement, guidance and a supportive atmosphere at home (Lee and Zhou 2014). Without this kind of support children will not have the confidence and motivation they need to work hard and to succeed in life which will affect their life chances (Lee and Zhou 2014). In the UK, increasing trend shows that more and more couples are cohabiting and becoming parents. The risk of separation among the cohabiting group is higher than among married parents. Issues of mental health and well-being, alcohol use, lower educational attainment and problems of relationships are common problems among children who experience family breakdown in the UK (Doughty 2008, Mooney, Oliver et al. 2009). In the case of Nepali participants in this study, children did have the protection and support of both of the parents and they live with them.

Researchers argue the negative impact of migration on the children will be greater in families with uninvolved father and unsupportive mothers (Hogan, MacMillan et al. 1996). Research in general has also revealed that father's active involvement is crucial for the development of children especially in the case of children from disadvantaged and deprived backgrounds because actively involved fathers benefit children in numerous ways. They display greater cognitive competence, they have higher IQs, they have great problem-solving skills, get good grades because they love schools and display fewer behavioural problems at school, they are more resilient to stress, more curious and they have greater self-direction and greater self-control, which ultimately leads to educational and economic success; an accomplished life (Clark 2009).

This chapter examined migration outcomes relating to the children of migrants, those 1.5 generation who accompanied their parents when they migrated and the second-generation born in the UK. Indeed, the participating parents had to work extra hard to support the educational

journey of the children whose education and social mobility was the main reason for their migration to the UK leaving their own comfortable life. Their migration to the UK also reflects their confidence on the opportunities available in the UK for themselves and for their children, the British education systems and the British economy that they seemed to be sure to offer potential opportunities of sustainable livelihoods. However, it must also be noted that in their effort to support their children they did not only worked hard but also called on their social capital – the social networks and ethnic capital in the form of network of people from same ethnic groups, community organisations and networks of extended relatives without whose support the outcomes would probably be not as encouraging.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

In this empirical chapter, I have explored the role of education in shaping the life chances and social mobility of Nepali migrant's children; those who accompanied them and the second-generation who were born in the UK. The chapter also briefly reviewed the overall development of education in Nepal over the last 65 years. The higher educational attainment and better life chances that one and half and second-generation get depends on the pre- and post-migration socioeconomic as well as educational and professional status of their parents; their continued availability for regular supervision, guidance and help when the children need them as well as the higher learning environment at home and is also driven by parental aspirations and culture (Liu and Xie 2016).

The data also revealed that Nepali migrant parents not only encouraged their children to attain higher education and pursue a professional career but they were also prepared to work very hard to meet the needs of their children and offer the support structure needed by their families to enhance their own human and social capital. So far as the educational successes, professional growth and the question of life chances of migrant children is concerned, the parental SES, professional affiliation, and higher education does play a role. However, equally important are the parental aspiration, family cultural background, family's 'ethnic capital' and 'ethnic resources' for the professional development and life chances of children of Nepali migrants (in the UK), as in the case of successes related to children of Chinese, Indian, Vietnamese and Cambodian migrants in the US (Hsina and Xieb 2014, Liu and Xie 2016). Looking at it from the perspective of livelihood framework, intangible concepts like parental aspirations, parental

dedication and preparedness to work hard to support the children, family socio-cultural and economic background, role played by ethnic resources in shaping their life chances probably calls for widening the remit of concept of assets or capital introduced by the original architects of livelihoods framework (Chambers and Conway 1991, Bebbington 1999, Ellis 2003).

One of the key findings of this chapter has been, besides the life chances and life choices made by the migrant children in advancing their professional career, both the parents and their adult children talk about increase in intergenerational intimacy and bonding in the family. This also indicates lack of intergenerational cultural dissonance in the Nepali migrant family which is also an indication of positive, healthy process of maturation characterised by the ability to maintain close relationship with family members while developing autonomy which is also influenced by cultural and ethnic factors (McQueen, Getz et al. 2003, Choi, He et al. 2008).

The next chapter focuses on those migrants who returned home after spending some prime years of their life abroad. They returned with knowledge, experience, skills, their social and professional networks and foreign qualifications that are always in high demand in Nepal. In the process of reconnecting to their homeland and making livelihoods they have been found to use their knowledge, skills, experiences and their networks that they bring along.

## **Return of Innovation: Livelihood Strategies and Knowledge Transfer of the Diaspora**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the ways in which a small sample of Nepali return migrants utilised the knowledge, skills and experiences gained abroad to further enhance their livelihood opportunities. It also explores the challenges the return migrants face to reintegrate, reconnect and re-establish themselves and move forward in their professional careers, especially at a time when many researchers find that the return migrants attach new meanings to culture, identity, home and place (Hammond 1999, p. 227, Dhungel 2019). This chapter will critically examine the motivations behind return migration and will discuss the experiences of 10 Nepali return migrants who returned after spending up to 14 years in Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. Nine out of the ten research participants said that they had no intention of settling abroad right from the beginning.

The chapter also examines the contributions made by the returned migrants transfer to Nepal in the form of diasporic knowledge. Whether the explicit, implicit or tacit knowledge, skills and experiences the return migrants bring have the potential to contribute to shaping the sociocultural, political, economic or other developmental aspects of Nepal, the chapter further explores. The chapter will also explore why one research participant chose to return within two years, although he had originally migrated with intentions to settle permanently.

Return migration is defined as, ‘a situation where the migrants return to their country of origin of their own free will after spending a significant amount of time abroad’ (Kunuroglu, Van de Vijver et al. 2016). Kunuroglu et al also extend their definition of return migration to include the large streams of second-generation returnees who often return accompanied by their children, as they return after having established a family in the place of destination (Kunuroglu, Van de Vijver et al. 2016). Return migration, a common phenomenon within the broader field of international migration, is little understood (Oomen 2013). In the words of some migration scholars, ‘outward’ and ‘inward’ migration are both strategies of survival that people choose

depending on their situation (Massey, Arango et al. 1993, Cassarino 2004, Wahba 2015). The precise details of return migrants such as their numbers, their migration histories, their employment and wider socio-economic and professional characteristics is neither fully known nor it is easy to know because many countries do not collect data about them (Potter 2005).

Policy makers and scholars have focussed for far too long on understanding and analysing decisions of departure, failing to acknowledge that migration is a multidimensional process involving not only emigration, but also different stages which includes settlement in the host country and the possibility of return or onward migration (Aydemir and Robinson 2008). Like departure, return also entails a complex decision-making process involving a wide array of factors (Oomen 2013, van Houte 2014). As explored earlier Cerase (1974) and Gmelch (1980) each argue that there are four major reasons for the migrants to return home whereas Stark (2019) gives us 12 reasons for their return home (Cerase 1974, Gmelch 1980, Stark 2019).

A variety of complex factors are involved in the decision to return made by some of the migrants in this research; these include family and social pressure to return (Kapur 2001), a fear that the children would find it difficult to return and adjust to life in the home country after they reach a certain age, global economic meltdown, an increase in opportunities available in the country of origin, natural disasters in the home country as well as in the country of residence, and lastly racial abuse or discrimination in the destination country (Wadhwa 2009). Return migrants constitute a highly heterogeneous group of actors in terms of migration experiences, length of stay abroad, patterns of resource mobilisation, legal status, motivations and life plans (Cassarino 2014b).

The data analysed in this chapter was collected in Kathmandu in 2012, during which I spent thirty days researching, building contacts, identifying research participants and interviewing them. I met over 30 return migrants when I attended programmes organised for them in Nepal by Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM), a programme initiated under the aegis of German Government's Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). CIM oversees the Returning Experts programme which encourages the migrants in Germany to return home after completing their higher studies and training; advises them and helps them to find a job in their country of origin and even supplements their take

home salaries. These individuals are from different developing countries who have completed higher studies or training courses in Germany, or are working in Germany, but are interested in reintegrating into a career at home (Kuschminder, Sturge et al. 2014).

Ten in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted in Kathmandu, of which four were female returnees and six were male returnees. They had all returned permanently, leaving lucrative professional careers, but were leading professionally and socially rewarding lives in Nepal. Of the female return migrants, one was in her early 20s and the rest were in their 40s and 50s. Of the male return migrants, one was in his 20s, another was in his 50s, and the rest were in their early 30s.

Out of the ten return migrants, eight did not regret their return, leaving successful careers and comfortable lives behind because they had never intended to settle in the host country. One had not thought much about returning because his parents were also settled abroad, but some events in Nepal made him change his mind to return. One of those who had migrated permanently was quickest in returning home because emigration did not meet his expectations. This chapter now explores the migration experiences and the challenges they faced in the country of destination in order to fulfil the purpose of their migration.

## **8.2 Challenges and Difficulties in the Destination Countries**

The returned research participants who had migrated to the UK did not face major challenges due to language barriers as they all came from educated background with good command of English; the same cannot be said for those who migrated to Germany, Austria, or France for example where English language is relatively restrictive. According to the return migrants, although in some of the countries the language of instruction was in English, their inability to speak the local language was of great disadvantage as it prevented them from interacting and integrating with local people in the beginning. Where extensive networks of Nepali people existed, new migrants did not face many problems. To counter the challenges of isolation, migrants talked about forming their own Nepali Student Associations or finding people who passed out from the same college in Nepal or went to meet local people who had visited Nepal.

### **8.3 Livelihood Advantage of Being Abroad**

Return migrants, as explained above, claim to have benefitted personally and professionally from higher studies, develop personally and professionally by living on their own in a new culture, working and extending their social and professional relations in different stages in the academic and corporate environment of the universities and when they enter corporate world for work. The returnees said they acquired technical and specific knowledge through their studies, observation, interaction with one another, friendships with people coming from different countries, observing different cultures and belief, by living with them in that society which is very different from their own and by participating in programmes that increased their professional knowledge but importantly also built their character as they became more liberal, non-discriminatory, non-interfering and non-judgemental in their attitudes.

### **8.4 Return Preparedness: The Importance of Knowledge**

The research participants of this study returned voluntarily so one can imagine they were prepared to return and settle but that may not always be the case. Cassarino argues that return preparedness is not a vague notion (Cassarino 2014a). According to Cassarino, it is a process that takes place in a returnees life through time and is shaped by her/his circumstances such as personal experience, contextual factors in sending and receiving countries in their broadest sense. Return preparedness is not about preparing to return but about having the ability, though not always the opportunity, to gather the tangible and intangible resources needed to secure one's own return (Cassarino 2014a). The returnee research participants of this study had varied length of migration experiences ranging from 19 months to 14 years. They wanted to return home immediately after completing higher studies, but they postponed their return a bit further than they had originally planned, in order to gain some professional exposure to widen their intellectual horizons.

Willingness to return and readiness to return are two fundamental elements that compose return migrants' preparedness to return. Willingness pertains to the act of deciding or choosing, on one's own initiative to return without any pressure (Cassarino 2014a). It refers to the subjective power to choose to return at a certain time assuming their migration cycle will complete by then, as in the case of the research participants of this study. Prior to their final decision to return the returnee will necessarily have to weigh the pros and cons as well as the costs and

benefits of the decision to return. Some among the research participants thought they needed to get some hands-on experience before they returned home but they were absolutely happy because it was their own decision to return. The returnees owned their decision and showed no regret to return which proved their willingness to return.

The other aspect that is closely associated to return preparedness is the readiness to return which reflects to the extent migrants are in a position to mobilise adequate tangible as well as intangible resources such as financial capital, and contacts, relationships, skills, networks respectively that are needed to secure their return whether temporary or permanent. Time, resources, experience and conditions in the host country and home country constitute the main factors that combined together to shape their readiness to return. Willingness and readiness to return reflects the ability of a person to decide how, when, and why it is time to return home (Cassarino 2014a).

### **8.5 Reintegration Experiences of Nepali Return Migrants**

Research studies relating to reintegration, the process through which returnee professional migrants take part in the social, cultural, political and economic aspects of their country of origin, continues to be glaringly overlooked (Cassarino 2008). The participants of this study who come from middle to upper class background from the capital Kathmandu, raises the questions about their acceptance and adaptability to the society where they return to live with new social, cultural and religious values and political belief.

Participants could integrate economically by participating in the economic life of the society; by engaging in businesses, investing locally in new ventures, creating employment opportunities for local people, making use of employment opportunities that would offer them social status and lifestyles of their choice. Thus, they can make financial contribution to the society. Their political reintegration would include their participation in local or national governments, participation in political parties and national governments (Cassarino 2008). There is already some signs of conflict as some Nepali female return migrants completing their studies abroad, are rightly challenging some traditional social norms of untouchability and the concept of impurity applied to females during the menstruation cycles, during which time they live eat separately from the rest of the family (Dhungel 2019).

As illustrated earlier, return migration and reintegration differ with one another in terms of levels of return preparedness and patterns of resource mobilisation. The integration patterns of returnees are influenced by three different conditions and three degrees of return preparedness that differ from one another in terms of resource mobilisation as pre- and post-return conditions, length of stay abroad, and willingness as well as readiness to return (Cassarino 2014a). As examined earlier, these three interrelated aspects of return migration predominantly play deciding role in the effective and efficient utilisation of assets that remigrants bring along.

A developing country like Nepal stands to benefit from the experienced labour migrants who are returning in greater numbers as well as educated competent migrants who are returning back equipped with international qualifications, with much needed knowledge and skills. Some of the remigrants stayed longer than they had expected but settlement abroad in the destination country was never part of their plan, except in the case of a family that had planned to settle permanently in Canada but returned within 2 years. The other returnees claim to have maintained regular contact with their relatives through social media, Skype, Viber and through regular visits and were aware of the sociocultural, economic and political changes taking place in Nepal and many of them had also taken part in the political movements that was instrumental in the establishment of multiparty democracy in 1990.

The reality they faced when they actually returned to settle back in Nepal turned out to be quite different than what they had experienced during their annual visits during holidays. Temporarily it had escaped their mind that they were exposed to new sets of work ethics, democratic values, social outlook and social perception and mentality, although they had kept abreast with cultural changes, the construction of communities and multiple meaning of and connection between notion of identity, culture, home and geographical place (Hammond 1999). The sociocultural and professional milieu of a developed western society seem to have changed these return migrants in many different ways, as they adjusted to the western social and cultural values that are fundamentally different from the social and structural realities of the Nepali society.

The research also revealed that female and male return migrants have different reintegration experiences as in the case of female international migrants who have different migration experiences as compared to men (Zlotnik 1990, Boyd and Grieco 2003, Donato, Gabaccia et

al. 2006, Caritas 2010, IOM 2010). Although they had different reintegration experiences, yet none of them faced any major challenges while renegotiating their reintegration back into Nepali society when they returned. Some however faced some personal challenges which they had to find innovative ways to deal with.

## **8.6 Knowledge Transfer by Return Migrants**

Nepal has been devastated by years of armed rebellion, political infighting, national strikes, corruption, ethnic tensions leading to political instability that has severely hampered growth. Furthermore, the crippling earthquake of 25 April 2015 not only killed around 9,000 but also injured over 25,000 people, displaced 2.6 million people, destroyed 882,000 houses, affected 8 million people across 31 districts and caused damage worth more than US\$ 7 billion (Lai 2017). Nepal continues to be battered by other natural disasters earthquakes, floods and landslides year after year. Whatever employment opportunity over 400,000 Nepali youth joining the job market had before Nepal was struck with one after other catastrophises has considerably diminished. As a direct impact of these problems, migration of Nepalis youth has dropped to around 900 a day from 1500 (Lai 2017).

In such a dismal situation, the determination of some migrants to return home may bring not only much needed knowledge and skills but also a ray of hope that is welcome in Nepal. Besides other infrastructure building issues, the 2015 earthquake has created a massive demand for skilled labour for reconstruction and development projects in Nepal. Research data shows that there being a massive cohort of return migrants in Nepal (de Zwager and Sintov 2017), but it is up to the policy makers and the institutions leading the infrastructure development and rebuilding programmes to tap on the reserve of return migrants' embodied knowledge and their other resources.

As discussed in Chapter 6, skilled migration contributes to the intellectual, social, and economic capital of migrants, from which home countries benefit through knowledge transfer either directly when they return home or indirectly through different projects (Siar 2014). Knowledge comes in different types and they all contribute to development differently, as will be explored further below.

How exactly the knowledge, in whatever form, gets transferred from these agents of social change who come from different corners of the world? Meyer and Brown (1999) refer to the flows of knowledge, what we personally know about science and technology, practical skills relating to business and trade, economics, culture, researching and project management or multitasking skills through formal and informal channels of communication, which may include but not limited to meetings, seminar and conferences, email exchange, training programmes, research projects, formal and informal advise (Meyer and Brown 1999). It must be noted that Meyer and Brown's intervention although suggested the definition of knowledge transfer to benefit the country of origin but they were more focussed to the idea of scientific and technical diaspora, who had migrated from the developing to the industrialised countries between the decades of 80s and 90s.

The knowledge could be intuitively defined as what people really know which they create from the data and information that they have, writes Charlotte Muller, a researcher who is affiliated with Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, Maastricht University / United Nations University-MERIT. Knowledge can be divided into explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge can be easily learned and transmitted by means of manuals, textbooks, reports assessments, patents, database and computer programme. On the contrary, tacit knowledge is difficult to articulate or codify because it is personal in nature and it comes by personal experience, cultural practices. Knowledge gained by return migrants can be further classified into academic and non-academic, tangible or intangible or even implicit and explicit knowledge (Ghimire and Maharjan 2015). The return migrants knowingly or unknowingly make use of these various forms of knowledge in their daily life as and when necessity arises. Based on the findings of this doctoral research, the author has adapted the typology of knowledge suggested by Ghimire and Maharjan (2015) as given in Table 8.1 below to explain how the participants made use of these knowledge in their quest for livelihoods.

<b>Table 8.1: Knowledge typology of returnees and its use</b>		
<b>Knowledge Typology</b>	<b>Learning</b>	<b>Area of</b>
<i>Implicit knowledge and skills</i> Knowledge and skills related to personal capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Critical thinking</li> <li>➤ Analytical capacity</li> <li>➤ Communication skills</li> <li>➤ Interpersonal skills</li> <li>➤ Working as part of a team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work area</li> <li>➤ Enterprise</li> <li>➤ Interpersonal relations</li> </ul>
Realisation related knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Realisation of self-potential and responsibility</li> <li>➤ Value of human freedom</li> <li>➤ Viewing things from broader perspective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Enterprise establishment</li> <li>➤ Leadership development</li> <li>➤ Work area</li> </ul>
Behaviour related professional knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Time management and punctuality</li> <li>➤ Work ethic</li> <li>➤ Liberal attitude</li> <li>➤ Non-interfering and tolerance</li> <li>➤ Non-judgemental attitude</li> <li>➤ Listening skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work – research</li> <li>➤ Academic</li> <li>➤ Career consultation</li> </ul>
<i>Explicit knowledge and skills</i> Specialized knowledge and skills related to academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Course-related learning</li> <li>➤ Language and vocabulary</li> <li>➤ Knowledge related to technology</li> <li>➤ Writing skills/communication</li> <li>➤ Research techniques</li> <li>➤ Library use/research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Professional work</li> <li>➤ Management</li> <li>➤ Academic</li> </ul>

Table Adapted from – Ghimire and Maharjan 2015

According to Ghimire and Maharjan (2015) knowledge and skills becomes a part of the subconscious mind which is difficult to explain but forms a kind of tacit knowledge. As our brain is conditioned in such a way that this repository of skills and knowledge continuously comes into play in our day-to-day practices and livelihood approaches without us even noticing, this knowledge can lead to many intangible impacts. In essence, the returnees benefit from their wider exposure to new experiences that increases motivation and capacity to challenge existing power structures, traditional value systems, political system, cultural taboos or even ways of doing business.

It is not always easy to transfer knowledge and skill for two reasons: first, the country should display preparedness to accept such new knowledge in terms of socioeconomic and technological level and, secondly, the government and people in power might not feel the need for new ways of working (Cassarino 2004). The structural and legislative rigidity of the Nepali administration could be very easily overcome provided one has the right networks because it is virtually impossible to get anything done in Nepal without the social capital. In other words, it is not only who you are and what you know but also the questions of whom you know and how you know comes to play when one tries to employ the knowledge for innovation and for livelihoods in Nepal. As Cassarino explains, local power relations, traditions and values in home countries have a strong bearing on the returnees besides the knowledge, human and financial capital possessed by them (Cassarino 2004).

### **8.7 Return Migrants, Their Varied Experiences and Their Aspirations**

As discussed in previous pages, migration is not a smooth process. The migrants encounter numerous challenges and difficulties in the destination countries which they gradually overcome by developing different coping strategy. Reflecting back on how they overcome those challenges the return migrants share their personal experiences. The statements below reflect the psychological and emotional challenges some of the research participants had to endure:

### **Box -3: Psychological and emotional challenges**

*I had difficulty coping with the educational standards in Germany, so I had to put in extra hours to catch up. It was also very difficult to find accommodation and I had no one to turn to for help. Making friends became difficult as I was not exposed to their culture. These were emotionally draining psychological challenges I faced,” Arpana, 27.*

*“I have faced many challenges from policy level, to technology level, also related to funding but that is part of the game. I think, that being able to overcome all those problems equates to success. You are trading millions, but people can’t see anything except a website in the Internet. It is like going on a never-ending emotional roller coaster ride,” Bikram, 47.*

*“We faced language problems and had culture shock in Germany. Especially language was a huge challenge for us because the education was in German language and the teachers would not make any allowances for foreign students in the class. Finance was also tight,” Sumitra, 60.*

Box -3 Return migrants related to the different forms of challenges and difficulties that they had to cope with and find ways to overcome them because they were new in those countries and had no one to turn to for help.

The return migrants, as we have seen from their direct quotes above, talk about various emotional and psychological challenges they faced in destination countries. They experienced difficulty making friends in the beginning because they knew no one, did not understand the culture, and above all did do not speak their language. Jeet was the youngest in the class when he went to study in the US, so he had difficulty making friends as most of the students in his class were older. Similarly, Arpana, a top student in her batch had to work extra had to come up to the standard of education in Germany. Her dedication to her studies did not allow her to spend much time making friends, also her different sociocultural background and upbringing did not facilitate this process.

Entrepreneurship or opening up their own small businesses or becoming self-employed is common among the migrants as an antidote to racial and professional discrimination they face in the host country (Light, Bhachu et al. 1989, Acs and Szerb 2007, Thapa, Basnett et al. 2013, Brzozowski, Cucculelli et al. 2014), as in the case of Nepali migrants examined earlier in chapter 6. The story of Bikram is a bit different. Getting to understand the American way of life was problematic for him initially, but he always wanted to establish a business of his own after completing his studies. His family was already established in business, and for him understanding the business policies, developing knowledge about relevant technologies and above all, raising the funds to launch his own business was the biggest challenge of all. Getting over the challenges represented success for him. He became one of the pioneers of online trading in Nepal. Bikram introduced an innovative and unique concept that would help migrant Nepalis send gifts to their loved ones anywhere in Nepal. This idea was very well-received, and today he has successfully expanded his business interests to many countries and holds offices both in the US and in Nepal. He also offers the choice of legally remitting money and operates his business from his base in Kathmandu, Nepal, employing well over 40 people.

The online business model pioneered by Bikram was highly appreciated in the US and a number of researchers have written about it (McCormick and Wahba 2001, Brinkerhoff 2009). Bikram's online business was successful because he started a business which catered to a long felt need of the Nepali people, his business filled a gap in the market, also being Nepali himself, he was trusted by the Nepali people. This shows us how social and ethnic capital could help the migrants establish businesses, as we have seen earlier in Chapter 6 in the case of Laxman and Santosh who ran their food import and export business successfully, by aiming to provide their services to the Nepali community in the UK. Ethnic capital is increasingly seen as an important asset which facilitates livelihoods thus need to be included within livelihood framework.

These migrants were very fortunate to have been able to return, as they had originally planned, with the degrees that they wanted in the first place by successfully overcoming the challenges. They returned with many different kinds of knowledge, skills and experiences; such as an understanding of the global conglomerates and corporate culture, how to establish and operate businesses, incubation and office sharing business, work ethics, German language, social and

professional capital, enduring friendship, research methodologies, and above all their self-confidence. Their personal and professional growth became enhanced by time management skills, punctuality, respect for any work, respect for law and above all, self-reliance, self-confidence, taking responsibility and independence which all of them appreciate greatly because in Nepal they were used to getting things done for them by someone, either parents or grandparents, 'including decisions'. The research participants of this study are described in migration literature as successful migrants or 'return of innovation' (Gmelch 1980).

Researchers argue, the migrants who manage to get good degrees in the destination countries may return home on not finding jobs matching their education (Pungas, Toomet et al. 2012). Thus, return migration is much more than just a failure or pre-planned strategic outcome of household decisions to maximise family income as posited by NELM; and it cannot be described with the help of structuralism, transnationalism or social network theory alone. It is difficult to explain why some young people choose to leave relative comfort and better quality of life after overcoming the initial challenges and establishing themselves professionally, to return to a country where life is different, and probably difficult. Many research participants of this study continued to visit home, the country of origin, and keep the link renewed because they cherish the prospect of being able to return one day and that thought literally sustained them during their migration histories (Dumont and Spielvogel 2008).

Suraj was around 11 or 12 years old when he migrated to the US with his father who was appointed as Nepal's ambassador to the US, did all his studies in the US including PhD and returned to Nepal at the age of 23. A political scientist by profession, he never regretted returning home despite his father's advice that he settle in the US. His father was in the US for eight years but Suraj stayed back another three years to finish his studies. He shared his thoughts on return to Nepal as follows:

*"Our family story is very interesting. We were three sons and one daughter. My eldest brother came back and stayed here. My second brother decided to stay in the States from the very beginning and got a green card. My sister came back, got married and went back. Now she lives in the States. I decided to come back and decided to stay. From the very beginning, I had a mind-set that I wanted to return and do something useful here. My initial ambition was to come back and join the foreign ministry and then contribute whatever I can whatever I have learned there. I did my education on that basis and lucky for me when a new Prime Minister of*

*Nepal was appointed in 1975, he asked my father that your son has returned from the US, if he was not doing anything then why don't he come and help me as my Private Secretary? So, I worked as his Private Secretary when I was just 23," Suraj, 65.*

After working as a Private Secretary of the Nepali PM for about one-year Suraj joined the university and started teaching master's level course when he was only 24. Talking about his teaching experience he said:

*"Most of the students were older than me at that time also. It was more challenging in the sense that the students at that time were challenging and brighter compared to the students now. They used to read things even beyond the syllabus and test the teacher at the same time, which I found very challenging and stimulating. Later on, I was asked to set up a Department for International Relations and Foreign Policy and brought out strategic series of journals and started publishing country reports on Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. That was how I got stuck at the university for 27 years," Suraj, 65.*

The participants shared various reasons to return which ranged from family to professional such as one of the return migrants said:

*"I wanted to use in Nepal the skills, knowledge and experience gained in Germany. I wanted to find out whether I could reach my potential by putting to practice my theoretical knowledge so I returned to Nepal. I will never get a platform like Nepal anywhere else in the world, at least not at the entry level, that too living in the comfort of my own home environment with my own family," Amir, 23.*

From among the participants, only one out of 10, said he regretted migrating to Canada because migration did not fulfil his ambition of social mobility and higher earning as he had left a very lucrative position behind so he decided to return to Nepal within two years of his migration.

In this section I have discussed the migration motivations of participants who had chosen to return home on their own free will without any coercion. They returned also because they were able to fulfil their primary ambition to migrate which was to improve their educational qualifications. Besides the education they also gained skills, experience and built social networks. They also encountered several challenges in the initial stages of their migration such as language problem, finding places to stay and developing friendships with the local people. The section also explored how they improved their human, social and ethnic capital and became innovative and how that has helped them to build their livelihoods on the basis of the

knowledge and skills they gained abroad. The next section examines the personal and professional development of these return migrants by looking at what specific skills and knowledge did they really transfer when they returned home.

#### 8.7.1 Advantage of being abroad

Replying to a question relating to the advantage of migration and what they had learned abroad that they lacked in Nepal, the research participants shared their thoughts as follows:

##### **Box – 4: Advantages of migration**

*“The attitude towards work. I really learned that if you are doing something you really give it your best, work really hard. And also, you start noticing a lot of differences, you know. The culture, the religion, the economy, the politics everything and when you see that difference that puts things into perspective where Nepal is and where it could be,”* Bidur, 28.

*“I followed my husband when he was going to Germany for higher studies. In Germany I learned a lot about their education, about their culture and why people are so free. I didn’t come back only with the certificate and qualification, but I also learned a lot through observation, by living with them in that society, making friends with them and that is what I also brought back and used in my life,”* Sumitra, 60.

*“I help my wife in the kitchen, iron my clothes which I never did before going abroad. Instead of doing things myself, I preferred going to a hotel but now I don’t mind doing all that. Unlike before I respect any work. I guess migration made me mature,”* Sagun, 38.

*“I think the advantages of being abroad is you learn to make good use of your time and you also learn to be independent. I realised that I also learned to appreciate and to value people and to give children importance which I think in Nepali society we are learning,”* Shalini, 56.

Analysing the quotes from the participants above, it is easy to understand that their emphasis on learning includes their exposure to a wealth of things including new attitudes, new perspectives towards life, towards work, the qualitative implicit gains besides the degrees; the qualifications that they gained and the professional skills they learned abroad (Hunger 2002). Their experience of migration abroad is not too different from that of the migrants who continue

to live in the host country. The return migrants within this research frequently mentioned how international exposure widened their horizon and changed their attitude towards life and livelihoods. They said they have learned to respect work and value the importance of time, both of these things are not always valued similarly in Nepal. They learned about how to keep alive inquisitiveness in their children by patiently and enthusiastically replying to all their curiosities about different things when they take the children out for stroll, as did the German parents.

The participants said they were exposed to very high standards of work ethics and work culture that did not exist in Nepal. Migration also gave them the opportunity to make friends from different countries and know their culture and religious practices. They learned to value and respect alternate opinion and respect others' views. The return migrants relate having brought all the new implicit, informal knowledge with them besides the explicit knowledge backed by the qualifications from the prestigious institutions. Some of the same achievements were also observed among the Caribbean youth who returned to small island societies from Canada, Hong Kong, the United States and the UK (Potter 2005, Conway and Potter 2007).

As discussed in previous chapters, migration also challenged traditional gender roles within the family as women found opportunities to break away from restrictive reproductive roles, a fact that impacted positively on their personal development as well as their career development. Indeed, return migrants are the carriers of knowledge as they accumulate implicit and tacit knowledge and technical skills during their sojourn in a host country which they transfer to the local context on their return or by developing transnational networks. However, the transfer of knowledge and skills is affected by the contextual and structural determinants, institutional policies, country's capacity to utilise this knowledge and skills and how these skills are utilised in the local context (CODEV-EPFL, IDSK et al. 2013, Tejada 2016).

The return migrants talk about being able to take on many responsibilities in personal life and in professional life after returning to Nepal because of their education and experience abroad, as Jeet explains citing his work at Siemens in the US where he went for further studies when he was merely 17 years of age:

*“If I were to prioritise, exposure would be the key advantage that has worked for me. I also learned about other countries, their culture, their philosophies – it gave me the self-confidence to interact with them. My work at Siemens gave me a chance to see how the large global corporates really work and learn about their corporate culture,”* Jeet, 32.

The exposure and experiences the participants had while living individually in an advanced society with different socioeconomic status, cultural practices, rule of law and political environment has made them confident about their own abilities. They now enjoy the respect that people give to them and to their opinions and people tend to be more receptive and attentive, as compared to before. Besides, their experience of living and working abroad has also contributed to their perspective and outlook towards life. They claim to have learned to value others’ opinions and have developed the ability to look at things from different perspectives and learned that there are different ways of doing things and that all of them are valid ways.

The return migrants, particularly young ones, advise others that every person should leave her/his comfort zone, go out and learn to think independently as this builds them not only professionally but also from inside as a person. Many of the return migrants opined that by independently migrating:

*“They will gain self-knowledge, an awareness of their own habits, and learn to understand their weaknesses as well as their strengths,”* Amir, 23.

In addition, some participants say that their exposure to a developed industrialised country made a huge contribution to their professional growth and was key to their success in developing their own businesses that have become transnational (McCormick and Wahba 2001, Brinkerhoff 2009, Kuschminder, Sturge et al. 2014). Return migration happens all the time (Cassarino 2004, Carling, Bolognani et al. 2015, Kunuroglu, Van de Vijver et al. 2016). Those who migrate for good, sometimes return earlier than others. Critical variables combine to shape the migrants’ reintegration patterns in their country of origin, such as their address in the host country as well as the home country, the duration and type of migration experience abroad, as well as the migrants’ pre- and post-return conditions.

In summary, many participants talked about the important contribution of implicit and tacit knowledge to enhance their livelihood outcomes on return (Williams 2007a, Ghimire and Maharjan 2015, Baláž, Williams et al. 2019). The participants argue that being exposed to a different culture enabled them to see, experience and learn things that they would not have learned without migration. They even recommend that besides gaining external knowledge, migration offers them the opportunity of self-discovery, gaining knowledge about their own strengths and weaknesses. The next section will explore preparedness of the return migrants, a basic yet too often neglected condition that intimately connects any person who returns home from abroad, regardless of the place of origin, social backgrounds, motivations, prospects, skills and occupational status (Cassarino 2014a).

#### *8.7.2 Returning home to implement knowledge, experiences and skills*

In the case of return migrants of this study, eight out of ten were advised by their families and friends not to return because they thought the condition in the country would make them unhappy. One had family pressure to return and another returned on his own free will when he realised that ‘emigration did not produce bed of roses’ for him and his family. In fact, one of the returnees Bidur was challenged by his friends and relatives that if he returned to Nepal, he would be re-migrating within two years, but he was determined to return and make it a success. Talking about his return experience he said:

*“I thought I could do more in Nepal than in the US. I prepared myself to return two years in advance. When I decided to return, I started doing things that would build my network in Nepal. I offered to fundraise for a school project in Nepal. I worked in areas that would help me return. When I returned, I introduced a new concept of shared office and business incubation. It has been more than two years. I am going strong,” Bidur, 27.*

Discussing return migration, Cassarino talks about departure, immigration and return as key stages characterising a migration cycle but each migrant experience different conditions throughout these three stages of cycle (van Houte 2014, Cassarino 2014a). For example, the majority of the research participants of this study had a complete migration cycle because returning to Nepal was for them a logical and expected step as they had met the objective for which they had migrated: they had completed their education, had learned new skills and gained various experiences. Thus, they had high levels of return preparedness (van Houte 2014,

Cassarino 2014a). The second return cycle refers to those return migrants whose migration cycle was incomplete. For example, for Sagun, who had migrated to Canada after a long wait but decided to return within two years because of unfavourable circumstances; migration did not meet his expectations. He was not happy, so he decided to return home and consequently had very little return preparedness. However, having worked for a bank in Canada he was able to put his experience in practice on his return to Nepal as he was offered a job in a newly established bank in Kathmandu. The third cycle is the interrupted migration cycle. The migrants who were forced to return because of external pressure, because of family pressure or serious health issues, loss of jobs and had no return preparedness because of interrupted migration cycle (van Houte 2014, Cassarino 2014a).

The complete migration cycle leads the migrants to prepare for return. Cassarino explicitly deals with migrants' 'return preparedness' and 'resource mobilisation' as processes that synthesise preparation to return as distinguishing criteria - factors that contribute to migrants 'readiness to return'. But readiness to return or preparation to return applies differently to different groups of return migrants: those who return voluntarily on their own without any pressure will have more time to prepare for their return than those who are being forced to return (Cassarino 2004, Cassarino 2008, Lietaert, Derluyn et al. 2013, Cassarino 2014a). Those migrants who had time to prepare for their return could be an integral part of development projects at home rather than those who were deported; those who had no or very little time to prepare for their return. Thus, it could be argued that return preparedness is essential for development at home and all those organisations vouching for migration development nexus should invest in this stage to ensure returnees will make maximum contribution to development back home.

The migrant students whom Ghimire and Maharjan (2015) interviewed in Denmark, Sweden and the UK, were also inclined to return home to implement their knowledge and skills. They want to return so they start preparing to return in the form of building contacts and taking additional trainings. Some of the returnees interviewed for this research in Nepal expressed a high degree of return preparedness. They talked about making investments to upgrade human capital and worked on specific projects and in organisations to upgrade their professional expertise and to build social and professional networks prior to their return.

Bidur, who returned back in 2010 and has established his own business in Kathmandu, stated that it is very difficult to return unless you make preparations to return. He says there are many Nepali people studying and working in the US, who talk a lot about returning to Nepal but continue to live in the host society because they have not prepared themselves to return. Although returning means essentially, going back to one's own country of origin, that country gradually becomes distant as the migrants forge various sort of relationships in the host country which ultimately becomes their primary home. People become attached to the host society in different ways which makes it difficult, if not impossible, to leave unless preparations are made to return, or are forced by some unforeseen developments in the family (Cassarino 2004, van Houte 2014, Cassarino 2014a).

Jeet was just 17 when his parents sent him to the US for studies in 1997. He returned in 2002 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry with minors in computer science and mathematics. He runs multiple businesses in Kathmandu. Speaking about his migration experience, he said:

*"I came back with a degree, exposure to the United States, exposure to different cultures and exposure to a professional workplace. I came back knowing lots of people there with whom I am still in touch. I would say one of the main reasons to return was that I felt I could contribute more here than to actually work there for someone,"* Jeet, 32.

Jeet belongs to a wealthy family but lived on his own in the US, earning his livelihood. His parents had also advised him not to return. He returned with a degree, exposure to corporate work culture and an extensive social network. When he was interviewed in his office in Kathmandu, he had already been back for 10 years. He said he had never been idle since his return and thinks that there is actually a lot of opportunity to do something in Nepal. He said,

*"I have morphed into an entrepreneur. The fact that I went to the US and returned is actually enough proof for lots of people to work with me here as partners, as investors, as advisors. I worked in the US; I know their system as a result I do have foreign partners in my business. Actually, we have got an American partner, a Korean partner and a company in Korea. I have got a Singaporean partner and a company in Singapore,"* Jeet, 32.

Ghimire and Maharajn (2015) argue three things are required for return migration to be successful, or to reflect in terms of better livelihoods or for the transmission of knowledge in the community. First, the migrant should have learned something useful in depth besides the

technical degrees; they should have the necessary knowledge. As this thesis has argued, it is also necessary to recognise the importance of both tacit as well as explicit knowledge. Second, they need a supporting structural framework in the country of origin for them to invest their time and resources back home. The third thing necessary for the migrant to transfer her/his skills and knowledge to the benefit of the origin country is an appropriate level of development in that country. If the country is too underdeveloped or there is no basic infrastructure there then return migrants have problems transferring the same level of knowledge and skills. In fact, the return migrants may not be able to implement everything that they have learned abroad for their livelihoods because of the consumptive power of the local infrastructure. Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, China, India are some of the examples where either the return migrants or the diaspora network has been able to apply their advanced knowledge (Meyer and Brown 1999, Siar 2014). As discussed later in this chapter, the implicit knowledge and skills that the research participants learn helps them to think clearly and critically, develop their analytical capacity and their interpersonal communication skills. And, the explicit knowledge and skills helps them to learn about new technologies, learn new language, build their vocabulary and trains them to write. However, they also develop some skills by intuition; develop tacit knowledge through experience and observation that forms the part of their migration experience.

In the case of Nepal, however, the basic infrastructure is there for these return migrants to transfer their knowledge and skills and the country is virtually open for any kind of development (Ghimire and Maharjan 2015). The only problem that the return migrants face in Nepal is the structural set back. Although there are no restrictions on establishing businesses, at times they face some personal setback. As Bidur explains:

*“I had gone for six years and my parents were also not there, so I had lost all my contacts during that time. It was difficult to build the network in the beginning because Nepal was not the same but gradually, I revived my old school network and that helped a lot,”* Bidur, 27.

As we have seen, social networks are an important component, a must not only to sustain migratory flow but also to start business or to make a livelihood when the migrants return home. It is interesting to see how each of these returnees relates to their experience of migration at various stages of their lives. The common thread that binds them together is the personal

experiences each of them had abroad and their dedication to learning and implementing what they have learned on their return home.

Among the returnee females, two were married and migrated along with their husband as their dependents when they migrated for higher studies. The remaining seven research participants were young and unmarried students with no particular attachments back home. One among them, Bikram, has started a very successful online business with offices in the US and in Nepal so frequently travels between these two countries but prefers to live in Nepal. He shared his thoughts:

*“I go to the US to attend business meetings and after meetings I catch a flight back because I do not like to live in the US,”* Bikram, 47.

All these returnees confirm that they had the possibility to extend their stay, earn good money, lead a professionally successful life and ultimately settle in the destination country but they all choose to return voluntarily, and no one regrets the decision to return. This is in stark contrast to findings of many other researchers who argue that some migrants decide to return with a hope to travel back and forth between host and country of origin, thinking this gives them better value for their human capital. Return migrants are also locally embedded in terms of local networks and cultural affinity and are better able to transfer skills, social capital and norms; those who decide to return willingly have different remittance behaviour than those who are forced to return; some wonder why and how some of the world’s most exploited people are expected to contribute to development when official programme have failed (Dustmann and Weiss 2007, Collier, Piracha et al. 2011, Jones 2011, van Houte 2014, Cassarino 2014a).

The majority of the participants of this study had their migration cycle completed and fulfilled their original ambition of migration as they gained knowledge and experience, accumulated tangible and intangible resources such qualifications, skills, savings, social and professional networks. In the case of return migrants, return particularly from the global North is indeed exception, a rare phenomenon. On the one hand, there are those youths who are dying to migrate in search of livelihoods, but on the other, there are these return migrants who leave behind their secure professional careers and comfortable life to return home.

### 8.7.3 Differential reintegration experiences of Nepali return migrants

Renuka joined her husband, a medical doctor, in the UK after around nine months of his emigration with her 15-month-old baby daughter. Her husband migrated to the UK for further studies and to prepare for the membership exams of the Royal College. After three years of arrival in the UK she had a baby boy. Her children were eight and 12 years old when she returned to Nepal alone. Her husband initially stayed back in the UK, waiting to see how his family would settle back in Nepal, and if everything went well, he planned to follow after about two years. They lived in a huge joint family in Kathmandu and had lots of support, also the family was relatively well-off, but there were some adjustment problems at the start. She related her personal reintegration experience:

*“I came alone with my children and it was hard in the beginning. We had to live in a joint family of over 13 members so it was difficult because we used to live alone in England. We used to live comfortably in a three rooms hospital accommodation, but when we returned, we received a single room for all of us plus all the things that I had collected over the years. There were boxes everywhere in the room and no place for anything else,”* Renuka, 56.

After returning Renuka was offered a teaching job in a relatively new school. Her daughter had no problem adjusting and started making friends from the second day in school. Her son, however, was younger and missed his father who was still in England, and the football club where he played with his friends. However, after about six months he finally accepted and came to terms with his new surroundings and new friends. Renuka shared her difficulties:

*“We were 13 members in the house eating together. My kids were not used to that. My son refused to eat rice and curry without fish or chicken. He will simply say he was not hungry and it was so frustrating for me because I cannot cook for my children alone in a joint family. My children benefitted a lot from the joint family we lived in because they learned religious and cultural things. My mother-in-law worships regularly, which they learned,”* Renuka, 56.

However, as explained earlier, the return migrants face different challenges in their effort to reintegrate when they return home. For example, as in the case of Renuka and many others, it is the question of balancing their expectations and practical realities that they face in the process of reintegration. But in the case of Bikram, a successful businessman with offices in Nepal and in the US, he faced difficulties and frustrations relating to the lack of specific policies, guidance, but most of all the indifference, neglect and the lack of understanding about the

operation of an internet-based business among Nepali bureaucrats and diplomats. Bikram was only 19 when he went to the US in 1990 for higher studies and returned to Nepal in 1995 with experiences of working in Morgan Stanley Investment and Automated Clearing House and set up his own business. His business was launched in 1999 and claims to be the pioneers of “transnational social networking”.

After years of hard work his business is very well-established today and employs over 40 people. He has a client base of over 100,000 Nepalis in over 30 countries with 60 to 70 percent of his clients based in the US and his annual transaction is Nepalis rupees one billion (£8 million). Yet, he is still having trouble convincing the government and others who take interest in his business that migration and development should climb to the top of their business agenda which they refused to do. He expressed his frustration:

*“I was in a meeting with the US Ambassador to Nepal and Economic Advisor but left that meeting when they said migration and development was not in their agenda,”* Bikram, 47.

Bikram talks about facing many challenges from policy level to technology level to funding but gives credit to these challenges being part of a bigger game. For him it is difficult to single out the challenges he faced because for him getting over those problems equalled success. The problems begin when a business becomes successful and begins to move credit, the business grows, creating need for more funds. Talking about his business he said:

*“You are trading millions and billions but people can’t see anything except a website in the computer. There are problems about the goods that are traded. There is pressure to make people understand how it operates. Besides there is the problem of regulatory policies because sometime the government ask us to follow (a) regulation and other times they ask us to follow (b) regulation. Sometime you here about Nepal account being frozen by Citi Bank and I need to find out how is that going to affect my business. It is like never ending emotional roller coaster ride,”* Bikram, 47.

The other return migrants also faced their share of challenges in the process of reintegrating in the society. One among them is Bidur who had emigrated to the US for higher studies in 2004 after completing his A levels because over 80 percent of the students from his school in Kathmandu went to the US. In his case his parents and a sister were already settled in the US. The political changes in Nepal in 2006 affected him deeply and he decided to return to Nepal

after completing his studies although he did not know then exactly what he would do. But he felt there were lots of opportunities in Nepal. After finishing his studies in 2008 he started to prepare to return to Nepal. In the process of preparation to return he says he started doing things in a way that would help him return. For example, he went to work for organisations and programmes that would give him skills and contacts to work in Nepal. Finally, after collecting different work experiences in the US and against the wills of his parents and advice of friends, he returned to Nepal in 2010. The following illustrates his preparation to return and the challenges he faced in the process of reintegrating:

*“I came in contact with a person in New York who was involved building schools in Nepal so I offered to fund raise for him and raised over US \$11,000 for the schools project. Similarly, I went to work for organisations that would give me experience and skills that would be useful in Nepal. In the process of establishing my enterprise which offered office space and business incubation, I realised that the disadvantage of being away was losing one’s local network without which it was very difficult to get things done in Nepal. Lucky for me I had my school alumnae network which came to my rescue,” Bidur, 28*

The return migrants have taken initiative and are found to be involved in a wide range of innovative professions and businesses such as engineering, online business, business incubation and office sharing hub, teaching, school, banking and public relations and all of them are doing rather well. Return migrants are already contributing to the development in Nepal in their own way as they make use of their knowledge, skills, experience and social networks to establish businesses that help them as well as the Nepali society in many different ways such as creation of employment, taxation, implementation of new innovative ideas, foreign direct investment through business partnerships as Jeet and Bikram, two of the businessmen who have multiple business interests, mentioned earlier. Jeet has managed to establish companies with partners from the US and South Korea whereas Bikram runs his business from Nepal and the US.

The narrative evidence provided by the returnees suggests that return migration has indeed proven to be a blessing for them as well as for the country because, on the one hand, they have returned with assets which are highly valued in the country where they live close to their families, relatives and friends; they get involved in social, cultural and religious functions. On the other, they are engaged in successful livelihood choices based on their qualifications, their

social and professional networks, their skills, their knowledge of domestic job market, domestic demand and knowledge of the socio-cultural practices.

One of the sample research participants is Sagun and his case is unusual. Unlike others, Sagun patiently waited for over 7 years to obtain residency permit to emigrate to Canada with his family. Before migrating to Canada, he was working in the respectable position of General Manager in an auto industry and had 500 employees working under him. He longed to emigrate to Canada because one of his brothers had settled in Canada and had started his own restaurant business. In 2008, Sagun finally emigrated to Canada with his wife and young child but decided to return after only 19 months. Despite the relatively brief stay abroad, he is confident that he learned enough personally and professionally and is making good use of his skills in Nepal as he carves out a new professional career for himself. He said:

*“I quickly learned that if you have a professional degree such as engineering or medical or computer science then you could have a good life abroad because you will get a professional job. Also, if you are young then you can just do anything and gradually work through different jobs to build your future in a new country, but it is difficult for someone like me. Although I had no professional degree, I was in a very good position in Nepal, so instead of struggling I decided to return home,”* Sagun, 38.

Sagun’s experience is not unique; there are thousands of others like him who dream of migrating to a rich western country because they are attracted by affluence displayed in those countries through televisions and other media but know virtually nothing about the inside running of these countries, do not possess the human capital in the first place to engage in successful livelihood. Sagun’s experience reminds us of the necessity of preparation or preparedness when one plans to migrate to a new country in search of livelihoods. Lack of preparation lands them in trouble with the fate like that of Sagun or the experienced Nepali nurses, as discussed in Chapter 7.

As discussed in Chapters 6, the emigrants experience culture shock, face language problems, face professional challenges due to lack of technical skills and face numerous other unexpected challenges because those who encourage them to migrate feel embarrassed to share the difficulties that they may have faced in the process of settlement in the host country. As we saw from nurses’ experience, sometime even the technical degree that they had was not enough

as they faced the challenge of operating the modern machinery that they had not seen before. Many get disheartened and frustrated in the host country because of their lack of basic local knowledge. However, the decision to return is rarely taken on this basis as the migrants know it would amount to failure in the eyes of families (Cerase 1974, Gmelch 1980, Cassarino 2004).

This study could have wider policy relevance for home country, host country and related institutions particularly because (1) Return migration is relatively overlooked area of scholarship due to difficulty in getting data, (2) Return migration is studied from the perspective of host country, and (3) Interpersonal interactions to collect data from return migrants is rare. However, smallness of sample size and coming from only one country may be regarded as the limitation of this study. But still, the information could be used to analyse changes in the migratory habits, transnational or circular migration and return decision making patterns among the return migrants and the overall impact migration have had on them and the processes that encourage knowledge and skill transfer (Vertovec 2007, Castles and Ozkul 2014).

Some returnees, especially, the female returnees face problems reintegrating in the family they had left behind some years back. Time has moved on but on coming back they discover that the norms, values and practices their families adhered to remains the same. This causes problems for reintegration for some return migrants, as I explore in the next section of this chapter.

#### *8.7.3.1 Challenges of reintegrating to life in Nepal*

Researchers argue that it is very difficult to know the extent of return migration in any country because of the lack of data (Adda, Dustmann et al. 2006, Dustmann and Weiss 2007). The same applies in the case of Nepali return migrants. Although unlike some other countries, Nepal collects both emigration and return migration (embarkation and disembarkation) data from Nepali citizens and other visitors where they are required to provide where were they coming from, how long they were out of country and what was their last port of entry but they do not seem to use these embarkation and disembarkation cards to publicise return migration related data.

The potential for return migrants to benefit Nepal has been studied by a number of researchers by investigating Nepali migrants who went to study in the UK, Denmark and Sweden and

student returnees in Nepal (Ghimire and Maharjan 2015). Similarly, both migration from Nepal and return migration to Nepal and the impact of migration on Nepal from the policy angle has been done by other organisations in Nepal (de Zwager and Sintov 2017). Even more, Brøgger and Agergaard drawing on the case studies of urban growth in three urban sites of Nepal explore how migration practices whether rural-urban, international or return migration and the migrant economy exemplified by remittances intersect with socioeconomic and spatial dynamics of urban growth (Brøgger and Agergaard 2019).

The return migration histories of the participants are not too dissimilar from that of Afghan return migrants, who migrate to an industrialised nation whether for study or for work, because that is a privilege reserved for a relatively few wealthy minorities or those with political influence who are considered to be the better-educated, wealthy, entrepreneurial and strongly-networked elite (Jones 2011, van Houte 2014, van Houte and Davids 2014). They belonged to well-connected professional families who were well educated prior to emigrating. Therefore, it may be difficult to isolate the benefit gained from migration: successful return migrants may have been equally successful without migrating which also applies to most of the participants who emigrate for higher studies.

For example, Shalini, a very successful return migrant, who hails from upper middleclass family background was only 20 years old when she accompanied her husband who got scholarship for higher studies in the US. She related her pre-migration background:

*“I grew up reading Newsweek and Time at home, so I had no problem and no cultural shock. In the US, I also got the opportunity for higher studies and completed a PhD,”* Shalini, 56.

On returning to Nepal after about 10 years in the US, Shalini wanted to join a teaching hospital where she wanted to share her knowledge and experiences with the students. She was keen on having a livelihood based on her human capital but because of her personal conflict with someone in the senior position she was denied the job she wanted. After that she spent some time doing consultancy work before finally deciding to open a school in 1992 with the support of her US social network. In the beginning, she struggled to set educational standards for this school, to find quality teachers, but now the school is well established nationally and internationally. Shalini received huge support from her networks in the US.

Her link with her school network in the US has grown stronger over the years. She said:

*“We have very good friends in the US who support us. I used to work in Columbia University, and I have a good network of friends there. We are affiliated with Bank Street School for Girls in New York. Every time I am in the US, they make special programme for me, so we have huge support from them,”* Shalini, 56.

Shalini was successful in transferring her US qualifications, her professional experiences relating to educational standards and above all, she was able to make use of her social and professional networks in the US to establish her school in Nepal with their support. Shalini continues to maintain her relationship with her friends in the US by visiting them. There are others like Shalini among the return migrants who give credit to their personal growth, the knowledge and skills that they learned abroad, and their personal and professional networks to establish their businesses in Nepal and for their growth.

Reintegration is an integral part of return migration and now all the migrants have similar experience in terms of reintegration in their own society which they had left only a few year ago but maintained contact by annual visits. They are returning to a society whose cultural norms are familiar to them because they are a part of it but still, some, especially female migrants face some problem reintegrating but gradually they find ways to get over it, as discussed above. In the next section of this chapter, I will examine who among the return migrants are the conduits of knowledge, skills and technology and how they exploit the endowment of their human and social capital that they build painstakingly which accompanies them when they return home.

#### *8.7.4 Return migrants and knowledge transfer*

As we have discussed in Chapter 2 and also above in this chapter, several research scholars have spoken highly of role of return migrants and diaspora about the importance of knowledge and skills transfer to their country of origin. One of the research participants of this study Bidur could indeed be taken as one of the return migrants that the scholars have talked about. Bidur, one of the returnees who wanted to establish an office space sharing and business incubation hub, an entirely new concept of business enterprise in Nepal, faced structural and legislative hurdles from the local administration. Having lived away from Nepal for over six years and

being young, he was not taken seriously by Nepali administrators because he was not accompanied by someone they knew or was not recommended by one of their contacts. However, Bidur was eventually able to establish his business with the help of a network of his school alumnae. The idea that Bidur implemented in Nepal is about office space sharing and supporting new entrepreneurs to grow their business ideas to fruition (business incubation). He has been successfully running his business for the last 6 years.

Bidur's parents are settled in the US but he migrated to the US only in 2004 for higher studies. Events in Nepal in 2006 made him think that he might have better opportunities in Nepal to implement what he had learned in the US, so he started preparing to return and was finally able to return to Nepal in 2010. Back in Nepal, Bidur together with another US returnee, introduced the concept of shared office spaces and business incubation of which he had some experience in the US. He said:

*“Professionally what I am doing right now is not something a kid growing up in Nepal would dream of doing because they dream of becoming a pilot, a doctor or an engineer. In other words, they would choose a very set defined careers whereas what I am doing now even I have difficulty explaining to other people,”* Bidur, 27.

Bidur sees Nepal passing through an exciting time and thinks there are lots of opportunities in Nepal but at the same time, he thinks, there are also numerous problems that no one can handle alone. However, the shared office and incubation business concept that he introduced in Nepal allows entrepreneurs like him to hire space and work together.

Another return migrant, Amir, is happy to work in a solar power company specialising in installing solar power systems in peoples' homes and public places, allows him the freedom that he would never have received in Germany. He does not boast about his achievements, but the engineering degree he obtained in Germany and the social network he established has helped him immensely to advance his career in Nepal. He confesses that he learned a lot in Germany from a professional manner, punctuality, a good work ethic, and respect for as well as commitment to work. He shared his thought:

*“I have been able implement all that I have learned in Germany in my own life as well as in work. Smaller things such as when I get up early in the morning unlike in the past, I don't laze*

*around rather I plan for the day. I even divide the day into smaller sections or chunks from this to this to this. Now all my days are totally planned. Even when I return to my residence in the night, I do the summary of my day's work and plan for the next day based on that day's work. I wouldn't have probably learned all that if I hadn't gone to Germany," Amir, 23.*

The participants apply many kinds of knowledge that they were able to accumulate abroad in their life when they return home. Amir, following Cerase's typology, might be classified as an innovative actor who's prepared to utilise the new skills that he acquired abroad because home offers greater opportunities gained as a result of migration (Cerase 1974). Return migrants such as Amir, Jeet, Bidur and others seem to be putting to use the implicit/tacit and explicit knowledge that they learned as part of their migration experience in terms of their livelihoods as well as to pass on their knowledge to the society.

Another return migrant, Suraj, was only 11 when he accompanied his parents to the US because of his father's secondment there as head of the diplomatic mission. He had all his education in the US, from school to University eventually gaining a PhD. At the young age of 23 he returned to Nepal to work against the wishes of his parents, but he never regretted not settling in the US. Suraj, now a Professor of Political Science and International Relations at the Tribhuvan University, has previously held several national and international positions. He shared his thoughts about transferring his knowledge and experience to his students over 27 years:

*"Once you go to America for studies, you don't only get education but also you get exposed to a different culture, which changes your outlook and approach towards life. If you can't grow equally in all these areas, only getting a degree won't be of much use to you because at the end, that degree won't work alone. That degree won't have much value for you or anyone if your outlook and approach towards life and understanding of the great society is not there. I think this is what I got because besides the education my approach towards life and outlook also got mature which made a lot of difference," Suraj, 65.*

Besides higher education and knowledge, the return migrants also talk about their personal growth including experience of being independent for the first time in their life and doing everything on their own without the interference or support of their parents and siblings. One of the return migrant's commented:

*“I was there for education and I had a good education, besides the education the sense of liberty and independence from my family added to it. For the first time in my life, I had no one telling me do this or do that and I was thinking and deciding for myself,” Amir, 23.*

Return migrants talk about bringing higher educational degree, professional experiences such as researching skills, project management skills, managerial skills, life experiences and lots of useful contacts (social networks) with them when they return. Whether in family matters, professional life, scholarship or setting up businesses these different kinds of knowledge and skills have been vital to the participants in different ways. Talking about using his experience and knowledge that he learned in the US where he spent 12 years studying from 6<sup>th</sup> grade till a doctorate in international relation and diplomacy, talking about knowledge he said:

*“You have to understand that in today’s globalised world you are competing with rest of the world. The value of your education and your own value in your own country and outside is very little because, one way or the other, you have to develop that knowledge. There should not be any limitation in search of knowledge but it’s how you use that knowledge makes the difference and there is no right or wrong way to do that,” Suraj, 65.*

Similarly, Bidur tried to learn as far as practicable many different skills and experiences as part of his preparation to return. His focus was on knowledge that would be more applicable and innovative and would also help him with his livelihood so he started a business with office space sharing and also mentoring entrepreneurs to shape their business and professional ideas.

The returnees highlight gaining sociocultural experience of living in a country with different culture and language than their own, their personal and professional development, their human and social capital as lasting forms of tangible benefits of migration which helped them shape not only their professional livelihoods but also their social profile. The next section explores the respondent’s perceptions of their achievements and it examines how more intangible benefits have impacted on other aspects of their lives.

## **8.8 The Achievements of Return Migrants**

One of the achievements of migration, according to return migrants, has been wider awareness; an awakening about the differences that existed between their own country and the host country (Conway and Potter 2007, Potter and Conway 2010, Mishra 2016). As well as discussing how

they gained tangible benefits, such as knowledge, qualifications and acquiring another language, the respondents also reflected on the importance of intangible benefits of migration such as establishing friendships, learning new ideas about how systems operate and work ethics such as punctuality and respect of time. Of particular note, is the increase in individual's confidence to try anything in life and work anywhere unlike their friends, who have never left their home or lived on their own. They talk about becoming 'intellectually mature' by living abroad.

Box - 5 highlights on the participants key achievements from working abroad.

**Box – 5: Returnees' achievements**

*“The greatest achievement would definitely be my experience, my social circle, and the creation of a network of friends. I can get new ideas and information and call them for help which I think is an added advantage for me compared to my colleagues who live here,” Amir, 23.*

*“Besides a master's degree, I learned a lot through observation. The other great achievement is the friends. I saw the difference between friendship in Nepal and friendship over there. When you say they are friends that means they are really ready to help you at any time at any cost which is not the case in Nepal,” Sumitra, 60.*

*“I worked as a field manager in a bank for about 19 months. The things I learned there helped me to get a job in a bank in Nepal. Before migrating abroad, I always admired the lifestyles of my banker friends but now I have become a banker myself. It is all because of my hard work and experience of migration,” Sagun, 38.*

The return migrants shared their experience and talked about the knowledge they gained abroad. It is very hard to pinpoint exactly where and how they acquired the knowledge. Knowledge goes on gradually building, deepening depending on exposure; things we do, things we experience and things we read all contribute towards building knowledge. Indeed, mobility

or migration has been well established both as a source and conduit of development of new knowledge, but the process of learning and knowledge transfer has received less attention by researchers. The deficiency in research is particularly marked in the case of return migrants, an increasingly important group both because of growing mobility and shifts to more cyclical mobility (King 2002, Williams and Baláz 2008).

The knowledge and skills that return migrants learn abroad or transfer with them could be classified into tacit and explicit knowledge and both of these knowledges contribute on their own way towards livelihoods. For example, tacit knowledge is knowledge that is difficult to write down, visualise or transfer from one person to another and it relates to those skills that are specific to individuals and may not be easily communicated (Williams and Baláz 2008). Examples of tacit knowledge are Sumitra learning about German culture, Sagun developing leadership and sales skills quality as well as emotional intelligence. Other forms of tacit knowledge are humour, innovation - these are things that come naturally to some whereas others struggle. Whereas explicit knowledge consists of facts, theories and principles that are codified in research journals, taught in schools and recorded in industry, articulated, accessed and verbalised (Adler 1996). For example, Shalini's PhD and Sumitra's master's degree are all examples of explicit knowledge. All these forms of knowledge are parts of human capital as part of livelihoods framework that have been used differently by the research participants in the process of livelihoods.

The return migrants in the sample claim to have made use of both tacit knowledge that they acquired through experience, observation and intuition and explicit knowledge they gained by studying for it, skills and experiences that they gained as well as the social networks that they created in pursuit of their professional growth and livelihood such as business ventures, enterprise development, consultancy, opening school, doing research. Above everything else migration offered the opportunity of personal growth. The exposure has major impacts on their life chances in Nepal. They feel confident about their knowledge and the things that they have learned abroad. In order to capitalise on their experiences, some of the return migrants have formed a 'forum', comprising of people like themselves who have returned from abroad to share ideas and for networking. One of the returnees found his first job through the forum. Talking about his experience Amir said:

*“Within three days of my arrival in Kathmandu, I went to attend a meeting where I met a lot of energy professionals, people working in the field of my interest that helped me with rapid networking. Through the contacts in that meeting, I started checking the available vacancies and the options that I had. I got the first job in an international non-governmental organisation through the network that I had from the meeting. I checked with the people I had met in the meeting and offered to come on board so they agreed and I started the work. Now even I think that I will be able to help some people who would be returning to Nepal now. This way, it goes on,” Amir, 23.*

Instances such as these makes us to realise the important role that more intangible benefits and tacit knowledge play not only in adjustment, integration and settlement of the returnees but also in finding their professional footing and growth (Sumption 2009).

Having returned from different developed industrialised countries after living there as students and professionals, the research participants felt at ease in Nepal unlike the ‘West’ where they had difficulty breaking into any area because of their strict employment preferences to hire their own graduates because of the discrimination against people with different phenotype, who looked different and who spoke differently.

Whereas Nepal is different because it is your country and there are a lot of opportunities because Nepal is just finding its developmental pace. There are a lot of new initiatives taking place which to a large extent is driven by individuals like these return migrants. It remains a challenge for the government to come up with suitable structural policies such as developing new bodies and creating new incentives and adopting new strategies to attract and engage these professionals for the greater good of the nation.

### **8.9 The Return of Innovation – *Knowledge Transfer***

The contributions made by the returning migrants and the diaspora is beginning to be gradually recognised by the society as a potential brain gain in Nepal as they continue to introduce innovative ideas in the society. As discussed above, migrants accumulate new knowledge and gain skills and savings by working hard abroad from which the home country can benefit (Wahba 2015). There are over 50 countries which are courting their diaspora to engage in knowledge and technology transfer (Leclerc and Meyer 2007). Nepal has joined the list of these countries only recently by making various legislative structural adjustments, including dual nationality in its new constitution in September 2015. The implementation of the provision of

dual nationality remains incompletely in terms of acts and regulations because Nepal has now been divided into seven separate states under federal system.

As discussed earlier, none of the returned migrants had followed a family decision to increase household income as an insurance against falling family income and agriculture productivity as suggested by new economics of labour migration (Stark 1985, Massey 1993). Rather, eight out of ten of the research participants migrated for higher studies with initial financial support from their families.

### 8.9.1 Work ethic and work culture

Comparing their professional lives abroad and their professional lives in Nepal, the respondents almost unanimously speak about good working environments, respect for work, rewards for hard work, high spirit of teamwork, punctuality, time management and commitment to responsibilities; intangible qualities that they often find missing while working in Nepal. Speaking about the difference in work environment and work culture in Nepal and the US, Bidur said:

*“I really appreciated the work culture there. My exposure in the US definitely taught me a lot of lessons. It was good to be independent from my family which gave me the opportunity to explore who I really was. So, going abroad and living by myself sort of really helped me to really understand who I was basically,”* Bidur, 27.

Arpana, a young female student, had migrated to Germany for higher studies. After completing her studies, she was hired by an organisation in Austria. She returned after spending some time working for that organization. In Nepal she was hired by a charity organisation working in the health sector in remote corner of Aacham, in far west Nepal where she worked for a year. Talking about the difference in work environment between Nepal and Austria, she commented:

*“Everything just happens on time. People follow a system. You are rewarded for your hard work. Working here in Nepal is tough. Here, there is no system. It is not motivating because however hard you work your effort is never valued and appreciated. It is very demotivating, discouraging to work in Nepal,”* Arpana, 27.

The participants argue that they have introduced punctuality and work ethics in their working environment only for themselves as they are not in a position to implement it in the office. They

hope that their colleagues will gradually learn from them. They opine that migration is important as it allows them to broaden their horizon and learn new things.

Migration has played huge role in the livelihoods of the return participants. Sagun confessed that his experience in Canada not only opened his eyes and taught him valuable lessons but also made him a mature and sensible man. It is that experience of living and struggling in Canada that got him his first job in a bank in Nepal after returning back from Canada. Now he is heading a branch of an Arabian bank in Kathmandu.

Shalini is another female returnee professional who worked in a university in the US, while her husband worked for the UN. They decided to return because their children were growing fast and they wanted them to grow up in Nepal. They never wanted to settle in the US but got the opportunity to continue further education and by the time her husband graduated, and she completed her PhD it was already 10 years. Around that time things were also rapidly changing so instead of wasting any more time they decided to pack their bags and return because things looked prosperous in Nepal, as Cassarino and other return migration researchers argue that migrants return home when they see they have better prospects at home (Glaser and Habers 1974, Gmelch 1980, Cassarino 2004, Dustmann and Weiss 2007, Cassarino 2014a). Talking about herself, she said:

*“I think our main reason to comeback, besides my husband wanting to be back as a journalist in Nepal, was our children. If we were going to stay in the US our children have to be brought up as any other American child. We felt that if we wanted them to be more Nepali then they should be in Nepal and not in the US so we returned,”* Shalini, 56.

For her things have gone from strength to strength in Nepal. The female return research participants of this study are successfully established socially and professionally in Nepal because of the confidence and knowledge they gained and networks that they were able to establish as part of their migration experience.

Until now, the migrants are returning to Nepal on their own or because of the initiatives such as the one taken by the German government. The returnees claim to have been successful in providing their services to the society in their chosen professions on their own. They claim to have successfully implemented new ideas and their knowledge in their bid to reintegrate and

to make a living in the society that they all had left some time ago. There are more of them abroad who could share their knowledge and expertise and lend their support to the government without even returning to Nepal or asking anything in return. All they need is a positive government outlook towards them and a forum through which both the returned and the diaspora could contribute their resources and innovative ideas to nation building without relocating permanently.

### **8.10 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the migration related experiences of 10 Nepali return migrants and their return journey. It explored the extent to which Nepali return migrants apply the knowledge, skills and experience they have gained abroad for their livelihoods and social mobility when they return home. The research found that the returnees were fully integrated into society and were professionally active despite facing some structural problems in the effort to implement their knowledge, human and social capital.

The research participants showed how they took advantage of their tangible and intangible resources and the tacit knowledge that they gained living among and interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds. The business, professional and social networks that they had established in the destination country have been very useful to them to extend their business interests (Chen and Tan 2009, Brzozowski, Cucculelli et al. 2014). Furthermore, the migrant networks have emerged as development agents because of their scope to directly interact with state institutions about a range of issues from remittances and skill/knowledge transfer trainings to political ideas (Faist 2008). Besides formal qualifications, their exposure to professional environments, teamwork, punctuality at work, time management, transparency, respect for time, liberal attitudes, respect for others opinions and social justice has enriched them socially and professionally.

Return migrants has been hailed as flagbearers of change and development for their knowledge and innovations in many emerging nations such as India, China, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan (Kapur 2001, Biao 2006, Opiniano and Castroa 2006, Brinkerhoff 2006a, Saxenian and Sabel 2008, Agrawal, Kapur et al. 2010). The human and social capital of return migrants and that of the diaspora, their scholastic and professional achievements, gains in tacit and explicit

knowledge, new skills and experiences, and their international networks make them most valuable resources from which the developed nations in the global North has benefitted so too can Nepal. Nepal needs to take stock of her human resources and plan strategically to harness their potential for the greater good of the country (de Zwager and Sintov 2017).

During my field research in Kathmandu, I came across more and more young people returning from abroad after completing their studies and are engaged in innovative enterprises. They are true assets of Nepal so the Government of Nepal and Nepali bureaucracy should adopt strategies to harness their knowledge, their innovative ideas and their international networks by extending their support from which Nepal and Nepali people stand to benefit.

The next chapter summarises the overall research findings and conclusions. It will also offer some policy recommendations in relation to harnessing the benefits of Nepali migration to both the country of origin and the country of residence, as well as to the migrants and their families.

## **Research Findings: Concluding Discussion**

### **9.1 Concluding Discussion**

The purpose of this thesis was to address two aims; the first one was to explore the livelihood opportunities and strategies of professional first, 1.5 and second generation Nepali migrants and their families in the UK, in order to understand the importance of education, knowledge, social networks and employment in shaping their social mobility and other livelihood outcomes. The other aim was to examine how return migrants have transferred their qualifications, knowledge, labour market experiences and professional networks to develop new livelihood strategies in Nepal that have the potential to contribute to the development of Nepal.

This thesis explored how skilled Nepali migrants in the UK have utilised available opportunities to further strengthen their human capital, extend their social capital and how these assets contributed to their livelihood strategies and social mobility. It focuses on the narrative of migratory experiences and migration outcomes as related by 24 first and 1.5 generation and six second generation as well as 10 return migrants through semi-structured in-depth interviews.

The study found that the skilled Nepali migrant community in the UK is comprised of professionals who are successful and well recognised in their respective areas besides the families of serving and retired Gurkhas. This research contributes empirically towards filling important knowledge gaps about an emerging migrant community that has not only contributed and won battles for the UK, but has equally contributed to sustaining her health services, security systems and building socio-ethnically multicultural, tolerant and economically stronger nation.

Another core finding of the research is that the grown-up children of first-generation migrants have done well educationally. Educational attainment has enabled them to increase their upward social mobility, enhancing social recognition and improving quality of life (Stash and

Hannum 2001), and they worked hard to take advantage of the available opportunities in the UK with help of their parents. However, in the absence of any larger empirical study relating to the Nepali migrant community in the UK such as this one, it is difficult to explore the relative success of the children of Nepali migrants compared to White working class or other ethnic minorities in the UK such as Bangladeshis, Caribbean, Pakistani, Vietnamese, Latinos (Haque 2000, Dustmann and Glitz 2011, Chavira, Cooper et al. 2016).

For the returnee research participants, their greatest achievement has been their personal growth as return migrants talk about having enjoyed the freedom to think about themselves and deciding for themselves without the interference of any one from their families for the first time in their lives, when they were away from home. As explored in Chapter 8, tacit knowledge was particularly important in enhancing returnees personal and social development (Siar 2014). All but one research participant said that he did not get what he wanted from migration, so they returned back to Nepal within 19 months. However, on his return he was duly rewarded with a lucrative job in a bank in Kathmandu because of the knowledge, skills and experience that he gained by working for a bank as a migrant.

One of the research findings of this study has been difference in female and male return migrant's reintegration experiences. In the case of female return migrants, whether single or married, one of the first casualty of returning back is their freedom; freedom to think and do things their way, freedom to socialise with friends, freedom to go out anytime they wish to go out or even freedom to offer their children the food of their choices. Other studies of female migrants who return to Nepal, after their sojourn abroad are found to challenge societal norms that they consider meaningless (Dhungel 2019).

This research study was an absolutely fantastic opportunity to discover various new knowledge about professional Nepali participant migrants in the UK and participant return migrants in Nepal. Despite being close allies of the British empire for over 200 years, the history of sacrifices that Nepalis made for the British sovereign as well as their intergenerational emotional sufferings over the years due to isolation and separation from their families remains deeply buried in the annals of British empire and begs for a deeper and much wider research. The major contributions of this thesis are presented in the next section.

## 9.2 Summary of Key Findings

In the next few pages, I would like to highlight some of the major findings of this research.

### 9.2.1 *Socioeconomic impacts of migration: education, livelihoods, professional development and social mobility*

Education has been the major benefit of migrating to the UK for the Nepali migrants and their families in this thesis. First generation migrants took advantage of further education and higher professional qualifications in the process of upgrading their human capital while their grown-up children went to the universities and benefitted from higher education. While attending schools, training institutes and universities in the UK, the participants did not only get the degrees but were able to benefit socially and culturally and build their social networks as they interacted with other students representing different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Higher education and their social capital offered them opportunities of further professional development besides giving them the opportunity of better livelihood options leading to improvement in their quality of life and financial freedom. Skilled Nepali migrant's children have generally done well educationally, professionally and socially particularly as compared to first generations, which reflects not only on the human capital that they improved by being in the UK, but also on the support they received during their formation years to adulthood from their extended social and ethnic capital developed by their parents as well as by themselves; though how far they have moved socially and professionally and how they compare to the successes of children of Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian and Chinese and other ethnic minorities in the UK would be a useful next step (Algan, Dustmann et al. 2010, Dustmann and Theodoropoulos 2010).

In the UK, there is as much professional and social diversity among Nepali migrants as there is in Nepal and each group exercises different livelihood approaches based on their 'assets' or 'capital', institutional contexts and vulnerabilities (Chambers and Conway 1991, Bebbington 1999, Ellis 2003, de Haan and Zoomers 2005). Many Nepali families who are settled in the UK have morphed into transactional migrants as they continue to engage in businesses and industries in the host country as well as in the home country. However, they have evolved into transnational migrants also because of the process of globalisation that has made the world into a 'global village' thanks to modern transportation links and digital communication that has

brought them close to their parents, siblings, friends and member of extended family as they regularly communicate with them.

The growing size of the community of Nepali people in the UK and knowledge of food habits and other sociocultural traits of Nepali migrants has encouraged some entrepreneurs to establish business of nostalgic products to tap into this opportunity as their livelihood strategy. These entrepreneurs have not only created employment in the UK but also in Nepal, and they have engaged farmers in Nepal to produce a number of food crops that arrives in UK market thanks to globalisation of goods and services. The Nepali people claim to have benefitted from migrating to the UK in numerous ways but in return they too claim to have made contributions to the British society in a number of ways.

In return for their contribution to the host community, the Nepali migrants have capitalised on the available opportunities. Many of them said they migrated for the safety of their children because Nepal was suffering from political instability, a Maoist led insurgency, a worsening law and order situation leading to anarchy and failure of their leaders to find a solution to the ongoing problems. The parents were worried for their children's safety and education which they claim to have found in the UK. Migration to the UK has given their children the opportunity to obtain British higher education which helps them to raise their standard of living and obtain a quality of life that their parents dream for them. The analysis of the narratives provided by the research participants reveal that the children of Nepali migrants, both who accompanied them and those who were born in the UK, have done well professionally, economically and socially.

One of the factors that troubled the participants, both first and successive generations who are invariably better off than their parents, is the continuous discrimination that they experience in the UK based on their phenotype, race and ethnicity when they enter the local labour market. As explained in Chapter 6, discrimination is embedded in the hiring practices in such a way that the degrees and experiences of first generation migrants are not sufficiently transferred and valued. Successive generations of migrants' children, who are born and brought up in the UK, continue to face a range of discrimination as they enter the labour market. However, in a discriminatory UK labour market their social and ethnic networks offer them a rescue net by availing them information about available jobs before anyone else learns about those

opportunities and assists them in securing employment (Datta, McIlwaine et al. 2007). The participants community, social and ethnic capital also teaches them a range of everyday tactics and knowledge transfer strategies to counter labour market discrimination and enables them to enhance their livelihood strategies overall (ibid.).

### 9.2.2 *Implicit, explicit and tacit knowledge*

One of greatest rewards that migrants reap is development of competence; a combination of qualifications, experience and tacit and explicit knowledge. Implicit, explicit and tacit knowledge and the skills to implement these in their daily life is sum total of migration experience (Baláž, Williams et al. 2019). The knowledge that they gain can further be classified into academic and non-academic, tangible or intangible or even implicit, explicit and tacit knowledge that are used by the migrants knowingly or unknowingly in their life to make a living, their livelihoods, whether in host country or home country when they return (Ghimire and Maharjan 2015).

According to Ghimire and Maharjan (2015) and William and Balaz (2019), implicit knowledge and skills are related to people's personal capacity such as critical thinking, analytical capacity, communication and interpersonal skills that allows them to work in teams or to establish unique business enterprises, which Nepali migrants display in terms of their livelihood choices in the UK. Similarly, explicit knowledge and skills are specialised knowledge that are associated with academic learning such as courses that we take, things we learn about technology, languages that we learn and vocabulary that we build by studying (Ghimire and Maharjan 2015, Baláž, Williams et al. 2019). Apart from implicit and explicit knowledge and skills sets, there is also tacit knowledge which the migrants learn by intuition, by observing and by learning cultural norms and behaviours such as social etiquettes, sales skills and other specialised knowledge that cannot be taught in traditional educational settings.

As this research has argued, tacit knowledge has been important in helping Nepali families benefit from the everyday socio-cultural experiences of working and living in the UK. Among other things the migrants return with explicit, implicit, realisational and tacit knowledge that contribute to their integration and day-to-day livelihoods and contributes to their social upward mobility. Application of explicit, implicit, realisational and tacit knowledge by the migrants

towards meeting their livelihoods objectives forces us to consider all these forms of knowledge being extension or a part of human capital as described by different researchers such as Chambers and Conway (1991), Scoones (2003), Sagynbekova (2016) Levine (2014). However, many forms of realisation or tacit knowledge such as knowledge of social etiquette, language and communication skills, knowledge of social values could also be the extension of the social capital discussed by Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1986).

### *9.2.3 Sociocultural benefits of migration: freedom and independence*

As discussed previously, professional Nepali migrants and their families have benefitted from a wide-range of socio-economic and livelihood opportunities that include education, professional career advancements and increases in explicit, implicit and tacit knowledge, that migrants gain as part of their migration experience (Ghimire and Maharjan 2015). As such, this doctoral research has also drawn attention to the importance of the more intangible socio-cultural benefits of migration that have enhanced the life chances and everyday living experiences of migrant families, particularly dependent female migrants who were housewives prior to their migration. Enhanced freedom, independence and confidence that they experience in the UK impacts positively on their working lives as they become economically active, financially independent and start supporting the family that also improves their family life as well as family bonding. It shows that, on the one hand, social and professional discrimination that they experience in Nepal saps their enthusiasm contributing negatively towards their livelihoods. On the other, enhanced freedom, independence and confidence that contributes positively towards the livelihoods of female migrants (wives of first-generation migrants) shows that besides the human capital, social and other capitals, intangible assets like freedom, independence and confidence are also crucial elements for successful livelihoods. In summary, therefore, these should be considered as important assets that contributes positively towards livelihoods and family dynamics (Pariyar, Shrestha et al. 2014).

### *9.2.4 Personal development, work ethic and work culture*

It is mostly the return migrants who suggest that migration abroad did not only give the opportunity to advance their qualifications, establish lasting social relations and gain knowledge but the migration offered them the opportunity of personal development. Female migrants especially those who accompanied their husbands on their educational journeys

abroad, were themselves awarded the opportunity for further professional development which helped them grow personally and professionally. Male migrants confess the importance of being able to decide for themselves without the interference of their parents or other members of the family. They confess loving every second of their independence and freedom which allowed them to think about their strengths and weaknesses because they were out of their comfort zones. In particular they value the ways in which their exposure to the professional work environment, their efficient work culture, respect for work and work ethic that they learned as part of their migration experience has contributed to their livelihoods because they practice what they learned abroad. Comparing about their lives abroad and living in Nepal, the respondents almost unanimously speak about rewards for hard work, high spirit of teamwork, punctuality, time management and commitment to responsibilities; intangible qualities that they often find missing while working in Nepal.

Tacit knowledge related to time management and respect of time, punctuality, work ethic and liberal attitudes are other forms of knowledge, parts of which could be described as tacit knowledge, that could be grouped under the umbrella of behaviour related to professional knowledge is particularly significant (Williams 2007a, Williams 2007b, Ghimire and Maharjan 2015). Similarly, realisation of self-potential and feelings of responsibility, the development of viewing and analysing issues from a broader perspective and the appreciation for human freedom are forms of behaviours that are related to self-actualisation or realisation that contributes positively towards livelihoods (Siddiqui 2003). Individually, all the returnees have made their mark in the society by contributing to its development in different ways. They consider themselves successful in providing their services to home society in their chosen professions as engineers, researchers, schoolteacher, businessmen, and business incubators and innovators.

#### *9.2.5 Return and reintegration*

The returnee participants of this study chose to return on their own voluntarily without any support or incentives neither from the home nor host governments, leaving behind their professional careers and a secure future which they build after long struggles. By willingly returning home for good, return migrants add to the existing human, financial and social capital of their country or continent of origin. In fact, the return migrants themselves are the human

capital who bring with them increased financial capital in the form of their savings and social capital such as their social and professional network (de Hass 2010). Return migrants are also credited to transfer new ideas, new knowledge and entrepreneurship with them that is expected to transform the economic and developmental fate of the countries they return to (ibid.). Researchers argue that due to devaluation of their qualifications, skills and experience in the host country they land in jobs in which they have to rely on their hands rather than their brains, leading to deskilling and economic loss as they earn far less (Siar 2014).

The voluntary return migration of highly skilled migrants from the developed western economies are hailed as brain gain to the countries of origin, only if the country has the capability to exploit their intellectual and social wealth supported by the technological and infrastructures as well as policies. Above all, without having adopted the technical infrastructure that would allow them to implement and experiment with their innovative ideas and knowledge there is no brain gain. For reintegration to work effectively there have to be reintegration policies that would guide it. Reintegration also refers to reinstating the return migrants into the social structures and reactivating their social networks so that they can engage in economic activities (IOM 2019, pp 174-175).

Those Nepali female return migrants who had accompanied their husbands to the UK, and other countries, said they have done well after returning to Nepal. Migration has given them professional exposure, taught them new knowledge and skills and helped them to establish and further strengthen existing social and professional networks that have contributed to their success. Many of these return migrants in Nepal obtained higher education and professional qualifications, received a wide range of professional experience and established social and professional networks with the people with whom they associated. Female participants feel more empowered, confident in their abilities and liberated with the feeling that they too contribute to their household and they enjoy the social status it brings to them. However, when it comes to reintegration in the Nepali society the family values, male and female patriarchy and traditional social norms disillusion them and many of the returnees are challenging those traditional social norms.

This research has shown that compared to male return migrants, female return migrants face different challenges to reintegrate in the family and society that they return to. In particular they face problems adjusting to social norms and values which they think should not be forced on them. Whereas the male migrants face problems that are more administrative in nature such as lack of support from the officials, lack of clear policy guidance to establish businesses. However, the return and reintegration experiences of skilled professional female migrants continues to be ignored and calls for extensive research with a much wider and larger research sample. Such studies will help the institutions as well as the governments to devise appropriate return and reintegration policy and programmes regarding skilled and professional female migrants that would not only allow them to reintegrate and reinstate themselves in the society but also support wider gender transformation in Nepali society in meaningful ways.

#### *9.2.6 Development of intergenerational bonding in the family*

One of the findings of this research has been the growth of intimate intergenerational bonding among the siblings and parents who participated in this research. As has been extensively discussed in chapter 6, the research participants talk about a gradual growth of a unique bonding experience in the family in the UK, which they had not experienced before in Nepal. The migrants have no explanation for the evolution of this phenomenon in the family, but they assume it could be because of migration which has reduced the family size drastically from an extended large family consisting of grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins which is common among those who follow collectivist culture to a nuclear family of mother, father and siblings.

Researchers studying intergenerational relationships among Asian American Children of Vietnamese and Cambodian immigrant family backgrounds in the US have found conflict brewing between the parents and their children as the children start to follow host country culture. This gives rise to a phenomenon they describe as ‘intergenerational cultural dissonance’ which is likely to be more serious among families from non-Western cultures that share fewer commonalities with mainstream culture (Choi, He et al. 2008). Intergenerational dissonance between the children and their parents is more serious among Asian American adolescents that hail from Cambodian, Filipino, Vietnamese immigrant background than other groups of adolescents (Phinney, Ong et al. 2000). The published research on cultural assimilation fails to explore the increase in intimacy, support and bonding in the family as

experienced by the Nepalis migrant community highlighted by this research. As a result, I hope that this research will encourage more extensive research on intergenerational familial bonding and intergenerational dissonance within migrant families, particularly in relation to other migrant diasporas in the UK.

### *9.2.7 Impact of migration on the host community*

The primary thing about the research participants is that they represent a significant source of cheap human capital because the UK did not invest on their skills and qualifications. Not only that, but they are also highly qualified professionals representing such fields as medicine, nursing and health care, engineering, research and development, academia, social work and contribute in significant way to the service industry as well as local economy at the cost of home country economy which finances their education and training. The host country reaps the benefit significantly without even duly recognising the value of migrants work. With the right mix of policies not only the destination country, but also the country of origin, could maximise the advantages gained from its transnational diaspora (Newland and Patrick 2004, Patterson 2006, Brinkerhoff 2006a, de Haas 2006a, Li and Opoku-Mensah 2008, Riddle 2008, Newland and Tanaka 2010, Aguinias and Kathleen 2012, Khanal 2013, Thapa, Basnett et al. 2013).

A number of studies point to the fact that migrants have very little or no negative impacts on local employment because migrants work on jobs resented by the local people and that the migrants makes financial contribution to the local economy (McIlwaine, Camilo Cock et al. 2011). The host community and national economy benefit in significant way from international migration. Migrants contribute to the local economy by paying taxes, creating jobs, providing their professional service as they establish their own business or work for some local or national organisations like NHS, Home Office, Police, local councils and burrows. Establishment of own business and self-employment as a means of making a living is common practices among the migrants. Among the research participants of this study, twenty-two had their own business.

The skilled Nepali participants in this research have also engaged in reverse remittance as they brought money from Nepal to buy their properties without mortgages in the UK. Similarly, many of them are pensioners who receive their pension here in the UK, not in Nepal. They have launched their own businesses that provide employment to the local people enabling them

to maintain their livelihood and contribute economically to the host community. Volunteering is another way the migrants contribute to the local community when they benefit the local community with their knowledge, skills and labour. A research study conducted among the Nepalis in the borough of Rushmoor confirm that over 71 percent of Nepali undertake volunteering in their community and 90 percent are willing to engage in volunteering (Gurung 2011).

### **9.3 The Contribution of Knowledge and Innovation by the Return Migrants**

The impact of migration on the home country is one aspect of migration that has been attracting much debate from researchers and the international development fraternity over the years for two reasons: Firstly, the majority of the migrants to the global North receive opportunities to increase their human and social capital, as well as physical assets, are from the global South. Secondly, there is great potential in return migrants becoming the agents of change of their countries of origin; in reducing poverty, increasing political stability, establishing human rights, increasing social justice and social inclusion and to take the country in the path of sustainable development and democracy to stir the country out of deprivation and poverty. Nyberg-Sørensen, van Hear (2002), Faist (2008) and Piper (2009) have examined the ‘diaspora development nexus’ and highlighting the important roles these agents of change could play by being conduits of development (Nyberg-Sørensen, Van Hear et al. 2002, Faist 2008, Piper 2009, Muniandy and Bonatti 2014). This thesis has revealed that there are Nepali professionals embedded within Nepali migrant community in the UK who possess the knowledge and skills to support development potentials in Nepal. The research presented here on the knowledge, skills and experiences within the skilled Nepali migrant diaspora community in the UK could help inform a strategy to engage them in country development initiatives.

The participants in this research showed great enthusiasm for their desire to be an agent of change as increasing numbers of them experience transnational behaviour. They talked about their willingness to undertake volunteering in Nepal to pass on their skills and experiences (Khanal 2013). Some of the research participants were already a part of Nepali Diaspora Volunteering Programme (NDVP) and they wanted to continue volunteering and passing on their knowledge and skills to people in Nepal year after year. Others hoped that the government

would not forget them completely because they have left the country and would think of policies and ways to allow them to be part of bigger development picture.

Unemployment in Nepal is around 32 percent, and nearly half a million youth join the job market every year as they believe that migration is the only option left to them as a means of livelihood and to improve their situation (Thapa et al. 2013). Despite high unemployment rates and associated problems in Nepal, there are also those professional participants living in the global North who leave everything behind to return home to Nepal. They return because they see greater scope and opportunity to implement in Nepal what they learned abroad as the country is gradually finding its development pace. The returnees do not regret returning because they have returned back with higher qualification, knowledge, skills and experiences as well as their social and professional networks that they are confident to be valuable assets for their livelihoods in Nepal. They have engaged in transferring their knowledge and skills to Nepal by establishing innovative enterprises.

At present there are no formal mechanisms of monitoring or evaluating the in-depth impacts of the contributions made by the return migrants and there is lack of research on the development impact of knowledge transfer by the return migrants, with the exception of a World Bank study of the impact of remittances in alleviating the level of poverty from over 35 percent to around 25 percent (Lokshin, Bontch-Osmolovski et al. 2010). Although Nepal has long been experiencing emigration of youth in search of employment and their return after spending a few years abroad, the Nepali government has not yet paid much attention to this valuable resource. There were an estimated 735,000 foreign employment returnees in Nepal in 2009, with an average age of 30 years (Jones and Basnett 2013, Thapa, Basnett et al. 2013, Basnett, Henley et al. 2014). Of these, around 47 percent were found to be involved in agriculture and 22 percent of them had remained inactive. Due to the lack of any incentive and support from the government, a majority of the returnees re-migrate when they fail to engage in any productive enterprise at home or when their savings run out (ibid.).

#### **9.4 Contribution to Academic Knowledge**

This is one of the few research studies in the UK that explores the motivation of professional Nepali people to migrate to the UK and it examines the impacts of migration on their

sociocultural and professional development, and their livelihoods. As mentioned earlier, there is an urgent need for more empirical research on the Nepali community in the UK, as they have been an integral part of British society, British national health system and British economy for over three decades and a part of British Army for over 200 years. This thesis research makes an important contribution to our understanding of the everyday life chances and livelihood experiences of professional Nepali migrants and their families and it offers a range of new empirical and conceptual insights.

The empirical findings of this study have come to supplement important and long-awaited information on the livelihoods of professional Nepali migrants in the UK, their motivations to migrate, and the advantages and disadvantages that migration brings to them and to their families. This research also complements knowledge relating to the existence of a large Nepali diaspora community in the UK comprising of professionally skilled and experienced individuals. It also suggests that financial motivation, particularly the expectation of higher income return on their human capital has not always been the core reason for their migration, and this challenges traditional migration theories that advocate economic gains to be the main reason. In addition, Nepali migrants with professional degrees such as medical doctors, engineers, computer scientists, accountants and nurses - qualifications that are in short supply, benefit more as compared to unskilled or semi-skilled workers.

The second-generation participants, are surprised to be addressed as children of migrants and refused to be labelled 'migrants' because they consider themselves British Asian. How does migration theory addresses this lacuna? Current studies in the second generation fail to fully explore the intergenerational impact of migration on second-generation and this thesis offers a qualitative perspective on how their livelihood experiences differ from their parents. Similarly, gender and intergenerational differences have also been highlighted with new insights into how migration brings greater confidence, independence and enhances family bonding.

In the light of the practical difficulties of reintegration into the Nepali society faced by the female return migrants, the research also highlights their return migration and reintegration experiences. Although scholars argue that male and female migrants experience the impact of migration differently, and highlight the fact that many women are independent migrants

(Zlotnik 1990, McDowell 1999, Boyd and Grieco 2003, Donato, Gabaccia et al. 2006, Mahler and Pessar 2006, Campt and Thomas 2008), there is a lack of research on their return experiences and the gendered experiences of reintegration, to which this thesis makes a small but important contribution.

Nepal has gradually emerged as a country which exports cheap labour to the countries in the Persian Gulf and other more economically affluent parts of the world such as Israel, Japan, Malta, Malaysia, South Korea where they are exploited by those who employ them. Migration alone should never be considered a solution to lack of development, unemployment or poverty alleviation. In the longer term, Nepal needs to ensure that there is sustainable growth and development at home which can generate decent work opportunities to citizens (Wickramasekara 2010). This will ensure that migration occurs by choice, and not by need (GCIM, 2005).

In conclusion, I hope the findings of this research will contribute to an informed discussion in Nepal among the politicians, policy makers and leaders of the civil society as to how best they could support those Nepali people who emigrate in search of employment. Similarly, the return migrants, wherever they return from, go home with the endowment of foreign degrees, technical knowledge, skills, experiences, social and professional capital, their savings and other important resources that could be mobilised for the greater good of the nation.

This research offers new empirical insights into the migration experiences of a small sample of professional and skilled Nepali migrants. While it might not be possible to make wider generalisations about the wider Nepali community in the UK, I hope the findings of this research paves the way for more in-depth research with a much larger and more diverse sample of Nepali participants from around the UK.

## **9.5 The Way Forward**

This thesis has made an original evidence-based contribution to the knowledge and information relating to various aspects of the emergence of the professional Nepali migrant community in the UK. It analyses the wider socio-economic, cultural and educational factors affecting first generation migrants and their families in relation to their professional development and

livelihood strategies, particularly with regard to the importance of knowledge acquisition and transfer. It also highlights the life chances and professional mobility experienced by the 1.5 and the second generation. The research has also highlighted the opportunities and barriers facing skilled Nepali people in terms of their social mobility and highlighted the important role, and potential contribution to development, played by return migrants. In conclusion, I would like to offer some thoughts on policy initiatives that might harness the assets and capitals of the skilled Nepali diaspora

## **9.6 Steps that the Nepali Government could Take**

It is a challenging prospect for the Nepali government to encourage and engage Nepali migrants, the diaspora or the return migrants in the development mainstream. Nepal could aim to create opportunities to all its citizens so that there is no need for any one of them to migrate in search for livelihoods. This does not seem feasible given Nepal's current political, economic and sociocultural realities. Keeping these realities in focus Nepal should aim for the following:

- (1) Country Specific Advisory Groups - The incumbent Nepal government could form country specific advisory groups consisting of diaspora experts representing different professional fields to assist the government relating to foreign policy, international aid and development, foreign direct investment, country development strategy, tourism promotion. Attention should be paid to engaging a diverse range of professionals only and not political activists representing political parties.
- (2) Develop strategies to take advantage of its global diaspora by creating opportunities by engaging them through transnational, diaspora and philanthropic networks.
- (3) Motivate and engage Nepali professional people in diaspora volunteering recognising the concept of 'diaspora-development nexus' by creating forums, programmes and opportunities through which Nepali professionals living abroad could participate through diaspora networks without returning permanently to Nepal (Stuart and Russell 2011, Malfait, Cottrell et al. 2013, Pellerin and Mullings 2013, Song 2014).

- (4) Reach out to the Nepali diaspora through Nepali forums and networks abroad to keep them informed about government initiatives and make them '*local ambassadors*' to engage them to promote Nepal as a brand.
- (5) Nepali diplomatic missions abroad should be tasked to collect information about every Nepali student in the universities in respective countries studying science and technology related subjects, doing doctorate, studying for higher degrees, doing research, engaged in academic activities. Annual programmes could help students network and support their professional development.
- (6) Develop a database on the professional skills of Nepali workers returning from various countries. It is important to recognise the importance of tacit as well as explicit knowledge that the return migrants can transfer so the government should attempt to harness these through various initiatives and incentives.
- (7) Develop attractive investment proposals for the Nepali diaspora - particularly those living in the developed northern nations, where small capital could neither be invested nor gets any return in the form of bank interest.

Countries like India, Bangladesh, Ghana, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, China, Taiwan, Korea have all sizable migrant community abroad, especially in the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Japan so they have rolled out attractive incentives and paved ways for their professional collaboration as well as make investments (Meyer and Brown 1999, Kapur 2001, Saxenian 2006, Siar 2014). Many of the countries have explicit policies that encourages their nationals to invest in their country of origin such as Mexico, China, South Korea, the Philippines, India.

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## Appendix – I

### Checklist of Questions for the First Generation Migrants

#### General

- Why did you migrate and when did you migrate?
- Any particular reason to come to the UK?
- Did you get what you came for
- Why didn't you go back?
- Did you plan to stay or settle here when you first came, if not then what made you change your mind?
- Have you ever regretted migrating to the UK? Has there been any moments/instances in life when you regretted migrating?
- Are you happy with your life here?
- What have been the advantages of coming to the UK, which you didn't get in Nepal?
- Has there been any disadvantages as well?
- What has been your greatest achievement here in the UK?
- Do you miss Nepal much? What do you miss the most?
- Do you feel you have a Nepali identity? Or, you consider yourself British or something else?
- How about religion – does it have a role in your life?
- Are you able to practice your religion?
- **For women respondents:** Do you think you were ever treated differently because you are a woman
- **For women respondents:** How about the general public, do you feel that they too treat you differently as compared to men?
- **For women respondents:** What thoughts cross your mind when you feel that you were treated unfairly or unequally?

#### Family related

- Do you live with your children and spouse/parents here?
- Were you born in the UK?
- What do they think about being in the UK?
- Do they consider themselves British or Nepali or something else?
- Does your children/spouse want to go back to Nepal
- Do you have any family back home?
- Do you have relatives in other countries?
- How do you keep in touch with them – Skype, internet, phone, Facebook?
- What language do you speak at home?

- Do you speak, read and write Nepali?
- Do you travel back home sometime: how often?
- How do you feel when you are back in Nepal?
- How are you treated when you are in Nepal?
- How do you pass your time?

### **Your profession**

- What is your profession?
- Did you get what you came for
- How long have you been in this profession/business?
- How do you find living in the UK as a professional?
- Do you feel good about your profession/business/training?
- Do you consider yourself professionally successful, why or why not?
- Do you want to go back home someday - why or why not?

### **The Challenges and difficulties**

- What has been the greatest challenge of migration?
- What difficulties you faced in the initial stage and how about now
- Did you ever feel that you were not treated fairly or equally in job/business and by whom?
- Did anyone offer their help?

### **Membership/Affiliation with professional/social organisations**

- Do you belong to any professional/business organisation or community organisation?
- Is it important to belong to one of these organisations?
- What benefit did you get?
- How many such organisations are there?
- Do you participate in community events/programmes?
- Why do you participate in community events?
- What about NRNA and its role

### **Development Prospect of Nepal**

- How do you feel when you hear various events/developments going on in Nepal?
- Do you keep in touch with development in Nepal?
- Are you interested about events in Nepal?
- How do you follow them – online newspapers, subscribe locally published Nepali newspapers, call Nepal, go to the embassy, Nepali TV etc.
- Do you think people like you could play a role in developing Nepal?
- How? Do you have any particular skills from which Nepal could benefit?
- Are you interested in playing a role in the development of Nepal, why?
- Do you feel that you will be welcome in Nepal?

- What should the Nepal government or British government do to encourage or motivate you
- What would motivate you or people like you to do something back home? What should the government do?

### **Investment in home country**

- Do you send money home regularly?
- Have you made any investment in Nepal?
- Why do you want to make investment in Nepal, why?
- Do you feel that Nepal government wants people like you to come back to invest or to develop Nepal?
- What the Nepal government should do to create investment climate

### **Impact**

- What has been the most significant impact of migrating to the UK in your life and in the life of your family?
- What has been the impact on the British society where you live
- Has there been any impact on Nepal as well?

## Appendix – II

### Checklist of Questions for the Second Generation Migrants

#### **General**

- You were born in the UK. How did you feel growing up in the UK as a child of a migrant?
- Are you happy with your life?
- What is your plan now?
- What has been the advantage of being brought up in the UK?
- Are there any disadvantages as well?
- What have been your greatest achievements so far?
- What about the identity? What identity you think you have?
- Have you ever been to Nepal? How often?
- Do you think about Nepal sometime? What do you think about?
- What do you like about Nepal?
- What do you dislike about Nepal?
- Do you miss Nepal? What do you miss the most?
- Would like to live in Nepal, if given the opportunity?
- How about religion – does it has a role in your life?
- How about your friends? Do you have any Nepali friends?
- Other than that, you are quite happy with here in the UK?

#### **Family related**

- Do you live with your parents or you live on your own?
- What role your parents have in your life?
- Do you have any family back in Nepal?
- Do you have any relatives in any other countries?
- How do you keep in touch with them?
- How many languages do you speak?
- What language do you speak at home?
- Do you speak Nepali language at home or with friends?
- How do you pass your time when you are in Nepal?
- Do you think the second and third generation will probably lose cultural values and language?
- How important it is for you that your children learn Nepali culture and language?
- How do you feel when you are back in Nepal?

#### **Your profession**

- What is your profession?

- Are you happy professionally?
- Do you consider yourself professionally successful?
- Do you plan to go back?

### **Challenges and difficulties**

- What has been the greatest challenge for you to go back?
- How long did it take for you to find a job?
- Did anyone offer their help?
- Did you ever feel that you were not treated fairly or equally in job?

### **Membership/affiliation with professional/social organisations**

- Do you belong to any professional/business organisation or community organisation?
- Do you belong to any community organisations and participate in community events/programmes?
- What are the benefits that you get by participating in activities organised by these community organisations?
- What about NRNA and its role?

### **Development prospect of Nepal**

- Are you interested in events in Nepal? How do you keep in touch with them?
- You don't follow events in Nepal then?
- What about playing role in the development of Nepal? Do you think people like you could play some role in the development of Nepal?
- How? Do you have any particular skills from which Nepal could benefit?
- What should the government do to encourage/motivate or to facilitate people like you to help Nepal?
- Do you know about dual nationality? Do you think the government of Nepal should give dual nationality to Nepalis living abroad? Why?

### **Investment in home country**

- Have you made any investment in Nepal?
- Any plan to invest in Nepal?
- Do you think government has done anything to encourage people like you to come and invest in Nepal?
- What the Nepal government should do to create investment climate?

### **Impact**

- What has been the most significant impact of migrating to the UK in your life and in the life of your family?
- What has been the impact of migration on the British society where you live?
- What has been the impact of your migration on Nepal where you came from?

## Appendix - III

### Checklist of Questions for the Return Migrants

#### **General**

- When did you migrate and why did you migrate?
- When did your return back to Nepal?
- What do you like the most working and living abroad?
- How has it influenced your life or professional career?
- Why did you decide to return? Did anyone encourage you to return?
- You returned at a time when every young people dream of going abroad and living there?
- Was it a family decision?
- Do you want to go back if there was an opportunity?
- Did you get what you migrated for
- Did you ever regret migrating?
- What have been the advantages of migrating, which you didn't get in Nepal?
- Has there been any disadvantages as well?
- What would you describe as your greatest achievement as a result of migration?
- Did you miss Nepal much when you were away? What did you miss the most?
- Do you think it was a good decision to return? Are you happy with your life now or do you regret returning back?
- How about religion – does it have a role in your life?
- Were you able to practices it?

#### **Family related**

- Do you live with your children and spouse, parents in joint family?
- Were you or any of your children born abroad?
- What do they think about being in Nepal?
- Do they consider themselves Nepali?
- Does your children/spouse want to go back?
- Do you have any family back in the country to which you migrated?
- Do you have relatives in other countries?
- How do you keep in touch with them – Skype, internet, phone, Facebook etc
- What language did you speak at home?
- Do you speak, read and write Nepali?
- How about your children and wife – do they speak, read and write Nepali as well?

#### **Your profession**

- What is your profession? Is it something that you learned when you were abroad?
- How long have you been in this profession/business?
- How do you find living in Nepal as a professional?

- Do you consider yourself professionally successful, why or why not?
- Did you bring any new technology/idea/experience to Nepal?
- How do you compare your life now and before?

### **The Challenges and difficulties**

- What difficulties/challenges did you face when you first migrated?
- Did you face any difficulty or challenge on returning to Nepal? What sort of challenge did you face on returning? Please elaborate
- Did you ever feel that you were not treated fairly or equally in job/business and by whom?
- How were you treated by professional colleagues/competitors on your return to Nepal?

### **Membership/Affiliation with professional/social Associations**

- Do you consider belonging to any professional/business association is important? Why?
- Do you belong to any? How many?
- What benefit do you get?
- When you were abroad, did you support any community association and participate in community events?
- Do you think community associations are important? Why?
- Do you consider attending community events is important when you are in a foreign country?
- Why do you think so?

### **Development Prospect of Nepal**

- Did you follow news about Nepal when you were abroad?
- How did you follow them?
- What aspect of the coverage you prefer to follow?
- How did you feel when you hear various events going on in Nepal?
- Did it ever occur to you that you could contribute to the development of Nepal?
- Did you make any effort to contribute to the development of Nepal in any way?
- Do you think people like you could play a role in developing Nepal?
- Since you are back now, are you contributing to the development in any way?
- Do you think the government of Nepal should give dual nationality to Nepalis living abroad? Why?

### **Investment**

- Did you send any money to Nepal when you were away?
- Did you make any investment in Nepal while you were away?
- Did you make any investment in the country you migrate to?
- Do you have any property in the country where you migrated to?

- What should the Nepalis government do to encourage people like you to invest in Nepal?

### **Impact**

- Was migration significant or a total disaster for you and for your family? In what way?
- Looking back, what do you consider to be the most significant impact of migration to you and to your family?
- Were you and members of your family able to contribute in any way to the society where you lived? How did you do it?
- What has been the impact on Nepal as a whole – when you left and when you returned?