

FROM LABOR MIGRATION TO SUCCESSFUL AGRO- ENTREPRENEURSHIP: CASE STUDY OF RETURNEE MIGRANTS IN AGRICULTURE

A study conducted as a part of the Daayitwa Nepal Public Policy Fellowship 2023, together with
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ABSTRACT

This three-month intensive study delves into the world of successful agro-enterprises established by returnee migrants in Nepal, shedding light on multifaceted realities. The primary objective of the research was to identify the underlying factors contributing to the success of these enterprises, considering the diverse backgrounds from which these returnees hail. Furthermore, the study aimed to explore how the skills and remittances acquired from foreign employment were being leveraged within these agro-enterprises. Ultimately, the research sought to propose relevant policies and intervention programs that the state could implement to harness the skills and remittances of returnee migrants for the enhancement of agricultural productivity in Nepal.

The study employed structured focused comparison and thematic analysis as methodological tools, meticulously examining fourteen cases from various regions across Nepal. These cases represented a wide spectrum of diversity, including ethnicity, gender, province, geographical region, and the type of agro-enterprise being operated.

The findings revealed several key factors contributing to the success of returnee migrant agro-entrepreneurs. Notably, hard work, family support, and networking skills emerged as critical determinants of success. Additionally, the entrepreneurs reported acquiring valuable skills during their foreign employment, such as customer service, business management, and marketing, which they now apply to their agro-businesses. Insights from their foreign employment experiences also underscored the importance of dedication, labor rights, a positive work environment, loyalty to their home country, and unwavering willpower.

While not all entrepreneurs reinvested their foreign earnings into their agro-businesses, those who did had either formulated plans for agro-entrepreneurship while abroad or developed such plans upon their return to Nepal. Beyond addressing the research questions, the study offered suggestions for how government institutions could support returnee migrants with a burgeoning interest in agro-entrepreneurship.

Key words: agro-entrepreneurship, skills, remittance, foreign employment, case study

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1. INTRODUCTION

Policies and programs of the government of Nepal for the fiscal year 2080/81 focus on improving the reeling economy of the country and highly encourage endeavors in improving national productivity. The budget for the fiscal year likewise has stated to support skill development programs to foster entrepreneurship among returnee migrant workers in order to retain young human resources in the country and engage them in the national production of goods and services. Nepal has an import-dependent economy which while making it face a trade deficit every year, also makes it prone to be highly affected by external economic shocks. Additionally, its remittance economy (as per the latest World Bank data, remittance comprises 22.7 percent of GDP in the year 2021) is equally dependent on external shocks and variables and has been attributed to lower national production of goods and services.

In addition to that, as per Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) the agriculture sector still engages 66 percent of the Nepalese population. Likewise, 24.12 percent of the country's GDP is composed of products from the Agriculture, forestry, and fishing industries (the classification of industry is based on ISIC- International Standard Industrial Classification) (Nepal in Figures 2022, 2022). This is the largest share out of all other industries' contributions. Agribusiness is also being practiced by a number of individuals who have had access to financial resources and required skills. As per the latest statistics (updated until 2080-03-31) obtained via the Industrial Information System of the Department of Industry, there are 530 registered agro and forest-based industries. This is around 6 percent of total industries registered till the very same date. Though the proportion of such industries in the larger industrial sector is still small, Nepal being an agricultural country does hold higher prospects for people's growing engagement in this sector. In this share of agro entrepreneurs, there are some valid numbers of returnee migrants who have been able to successfully run agro enterprises using the savings that they earned during their foreign employment and also skills they learned during their time in foreign land.

In that pretext, I believe studying some of those success stories of returnee migrants turned agro entrepreneurs can be quite beneficial to identify relevant policy and programmatic interventions for increasing agricultural productivity in Nepal. With this idea, this research intends to conduct an exploratory and descriptive case study using fourteen cases of successful agro-enterprise of returnee migrants (in Nepal) with varied background factors (confounding variables). In order to reach the said goal of recommending evidence-based policy intervention, I will be intending to answer two important research questions here –

- Q1. What are the factors that are causing successful agro-enterprise of returnee migrants?
- Q2. How are returnee migrants using skills and remittances garnered during foreign labor employment to enhance their agro-enterprise in Nepal?

Most different case selection (method of agreement) is used for the purpose (especially to answer the first research question) which means while the output or the dependent variable is same in all the cases that is successful agro enterprise of returnee migrants, the other background factors or confounding variables – gender, province, ethnicity, geographical region, type of agro-enterprise – of the cases are different. Such selection design is used to isolate the effect of these factors on the outcome and find other common causal factor(s) for the successful agro-enterprise. Regardless of being different in many variables, what common factor(s) among these cases is potentially causing successful agro enterprise of returnee migrants is what I am trying to find here. This approach is used to increase the validity of the study findings which is a commonly raised question for qualitative study. To make the study more systematic, the Structured Focused Comparison tool shall also be used here. (More information on the tool shall be discussed in the methodology chapter.)

While a comparative study is being done to answer the first research question, in-depth study of all the selected cases will be carried out to list down different ways returnee migrants use the financial capital and skill garnered during their foreign labor employment in their agri-business. Thematic analysis tools will be used for this purpose.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As per Nepal Labor Migration Report 2022 issued by the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS), 4.7 million labor approvals (permits) were issued between 2008/09 and 2021/22. This excludes those who migrate to India in search of employment opportunities as India does not require a work permit for Nepalese nationals to work there. Yet it is to be noted the country hosts a number of Nepalese workers. The same document furthermore reports that “1.8 million migrant workers approvals have been renewed, indicating the desire of Nepali migrant workers to continue with their jobs abroad after their contracts end, and suggests either satisfaction with their jobs, paucity of opportunities at home or both.” The latter part of the statement signifies Nepal’s failure to generate job opportunities for Nepalese human resources. The fact that these human resources are of economically most productive age group of 18-44 makes the situation even more concerning as it suggests that the country is unable to utilize such productive human resources in its own land.

2.1 Overview on Returnee migrants

Regardless of this, there still is a section of migrant workers who decide to return back to Nepal because of many factors like expiry of work contract, expiry of visa, detention, amnesty granted, death of household member, family reunion, leave facility of company, and pregnant or women just delivering birth (International Organization for Migration; Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security, 2021). COVID-19 was however, one of the significant events that led to the return of numbers of Nepalese migrant workers. After COVID-19 hit the world, until January 2021 235,907 migrant workers returned to Nepal via rescue flights. “The number of migrant workers who returned through the Tribhuvan International Airport was 203,934 in 2020/21 and 470,978 in 2021/22” says the report. This jump was seen because flight restrictions were strictly placed during 2020/21 because of COVID 19 which gradually got lifted in the year 2021/22. According to Foreign Employment Information Management System (FEIMS) Madhesh province observed maximum returnee migrants in between 2020/21 to 2021/22 followed by Koshi province and then Lumbini province. In case of women returnee migrants it was Bagmati province which received the highest numbers of returnees followed by Koshi province. It is also to be stated that just like with issuance of labor approval, the number of male returnee migrants significantly outnumbered women returnee migrants. In the year 2020/21 and 2021/22 the proportion of male returnee migrants were 94.2 per cent and 93.3 percent respectively. (Government of Nepal: Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security, 2022)

2.2 Reintegration of returnee migrants in the labor market

A significant increase in the number of returnee migrants due to CoVID-19 also reflected some light on the negative sides of higher dependency of the country's economy on foreign employment. COVID-19 came as a reminder for the requirement of diversifying the economy and also reintegrating the returnee migrants to diversified economic sectors. In Nepal besides remittance, agriculture is another sector where a large proportion of human resources is engaged. Research titled “Profiling Returnee Migrant Workers for Labor Market Integration” by International Organization for Migration (IOM) and MoLESS states, though the agriculture sector’s GDP is declining over years, it still is providing employment to 70 percent of the workforce. In that context it also underlines the high possibility of engaging returnee migrants in the agricultural sector and using the fallow land around the country left in that state because of migration of productive human resource overseas for the very search for better employment opportunities.

The same study also looked into the kind of skills earned by returnee migrants in the destination country as per which 1288 out of 1400 surveyed returnee migrants reported to have earned some skills during their foreign employment. Out of these 1288, 22.9 per cent said that they learned about factory work such as production and manufacturing. This was the highest proportion followed by skills concerning hotel work. However, the kind of skills learnt were not segregated with better explanation. For example by just reading the report one cannot understand what kind of skills “factory work” encompasses. Same goes for other categories like skills concerning hotel work. So clarity on that regard was found lacking in the report. Likewise, Nepal Labor Migration Report 2022 (which has been cited above) states that the majority of migrants are in elementary occupations in which men are seen mostly working as laborers and women have a high share in work concerning cleaning and laundry. Data provided by neither of the publications, shows a high share of learning of skills significant to agriculture.

2.3 Policies and programs relevant to reintegration of returnee migrants

This section highlights initiations by Nepalese state and non-government bodies to socio-economically reintegrate returnee migrant workers. All this information is based on the Nepal Labor Migration Report 2022.

The government of Nepal has addressed the issue of reintegration of returnee migrant workers through various placed laws and policies. These include the Constitution of Nepal 2015 (see article 51: Policies relating to economy, industry and commerce) , the Foreign Employment Act 2007 (see section 33 (a)), and the Foreign Employment Policy 2012 (FEP 2012), which emphasize utilizing the skills and experiences gained from foreign employment in the country's development. While the constitution in the said article promotes the utilization of capital, skills, technology, and

expertise acquired through foreign employment to boost productivity in the country's various sectors, FEA in the said section, grants the government the authority to employ the Foreign Employment Welfare Fund (FEWF) for the implementation of employment programs specifically aimed at returnees. Likewise, FEP calls for effective social and economic reintegration packages to facilitate their smooth transition back into society and the workforce in Nepal. The Fifteenth Periodic Plan and the Local Governance Operations Act 2017 also prioritize returnee reintegration. Likewise recently a Directive for Returnee Migrants has also been drafted, the title of which is "Reintegration Programme (Operation and Management) Directives for Returnee Migrant Workers, 2079".

Nepal is committed to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), which calls for investing in skills development and recognizing migrants' qualifications and competencies. The government has initiated programs such as financial literacy, vocational training, psychosocial support, and direct grants to support returnee reintegration. A reintegration directive has been implemented to consolidate these efforts.

Returnee migrant workers in Nepal benefit from three types of reintegration programs: socialization, employment support, and entrepreneurial development. The Foreign Employment Board (FEB) plays a central role in designing and implementing these programs.

Ongoing initiatives include recognizing prior learning to certify returnees' skills, providing skills-oriented training, and felicitating returnee entrepreneurs. Provincial governments also contribute by formulating policies and programs, particularly in sectors like agriculture and entrepreneurship. Additionally, Employment Coordinators have been appointed in municipalities to support employment services.

In summary, Nepal has developed a comprehensive approach to reintegrate returnee migrant workers, encompassing various laws, policies, and programs aimed at utilizing their skills and experiences for the country's development. (Government of Nepal: Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, 2022)

Here below are also some programs and projects supporting reintegration of returnee migrants:

- i. Safer Migration Project (SaMi) (2011): This project provides information and counseling to returnee migrant workers and refers them to relevant agencies. It is funded by the Government of Nepal and the Government of Switzerland/Helvetas Nepal.
- ii. Dakchyata (2017): Dakchyata focuses on skills development for returnee migrants in construction, agriculture, and tourism sectors. It is funded by the European Union, British Council Nepal, UNDP, ILO, and IOM.

- iii. Strengthening Stage-wise Support System for the Stable Reintegration of Korea Returnee Migrants in Nepal (2022): This project aims to enhance the employability and entrepreneurial capacity of Nepali returnee migrants from Korea and is funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).
- iv. Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Workers (ReMi) Project (2022): This project provides reintegration services and supports the government in preparing reintegration policies. It is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).
- v. Prime Minister Employment Programme (2019): This program offers guaranteed employment opportunities to unemployed individuals aged 18–59 for a maximum of 100 days.
- vi. Microenterprise Development Programme for Poverty Alleviation (2010): This initiative supports entrepreneurs in developing enterprises under a micro-enterprise development model.
- vii. Prime Minister Agriculture Modernisation Project (2016/17): This project focuses on the development of agricultural pockets, blocks, zones, and super zones to facilitate the modernization of agriculture.
- viii. Subsidized Loans (2008/09): It provides subsidized loans of up to NPR 200,000 (approximately USD 1,500) to small enterprises, with a priority given to underprivileged individuals.
- ix. National Youth Council's Youth-Oriented Programmes: These programs offer 390-hour training in various agricultural sectors such as pig farming, poultry farming, mushroom farming, and vegetable farming.
- x. Rural Enterprises and Remittances Project (RERP) - SAMRIDDHI (2015): This project aims to support poor households, migrant families, and returnee migrant workers in generating income through micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises.

In addition to that Nepal's national budgets for the fiscal years 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22 have also outlined programs related to the reintegration of migrant workers. These programs include measures to encourage organic farming, skills development training, interest subsidies for enterprises, and support for technical and vocational education and training institutes. The Prime Minister Employment Programme is also restructured to provide employment opportunities to the unemployed. Additionally, the Foreign Employment Welfare Fund is utilized for employment

rehabilitation programs, with a focus on maintaining records of skills, experiences, and interests of returning workers.

While these many policies, programs and projects are in place to reintegrate returnee labor migrants, it is yet to be seen if the said initiations have helped returnee migrants to economically reintegrate specially in the commercial agricultural sector.

2.4 Returnee migrants in agriculture

While literature like “Returnee Migrants’ Reintegration into Agriculture in Nepal after COVID-19 Pandemic” by Paudel and Paudel, “Returnee migrants as agricultural innovators in Nepal” by Carter and Khadka, and “Migration and COVID-19 in context: Labor migration and the agriculture sector in Nepal” by Gupta, Kharel and Sugden did highlight the trend of returnee migrants’ engagement in agriculture, they did not look into why there is such higher engagement in this field. Also relationship between skills learnt during foreign employment and the significant use of those in agriculture is also missing from the scene. All in all comprehensive study exploring the intersection of these two major socio-economically impactful sectors in Nepal is yet missing. Further missing elements in previous literature concerning this study is discussed in the following section.

2.5 Research Gap/Problem Statement

While there have been numbers of literature talking about labor migration and remittance in Nepal and number of news articles covering stories of Nepalese returnee migrants turned agro-entrepreneurs - many of those being stories of success - a systematic scientific study uncovering factor(s) behind the said success is what I find lacking in case of Nepal. Likewise, a study uncovering the ways Nepalese returnee migrants use the skills and remittance they earned in foreign land for success of their agro-enterprise is something I find missing from the literature on returnee migrants of Nepal. Also research papers proposing relevant policies and programs based on identified factors of success of returnee migrant turned agro-entrepreneurs and their journey of using their learnings from foreign land in those agro-enterprise is missing from the scene of scientific study. Hence these are the gaps which this research aims to minimize by contributing a hypothesis generating in-depth study that can also be used to formulate evidence based policy and intervention programs by government and concerned stakeholders to engage a prominent human resource of returnee migrants in sustainable commercial agro-enterprise in Nepal.

Objectives of the Study

The overarching goal of this study is to propose relevant future policies and intervention programs that can be introduced by the state to mobilize skills and remittance of returnee

migrants for improving agricultural productivity in Nepal. To achieve this there are further specific objectives which go as follows:

- To find factor (s) that are causing successful agro-enterprise of returnee migrants
- To find out ways returnee migrants are using skills and remittances from their foreign labor employment for the successful running of their agro-enterprise

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative exploratory and descriptive research where different facets of returnee migrants' successful agro-entrepreneurship is being studied with greater depth and deployment of sound methodological procedure. While exploratory design of case study will be used to answer the first research question the descriptive design will be used in case of the latter. Case study using 14 cases of successful agro-enterprise of returnee migrants with most different characteristics are conducted for finding the answers to the posed research questions as stated in earlier chapter.

Research Questions	Research Design	Framework used
Q ₁	Exploratory	Structured Focused Comparison
Q ₂	Descriptive	Thematic analysis

Table 1 Research Design

3.1 Case Study

As stated by John Gerring in his book "Case Study Research: Principles and Practices", case study is highly focused in nature where a case or small number of cases are intensively studied for considerable time to shed light on the larger population of cases. The latter part of the earlier sentence reflects that in case study, it is necessary for selected case(s) to be able to generalize in context of a larger population of cases of which it is representative of.

3.1.1 Sampling

Following the definition provided by Gerring, this research selects 14 cases of successful agro-enterprise of returnee migrants from all seven provinces where they have used the skills and remittance that they have earned during their stay in foreign land. This means selected cases are representative of larger successful agro-enterprises of returnee migrants. Sample cases for the study are selected mostly using purposeful sampling. Cases that contain relevant information to the phenomenon we are studying are required here, hence the said sampling method is used.

One may ask why the number of cases are 14 here and not more or less than that. To answer that I would say I am conducting a study where I can get in-depth insight on studied phenomena which would also manage to represent the diverse context of the country. For the former purpose one will suggest to select a lesser number of cases. It is so because with fewer cases, more time can be spent on studying each of the cases with greater depth. Likewise for the latter they will suggest a larger number of cases and that is so because a larger sample size has a higher possibility of being representative of the larger population that we are trying to study. But because I want to conduct a study with both reliable and valid findings, I am taking this middle stance of conducting a case study with not too few number of cases but also not too many of them. Also if we go for a larger number of sample size it will no longer be a case study but a Large N study with many observations

rather than cases. As stated by Gerring (in his work cited above) “The fewer cases there are, and the more intensively they are studied, the more a work merits the appellation case study.”

Now that the rationale behind the selected number of cases is discussed, it is necessary to explain how these sample cases are identified. As per the data obtained through Industrial Information System (updated till Asadh 31, 2080), 298 industries out of 530 total agro enterprises in Nepal are registered in Bagmati province this is followed by Koshi province with 127 agro enterprises. These two are the only provinces that have managed to register hundreds of said industries. In third place comes Gandaki with 48 such industries. Karnali province with only one reported industry comes in last place. (**It is to be noted that many agro enterprises may not have been formally registered in government channels and hence I think the actual number of established enterprises is larger than what the said state level information system reports.*) So based on this data, it should be logical to have majority cases from Bagmati province, followed by Koshi province. However, if we look into data on province level major agricultural production the order of listed provinces are different. As per Final Report on Inter Provincial Dependency for Agricultural Development by Development Vision Nepal submitted to Department of Agriculture, it has been identified that out of 23 key agricultural productions, Lumbini province has 17 products with either surplus or sufficient production. This is the highest number among all other provinces. With 12 of such products with either sufficient or surplus production, Koshi province is in second place. Hence referring to these data sources and following the principle of purposeful sampling which is to select samples with richer information, this study decides to select 5 cases from Bagmati province, 3 from Koshi province, 2 from Lumbini province, and 1 each from other respective provinces. Even with the negligible number of agro industry reported by the state level information system in Karnali province, this study still wants to make the sample representative of all provinces and hence does not exclude any province in the collected sample.

In short number of case selection from each province is based on two criteria for this research:

- (i) Number of agro-enterprise in each province
- (ii) Number of major agricultural products with sufficient or surplus production

On the basis of these two criteria/determinants following number of cases are identified from each province

Province	Number of Cases
Koshi	3
Madhesh	1
Bagmati	5
Gandaki	1
Lumbini	2
Karnali	1
Sudurpashchim	1

Total	14
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Table 2 Number of Cases

Then in the second step of selecting cases, the municipalities or rural municipalities for the case identification are randomly selected. This is done so that to counter bias (to a certain degree) that our mostly purposeful sampling design might be inherent. Once the municipalities/village municipalities are selected, municipal offices of these places are contacted to receive detailed information on returnee migrants turned agro-entrepreneurs in the region. After that again method of purposeful sampling is used to identify case(s) which satisfies the characteristics we need in our study. These characteristics will be defined in detail in the following section.

3.1.2 Most-Different Design

The case selection is done using many different case selection designs which is mostly used in qualitative exploratory research. Because one of the research objectives here is to find (explore) causal factor(s) for successful agro-enterprise using a scientific method, this case selection design is chosen here. This design introduces a scientific way of conducting qualitative causal research by satisfying one of the four principles of causation which is isolation. To establish a causal relationship between an independent variable (X) and a dependent variable (Y), it is important to isolate the effects of other variables or factors that can have effect on either of independent or dependent variables and/or their relationship. Most different designs do so by selecting cases that are varied in these other background factors/confounding variables (Z) while are same in case of outcome or dependent variable (Y). In context of this study, these potential confounding variables are: Gender (of the entrepreneur), Ethnicity (of the entrepreneur), Province (where the enterprise is established), geographical region (where the enterprise is established) and Type of Agro-enterprise. Likewise the outcome/dependent variable (Y) here is successful agro-enterprise of returnee migrants.

This type of case selection also helps improve generalizability of study findings for the second research question. It is so because results received from here will be from cases of diverse characteristics just as how the population of successful agro-enterprise of returnee migrants is composed of.



Figure 1 Sampling process for the study

3.1.3 Structured Focused Comparison

As evident through its name, structured focused comparison (SFC) is a tool or a framework used to carry out scientific qualitative comparative analysis. The following snippet from the chapter "The method of Structured Focused Comparison" of the book titled "Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences", by George and Bennett can help us understand the essence of SFC.

The method and logic of structured, focused comparison is simple and straightforward. The method is "structured" in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings of the cases possible. The method is "focused" in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined. The requirements for structure and focus apply equally to individual cases since they may later be joined by additional cases.

In other words, to carry out a SFC one needs to have a set of structured questions that will be asked to each case guided by research objective and such questions will be focused on one certain element the research intends to study. Likewise, as presented by Drozdova and Gaubatz in their book "Quantifying the Qualitative", *"the essential element of structured-focused comparison is the use of theory to clearly and explicitly identify a single outcome variable of interest and set of causal factors."* Hence following these statements, it can be said that this tool is used to study causation of an outcome in small N studies and that is what it is being used for in this research as well. SFC is used to identify common causal factors for successful agro enterprise of returnee migrants with varied circumstances like that of ethnicity, gender, province, geographical region and type of (agro) enterprise. Following the process of this method, a specific question is asked to each case and eventually data received after posing the question to each case is compared and on the basis of that, a certain hypothesis is generated.

3.1.4 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) is a qualitative data analysis tool where meaningful patterns are identified from the collected dataset for answering the posed research question. Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, psychologists and qualitative researchers, who have done extensive work on TA state that this tool of data analysis can provide an entryway to qualitative research for the newcomers. This means, for those who are new to the qualitative research field, it may seem quite a challenging and complex task to conduct qualitative research and in that context TA through its mechanics of coding and systematic analysis of identified patterns can help them make sense of (seemingly) vague dataset. In other words, it helps provide systematic structure to a large number of non-numeric dataset and make meaning out of it. It is also because of this structured segregation of data on the basis of commonality in the received answers that this tool helps to create is a reason why it is being used to answer the second research question of this study. Different ways of skills and remittance use can be reported by the selected cases of entrepreneurs and this tool will help provide structure to those varied answers. Based on the shared answers by the entrepreneurs, codes will be generated which will be used to

3.2 Data Collection

In-depth interviews are conducted with the migrant returnees turned entrepreneurs running the identified successful agro-enterprise for collecting data relevant to the study. The interviews are guided by semi-structured questions. In possible scenarios the interviews are conducted in person. However, because of the time and resource constraints, the majority of the interviews are conducted either online or over phone. Observational data is also collected in context of the site visit.

3.3 Operationalization

Dependent variable of our study (in case of our first research question) that is successful agro-enterprise is a little vague concept. Hence there should be some parameters set that might help us measure and define success of such enterprise. This section presents the indicators that are placed to identify whether the selected cases are truly the cases of successful enterprise of returnee migrants or not.

- i. Running of business for more than three years
This is placed as an indicator for successful agro-enterprise because an enterprise actively running even after constant loss for three years of its establishment is nearly impossible unless the entrepreneurs have immense inflowing capital from certain source and never shaking hope for their business which is very unlikely considering the selected cases are not of business tycoons.
- ii. Cash flow positive

When the incoming cash is greater than that of outgoing money for expenses incurred, it is seen as the business having cash flow positive. Cash flow positive suggests sound financial health of the business and hence it is kept as an indicator for the successful enterprise.

iii. Entrepreneurs satisfaction with the running of their farm:

Entrepreneurs are the main actor in their story of entrepreneurship. So how they are feeling about the functioning of their enterprise so far is an important factor behind determining whether the said enterprise can be considered a successful one or not. It is however to be noted that by this it does not count the enterprises who have been currently facing loss a successful one just because entrepreneurs running them are hopeful about a better future for their business regardless of it currently encountering a roadblock. Those have to show signs of better production and or marketing in the current context for them to be considered successful.

The cases are determined as successful enterprises on the basis of them meeting at least one of the above listed criteria.

4. CASES

Here is the list of fourteen selected cases of returnee migrants turned successful agro-entrepreneurs. In total, interviews and interaction with eighteen of the entrepreneurs were conducted. However, four of those did not meet the criteria of being a success story. Hence responses of only fourteen entrepreneurs are recorded here. Out of fourteen twelve of them were interviewed via phone and the farms of two of the remaining entrepreneurs were visited. These were the farms of Hiralal Shrestha from Ramechhap and Jayaram Giri from Chandragiri, Bagmati province.

S.N.	Name of Entrepreneur	Name/Type of Enterprise	Address
1.	Netra Bahadur Magar	Beekeeping/ Vegetable and Livestock Farming	Mahalaxmi municipality, Dhankuta, Koshi province
2.	Dilli Raj Upreti	D&D Bio Plantech	Mechinagar municipality, Koshi province
3.	Purna Bahadur Lingden	Three Brothers Goat Agro Farm	Suryodaya municipality, Koshi province
4.	Ramdhyan Mandal	Maa Baishno Devi Krishi Farm	Samsi rural municipality, Mahottari, Madhesh province
5.	Hira Lal Shrestha	Potato and Kiwi Farm	Umakunda rural municipality, Bagmati province
6.	Jayaram Giri	Giri Nursery and Agriculture Farm	Dahachowk, Chandragiri municipality, Bagmati province
7.	Bhadra Kumari Amgai	Livestock Farming	Bharatpur, Bagmati province
8.	Karmadhwaj Tamang	Vegetable Farming	Mahalaxmi municipality, Lalitpur, Bagmati Province
9.	Nabin Awala	Vegetable Farming	Lubhu, Mahalaxmi municipality, Bagmati province
10.	Mahendra Baniya	Ekata Goat Agro Farm	Beni municipality, Gandaki province
11.	Krishna Prasad Khanal	Vegetable and Livestock Farming	Sandikharka municipality, Lumbini province
12.	Ravi Lal Pantha	Gaurav Dudh Dairy तथा Prasodhan Kendra	Ruru rural municipality, Lumbini province

13.	Devendra Godar	Unnati Agro Farm	Dungeshwor rural municipality, Dailekh, Karnali province
14.	Karunakar Awasthi	Balak Ved Krishi तथा Pashupankshi Byabasaya	Amargadhi municipality, Sudurpashchim province

Table 3 List of Cases

Limitations

- Time and resource constraints

Case study is a kind of in-depth research where each case does require a good amount of time to be invested to have thorough understanding of them. However, this fellowship is just three months long because of which time given to each case had to be crunched. In-short I feel like better in-depth information could have been received had the fellowship been longer in time length. Because of the limited time and also limited financial resources that each fellow is provided with for data collection, I could only visit a couple of case sites. Information for all other cases were collected through phone call or online call. There are fourteen cases selected from different parts of the country and to reach each of those sites was not possible using the limited budget that was provided to me as a fellow. I believe longer time and resource investment would help result in better in-depth findings and also a larger number of cases could also have been selected for better generalizability of study findings.

However, regardless of the study having a smaller sample size, I believe it does follow a sound methodological approach which will lead to valid and reliable study findings that can be helpful for state bodies (including NPC) to draft relevant policies in future.

- Low number of female case

In order to make the sample more representative and hence induce generalizable findings, this study intended to have as diverse cases as possible in terms of ethnicity, gender, province, type of enterprise and geographical region. Diverse cases were also required for isolating the effect of these factors (confounding variables) on successful agro enterprise of returnee migrants (dependent variable) in order to identify other common causal factors of such success. However, only one successful case of female returnee agro-entrepreneur could be identified for this study that too after a rigorous effort to identify female cases using purposeful sampling. This could also be because of a quite lower ratio of female migrant workers compared to that of male migrant workers in the country. Yet it would have been better if at least 30 per cent of sample size were that of female agro-entrepreneurs as lesser diversity in the data in terms of gender can also have an effect on validity of study findings.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 Causal factors for successful agro-enterprise

As per the conducted interviews and observations during the field visit, there are some important common factors reported by the entrepreneurs for their successful agro-enterprise. Because the cases are varied in other characteristics like ethnicity, gender, province, geographical region and types of enterprise, for this study I focused on common factors all these varied cases attributed to their successful agro-enterprise to answer the first research question of this study. Here below firstly I will list down all the factors attributed by all thirteen cases and then select the common ones in the end.

Case No.	Ethnicity	Gender	Province	Geographical Region	Type of agro-enterprise	Factors
I	Magar	Male	Koshi	Hill	Beekeeping, Vegetable and Livestock Farming	- Hard work - Family Support (involvement in the business)
II	Hill Brahmin	Male	Koshi	Terai	Floriculture: Large Scale Marigold production farm and large nursery with varieties of flowers, Horticulture: Large scale Papaya and Watermelon farming, Vegetable Farming	- Spousal support and partnership - Hard work - Discipline - Lifestyle focusing on fulfillment of needs rather than luxurious wants - Management skills
III	Limbu	Male	Koshi	Hill	Goat Farming	- Hard work - Ability to do physical labor - Geographical location of the farm

						- Family support (support from siblings) - Networking skills
IV	Madheshi	Male	Madhesh	Terai	Fish farming, horticulture and vegetable farming	- Family support (especially those of siblings) - Support from local government institutions (rural municipality and agriculture knowledge center) - Hard work - Trust of few individuals from the community (those who gave their land to him for lease)
V	Newar	Male	Bagmati	Hill (2500 m altitude from sea level)	Potato, Kiwi and <i>Loth Salla</i> cultivation	- Support from individual experts and relevant organizations working in the field of agriculture and entrepreneurship (Networking skills) - Inspirational books - Positive interaction with like-minded people

VI	Hill Brahmin	Female	Bagmati	Inner Terai	Livestock Farming (Goat, Buffalo and Cow)	- Hardwork - Will power - Networking skills - Never give up attitude (perseverance) - Desire to learn
VII	Giri	Male	Bagmati	Valley	Vegetable Farming (Mostly tomato and other green vegetables)	- Family support (involvement in the business) - Individual research and study - Understanding of soil quality - Consultation with experts
VIII	Tamang	Male	Bagmati	Valley	Vegetable Farming	-
IX	Newar	Male	Bagmati	Valley	Vegetable Farming	- Individual research and study - Less expenses because of organic way of cultivation
X	Chhetri	Male	Gandaki	Hill	Goat Farming	- Hardwork - Pre-planning
XI	Hill Brahmin	Male	Lumbini	Hill	Multipurpose Farm (Vegetable Farming, Poultry Farming, Buffalo farming)	- Hard work and invested effort - Market study - Multi purposive typology of farm - Location of the farm (nearby market area)
XII	Hill Brahmin	Male	Lumbini	Hill	Dairy (Collecting,	- Area identification - Diligence

					producing and distributing)	- Proper operation of financial resources - Interest based type of enterprise
XIII	Chhetri	Male	Karnali	Hill	Vegetable and livestock farming	- Consistent effort even when faced with loss at times - Family support (specially spousal support) - Support from government agricultural bodies
XIV	Hill Brahmin	Male	Sudurpashchim	Unnati Agro Farm	Multipurpose Farm (potato cultivation, livestock farming, vegetable farming)	- Collective effort of family to find solution to identified problems of disease in crops, and combating attacks from boars and monekeys

Table 4 Table of Factors

While one unanimous common factor was not seen in all the selected cases, there are few that have been repeated by majority participants. Here below are those common factors.

i. Hard work:

With seven of the participants (so far) reporting it as a major factor behind success of their enterprise, this comes as the most important factor behind the said success. Relentless hard-work of the entrepreneurs in their business enterprise was the most voiced factor behind their said success. This was just not based on their answer on what they think is a factor behind their success but also their narrative when they shared their journey of being an entrepreneur.

Mahindra Baniya, a forty eight year old entrepreneur from Beni who spent twenty three years of his life in foreign countries and now owns a goat agro farm with 300 plus goats had the following thing to say when asked about factors behind his success.

"We worked as bridle horse when in foreign land. So I have tried to work here in the similar manner and I think that is the main factor behind my success so far."

Likewise, twenty years old Ramdhyan Mandal from Samsi rural municipality of Mahottari district who did labor work on 300 (NPR) per day wage basis before leaving for foreign employment, who faced many difficulties during his 13 months stay in Malaysia as foreign labor employee but who now owns business which produces 40 lakh profit per year says,

"For two initial years of my business, I spent 24 hours of the day at my farm. I went nowhere. I celebrated no festivals. I slept for 2-3 hours per day. I would not have food on time and slowly all that paid me off."

Some of the participants along with this factor also added their perseverance and diligence behind their success. Because these two things also align with one's hard work, it has been decided to not record them as separate factors in the context of this report.

ii. Family support:

Seven participants so far attributed factors aligning with family support and collective effort as one of the factors behind the success of their enterprise. They mentioned family support mostly in a sense of their family members' involvement in the running of the enterprise. Furthermore, a participant stated that his partnership with his wife and her constant support and division of enterprise's responsibility with her as a major factor behind their flourishing enterprise. In two of the cases wives had started the work of establishing the enterprises before the return of the husbands. Also in three cases when they said family support, they specifically meant support from their spouse. However, there was also reported significant support from other family members like that of siblings. In the case of sibling support, they were not directly involved in the farm's regular functioning but they had made financial contributions in the business when needed and also provided his brother (the owner) with required moral support during difficult times. Below are the excerpts from two of these interviews, which present their family support as a factor behind their success.

"It is because of my wife that I am able to run my livelihood at the moment...She is the main actor I believe because it was her idea to start this farm and even currently when we decided to take it to Birtamod, she is looking after all the work of nursery here (in Mechinagar)...If my wife was not there in my life, none of this would

happen, there would be no enterprise that I am running at the moment. Probably I would still be in foreign country working there."

-Mahendra Baniya, Mechinagar

Listing out factors behind his success so far, Purna Bahadur Lingden 36 years old owner of goat farm from Suryodaya municipality, Ilam states that –

"..the other factor is also my brothers' support for my business. Their consolation during challenging times in business, their moral support and also their financial support have been there in this entrepreneurial journey of mine."

iii. Networking skill:

Though this was reported by only two of the interviewed participants, this factor still held quite some importance behind the success of both the cases. It is to be noted that the word networking skill was not exactly used by the participants. However, the fact that they described their active quest of connecting to people and reaching out to them resulting in them gaining support from those networks, signified that what they were saying was use of their networking skill. Hence provided statements were summarized and presented as their networking skill to be a reported factor behind success of their enterprises. Here below I briefly share the story of one of the entrepreneurs which sheds light on how his zeal to connect with people and share his ideas got him to the position of being a successful entrepreneur.

Hiralal Shrestha an agro-enterprise from the rural part of Ramechhap district when came back to Nepal from Malaysia after the end of decade long conflict between Maoist and the state, he came with lots of hope of doing something of his own on his own land. He started an agricultural cooperative in Kathmandu through with some of his village mates living in Kathmandu. However because his partners could not commit much of their time to the cooperative, it came to loss. That was a period of failure for Mr. Shrestha which also brought this thought of leaving his place once again for foreign employment. However, his goal to make something of his own on his own land retained him back and he again started to work from the scratch. This time he thought of doing agriculture commercially on a larger scale in his own land. For this he realized he required more study and training on effective ways of doing agriculture and business. Then soon he started connecting to experts/trainers. He built good relations with them and to this date they have been providing him required guidance on commercial agriculture. He has taken 11-12 training sessions on agriculture, business, commercialization of vegetable farming (including potato farming) so far. He is the first person to start Kiwi farming in Gupteshwor VDC (now part of Umakunda rural municipality). Today he cultivates potato in 60 ropani land through which he mostly supplies potato seeds to the market. He also runs Kiwi farm and cultivates *Loth*

Salla (*Taxus wallichina*) as one of his major crops. Moreover he works as collector of agricultural produce from local farmers in two of the districts. He manages to save NPR 50,000 per month living in the same rural part of the country from where every year large numbers of young manpower migrate for foreign employment. Hearing his story it was very clear that his way of connecting with people and valuing relationships with them is an important factor that got him here. He still remembers the owner of the restaurant where he worked in Malaysia and the learnings he had from him and his family. Likewise, even when I got connected with him for this research, the way he and his family welcomed me, provided me with their hospitality and shared their ideas and vision was commendable.

5.2 Use of skills and remittance

Second objective of this research is to find the ways in which returnee migrants turned entrepreneurs are found to be using the skills they garnered and remittance that they earned in their enterprise to make them success stories. There were two specific questions in the drafted semi-structured questionnaire that was posed to receive the answers for the said purpose. Answers to those questions reported different use of skills and remittance in the business of the entrepreneurs. Here I will report answers on the case basis and later generate themes out of the reported answers.

In the context of remittance, not everyone interviewed reported its use in their business. Though they did bring their earnings to Nepal, some of them reported using those in purchasing real estate. Regardless, many of the entrepreneurs did respond using the remittance earned in their enterprises. In relation to using the remittance in the business it was done in two ways.

i. Invested in building business capital before their return to Nepal

Two of the interviewed entrepreneurs shared that they started saving their earnings in foreign land for their startup since the time they were actively working there. These two people had a vision of starting their agro-enterprise long before they returned to Nepal. One of them started buying lands for cultivation of grass for the goats he was planning to farm. Likewise the other invested in real estate thinking that he can use the bought land to get a loan when starting his business after his return. Many other people also invested their earnings on land but it was not with a vision of using it for business in future. Those lands were usually bought as part of expanding their property.

ii. Invested in business after returning to Nepal

Besides these two cases four of the interviewed entrepreneurs reported not using their earned remittance in current business and remaining eight of them said that they invested that money in their initial business capital.

Likewise majority of the interviewed entrepreneurs were not engaged in agriculture related work when in foreign country. Regardless of none of them gaining technical skills concerning farming, they have implemented their varied learnings in their enterprises in their own ways. So the skills they earned and learnings they had there which they are using in their current enterprise are divided

in two themes as listed below. Each section also presents the ways those skills have been used by the entrepreneurs.

(i) Business skills

This section presents skill sets specifically concerning functioning of business that the interviewed entrepreneurs said to gain during their foreign employment. Two of the interviewed entrepreneurs reported that the skill that they learned during their foreign labor employment period was **customer service** which includes things like polite interaction with customers, hearing their feedback and complaints and acting on those. Dilli Raj Upreti owner of D&D Bio Plantech says -

"..talking about learnings or skills that I gained during my stay abroad, I have to say because I worked in customer service department, I learnt about customer service skills like you have to be respectful to customers, their complaints should be considered and exchange policy should be put in place in such situations. You can't say that you already bought it and we did not know how the product was inside (when a customer complains about a product turning out to be of bad quality). Like if someone comes with a complaint in our watermelon (sharing an example from his business) then we exchange it."

In the above excerpt the entrepreneur was also found to be reporting the way he is utilizing his learnt customer service skills in current business. He took the learning from his foreign employment and applied it to his current business where his customers' reviews and complaints are actively taken into consideration.

The other frequently reported skill directly relevant to business was that of **business management** which includes range of skills from time management to financial management to human resource management. Even in that, **time management skill** is something that surfaced more often among research interviewees.

"From my employers in Malaysia I learnt how each minute spent is important. I learnt the value of time there. They (employers) would keep track of every extra minute we spent even in loo. They would question us if we spend a couple of minutes longer there. That made me realize time surely is important and if I work half the way I work here in my own land, I surely would be able to make a good living."

The use of this learning of his was clearly seen in his current enterprise. From his account he gave all his time to his work in the first two years of starting his farm. For him how and where he spent the time he had in his hand was very important while running his business. Hence while running his enterprise he prioritized his work and spent the time accordingly.

Devendra Godar, who worked as a hotel manager in India for fourteen years summarizes his learnings from the foreign employment and its use in his current agro-enterprise in the following way.

"I learned the importance of human resource management there. I have been using it here as well. And handling accounts, (projecting and calculating) income and loss are other things I have brought in use here. I have been able to operate and manage the business using the practical knowledge I had gained there..."

On asking how exactly the said skills were utilized in his enterprise, he says

"The foremost thing I did was to decide whom to assign the task and when/where. This is what I have been doing. Like how many people can finish a certain task and when. In this way, workers also get paid and I also won't have to bear any loss. I have been employing the same method."

In the same way, Krishna Prasad Khanal from Arghakhanchi says, skills required to work along different stakeholders like that of police administration, journalist and **marketing skills** were two important learnings he had while working in India in the distribution channel of liquor industry. On explaining how he has used the gained knowledge he says

"In case of marketing, the prices tend to fall and rise, and hence when such situation rose in my business I didn't only listen to the businessmen of the markets but also made connections to the egg producers and suppliers of the market which gave me knowledge of the stocks, prices and source of these products such as where the eggs were coming from, for example if they were from Dang, Terai, Chitwan, etc. And only after taking suggestions from them and getting information from all the sides instead of listening to only one side did I use to draw conclusions about the market. This helped me to retain customers. We used to insist on the full agreed price but if they sometimes tried to bargain, we would give them a discount of 50-100 rupees."

The last important relevant business skill observed among entrepreneurs who have been successful in their business was their networking skills. This skill was clearly visible among three of the interviewed people. However, it was not clear if the said skill was something that they gained during their foreign employment or was it something that they had even before their migration to foreign land. Hence because of this un-clarity of it being a skill resulting from their employment, this will not be reported as a gained skill in this category.

(ii) General learnings:

The mostly voiced learnings from foreign employment among returnee migrants turned agro-entrepreneur is reported to be this understanding that no work is small and any work they do with dedication and hardwork can lead them to success. **Importance of working hard** is what they said they learnt from their foreign stay as they realize if they work even half the amount they were needed to work there after coming back home they can yield success in their business. Besides that, a participant even mentioned that the harsh conditions they (labor workers) had to work in foreign land taught him the **value of labor rights and good working environment**. Because of that learning of his, today while running his own business he makes sure that his employees' are valued and their rights are ensured. The other thing specially reported by those who had migrated to South Korea for foreign employment is the **dedication towards the work** among the South Korean and also their **loyalty towards their country**. Both of the returnee migrants from South Korea stated that experience being an inspiring factor to start and work hard on their own business in Nepal. Having gone through many difficulties while migrating for foreign employment to the point of almost getting trafficked and not being paid for their work for three years, an interviewee says "my those experience taught me to never lose **will power** and to no matter how difficult situations are thrown at you." With the same mentality they have been continuously working to better their livelihood at their own place and always looking out to better their business and eventually better their lives.

5.3 Additional findings

While studying all the selected cases in depth, numbers of important information concerning agro-enterprise of returnee migrants but not exactly related to the research questions of this study were surfaced which shall be dissected in this section. During interaction with the returnee turned successful entrepreneurs they reported about several challenges they encountered while running their business. Likewise, even when not specifically applied to their case, they spoke about challenges encountered by farmers and agro-entrepreneurs in general and from their accounts such issues can be addressed if received required action and intervention from the government. Here below are those challenges:

- Loss incurred due to lack of technical knowledge
- Issue of unstable price and market
- Scarcity of fertilizer during cultivation period
- Loss incurred due to market competition with Indian products
- Bureaucratic process and lengthy paper works

When asked about the kind of support and intervention programs from state they think can help support returnee migrants in their agro-business initiative following answers were mostly pronounced:

- State should provide need based support and grant programs to the returnee migrants interested to start their agro enterprise. This means instead of just providing monetary grants, interested returnee migrants should be provided with the skills, training and material resources required to start their agro business.
- Need of market security for farmers' production was another frequently cited necessity by the interviewees. So intervention guaranteeing market for the produced goods where the state ensures that the farmers at least always receive a certain price (support price) covering the production cost of their produce.
- State can also support returnee migrants' plan to start their enterprise in their own country by making the bureaucratic procedure to take loan and support grants less complicated and accessible. It was also suggested that the concerned government authorities should provide such loans at a concessional interest rate.
- Proper regulatory mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the use of grants by the receiving entrepreneurs is another suggestion that came from the ground. Some of the entrepreneurs reported that instead of genuine farmers in need, people with good connections with concerned authorities get the grants distributed by the government. Hence, the need for such a regulatory mechanism was identified by them. Supporting those who are doing better while genuinely working on their plan and guiding those who are dedicated to work in this sector but are encountering failures can be a way of producing successful agro-entrepreneurs in the country. And proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms can play a significant role in the process.
- Likewise, interviewees also voiced that the time relevant intervention is required from the state when farmers encountered challenges such as disease in plant or livestock. From the interaction with agro-entrepreneurs it was clear that many of new farmers do require better guidance and support from agricultural department of government at local level in the starting phase of their business especially through technical manpower sound in agriculture and business management who can provide such entrepreneurs with necessary advice when faced with challenging situation.

6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Plethora of information was received from the conducted fourteen in depth interviews and field visits to two of the farms. This also included information that was not directly related to the research questions yet could contribute to the overarching goal of the study. In this chapter, I will look into the credibility of findings laid out in the previous chapter. Likewise, the received findings will also be looked through the critical lens here based on which future research project concerning agro-enterprise of returnee migrants.

Hard work, family support and networking skill, were identified as causal factors after commonality in responses on causes of success was received from among the cases with varied circumstances of gender, ethnicity, provincial and geographical belongingness and type of agro-enterprise being run. The principle of causality requires satisfaction of three criteria: co-variation, temporal order and isolation. Isolation component of causality has been satisfied by this research to its best capacity. While the selected cases could not be as gender diverse as it intended to be, the diversity in other categories of confounding variables still help in isolating the effect of potential confounding variables on the stated outcome (dependent variable) of successful agro enterprise of returnee migrants. Also, all the major common attributed factors reported to follow the temporal order of preceding the outcome of successful agro-enterprise. The above presented statements in the finding section are testament to that. What it means by that is successful farmers worked hard and had good family support and or had good networking skills before they created a successful enterprise of their own. In other words, reported factors came before and not after the success of the enterprise. Hence, they can be the cause and not effect of the success. The only criteria of causality that is yet to be tested here is co-variation. For testing that, a larger scale study independently studying the relationship between these factors and successful agro enterprise of returnee migrants can be conducted in future. Regardless, because they do satisfy two important criteria of causality, they still can be considered potential causal factors for successful agro-enterprise. Likewise, the received factors also hold the value of being generalizable to other successful cases of returnee migrants, because of the diversity the study maintains in its cases selection.

A thematic analysis tool was used to answer the second question of the study that intended to find out ways in which the agro entrepreneurs used skills and remittances that they earned during their foreign employment in their current enterprise. While the first question followed exploratory research design this followed descriptive research design hence for this in-depth interview with semi structured questions were conducted. The narrative received afterwards then were coded and further segregated in relevant themes. In terms of use of remittance two prominent ways were identified. The first was investing in building business capital before returning to Nepal and the second was investing in business after returning to Nepal. The former way of investment held clear planning and vision for starting business after their return. However 80 percent of the entrepreneurs who reported using remittance in their business did so after their return to the country. These findings suggest that state policy promoting investment in business capital building among migrant

workers, during their employment in foreign land might help retain remittance in the productive sector.

Learnings from foreign employment were divided into two categories: Business Skills and General Learnings. The former focused on specific skills important to run a successful business, while the latter are things that have been shaping entrepreneurs' outlook towards their lives and their decisions, they take in their journey of being an agro-entrepreneur. From among the learnt business skills, business management skills had two important categories: time management and human resource management skills. Besides that, there were two other major important skills reported by the entrepreneurs: customer service skills and marketing skills. However, though these findings were received after conducting in-depth interviews with 14 different agro-entrepreneurs from around the country, the identified findings were not collectively reported. Meaning if few reported customer service as the skill they learnt, others said time management as the skill they learnt. The learnt skills varied from person to person depending upon the type of work they were engaged in while abroad. If a person was engaged in work where they had to interact with customers directly they learnt about customer skills but if they were engaged in other work say for example production of goods where they had no direct interaction with customers they were not able to learn customer service skills. These findings were also not received by the majority. Meaning while two people reported customer service skills as something they learnt during their foreign employment, three people out of fourteen total interviewed entrepreneurs said it was time management skills that they learnt there. Hence, diversity in received answers can raise questions in generalizability of the study findings concerning learnt skills. However, more than identifying what skills they learnt during foreign employment the study was more focused on finding out how those skills are being used in the successful agro-enterprise of returnee migrants. Use of the reported skills were observed in enterprises as laid out in the excerpts in the finding section. They also seemed to have contributed to the success of the enterprises. Like in the case of Ramdhyan Mandal he emphasized that his decision to invest all his time in hand in his farm for two years paid him off ultimately. He made best use of his time on his business and that definitely is considered a skill of time management, and it was said to lead to the success of his enterprise. Yet a separate study examining the relationship between the use of said skills and the success of the enterprises can help state the causal relationship with better confidence. This again can be a prospect for future study.

When it came to general learnings from the foreign employment which are importance of working hard, value of labor rights and good working environment, dedication towards the work, loyalty towards the home country and importance of willpower, these were seen to be shaping the general life values of the entrepreneurs which in one way or the other seem to have impacts on how they are running their business. However, unlike in case of other findings I do not see a requirement of intervention programs targeting any of these factors (learnings) for resulting successful enterprise of returnee migrants.

The additional findings of this research which do not have direct contribution in answering the study's research questions but still contribute significant insights on the role of state in supporting

agro-entrepreneurial initiatives of returnee migrants are those which will shape many recommendations listed in the upcoming chapter. Receiving these additional yet important insights also signified the necessity of a separate study that would solely look into the ways in which the state can support budding agro-entrepreneurs, especially those who have returned to their country in hopes of starting an enterprise of their own.

7. CONCLUSION

In this three months long intensive study of successful agro-enterprise of returnee migrants, many facets of reality surfaced. The idea of the study was to find factors behind the success of these enterprises given they come from diverse circumstances and also to explore the ways in which skills and remittances earned from foreign employment are being used in these enterprises. Based on accumulated findings then it intended to suggest relevant future policies and intervention programs that can be introduced by the state to mobilize skills and remittance of returnee migrants for improving agricultural productivity in Nepal. Structured focused comparison and thematic analysis were two methodological tools used here. Fourteen cases from across the country diverse in ethnicity, gender, province and geographical region they belong to, and type of agro-enterprise being run were studied in depth. The findings suggested hard work, family support and networking skills as factors behind the success of agro-enterprise of returnee migrants. Likewise, customer service skills, business management skills and marketing skills were reported to be skills garnered during their foreign employment by the entrepreneurs which now as per their account are also being used in their agro-enterprises. Importance of working hard, value of labor rights and good working environment, dedication towards the work, loyalty towards the home country and importance of willpower were other general learnings from the foreign employment reported by the entrepreneurs. While not all entrepreneurs reported to use the remittance earned in foreign land on their agro-business, those who invested either did so when in foreign land already having a plan to start an agro-enterprise on their return, or after coming back to Nepal when they finally came up with a plan to start an agro-enterprise. Besides these findings answering research questions of the study, there were others which reflected upon ways in which concerned government institutions can help support returnee migrants with budding interest in agro-entrepreneurship.

All in all the study findings suggested that given that the returnee migrants aspiring to be agro-entrepreneurs are provided with necessary support that would help them have access to resources, skills and factors required for successful enterprise, they definitely can make identity of their own in their own land while contributing directly to enterprising Nepal. None of the interviewed participants willingly left the country, it was their economic circumstance and lack of economic security in their own land that made them do so. But once they reached a position where they could arrange financial and other resources required for running an agro-farm, they went for it. Given such willingness and desire of Nepalese human resources to make something of them in their own land, it is the government's responsibility to retain them and make best use of their vision and willpower. In the upcoming chapter the measures that can be taken by government institutions will be laid out based on the received findings.

8. RECOMMENDATION

None of the interviewed entrepreneurs had it easy when they started their agro-enterprise here in Nepal. They faced a number of challenges but because of multiple factors mentioned in earlier chapters they made it to this point where they are able to sustain their livelihood through their business initiatives. Such journeys of returnee migrants to establish themselves as agro-entrepreneurs could have been smoother had there been better intervention from the state authorities. Also, these stories discussed were that of success, however, there seemed to be many stories of struggle of returnee migrants who are trying their best to not migrate to foreign land yet again. Three of the interviewed participants also stated that though in their individual cases they received relevant support from government authorities and experts working in the government agricultural institutions, many of the farmers and entrepreneurs are facing failures in their initiations because of many loopholes in the government system.

8. 1 Invest in returnee migrants as important human resource

Returnee migrants are already proven to be important actors helping sustain the economy of the country through their earned remittance. However, high reliance on foreign employment does pose a threat to the economy in the longer run. To lessen this dependency it is important to invest in human resources for those who have returned from their foreign employment and are trying to make something out of themselves here in their own land. Their success in Nepal can help retain other human resources in the country and motivate them to engage in the productive economic sector of the country.

Here are some of the ways in which government institutions can invest in returnee migrants.

- i. Design programs bringing aspiring returnee agro-entrepreneurs together and introduce them with successful ones who can provide them with required guidance:

Starting an enterprise especially if you have no prior experience in running one comes with a share of risks. To minimize those risks and provide a way out to such a group of aspirants, concerned government authorities can organize interaction programs between established successful returnee agro-entrepreneurs and the aspiring ones. Such interaction can help provide relatable guidance based on firsthand experience of those who have gone through the series of experience while building their enterprise. Networking skills have also been identified as a significant factor behind successful agro-enterprise of returnee migrants here by this study. And such interaction programs can help aspirants to build such beneficial networks. Furthermore government authorities can also help establish district level networks of returnee migrants on the basis of their industry association to make this interaction between returnees easier. Industry association here means association on the basis of which industry they are working in.

ii. Train farmers on necessary skills through tailored training programs:

From the study findings, most pronounced skills learned by returnee migrants from their foreign employment were those like that of business management, customer service and marketing skills. These were also reported to be used later in their enterprise. While a clear causal link between use of such skills and success of enterprise is yet to be established with higher confidence, they still cannot be denied as factors which can help run an agro-enterprise.

While training programs related to enhancing some of these skills are being run through government initiatives such as the Prime Minister Agriculture Modernisation Project (PMAMP) and Agriculture Information and Training Center (AITC) in collaboration with local governments, interviewed voices of entrepreneurs reflected that those programs have not met the requirements of many farmers. Hence effectiveness of those can be raised by closely studying the needs of the farmers and tailoring the programs accordingly. For example, some of the interviewed entrepreneurs running a vegetable farm reported bearing loss in initial days because of them being unaware of different kinds of disease that can be found in soil and ways to encounter them. Likewise, in case of goat farming, two interviewers reported that due to lack of knowledge regarding the amount of grasses required for goats to feed on, they and many other farmers had to bear loss as they did not invest much on cultivating grasses for their goats. This kind of specific information can be provided in tailored training programs focusing on different forms of commercial farming and agro-enterprises. These information can reach to the farmers either through in person farmer/agro-entrepreneur training or through social media channels and radio/television programs (means that are already being used by AITC)

iii. Record segregated data on returnee migrants and their current occupation:

Segregated data on returnee migrants with information on the type of agro-enterprise being run in every local administrative unit is required, to avoid saturation in production of similar products and in fact promote production of different kinds of on demand products in the given area. This recommendation is also based on the answer of couple of interviewed entrepreneurs who reported how there has been saturation of tomato farming in their locality which has led to surplus production of tomatoes in last season but due to lack of enough market for the produce they had to be sold in price that would not even meet the production cost. So in that case such data and guidance from the agriculture centre based on those data to the aspiring entrepreneurs in their initial stage of identifying the right profitable agro-enterprise can be a way out.

iv. Introduce programs promoting remittance investment in productive sector that can help build future business capital:

In two of the cases of this study, the entrepreneurs were planning to start an agro-enterprise of their own before coming back to Nepal. Hence they had already started investing on resources that would help build capital for their prospective business. While one invested in grazing land for the goats he was intending to farm, the other invested in real estate so that when starting his business he could take out the loan by keeping those invested land as collateral. These two had a prior long term vision and hence started investing way beforehand. However, in the present Nepalese context still majority of the remittance is spent on consumption products. To address that issue, government institutions should introduce programs that would encourage migrant workers to invest their remittance in the productive sector of building capital for future business intervention.

As Daayitwa Fellow 2017 Arshia Karki had highlighted in her fellowship research report on “Channeling Remittance to Investment and Entrepreneurship”, offering pre-designed investment schemes and business setup advisory services specifically tailored for migrants and their families can be one way of encouraging remittance investment in productive sector. Such initiative should simplify the process of investing and starting a business for migrants by alleviating the bureaucratic hurdles they typically encounter. Another recommendation in her report was to establish a mandatory pension fund for migrants before they leave, which would provide them with financial support upon their return. This financial cushion could enable them to start businesses or invest in various projects and improve their livelihoods. These could be some of the initiatives Nepalese state can take in order to promote investment of remittance in the productive business sector. (Karki, 2017)

8.2 Intervention programs concerning market stability

i. Provide support price to the farmers’ produce:

A minimum standard price for farmers’ produce covering the production cost by the government during the time of low market price is something agro-entrepreneurs had put forward as a solution to the issue of unstable market price for agricultural goods especially for vegetables and fruits.

ii. Levy taxes on agricultural products being imported from India to secure better market for goods produced by the local farmers/entrepreneurs:

In a couple of interviews, the entrepreneurs mentioned challenges they had to face when they had to compete with products from India production cost of which is much lesser than the production cost of goods produced in Nepal. Because of this, Indian goods are available

at a lower price. However, if the price of Nepalese goods are reduced to that of Indian price, the farmers would find it difficult to meet the production cost of their produce. As a solution to this the entrepreneurs suggested the possibility of the state levying high taxes on these imported products.

8.3 Intervention programs to meet the demand of fertilizers and pesticides

Scarcity of adequate amounts of fertilizers and pesticides has been another reported issue by a farmer running a large agro-enterprise. As per him, for the last two years they faced a huge issue of fertilizers/pesticides scarcity because of which they had to buy those chemicals from the Indian black market at high cost. Hence to make the process of farming a little convenient intervention programs to meet the demand of pesticides in Nepal is required from government authorities.

Many of these recommendations can be met even if the state focuses only on proper implementation of already formulated laws, policies and programs. As always Nepal is quite ahead when it comes to laws and policy formulation but the problem lies when it comes to implementing those drafted documents. Hence a major focus should be placed on making implementation mechanisms stronger. This includes investing in government human resources capable of implementing these programs. Likewise strategies to encounter possible challenges for implementation can also be placed pre hand. Lastly a proper monitoring mechanism is prerequisite to evaluate work of implementing bodies and also have a provision of penalties if the said bodies or responsible authority fails to do so.

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ANNEX I

सहमति फारम

अध्ययन र सहभागीको भूमिकाको विवरण: यो अध्ययन अन्तर्वार्ता मार्फत सञ्चालन गरिनेछ, जुन लगभग ६० मिनेट सम्म चल्नेछ। यस अन्तर्वार्तामा तपाईंको कृषि उद्यम बारे प्रश्नहरू समावेश छन्।

अन्तर्वार्ता टेप रेकर्ड र ट्रान्सक्रिप्ट हुनेछ। सहभागिता स्वैच्छिक छ। तपाईं कुनै पनि समयमा, कुनै पनि कारणले भाग लिन रोक्न सक्नुहुन्छ। यदि तपाईं कुनै पनि बिन्दुमा बन्द गर्ने निर्णय गर्नुहुन्छ भने, तपाईं रेकर्ड गरिएको जानकारी तुरुन्तै नष्ट गर्न अनुरोध गर्न सक्नुहुन्छ।

अध्ययनको उद्देश्य: नेपालमा कृषि उत्पादकत्व सुधार गर्न फर्केका आप्रवासीहरूको सीप र रेमिट्यान्स परिचालन गर्ने गरी राज्यले ल्याउन सक्ने सान्दर्भिक भावी नीति कार्यक्रमहरू प्रस्ताव गर्ने

जोखिमहरू: यस अध्ययनमा सम्बद्ध जोखिमहरू उत्तममा न्यूनतम छन्, र दैनिक जीवनमा सामान्य रूपमा सामना गर्ने जोखिमहरू भन्दा ठूला छैनन्। यदि अन्तर्वार्तामा भएका प्रश्न वा उत्तरहरूले तपाईंको लागि अप्रिय अनुभवहरू ल्याए र तिनीहरूलाई समावेश नगर्नु राम्रो हो जस्तो लाग्छ भने, तपाईंले अनुसन्धानकर्तालाई यी पक्षहरू बहिष्कार गर्न सूचित गर्न सक्नुहुन्छ। त्यसपछि ती सबै जानकारी र रेकर्डहरू मेटिने छन्।

गोपनीयता: तपाईंले प्रदान गर्नुहुने सबै जानकारी गोप्य राखिनेछ र अध्ययन उद्देश्यका लागि मात्र प्रयोग गरिनेछ। तपाईंको नाम कुनै पनि रिपोर्ट वा प्रकाशनमा देखा पर्नेछैन जबसम्म तपाईंलाई त्यस्तो प्रकाशनमा तपाईंको नाम प्रयोग गर्न कुनै समस्या छैन। टेप रेकर्ड र हस्तलिखित नोटहरू जस्ता अडियो उपकरणहरू मार्फत जानकारी सङ्कलन गरिनेछ। तपाईंको जानकारी सुरक्षित रूपमा पासवर्ड-सुरक्षित कम्प्युटरमा भण्डारण गरिनेछ, र केवल अनुसन्धानकर्ताको पहुँच हुनेछ। अडियो फाइलहरू ट्रान्सक्राइब हुने बित्तिकै मेटिने छन्। अन्तिम रिपोर्ट अनुरोधमा उपलब्ध गराइनेछ।

अनुसन्धानको बारेमा प्रश्नहरू: यदि तपाईंसँग अनुसन्धान वा यस अध्ययनमा तपाईंको भूमिकाको बारेमा कुनै प्रश्न वा चिन्ता छ भने, कृपया शोधकर्ता, समीक्षा बशिष्ठ भट्टराईलाई [basista.sami@gmail.com/](mailto:basista.sami@gmail.com) samikshya.bhattarai@daayitwa.org मा सम्पर्क गर्न नहिचकिचाउनुहोस्। तपाईंले संस्था, Daayitwa

लाई पनि फोन मार्फत +977-1-5444914 मा सम्पर्क गर्न सक्नुहुन्छ वा contact@daayitwa.org मा ईमेल गर्न सक्नुहुन्छ।

म यो अन्तर्वार्ता रेकर्ड गर्न सहमत छु:

☐ हो ☐ होइन

समीक्षा वशिष्ठ भट्टराईले गरेको यस अध्ययनमा सहभागी हुन म सहमत छु । म यस अनुसन्धानको प्रकृति बुझ्छु र सहभागी हुन चाहन्छु। तलको हस्ताक्षरले मेरो सहमति जनाउँछ।

सहभागीको नाम: _____

सहभागीको हस्ताक्षर: _____

अनुसन्धानकर्ताको हस्ताक्षर: _____

हस्ताक्षर मिति: _____

ANNEX II

Guiding Questions for Interviews

1. कृपया तपाईंको छोटो परिचय दिनुस्न। (नाम, उमेर, ठेगाना, कृषि उद्यमको प्रकार)
2. तपाईंले यो कृषि उद्यम थाल्नु भएको कति भयो?
3. वैदेशिक रोजगारी छाडेर यो उद्यम सुरु गर्नुको कारण के थियो?
4. यस उद्यमको प्रारम्भिक लगानी कति थियो?
5. तपाईंको व्यवसायको नगद प्रवाह कस्तो छ? तपाईं एक महिनामा व्यापार मार्फत लगभग कति कमाउनु हुन्छ?
6. तपाईं आफ्नो फार्मको व्यवसायबाट कतिको सन्तुष्ट हुनुहुन्छ र किन?
7. उद्यम सुरु भएदेखि तपाईंले आफ्नो र तपाईंको परिवारको जीवनशैलीमा कस्ता परिवर्तनहरू देख्नुभएको छ?
8. तपाईंलाई तपाईंको उद्यमको सफलताको कारक के के हुन् जस्तो लाग्छ र किन?
9. विदेशमा हुँदाको अनुभवले तपाईंलाई के सिकायो जस्तो लाग्छ?
10. वैदेशिक रोजगारीमा आर्जन गरेको सीप र रेमिट्यान्स आफ्नो कृषि उद्यममा प्रयोग गर्नुभएको छ ? यदि गर्नुभएको छ भने तिनीहरू कुन तरिकामा प्रयोग भएका छन्?
11. फर्केका आप्रवासीको रूपमा यो उद्यम सुरु गर्दा तपाईंले सामना गर्नुभएका चुनौतीहरू के थिए? तपाईंले ती कसरी पार गर्नुभयो?
12. यस्तो कृषि-व्यवसाय पहिलमा फिर्ता आएका आप्रवासीहरूलाई सहयोग गर्न राज्यबाट कस्तो प्रकारको कार्यक्रमहरूले मद्दत गर्न सक्छ जस्तो लाग्छ र किन?
13. अहिलेसम्म हाम्रो कुराकानीमा नआएको कुनै महत्वपूर्ण कुरा बताउन चाहनुहुन्छ?
14. नेपालमा आफ्नै कृषि उद्यम खोल्न चाहने वैदेशिक रोजगारीबाट फर्किएका आप्रवासीहरूलाई के भन्न चाहनुहुन्छ?

