



# **Socio-Economic Conditions Of Nepali Migrants In Siddharthnagar District, Uttar Pradesh: A Geographical And Livelihood Analysis**

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**ABSTRACT:** Due to the open border system between India and Nepal, movement of citizens of both the countries is relatively easy, making labor-based migration a common and ongoing process. This migration is mainly motivated by the search for livelihood, better employment opportunities, family responsibilities and the desire to get rid of economic insecurity. Siddharthnagar district of Uttar Pradesh, which is located near the international border of Nepal, has geographically become a favorable destination area for Nepali migrants. The continued demand for labor in agriculture, construction, small business and service sectors makes the region attractive to migrants.

The main objective of the presented study is to comprehensively analyze the socio-economic condition of Nepali migrant families living in Siddharthnagar district. Under this, the migrants' means of livelihood, income stability, residential condition, access to health services, children's education, remittances sent to Nepal and the status of their social integration in the local society have been studied. This study is based on primary data collected from 100 Nepali migrant families, which were selected by Snowball Sampling method, as no official list of migrant families was available and they are scattered in different settlements.

The study's findings show that most migrants are employed in the unorganized sector, where wages are low, employment is temporary and working conditions are unsafe. Due to instability in income the standard of living remains limited and housing facilities have also been found inadequate. Access to basic services such as health and education is limited and a large number of migrants are deprived of government welfare schemes, largely due to lack of documentation and information. Despite this, migrants are making significant contributions to the local labor market, agricultural production, construction and service sectors. Therefore, the findings from this study can prove to be extremely useful for policy making, district level planning and development of migrant-centric welfare programs in border areas.

**Keywords:** Nepali diaspora, socio-economic status, Siddharthnagar, livelihood, border area

**INTRODUCTION:** The India-Nepal border is one of those borders in the world where movement of citizens of both countries has been relatively open historically, socially and legally. This open border system has led to the development of labour, trade and social relations between the two countries. Migration in search of employment, especially from the hilly and Terai regions of Nepal to the border districts of India, has been a long established socio-economic process. This migration is not limited to temporary labor movement alone, but also includes cyclical, seasonal and permanent settlement forms.

Siddharthnagar district of Uttar Pradesh is a major border district adjacent to the border of Nepal, where a significant presence of Nepali migrants is seen. Due to the geographical location of this district, rural dominated economic structure, demand for labor in agriculture and construction sector and limited local employment options, this area has become an attractive destination for Nepali workers. Additionally, social

networks, kinship ties and already settled migrant communities play the role of guides for new migrants, thereby reinforcing the process of network-based migration.

Due to globalization, economic disparities and imbalance in regional development, migration is no longer just a means of earning a living, but has become a strategy for livelihood diversification for rural families. Limited industrial development, heavy dependence on agriculture, natural disasters and lack of employment opportunities in many areas of Nepal make migration a necessary option. On the other hand, the constant demand for labor in the unorganized sector in the Indian border districts attracts Nepali migrants, where they are forced to work even at low wages.

Although Nepali migrants provide an important workforce for the local economy, their socio-economic status often remains unstable. They are mainly employed in the unorganized sector, where facilities like employment security, minimum wages, social security and health benefits are often not available. Temporary residence, overcrowded housing, limited access to clean water and sanitation, and inadequate access to quality health services affect the quality of life of migrants. Additionally, they are also deprived of government welfare schemes due to lack of documentation, lack of legal knowledge and complexity of administrative procedures. From the social point of view, migrant communities also have to face many challenges. Experiences of social distance, limited social participation and sometimes discrimination based on language, culture and identity affect their social integration. Although in many places cooperative relationships develop between local communities and migrants, the social protection and rights status of migrants remains weak. Questions of education, health and safety become even more sensitive, especially for women and children.

In this context, it becomes extremely necessary to study the socio-economic condition of Nepali migrants in border districts like Siddharthnagar at a micro level. Most national-level studies view migration from a broad statistical perspective, which does not adequately capture local geographic, social and livelihood variations. Studies conducted at the district level are not only helpful in identifying local problems, but they also provide a solid basis for area-specific policy interventions.

The objective of the presented study is to comprehensively analyze the socio-economic condition of Nepali migrant families living in Siddharthnagar district. The study covers important aspects such as types of migration, means of livelihood, income stability, housing conditions, access to health services, children's education, remittances to Nepal, availability of documents, access to government schemes and social integration. The study is based on primary data, collected through field surveys, to better understand the real-life experiences and problems of migrants.

Additionally, this study attempts to view migration not just as an economic process, but as a geographical and social process, in which places, networks, livelihood strategies and social structures are interconnected. Analysis of the geographical distribution of migrants' settlement patterns, location of workplaces and access to service facilities highlights regional disparities. It also makes clear how migrants are linked to local development processes and what structural limitations keep them marginalised.

Therefore, this study is not only important from the academic point of view, but is also useful for practical policy making. Its findings may be helpful in formulating migrant-focused programs for district administrations, labor departments, social welfare schemes and NGOs. To ensure inclusive development in border areas, it is necessary that migrants are actively included in local development plans, so that they can become participants in the process of social development and not just labor providers.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AREA:

Siddharthnagar district is located in the north-eastern part of Uttar Pradesh state of northern India and is an important border district of Basti division. The district extends between 27°00' to 27°28' North latitude and 82°45' to 83°10' East longitude, making it a major geographical unit located near the India-Nepal international border. Due to the geographical location of these coordinates, the entire area of Siddharthnagar lies in the fertile soil of Terai and plain terrain, which gives rise to agriculture based activities and high labor demand. The total land area of the district is **about 2,895 square kilometers** and according to the **2011 census**, its **population was 25,59,297**, in which the rural population is predominant and the population density was found to be about **884 persons per square kilometer**. The sex ratio is **976 females per 1000 males** and the **literacy rate is about 59.2 percent**, which reflects the socio-educational status of the area.

The administrative structure of Siddharthnagar is based on five tehsils – **Naugarh (Sadar), Shohratgarh, Bansi, Etawah and Dumariyaganj** – which include a total of about 14 development blocks and numerous gram panchayats. These administrative units play an important role in the implementation of social and economic plans and resource distribution.

From the point of view of geography, the soil of Siddharthnagar is fertile and rich in water resources; Major rivers here, such as Budhi Rapti, West Rapti, Banganga etc., enable agricultural and irrigation activities and provide the basis of local livelihood. Along with this, the district area is also rich from historical point of view, because the ancient Shakya district located at Piprahwa and the archaeological sites related to Buddhist civilization represent the cultural landscape here.

The economy of Siddharthnagar is mainly agriculture based, in which the major crops are paddy, wheat, sugarcane etc. Black salt rice, in particular, is a hallmark of the region and associated agricultural industries provide local employment opportunities. Efforts are also underway to expand education and health facilities, such as the establishment of Siddharth University, Kapilvastu, which is an important step towards educational advancement in the district.

Apart from geographical, social and economic context, Siddharthnagar district is also an important migration center due to its proximity to the India-Nepal border. Workers crossing the border, especially Nepalese migrants, often take up employment in agriculture, construction, service and unorganized sectors in the same district. The findings of my survey show that the economic activities of migrant workers are not only linked to the local labor market, but they also influence local social structures, housing arrangements and the availability of basic amenities — such as the nature of housing, access to health services and participation in government welfare schemes. This socio-economic fabric makes Siddharthnagar a unique study area where the real aspects of life amidst border geopolitics and local livelihoods can be understood.

Thus, Siddharthnagar district is not only geographically contiguous, but also represents diversity and dynamism from cultural, historical and economic perspectives, making it a suitable and important study area for my research.

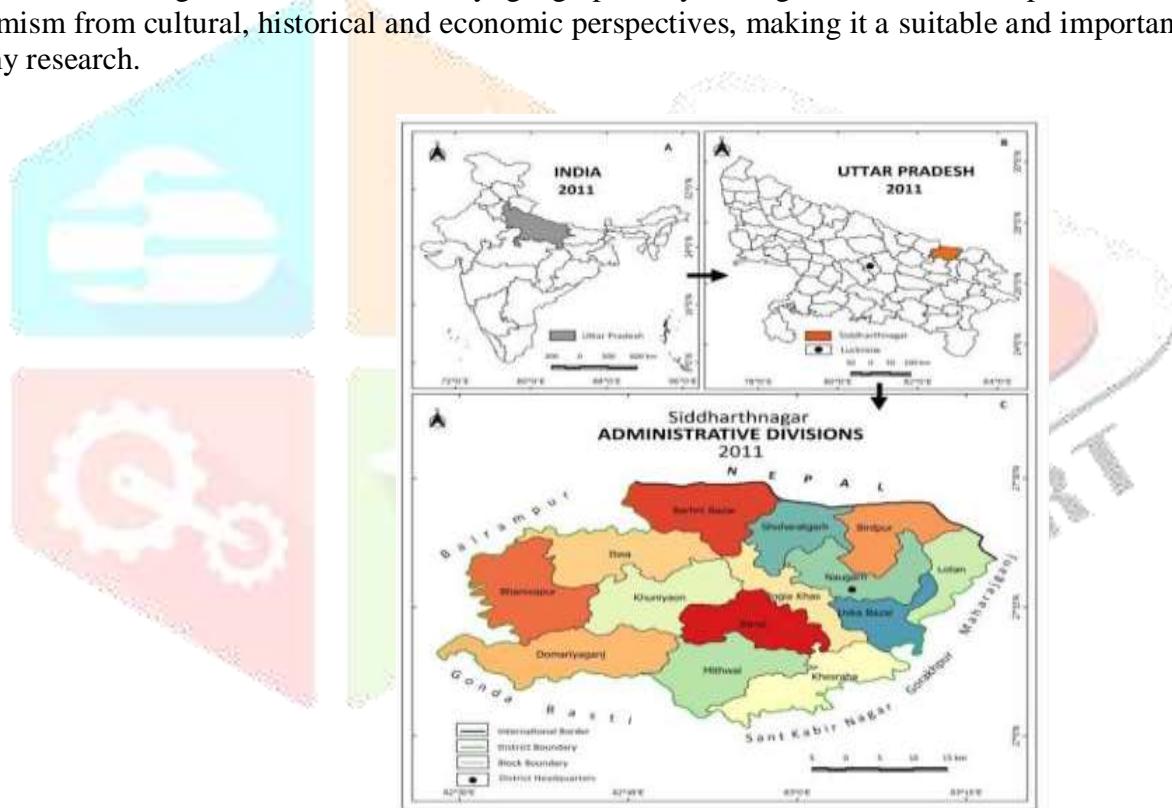


Fig.1 study area map

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

The main objective of the presented study is to analyze the socio-economic condition of Nepali migrant families living in Siddharthnagar district from geographical and livelihood based perspective. The following specific objectives have been set under this broad objective:

- To analyze the migration pattern and reasons of Nepalese migrants.
- To study the livelihood and employment structure of migrant families.
- Evaluating income, expenditure, savings and remittance behaviour.
- Analyzing availability of housing, health, education and basic facilities
- Assessing social integration, document availability and access to government schemes.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The scope of the presented study is limited to the socio-economic condition of Nepali migrant families living in Siddharthnagar district. The study covers rural and semi-urban areas, where migrant workers are employed in agriculture, construction and service sectors. This study analyzes migration not only as an economic process, but as a geographical, social and livelihood based process.

The scope of the study includes key dimensions of migrants' lives—such as employment, income, housing, health, education, remittances, documentation, social relations and future aspirations. Although this study does not represent the migrant community of the entire state or country, it provides an important context to understand the situation of migrants in the border districts.

This study provides a useful basis for policy making, district level planning and migrant welfare programs and paves the way for comparative studies for future research, such as comparative analysis with other border districts or study of changes in the status of migrants over time.

## DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY:

### 1. SOURCES OF DATA

The presented study is mainly based on primary data, which was collected through field survey. Primary data provide information related to the actual socio-economic status of migrant households, livelihood patterns, housing conditions, health, education, remittance behavior and social integration, which cannot be obtained from secondary sources.

In addition to primary data, secondary data was also used in the study, which mainly included the following sources:

- Census India 2011
- District Statistics Handbook, Siddharthnagar (District Census Handbook, 2011)
- Research articles and government reports related to Nepal-India border
- District administration website and documents related to development plans

These secondary sources were used to understand the geographical, demographic and administrative background of the study area.

### 2. FIELD SURVEY AND DATA COLLECTION METHODS

#### 2.1 QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

A structured questionnaire (Structured Household Schedule) was prepared for data collection, which included the following major sections:

- Demographic characteristics of the respondent
- Migration history and types of migration
- Family structure
- Employment and livelihood
- Income, Expenditure and Remittance
- Housing and infrastructure
- Health and education
- Access to documents and government schemes
- Social relations and future plans

The questionnaire was prepared in simple language so that migrant respondents could answer easily. The face-to-face interview method was adopted during the survey, which increased the reliability of the answers and also obtained additional qualitative information.

#### 2.2 SNOWBALL SAMPLING METHOD

Snowball sampling method was adopted as no official list of migrant families was available. In this method, first some migrant families were identified, through which contact was established with other migrant families. In this way, network based sampling was prepared, which is considered a suitable and popular method for migrant studies.

A total of 100 Nepali migrant families were selected in this study, who live in various rural and semi-urban areas of Siddharthnagar district. Snowball sampling had the advantage that it was possible to reach migrants living in hidden or unorganized settlements.

### 2.3 OBSERVATION METHOD

Along with questionnaire survey, observation method was also used. By visiting migrant settlements the researcher:

- Housing quality
- Sanitary condition
- Availability of water and electricity
- Working conditions

Direct observation was made. This confirmed the survey data and the real state of socio-economic conditions could be better understood.

### 3. SAMPLE DESIGN AND STUDY AREA

Various development blocks and village groups of Siddharthnagar district were included as the study area, where the presence of Nepali migrants is found. Factors such as proximity to the border, agricultural and construction activities and presence of market centers were taken into account in the selection. The objective of sample selection was to represent the diverse geographical and social environment of the district.

### 4. TECHNIQUES OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected was analyzed by the following methods:

- Percentage analysis
- Tabulation
- Comparative analysis

Each major socio-economic indicator such as income level, employment type, housing status, access to service facilities and document availability was analyzed through percentages. Along with this, comparative analysis was also done between different social classes and migration types.

### 5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although the study conducted a detailed field survey, some limitations remained:

- Due to limited sample size (100 families), the findings cannot be completely generalized to the entire district.
- Information related to income and expenditure was based on the memory of the respondents, which leaves a possibility of partial error.
- Some respondents were hesitant to share complete information for social or legal reasons.

Despite these limitations, the study was able to present a realistic picture of the socio-economic status of the migrant community.



### 6. IMPORTANCE OF PROCEDURE

The mixed methods used in this study—questionnaires, interviews, and observations—not only provided quantitative data but also highlighted the experiences, problems, and aspirations of migrants. Techniques such as snowball sampling ensured access to hard-to-reach migrant groups, increasing both the relevance and credibility of the study.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION:

### 1. GENDER COMPOSITION

The pattern of Nepali migration in Siddharthnagar district has been found to be clearly male-dominated. Out of the total 100 respondents under the survey, 87 percent were found to be male and only 13 percent were female, which indicates that migration in the border area is mainly a labor-based and livelihood-oriented process. This trend is linked to the greater demand for male workers in agricultural labour, construction work, small trade and other unorganized sectors. It is also clear from the study that the main types of migration are daily cross-border and cyclical, in which the role of physical labor is more, due to which the participation of men naturally becomes more. In contrast, participation of female migrants was found to be limited, limited mainly to domestic work, family support or supporting economic activities. Additionally, socio-cultural constraints, security concerns and lack of documentation also limit women's independent migration. Thus, the analysis of gender structure shows that Nepali migration is not only the result of economic inequalities, but it is also deeply linked to social structures and labor market demand.

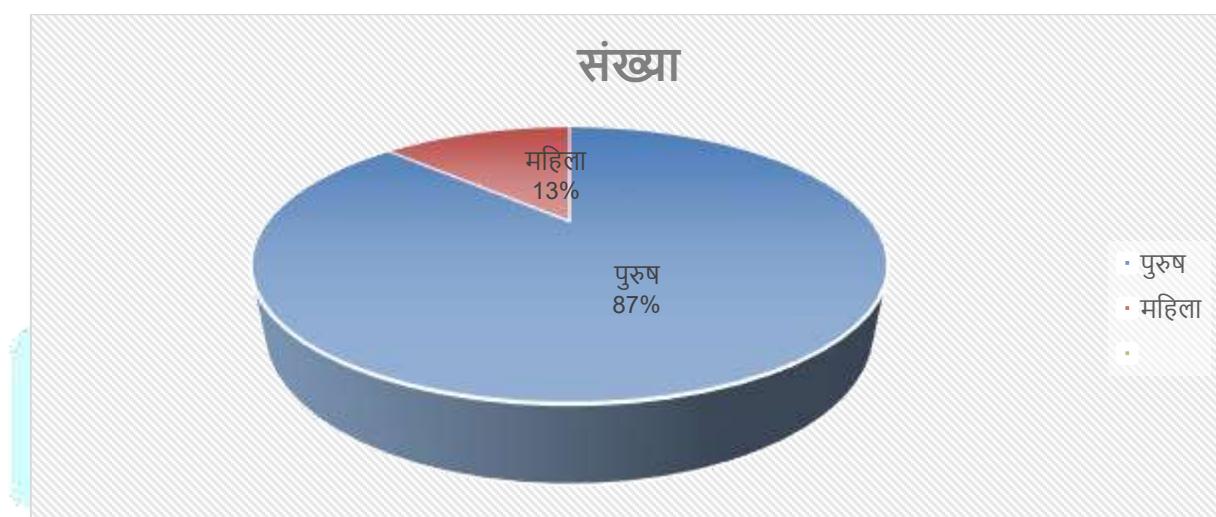


Fig.2 Gender composition

### 2. MIGRATION PATTERN

The form of Nepali migration in Siddharthnagar district has emerged mainly in the form of daily cross-border and cyclical migration. According to the survey, 63 percent of migrants engage in daily cross-border migration, while 19 percent are engaged in circular migration. This situation reflects the geographical proximity of the district to Nepal, open border system and regular commuting facility for employment. Only 10 percent of the migrants tend to settle permanently, which makes it clear that most of the migrants see Siddharthnagar as a temporary area for earning livelihood rather than as a permanent residence. This trend is also linked to unorganized employment, low income and unavailability of social security. This pattern of migration also indicates that migrants contribute to the local economy but are deprived of social and economic stability.

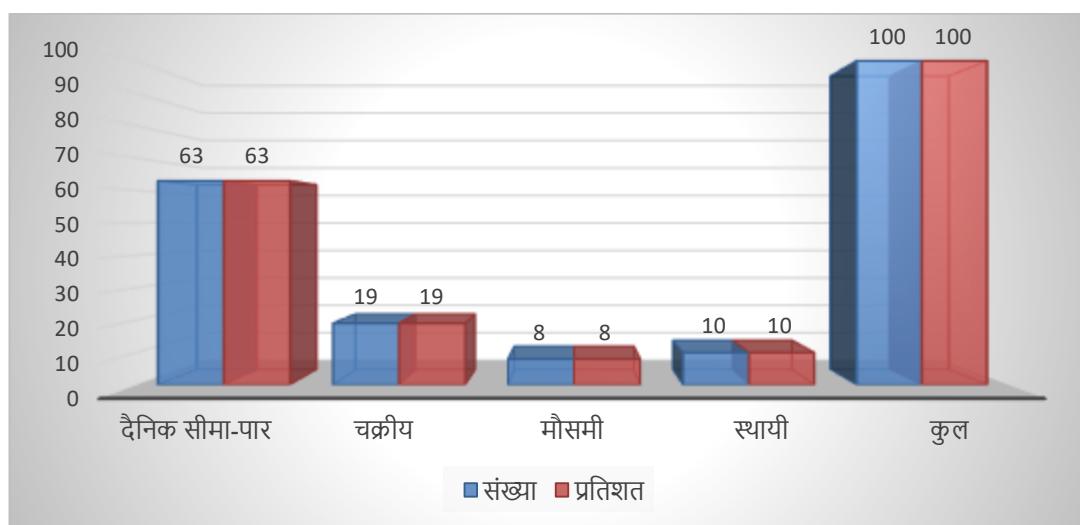


Fig.3 Types of migration

### 3. MONTHLY INCOME STRUCTURE

From the analysis of income structure, it becomes clear that the economic condition of Nepali migrants in Siddharthnagar district is relatively weak. According to the survey, 56 percent of migrant families have a monthly income of less than ₹10,000, while 29 percent of families fall in the category of ₹10,000–15,000. Only 15 percent of migrants are in the middle or upper income group. This income inequality reflects the economic insecurity and limited living standards of migrants. Due to low income, adequate expenditure on basic needs like housing, health and education is not possible. Despite this, most migrants send remittances to their families in Nepal, indicating that migration is more a strategy for family survival than personal gain for them.

Combined analysis of gender structure, type of migration and income level indicates that Nepali migration to Siddharthnagar district is predominantly low income, male-dominated and livelihood based. The high incidence of daily cross-border migration indicates that migrants are relying on temporary employment strategies and are not able to achieve sustainable socio-economic stability. This situation makes the need for social security, document availability and access to welfare schemes more relevant for migrants.

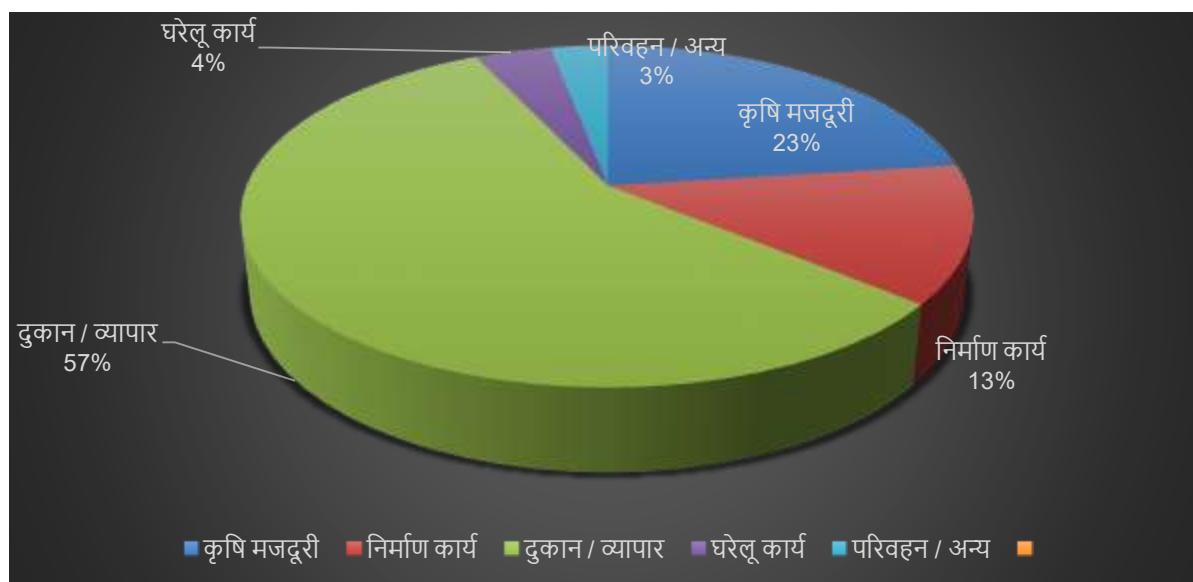


Fig.4 Income Structure

### 4. OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE

The livelihood structure of Nepali migrants in Siddharthnagar district is mainly unorganized and low skill based. Maximum 57 per cent of migrants were found to be associated with shops/small businesses, which reflects the increasing demand for labor and services in border market centres. 23 percent of migrants are engaged in agricultural labour, which reflects the agricultural economy of the district. Migrants engaged in

construction work (13%) were found to be working under temporary and unsafe working conditions. A limited number of migrants are engaged in domestic work (4%) and transport/other work (3%), in which participation of women was found to be relatively higher. Overall, the employment structure indicates that migrants are deprived of employment security, regular income and social security.



**Fig.5 Occupational structure**

## 5. ACCESS TO HEALTH FACILITIES

Most Nepali migrants in Siddharthnagar district rely on private health services (76%), while only 24 percent of migrants use government hospitals or primary health centers (PHCs). This situation reflects limited access to government health services, lack of time, documentation problems and dissatisfaction with service quality. Dependence on private health services places additional economic burden on migrant families, who already belong to the low income group. The findings highlight the need to increase health insurance, awareness, and access to government services for migrants.

Combined analysis of employment structure and health facility utilization indicates that Nepali migrants in Siddharthnagar are in an economically vulnerable and socially vulnerable situation. Working in the unorganized sector, incomes remain unstable, and dependence on private health services puts additional pressure on their limited resources. This makes it clear that livelihood instability and health insecurity are deeply interconnected.

## 6. HOUSING CONDITION

Although 56 percent of migrant families live in pucca houses, a significant proportion (40%) are forced to live in kutcha or semi-pucca houses. This situation reflects the economic inequality and residential insecurity of the migrants. Kutcha and semi-pucca houses are more vulnerable to natural disasters, health risks and sanitation problems. One reason for the abundance of pucca houses could also be residence in rented houses, which does not guarantee permanent residential security.

## 7. REMITTANCE BEHAVIOUR

It is clear from the study that 91 percent of the Nepali migrants living in Siddharthnagar district regularly send money to their families in Nepal. This fact strongly reflects the family and survival based nature of migration. Despite limited monthly income, unstable employment and work in the unorganized sector, remittances remain a major priority for migrants. This situation shows that migration is not just a means of individual economic gain, but it is a strategy adopted to fulfill the basic needs of the family. The money sent to Nepal is mainly used for essential expenses like food, children's education, health treatment and loan repayment. Thus, remittances play an important role in strengthening the domestic economy of rural Nepal. At the same time, it also becomes a medium to maintain social ties and family obligations among migrant families, thereby clearly highlighting both the social and economic roles of migration.

## CONCLUSION:

The present study presents a comprehensive and factual analysis of the socio-economic status, migration patterns and livelihood strategies of Nepali migrants in Siddharthnagar district. This study is based on primary data collected by Snowball Sampling method from 100 Nepalese migrant families. The findings of the study clearly show that Nepali migration in Siddharthnagar district is mainly livelihood-based, male-dominated and temporary in nature.

Analysis of the patterns and causes of migration under the first objective shows that 63 percent of migrants do daily cross-border migration and 19 percent do circular migration. This situation reflects the India-Nepal open border, geographical proximity and the convenience of regular movement for employment. The main reasons for migration were found to be employment, income instability and family responsibilities, which makes it clear that migration is a planned livelihood strategy rather than a sudden decision.

Under the second objective, the study of livelihood and employment structure makes it clear that migrants are mainly employed in the unorganized sector. 57 percent of the migrants were found involved in small business or shop work, 23 percent in agricultural labor and 13 percent in construction work. This employment structure reflects low wages, job insecurity and lack of social security.

Analysis of income, expenditure and remittance behavior as per the third objective indicates that 56 per cent of migrant households depend on monthly income of less than ₹10,000. Despite this, 91 percent of migrants send remittances to Nepal, which explains the family and survival-based nature of migration. This remittance plays an important role in education, health and daily consumption in rural areas of Nepal.

Analysis of housing, health and education facilities under the fourth objective shows a mixed situation. Although 56 percent of migrants live in permanent houses, 76 percent of migrants depend on private clinics for health services, reflecting limited access to government services.

The analysis of social integration and document availability under the fifth objective reveals a very worrying situation. 88 percent of migrants do not have any valid documents, due to which they are deprived of government welfare schemes. Overall, the study concludes that Nepalese migrants contribute significantly to the local economy, but their inclusion in social security and welfare systems is extremely limited.

## **POLICY-LINKED RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Based on the findings of the study, it becomes necessary to develop migrant-centric policies in border-adjacent districts like Siddharthnagar.

### **Special Documentation Campaign:**

It is necessary to run a special documentation drive for Nepali migrants in border-adjacent districts like Siddharthnagar. Linking migrants with identity and welfare schemes like Aadhaar card, ration card and health insurance will strengthen their social security and ensure their access to government schemes.

### **Labor protection in unorganized sector:**

Since most of the migrants are employed in the unorganized sector, effective implementation of minimum wage, job security and social security laws is essential. This will prevent exploitation of migrants and increase employment stability.

### **Expansion of health services:**

Mobile health units and primary health centers should be established in migrant settlements to reduce dependence on private health services and reduce the economic burden on low-income families.

### **Education of migrant children:**

Document-free school admission, language assistance programs and scholarship schemes should be implemented for migrant children to ensure their educational continuity.

### **Establishment of Migrant Facilitation Centres:**

By setting up Migrant Facilitation Centers at the district level, information, counseling and benefits of various schemes should be made available to the migrants at one place.

### **Skill Development and Self-Employment:**

Permanent sources of income for migrants can be developed by starting skill development and self-employment training programs in the border areas.

### **Administrative Coordination:**

It is necessary to strengthen coordination between the state and district administrations on migrant issues related to the India-Nepal border, so that effective implementation of policies can be done.

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