

Labour Migration: Psychological and Socio-cultural Impacts

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Introduction

Migration can increase the risk for family breakdown and fragmentation of social networks which has direct impact on psychosocial well-being of both migrant workers and their families.

Total of 27,23,587 people are recorded for labor migration in Nepal during the period of 2008/9 to 2014/15 with 85 percent in Gulf Cooperation Councils (GCCs) and Malaysia (MoLE, 2016).

Anxiety, depression, psychosis, suicidality and other health risks are suffered by Nepali migrants in abroad (Adhikary et al., 2012; MoLE, 2016).

Objectives

To explore psychological and socio-cultural impact of issues faced by migrant workers and their families

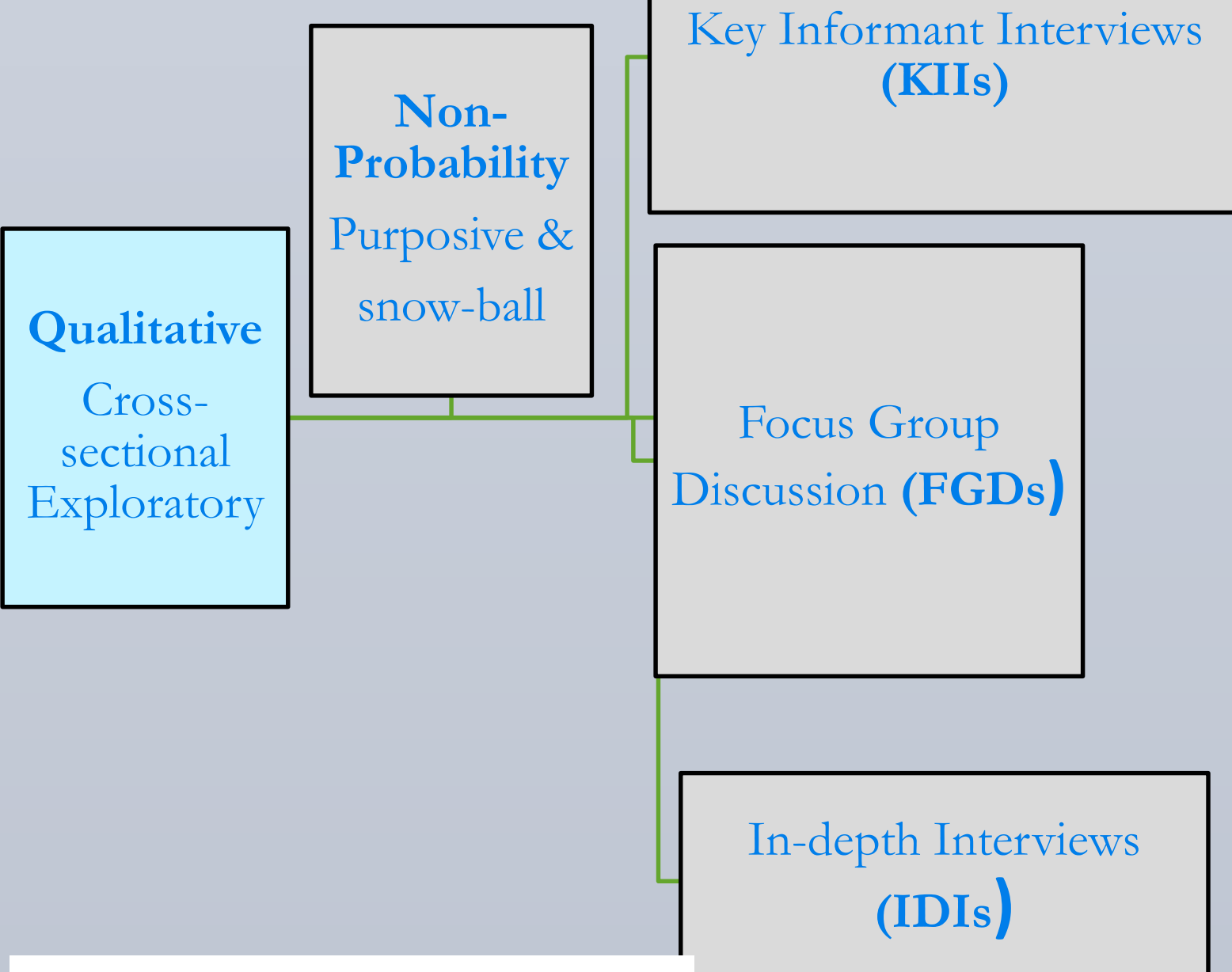
Method

Study Areas

The study was conducted in 4 districts: Dhanusa, Makawanpur, Sindhupalchok, Kathmandu



Study Design



Sample Size

District	FGDs	KIIs	IDIs
Kathmandu	2	6	4
Sindhupalchowk	3	4	2
Dhanusha	2	5	3
Makwanpur	2	4	3
Total	9	19	12

Data analysis

All data and field notes transcribed and translated into English.

NVIVO was used and a thematic analysis was done

Results

Issues faced by migrant workers during departure

Lack of proper guidelines and orientation on proper/safe methods of departure

Illiteracy and language Barrier

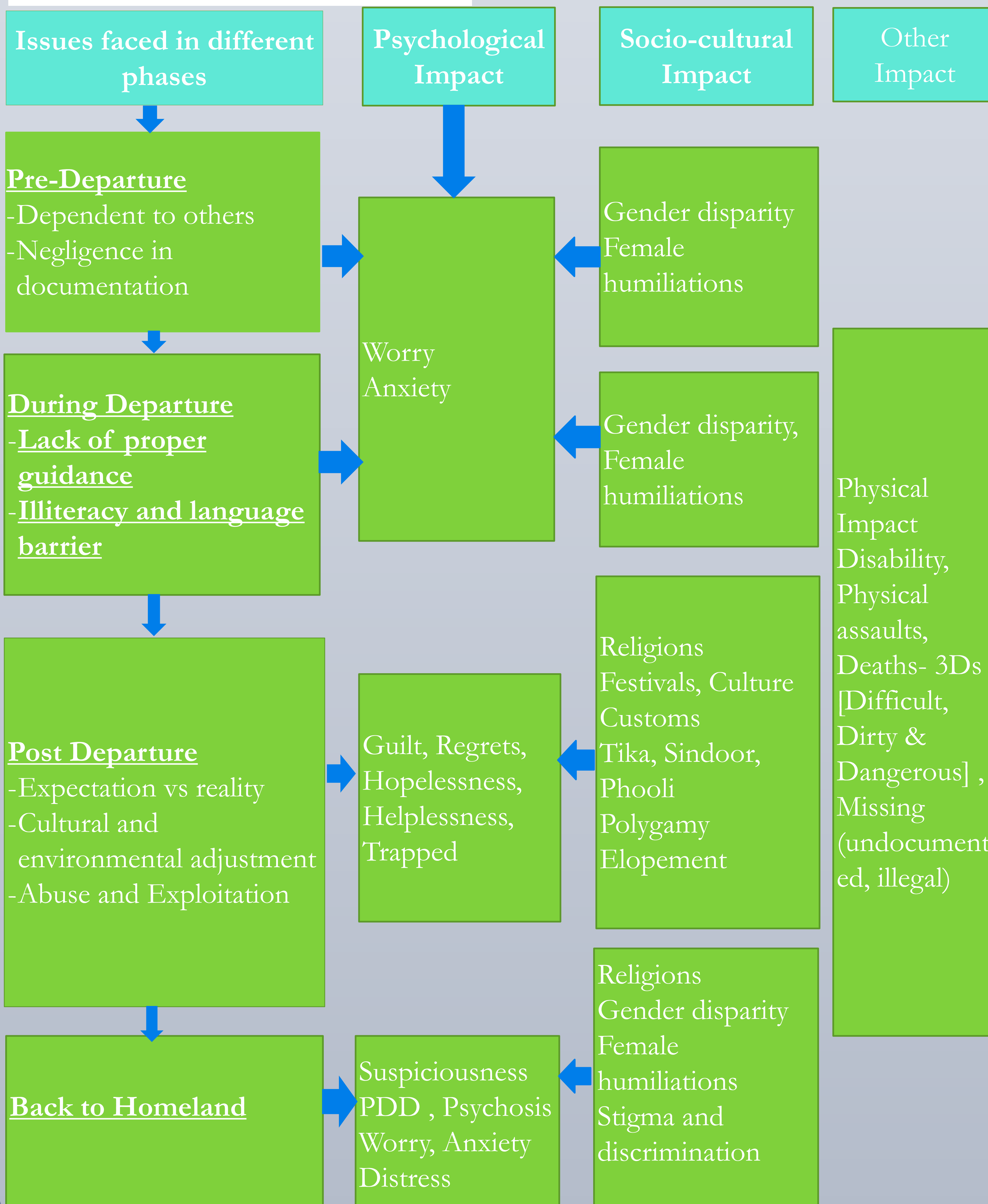
"We faced difficulties in the plane. We didn't know how to fasten their seat belt, when air hostess asked about our food preferences we had no idea what she was talking about. In immigration, Arabic people didn't not speak much English and it was difficult to understand what they said. Some of us didn't understand which one is entry and which one the exit door." -FGD Respondent, Male, Sidhupalchowk

Support systems available

Medical Insurances, Nepal Government
Compensations/Scholarships, Embassies

No Mental Health Psychosocial Support Services was reported while in foreign land

Impacts due to issues faced at different stages:



Issues faced by migrant workers prior departure

High Dependence on local agents and relatives

Lack of co-ordination between mediators, man power agencies and opting migrants

Challenges of documentation and

"I didn't look at the contract. I just signed it without reading it. I thought there would be no risk as my brother (relative) would never cheat me. I later came to know that they deceived me with 50,000." -FGD Respondent, Male, Dhanusha

Issues faced by migrant workers post-departure

Expectation v/s Reality

Socio-cultural and Environmental Adjustments

Legal Issues and Challenges

Abuse and Exploitation

"We had to please them, not just them but also their guests. If we refused to do so, we were beaten badly and were not given to eat for days. They threatened to kill us. We were too scared and did whatever they asked us to do"- Case study, Female, Makwanpur

Recommendations

Pre-Departure

Safer Migration Program, awareness and sensitization

Ensure adequate mental health and psychosocial assessment and support prior to immigration.

Post-Departure

Psychosocial interventions to survivors of irregular migration, sexual and gender based violence and others

Inter-Ministerial Co-ordination and collaboration

Government need to initiate proper dialogues and consultation with GCCs for eradication of violence, exploitation and suicide in destination countries.

Homeland

Community based MHPSS should be ensured at various levels. Such as health promotion and specific protection, diagnosis and treatment, rehabilitation

Level of mental health and psychosocial issues among these population has to be further research

Conclusion

Despite being a good source of remittances, it is difficult to conclude whether the benefits of labor migration outweigh the socio-cultural and psychological impacts faced by migrant workers and family members

Community sensitization on safe migration and adequate monitoring by concerned authorities are a must.

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