



Perception and Practice of Gender among Nepalese in Portugal.  
A Male Perspective

Sanjeev Dahal

Erasmus Mundus Masters in Social Work with Families and Children

Supervisors

Prof. Dr. Maria das Dores Guerreiro

Prof. Dr. Cláudia Pereira

Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

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UNIVERSITY OF  
GOTHENBURG



University of  
Stavanger



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



## **Abstract**

**Title:** Perception and Practice of Gender among Nepalese in Portugal. A Male Perspective

**Author:** Sanjeev Dahal

**Key words:** immigration, gender, perception, practice, praxis, masculinities, Nepalese, Portugal

The study looked into the perception and practice of gender among Nepalese men in Portugal. It explored gender related discourses and practices through these key research questions: i) how do Nepalese men migrants in Portugal perceive gender relations; ii) how are Nepalese men migrants in Portugal performing gender and iii) has migration affected the perception and practice of gender in Nepalese men. The study engaged in micro-ethnographic method using qualitative interviews and participant observation as tools. Five Nepalese men were interviewed during ethnographic field work which was substantiated with participant observation in private and public sphere of the life of Nepalese in Lisbon and Faro districts in Portugal. It was mentioned in the discourses of Nepalese men that migration and the resultant new social context of Portugal had a significant impact on how they perceive and practice gender which facilitated their understanding of unequal gender relations in Nepal as well as their move towards egalitarian gender relations. The study concludes that Nepalese men experienced significant changes in their perception of gender relation with women; but these changes were yet to be adequately reflected in their practices.

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# 1. Introduction and problem area

Imperialism and globalization have created institutions that operate on a world scale. These institutions all have internal gender regimes, and each gender regime has its gender dynamic - interests, gender politics, processes of change. (Connell, 2002, p.111)

World-spanning institutions thus create new arenas for gender formation and gender dynamics; the most important of these innovations seem to be transnational and multinational corporations, the international state (e.g., United Nations agencies, the European Union), international media and global markets (Connell, 2002). Connell's arguments alert us of the critical need to look at the issue of gender in a global context as the impact of these world spinning organizations can be felt in everyday lives of people, worldwide. Nepal is no exception.

Nepal has highly gender stratified society. Gender plays a significant role in shaping very different life experiences for men and women in Nepal as many socially constructed roles are based on sex. Nepalese society is largely patriarchal, patrilocal, patrilineal: the father is by default the head of the family and makes most of the socio-economic decisions, hence "*the patriarch*"; majority of the couples in Nepal live with the man's family after marriage, making families patrilocal; and the family line is continued through the males- women take the family name "surname" of the husband and the same is transferred to their children, making it patrilineal. The researcher became acutely aware of this gender stratification present in Nepal during the initial classes on the course 'Sociology of family' as a part of the Masters program on Social Work with Families and Children when all students were asked to draw the family chart: he drew only members of the family from his father's side. The reflections on what family meant to each of us helped the researcher realize how the understanding and doing of the family was different in each context. This exercise per se created ripple effects on the student to look at things in a different light and the inquisitiveness to look into 'doing family' and 'doing gender' within families was conceived.

The high visibility of Nepalese in Lisbon was another precursor for the development of the study. Portugal has been increasingly becoming one of the main destination countries in Europe for Nepalese, particularly after 2008 (Bajracharya, 2015). There were 2588 Nepalese in Portugal with residence permit in the year 2013 as compared to 560 in 2008; the Nepalese Consulate in Lisbon estimated around 10,000 Nepalese to be in Portugal in 2015 (ibid.). During my interactions with the Nepalese, they expressed that being in Portugal has changed their outlook on things. This visible presence of Nepalese in Portugal, their sharing of changes due to migration to Portugal and the researcher's own acute awareness shaped the study on gender and Nepalese in Portugal.

## 1.1 The research

The study "Perception and Practice of Gender among Nepalese in Portugal. A Male Perspective" looks into the discourses and practices on gender among Nepalese male immigrants in Portugal. Through a micro-ethnographic methodology, it makes an attempt to look into gender relations

among Nepalese within the context of migration to Portugal through three key questions: i) how do Nepalese men migrants in Portugal perceive gender relations; ii) how are Nepalese men migrants in Portugal performing gender and iii) has migration affected the perception and practice of gender in Nepalese men. The introductory chapter provides a bird's eye view of the Nepali context at an outset, the phenomena and context of migration and the gendered context in Nepali society to contextualize the study undertaken.

## 1.2 Brief overview of the context of emigration of Nepalese

The constitution promulgated on September 20, 2015 was a welcome relief for Nepalese who underwent armed struggle (1996-2006) causing a loss of more than 15,000 lives and internal displacement of an estimated 100,000-150,000, also fueling emigration of many Nepalese. The researcher finds it relevant to bring here some salient provisions in the very recent constitution as they reflect the discourses that took place within the Constituent Assembly that represented Nepali people's voice. The specific relevance of these provisions to the study undertaken is that they speak about the existing social order and also throw light on the way the society is moving towards by ending all forms of discriminations and oppression created by the feudal, autocratic, centralized and unitary system of government in the past. Noting commitment to Nepal's multiethnic, multilingual, multicultural and diverse geographical specificities, these provisions express commitment to end discriminations relating to class, ethnicity, region, language, religion and *gender discrimination*. They also express the determination to create an *egalitarian society* on the basis of the principles of *proportional inclusion and participation*, to ensure equitable economy, prosperity and *social justice*. The promulgation of the Constitution and the commitment for change and vision for '*New Nepal*' prominent in political discourses are yet to be translated into practice and emigration of Nepalese continues to be an increasing and concerning phenomenon. A significant and growing increase of the absentee population substantiates this claim.

A look at the development indicators in Nepal can illuminate the increasing emigration of Nepalese. Exposure to the Western World and the perceived economic and educational opportunities have enthused the young population to leave the nation, augmented by the bleak socio-economic status of the country. According to the National Planning Commission/UNDP (2014) Nepal's national Human Development Index (HDI) value, based on the geometric mean, is 0.490 for 2011. The HDI score puts Nepal in the lowest rank among the countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (ibid.). HDI is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living (UNDP, 2016, available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>). This highlights the plight of the Nepalese. Small Area Estimates of Poverty, 2011 by Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Nepal presents that Poverty Head Count Ratio is 23.5. Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.90 a day is the percentage of the population living on less than \$1.90 a day at 2011 international prices (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.DDAY>). This data indicates that nearly a quarter of



the Nepalese population lived in poverty in 2011. The CBS, Nepal (2014) shares that percentage of agricultural holdings reporting insufficiency of their agricultural product in household consumption by period of insufficiency is 10.9 percent for 1-3 months; 26.3 percent for 4-6 month, 13.9 percent for 7-9 month, 8.9 percent for 10-12 months, which is alarming and calls for serious transformations in the agriculture sector. The unavailability of even the basic amenities for a decent living in Nepal has caused heightened frustration among the Nepalese. According to National Population and Housing Census, 2011 only 85.6 percent people in Nepal have access to safe drinking water. Even today the capital and most of the electrified areas in Nepal suffer huge power cuts; according to the load-shedding schedule published by the Nepal Electricity Authority, effective from March 29, 2016, people have to face 77 hours of “load-shedding” (power cut) in a week, i.e. 11 hours each day, on an average. Fuel supply is irregular and the demand is mostly unmet causing people to queue for unpredictable periods. Inadequate facilities for a decent living, scarce opportunities for employment in the country coupled with systemic marginalization of a large populace from the state and its resources and an unstable political situation in the country since 1996 (the beginning of the armed struggle) has tunneled the young people to view emigration as the only opportunity to expand their life choices.

The inflow of Nepalese migrants in Portugal is an interesting yet understudied phenomenon. The large gap between documented and undocumented migrants calls for serious attention. Since most of the undocumented migrants come alone, there are significant impacts on their family. The dearth of studies on Nepalese in Portugal, in general, and the non-existence of studies related to gender among them provide impetus for the study, elaborated in the next section.

### 1.3 Rationale and significance of the study

When families move from one country to another, the most visible change in physical environment is accompanied by some degree of changes in values, perspectives and practices. One such prominent change within families could be changes in the gender relation. But there is overall inattentiveness displayed over “bringing gender in” to research on international migration (Mahler, 2003). Mahler argues that although gender is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, forces shaping human life and accordingly influences migration and migrants’ lives, it has been regularly sidelined in scholarly research on international migration over the past 100 years. The same pattern holds, regrettably, for the more recent breakthroughs in migration studies led by early proponents of the transnational framework (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995). The research is an attempt to contribute to this significant yet understudied contributor of change in human lives within the context of migration.

Gender is a socio-cultural construct of female and male identity that shapes how individuals live and interpret the world around them. Gender is not natural; it is learned in society through direct and indirect means (Knapp, Muller & Quiros, 2009). Ministry of Labor and Employment- Government of Nepal (2014) shares that surge in out-migration for foreign employment has brought profound changes in the socio-economic fabric of the country. This

provides an interesting avenue to explore how the migration of Nepalese to Portugal in significant numbers has contributed to the change in socio-economic fabric of Nepal. The study undertaken looks into the Nepalese men's understanding of gender and gender relations and how they practice gender within the household.

The rationale for the study is primarily shaped and informed by the dearth of literature on the male perspective with regard to gender relations in general and also within the context of migration. Literature on migration and gender relations seems to be lopsided in its focus on women although men are also a significant component. As Charsley & Wray (2015) put it:

Migration scholarship has often lagged behind developments in gender studies. The importance of gender has gained increasing recognition, but this has predominantly meant a focus on women migrants. Only recently has a gendered lens been turned to the study of migrant men. Discourses surrounding migration in law and government, and in legal scholarship, remain characterized by neglect or dismissal of the gendered experiences of male migrants (p. 403).

The research attempts to contribute to this fairly new and understudied area of gender and migrant men; exploring men's perception and practices of gender within families and residential context can throw light on the macro issues of gender and migration. It also shares the emotions manifested by migrant men (viz. Nepalese) which is poorly acknowledged and scarcely documented in the transnational migration and gender literature (Montes, 2013).

Migration of Nepalese in Portugal being a recent phenomenon, the Nepali population remains under studied. So far only two studies "Nepalese women migrants in Portugal and their experience with socio-cultural integration" by Bajracharya (2015) and "Parenting among Nepalese families in Lisbon and its effect on child integration" by Dangol (2015) could be located, both based in Lisbon. The research contributes to the study on Nepalese in Portugal, empirically expanding it to Faro (in Algarve region) and Lisbon districts. Nepalese in Portugal are sporadically distributed throughout the country; Lisbon has the highest concentration of Nepalese and Faro the second highest (Bajracharya, 2015). The research is also innovative in the sense that very few studies in the context of migration were found to be conducted in the Algarve region: Torkington, K.M. (2011) with her PhD thesis on "The discursive construction of place-identity: British lifestyle migrants in the Algarve" seems to be the precursor of most of the research work in the region, inspiring and supporting Ribeiro, F. P. in the study "Lifestyle migrants and working migrants in the algarve (portugal): multilingual challenge or monolingual imperative?". Thus the study will contribute to the research within the context of migration in this region.

The study by Bajracharya (2015) brought out that changes in gender relations have occurred within the experience of migration but these changes have been latent and not presented in discourse due to fear of confronting the traditional perception held by men (Bajracharya, 2015). This research is an effort to explore the understanding and practice of gender among Nepalese in Portugal from a male perspective, identifying the factors that facilitate or resist changes in the practice of gender. The study not only looks at the "*gender display*" (Goffman,

1976) among Nepalese males in Portugal but also how they are “*doing gender*” (West & Zimmerman, 1987) within the household through micro-ethnography using qualitative interviews and participant observation. The researcher believes that doing gender is an extension of the gendered perception constructed through discourses. In retrospection, the practice of gender by a man, within the household, speaks significantly about his understanding and perception of gender. Through the performance of everyday tasks, not only are ideas of gender, caste and social difference brought into view, but the embodied nature of difference that extends beyond the body and into the spaces of everyday life is evident (Nightingale, 2011).

The research has value for social work educators and practitioners as it brings out the gendered understanding of men within different contexts, viz. Nepali and the Portuguese, which can add to the multilayered understanding and practice of gender in other contexts too, e.g. the South Asian population because of its socio-economic-cultural similarities. This increased understanding will help change makers to engage in the field of gender more effectively. The research provides an insight into how doing gender is a product of the social structures and not merely individual’s activities. This research brings out, through the male perspective, how both men and women are limited by society at large; this provides impetus to all those working towards an egalitarian society to understand men’s perception and ensure their active participation in all efforts. In a nutshell, this research project looks into how Nepalese men in Portugal understand and carry about gender roles in their everyday lives. It also explores if their perception of gender has changed after migrating to Portugal. As the study is on Nepali migrant men in Portugal, it also looks at how they are placed in relations to the Portuguese and the outcome from the meeting of these two different cultures. The study also traverses the factors contributing to this change in their understanding of gender and gender relations, and their participation within the household.

#### 1.4 The research approach

The research uses micro-ethnographic approach to explore the perception and praxis of gender among Nepalese male immigrants in Portugal. There is no doubt that the existing literature on how gender affects migrants’ and non-migrants’ negotiation of work is rich and suggestive albeit far from conclusive (Pessar & Mahler, 2003). Pessar & Mahler (2003) argue that at least one essential piece of the puzzle is still missing, viz. the actual observation of how these relationships are negotiated, without which we are limited to a dissatisfying assessment of their effects. Most relevant data have been collected in retrospective interviews as opposed to immediate ethnographic observation; in order to improve the understanding of this complex transnational area the next generation of research needs to employ both methods at a minimum (ibid.). The research attempted to address this deficiency by employing a micro-ethnographic design incorporating qualitative interviews and participant observation. The research is qualitative in nature and exploratory in design. The qualitative inquiry on the understanding of gender relations was conducted through semi-structured interviews and observation of the study group in their

natural environment: qualitative interviews were the key source of data and observations were made objectively at various occasions to enrich the data.

## 1.5 Structure of the thesis

The presentation of the study on “Perception and Practice of Gender among Nepalese in Portugal. A Male Perspective” will be done in five chapters. The first chapter gives an overview of the Nepalese context in terms of gender and migration; introduces the research approach in brief and mentions the rationale and significance of the study. The second chapter covers an extensive review of literature on the theme of gender and gender in the context of migration, along with migration of Nepalese in Portugal and the gendered Nepali context. It also elaborates on the theoretical framework used in the conceptualization and analysis of the study, namely the concepts of ‘doing gender’ (West & Zimmerman, 1987) and ‘undoing gender’ (Deutsch, 2007). The third chapter provides detailed account of methodology used throughout this micro-ethnographic study. The fourth chapter includes findings and discussions relevant to those findings in light of earlier studies identified through the literature review. The final chapter concludes the study and suggests avenues for further research. The key finding is that the discourses on gender have changed within the context of migration, so have practices but these changes are yet to be adequately transformed into praxis.

## 2. Literature review and analytical framework

### 2.1 An introduction to gender in social context

Gender refers to those social, cultural, and psychological traits linked to males and females through particular social contexts. Sex makes us male or female; gender makes us masculine or feminine. Sex is an ascribed status because a person is born with it, but gender is an achieved status because it must be learned (Lindsey, 2005, p.4).

Lindsey also argues that gender can be viewed on a continuum of characteristics demonstrated by a person regardless of the person's biological sex and gender roles are the expected attitudes and behaviors a society associates with each sex. Lindsey's placement of gender in the socio-cultural context is in agreement with other authors (Ridgeway & Kricheli-Katz, 2013; Khalid, 2011; Deutsch, 2007; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

"Sex/gender, of course, is a form of human variation that is highly susceptible to cultural generalization as a primary category for framing social relations" (Ridgeway, 2009, p.148). Ridgeway also points out that the social importance given to gender as a primary frame for making sense of self and other affect the extent to which individuals actively gender their behavior.

As a belief system that privileges men over women, it gives most men and some women who benefit from male dominance an interest in enacting and maintaining that system. In addition, as a fundamental category for understanding the self, it gives almost all women and men a sometimes powerful interest in enacting essentialist expressions of gender difference. Both types of interests can have consequences for the actions individuals take when the constraining social structures around them give them the space to act on their own (Ridgeway, 2009, p.149).

Within the social construct that we live in, or the context, there are roles associated with these categories.

A role is the expected behavior associated with a status. Roles are performed according to social norms, shared rules that guide people's behavior in specific situations. Social norms determine the privileges and responsibilities a status possesses. Females and males, mothers and fathers, and daughters and sons are all statuses with different normative role requirements attached to them. The status of mother calls for expected roles involving love, nurturing, self-sacrifice, home-making, and availability. The status of father calls for expected roles of breadwinner, disciplinarian, home technology expert, and ultimate decision maker in the household. Society allows for a degree of flexibility in acting out roles, but in times of rapid social change, acceptable role limits are often in a state of flux, producing uncertainty about what appropriate role behavior should be. People may experience *anomie*—normlessness—because traditional norms have changed but new ones have yet to be developed (Lindsey, 2005, p.2).

From an evolutionary point of view, emotions have partially equipped humanity to adapt and, therefore, survive (Montes, 2013). Lindsey argues that emotions not only correspond to biological factors but are also “socially shaped by other social structures, such as culture and gender”, p.471). Rosaldo (1984) in Montes (2013) argues, drawing on Bourdieu’s notion of the “positioned subject”, that the “positioned subject” is structured by such factors as age, gender, and status, which typically afford the individual a set of life experiences that “naturally” and universally produce certain kinds of feelings. Montes draws attention to this context where both gender and culture determine not only what emotion can be shown to whom and in what contexts, but, most importantly, what set of emotions is entitled to what gender.

“An explosion of research on gender issues now suggests that all social interactions, and the institutions in which the interactions occur, are gendered in some manner” (Lindsey, 2005, p.2). She argues that all societies are structured around relatively stable patterns or statuses that establish how social interaction will be carried out, gender being one of the most important ascribed statuses. If our fundamental understanding of who we are is rooted in our primary identities, including gender, then many of us will implicitly fall back on cultural beliefs about gender to frame what it means to make life choices that “express” ourselves; there will be a tendency on the part of many of us to, in Charles and Bradley’s (2009) phrase, ‘indulge our gendered selves’ (Ridgeway, 2011). “Social relations, whether in person or even in imagination, require us to find a way to coordinate with the other for which we need some way to anticipate the other’s behavior so we can decide how to act ourselves” (Ridgeway & Kricheli-Katz, 2013, p.297). They express, as suggested by range of research, that people solve this problem by categorizing the other and by comparing themselves, according to widely shared “common knowledge” cultural codes of social difference.

In social relational contexts, the prime categories perceived by individuals make their cultural beliefs cognitively available to implicitly shape the perceiver’s judgment and behaviors in response to others (Macrae & Quadflieg, 2010 in Ridgeway & Kricheli-Katz, 2013)). These cultural beliefs associated with categorization, e.g. gender, often extend as stereotypes. Kunda & Spencer (2003) argue that the extent to which these mentally primed stereotypes actually do bias the perceiver’s responses varies from negligible to substantial depending on features of the context and thus context is fundamental to their effects.

Evidence indicates that gender and race stereotypes are effectively salient (i.e., sufficiently salient to measurably bias judgments and behavior) in contexts in which the participants differ on the characteristic (mixed-sex or mixed-race settings) or that are culturally linked to the characteristics (gender- or race-associated contexts, which can include same-sex or same-race contexts) (Berger & Webster, 2006 in Ridgeway & Kricheli-Katz, 2013, p.299).

## 2.2 Gender and migration

### 2.2.1 Migration and gender scholarship

Migration has largely shaped the world in the way we experience it today. In the global context, migrant is a person

who is outside the territory of the State of which they are nationals or citizens and who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate (EMN, 2014, p.33).

In 2013, the number of international migrants worldwide reached 232 million, up from 175 million in 2000, with an annual growth rate hovering around 2 per cent (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2013). Labor migrants comprise a significant proportion of all international migrants and the ILO estimates that some 105 million persons worked in a country other than the land of their birth in 2010 (Department of Foreign Employment-DoFE, 2014).

Migration has also reshaped the way in which men and women accomplish gender identities. Migration scholarship has focused on either men or women, at particular period of time. Initial studies on migration have been found to look into the process of migration and men. Migration of men was followed by migration of women and later a significant presence of women was observed in the phenomena of migration, referred to as *feminization of migration*, which called for a focus on the inclusion of women in the study of migration. The minimal presence of studies of women and migration and the growth of feminist scholarship resulted in upsurge of studies of women and migration, thereby making migration studies lopsided at some stage therefore needing a more balanced inquiry, stepping away from gendered studies of migration.

International migration patterns have changed as a consequence of broad social, political, economic, and environmental trends. Now the driving forces include war, globalization, urbanization, and changing cultural norms regarding social roles and responsibilities (Ross-Sheriff, 2011). Ross-Sheriff shares that international migration is a causal factor in the problems addressed regularly by many, perhaps most, social workers in all countries. This illuminates the importance of the study under discussion.

In the 1970s historians and sociologists began to include gender as a variable in statistics on migration and some examinations of social roles of immigrant men versus women were published (Ross-Sheriff, 2011). Sheriff argues that in recent times, ethnographers and other poststructuralist scholars have described the complex roles of women migrants as wage earners who contribute substantially to their families both in their countries of origin and in the host countries. By the late 1980s, the evidence had grown large enough to require redrawing the map of gender and migration scholarship leading to emergence of new theoretical formulations (Curran et al., 2006). In these frameworks the household economy became a critical site for revealing the relationship between migration and women. Some scholars contended that

migration tends to reinforce gender asymmetries via the tensions between reproductive labor and productive labor markets; some suggested that migration created opportunities for reworking gender with possible improvements in women's status and some others were more equivocal advocating the need for more research about the context of migration. By the mid-1990s sociologists had effectively turned to qualitative methods to understand the dynamics of gender and migration instead of relying on quantitative data to generate insights about gender and migration (Curran et al, 2006). At the same time, their studies shifted their lens away from women to gender in the migration process. By addressing methodological and theoretical critiques of early reviews, the new scholarship showed how migration processes are reciprocally related to the social construction of gender.

Most gender analyses assume that maleness and femaleness are defined in relationship to each other, as other axes of power and difference (e.g. class, race, and ethnicity) (Curran et al, 2006). Rather than viewing gender as fixed or biological, more scholars now emphasize its dynamic nature: gendered ideologies and practices change as human beings (gendered as male or female, and sexualized as homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual) cooperate or struggle with each other, with their pasts, and with the structures of changing economic, political, and social worlds linked through their migrations (Mahler & Pessar, 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Migrants often become particularly aware of the relational and contextual nature of gender as they attempt to fulfill expectations of identity and behavior that may differ sharply in the several places they live and scholars have stressed the importance of the context: gender roles are influenced by multiple sources across culture and time and they cannot be understood outside the context of particular ethnicities, societies and social settings (Ferdman, 1999).

Scholars have succeeded in bringing female migration out of the shadows in many disciplines (Curran et al, 2006). With the increase of female migration on a global level, virtually equal to migration of males, the terminology *feminization of migration* is gaining currency and importantly many migration scholars now insist that migration itself is a gendered phenomenon that requires more sophisticated theoretical and analytical tools than studies of sex roles and of sex as a dichotomous variable allowed in the past. Recent studies have gone beyond the economic aspect to address issues of social and psychological well-being (Ross-Sheriff, 2011). Anthropologists have begun to examine the influence of cultural traditions on immigrants' adjustments to their changing situations and sociologists have assessed social networks and informal organizations that support new immigrants. But changes within the context of migration have been phenomenal and scholars emphasize the need for more explorations. Charsley & Wray (2015) contend that the interdisciplinary field of migration studies sometimes appears to lag behind developments in the social sciences and humanities, something that has been particularly apparent in the field of gender.

In relation to this view that women have been neglected in migration studies, Charsley & Wray (2015) reflect that initial moves toward gendering understandings of migration took the form of increased attention to the experiences of women and to address the "invisibility" of women researchers may over-emphasize the migration experiences of women, paying less



attention to those of men. This would inadvertently undermine the gendered view of migration that helps explain the experiences of both males and females (Hibbins & Pease, 2009). Charsley & Wray (2015) present that over the last decade or so, a small body of social science research has belatedly emerged, which applies a gendered lens to the study of male migration.

### *2.2.2 Migration, men and masculinities*

In recent years the question of masculinity in general, and particularly with respect to transnational communities, has attracted attention among international migration scholars with most of the studies focusing on Filipinos, Mexicans, Vietnamese, Indians and recently Ecuadorians, leaving other transnational communities understudied (Montes, 2013). Albeit there are limited studies looking into masculinities, various scholars have discussed on how masculinities are expressed within the context of migration (Charsley & Wray, 2015; Adhikari, 2013; Montes, 2013; Messerschmidt, 2012; Sharma, 2012; Kleist, 2010; Curran et al, 2006; Mahler & Pessar, 2003).

One of the prominent and common expressions of masculinity stated by the authors above is the undertaking of or resistance to migration (as a process) by men. Drawing on a specific localized hegemonic masculinity that emphasized hierarchical gender relations in the family and vigilant fathering, Messerschmidt (2012) presents Broughton's study of men's contemplation of migration from North to south Mexico reflecting these men deployed "traditionalist," "adventurer," and "breadwinner" masculinities. All of these masculinities provided differing gendered responses to realizing both instrumental and identity goals in a time of rapid and wrenching change with the traditionalist emphasizing masculinity by maintaining the established local hegemonic masculinity primarily through family cohesion and refraining from migration; the adventurer proving his masculinity through seeking thrills and breaking free from rural life and the breadwinner symbolically dignifying masculinity by taking up migration as an inescapable duty for improving the standard of living of the family (ibid.).

Migration has also been seen as a rite of passage (Charsley & Wray, 2015; Sharma, 2012; Mapril, 2011; Kandel & Massey, 2002; Osella & Osella, 2000). Charles & Wray (2015) see it as a liminal phase before the acquisition of a new status. Osella & Osella's (2000) study shows young men from Kerala in South India transit to the adult patron householder role from the status of an immature youth by accumulating goods stored in the parental home. Mapril (2011) shares how migration for the Bangladeshi youth is not just an opportunity to earn foreign money essential for the consumption of modernity, reproduction of their parents' household and constitution of new ones but also the only opportunity to reach adulthood. Sharma (2012) presents similar account of young Nepali men from the hills covertly migrating to Delhi in search of both employment and adventure; returning clad in fashionable clothes to display their newfound worldliness and independence as well as the cash in their pockets. Kandel & Massey (2002) report that Mexican youths' migrant aspirations were substantially influenced by cultural expectations about life course trajectories and therefore young men were expected to migrate as a cultural rite of passage.

Charles & Wray (2015) look into the rite of passage model most often involving male migrants traveling alone to argue that it does not necessarily assure enhanced status. The Keralan returnees in Osella & Osella's (2000) study must tread a balance in how they spend and save to avoid being judged to be *kallan*—a self-interested maximizer disengaged from social obligations—or *pavam*—an overgenerous innocent who squanders his resources. Bangladeshi migrants to Portugal in Mapril's (2011) study continuously find themselves, either explicitly or implicitly, between *patrao*—a successful migrant who is a role model for all migrant men or *paagal manush*—a madman who has lost touch with reality, encapsulating failure in its most extreme form. Sotelo (1992) reflects that financial gains which have been anticipated and invested against may not materialize through migration alone; for those aspiring to or attempting to maintain a breadwinner role, disappointing returns can be a severe blow. Walter, Bourgois, and Loinaz (2004) in (Quayson, 2005) report that the shame experienced by some Mexican construction workers in the United States who are injured and so no longer able to earn and remit money can contribute to depression and substance abuse.

The economic challenges migrant men face are further added by being away from home and not being able to share their deeper feelings because of the socially constructed ideas of masculinity limiting their sharing of emotions. While all family members suffer the emotional cost of separation, migrant men endure a greater cost precisely because of their rigid and inhibited emotional expressiveness (Montes, 2013). She argues that for men, migration might create the opportunity to get in touch with deeper emotions that would be overlooked under normal circumstances as a result of the social association with feminine identities. In particular, the narratives of these men indicate that a father–son relationship can also have bonds of love and sacrifice normally associated only with mother–child relations. Charsley & Wray (2015) share that at a more mundane level, the type of employment migrants are able to obtain may challenge their models of masculine success, as migrant employment niches are often located in feminized and/or low-status sectors (*ibid.*). It can be seen that most migrant Nepali men in Portugal are engaged in restaurants and a majority of them start with *copa*-doing dishes, which is considered the work of females in Nepal. Individuals may vary in their willingness to be flexible with their gendered identities in light of the perceived gains of migration (Batnitzky, McDowell & Dyer, 2009).

Migration can be seen as a space within which masculinities are constructed, validated, reinforced, deconstructed, negotiated and reconstructed. The public inspection undergone by men hoping to migrate under the Bracero program providing Mexican agricultural workers to the United States (1942–64) provides an example (Cohen, 2004). To be chosen, in addition to knowledge of agriculture, they had to fulfill various criteria of ideal manhood: to be married with children (i.e., head of a household), to have no recent scars, disease, or other sign of weakness and to have manly hands (calloused, showing evidence of work). In this selection process, which both judges and produces a certain type of masculinity, peasant men are reborn as ideal masculine representatives of the Mexican state. Somalis negotiate respectable masculinity in the Diaspora, following their displacement to Western countries as refugees or family re-unified

persons on the backdrop of years of civil war (Kleist, 2010). Men's difficulties are articulated as a transfer of male authority to the welfare state, reflecting female empowerment and male misrecognition, causing multiple losses of social position and upheavals in gender relations (ibid.). Kleist argues that Somali men negotiate and enact respectable masculinity through associational and community involvement, creating alternative social spaces of recognition. The fluidity of masculinity between cultures and over time has also been discussed by Donaldson et al. (2009) who share that migrant men may find that the signifiers of masculinity in the new country contrast with those in their countries of origin. The Australian collection of *Migrant Men*, with migration and masculinity as its main focus, provides numerous illustrations of the encounters between varied migrant and non-migrant masculinities to look at how immigrant men renegotiate their gender identity as they relate their own cultural understandings of masculinity to the meanings and practices in the dominant culture (ibid.).

Men may pursue routes to legal migration that are in themselves less compatible with ideals of masculine independence or authority, that is, as refugees, as dependents of migrant women, or as migrant husbands in transnational marriages. The majority of marriage migrants globally are women, but significant numbers of men also migrate as spouses, and husbands even form the majority in a few contexts, such as Filipino spousal migration to the United Kingdom (Charsley et al. 2012) and the Nepalese spousal migration to the UK (Adhikari, 2013). The recent upsurge of marriage migration where young Nepalese men go through *Australia marriage*<sup>1</sup> also adds to these examples. Studies of South Asian migration have exposed the gendered tensions that sometimes arise when this movement, often against virilocal norms, leaves such men reliant on wives (and sometimes in-laws), upturning conventional gendered domestic relations of power (Charles & Wray, 2015).

Migrant men are found to use various subtle and manifest expressions to negotiate masculinities. Humor can be spotted being used to express dissatisfaction over the changed circumstances affecting gender relations and subtly trying to reinstate masculinities defined by the power to make decisions within households. When the state is visible and its strong involvement can be felt in the daily lives of people, even within households, guiding their behavior and keeping a watch on the rights of men and women (which might not be the experience in their countries of origin), it provides impetus and space for women to challenge and negotiate gendered norms and practices that oppress them. The men might not hold much power against the state and when they realize this, they see no choice but to give in to the negotiations. And they express this dissatisfaction through humor: the expression "Denmark is a ladies' country" (Kleist, 2010) by Somali men resonates with the expression of Nepali men in the UK that they were 'living in a Queen's country' (Adhikari, 2013).

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<sup>1</sup> The increasing incidences of pretend marriages that are taking place in Kathmandu between young men who are waiting for any chance to go out of Nepal and young women who have obtained residence permit in Australia through 'migration occupations in demand' e.g. registered nurse, have been reported. Commonly referred to as 'Australia marriage', there are wedding organizers who set up everything required for the marriage (to meet visa application requirements) including wedding venue, priest, photographer, food and guests.

Academic study of masculinity in law has been primarily concerned with the structures and discourses which reinforce male privilege (Collier, 2010). The limitation of studies on masculinities has consequences like insufficient critical deconstruction of masculinity itself, which has somewhat been taken as a given, reinforcing rather than deconstructing the masculine “norm” and risking reliance on an essentialist conception of gender and relatively little attention paid in the legal scholarship to the differences and relationships between men and between masculinities, particularly “hegemonic” and other forms such as “subordinate,” “complicit,” “marginalized, or “subversive” masculinities (Connell, 2005).

Charsley & Wray (2015) raise flag that not all men benefit in equal measure (or at all) from the “patriarchal dividend”; differences in class, ethnicity, immigration status, and other factors all determine relative power. This may be disguised because masculinity itself is “a constant struggle, never achieved but always needing to be proved” (Dowd, 2008). Men consistently have to ‘display’ masculinities in accordance to the societal expectations, e.g. the status and benefits received by a Hindu man of a so-called higher caste within a religious context, more often than not, outweigh those of the so-called lower caste man. And men in positions of weakness may seek solutions not in the rejection of the norms of hegemonic masculinity but in their reassertion, even in ‘hypermasculinity.’ It can be difficult for individual men, operating within the legal system and grounded in particular social, economic, or psychological conditions, to stand apart from dominant models of manhood; equally, they may be regarded skeptically if they make a claim based on non-hegemonic attributes (Charsley & Wray, 2015).

Charsley & Wray (2015) also discuss the role of the state in gendered experiences of migration. They note that migrant men (particularly migrant husbands) may find themselves with diminished power at home and yet be regarded as patriarchs by state institutions. Such men may perceive state interventions to protect or promote women’s interests as further undermining their authority; in Ong’s (1996) US research with Cambodian refugee families, one research participant complained that “ . . . in America, men feel they have lost value because they are no longer masters of their own families” (p. 743). Charsley & Wray (2015) derive key insight from this portrait of state institutions intervening on the basis of racialized normative assumptions about gender relations quoting Hearn and Howson (2009, p.42 ) who state that:

Not only is much policy and policy development constructed by and through assumptions about gender, but also, much policy and policy development can be understood as policy on and about gender relations. Gender constructs policy as policy constructs gender (p. 410).

The idea of mobile masculinities therefore has been widely discussed in literature and a commonly shared understanding is that of the intersectionality encompassing it. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) indicate that masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body of an individual but, rather, that it responds to a socially constructed set of practices determined particularly by a specific social, cultural, and historical setting. Masculinity is then relational not only to femininity but also to factors of space, time, and socially constructed structures, such as

class and race (Montes, 2013). Charsley & Wray (2015) emphasize the relevance of intersections of gender with sexuality, race, religion, ethnicity, immigration status, and labor market position and advocate the need for a complex intersectional understanding to appreciate the position of individuals or different groups of migrant men. Thus migration involves multiple cultural contexts that might provide avenue for multiple constructions of masculinity.

### *2.2.3 Migration and changes associated with gender*

Gender is imagined and lived across multiple social and spatial scales with the disciplining force and seeming immutability of any given gender regime being reinforced through repetitions in the ways in which gender is embedded and reenacted between and among these scales (Pessar & Mahler, 2003). They argue that envisioning and practice of gender within and across different scales and transnational spaces also brings out inconsistencies and contradictions. They share Fouron & Schiller's (2001) documentation of Haitian immigrant women often gaining power and prestige, on one hand, among non-migrant family members and friends through the remittances they send home and on the other hand, through these remittances, financing the Haitian elites' ability to retain power. The elites sustain the patriarchal structures embedded within their nation-building project: structures that systematically limit women's access to political power and secure employment. This provides a good example of how patriarchy is both challenged and reinforced by transnational migration. Another facet of migration is the precipitation of gendered division of work, with women and girls taking tasks usually performed by men and boys after they emigrate and weakening the traditional gendered roles (Pessar & Mahler, 2003). Similar observations were found in Aguirre & Pietropaoli's (2008) study in Nepal focusing on the impact of the armed conflict that it went through (1996-2006) resulting in forced migration in large numbers. Women in conflict affected areas undertook the responsibility of farm-work that was considered heavy and needing much strength, an area traditionally dominated by men. By performing this work, women not only challenged the hegemonic traditions but also established their strength, simultaneously weakening the traditional gendered roles. Thus it can be seen that migration merely does not change the economic situation as expected but also plays a significant role in the socio-cultural construction of gender in the countries of origin.

Migration disrupts gender relations and the institutions that reinforce gender relations and cultural expectations about gendered behavior (Curran et al., 2006). Curran et al.'s speculation can be exemplified by the negotiation of gender roles and relations within families when a member migrates; the undertaking of household chores by Nepali men with caretaker-wives in Israel or leading of decision making by Nepali women and their increased agency to negotiate with in-laws with construction worker-husbands in the Middle East provide examples of disruption of gender relations reinforced by the institution of family. The decreasing ability to exert power in Mexican migrants in the United States, noticed by Hondagneu-Sotelo (1992), with the corresponding increasing power of women and the erosion of their ability to exert patriarchal privilege provides another example (Curran et al., 2006). The increased likeliness of Pakistani migrants returned from UK to share responsibility for housework and childcare in

Pakistan spotted by Khalid (2011) also supports Curran et al.'s speculation. Khalid points this change to the experience of living in UK, a more liberal and egalitarian environment where segregation of sexes is not practiced, relationships between men and women are more informal and gender roles are more flexible and permissive, as compared to the traditional Muslim and patriarchal society in Pakistan where gender roles are organized in terms of sex and age of its members. Growing size of Hindu women in labor market in Lisbon shows that they are negotiating their gender role and playing both the role of care giver and economic support, breaking the gendered stereotypes of women as mere homemakers (Lourenço, 2011). The increased bargaining power of educated and profession Nepali women, working abroad, over marriage and experiencing shared responsibility for childcare and household activities, unlike in Nepal also supports this claim (Adhikari, 2013). Although the impact of migration on gender equality is a debated issue, there is a common assertion that migration may restructure gendered domestic relations of power (Charles & Wray, 2015).

### 2.3 Nepalese and emigration

Nepal has a long history of labor migration. The induction of young Nepali individuals into the colonial British army in the early nineteenth century appears to be the first instance of the state's involvement in formalizing labor migration through treaties between two governments (Department of Foreign Employment-DoFE, 2014; Bhattarai, 2005). Much of the history of labor migration for foreign employment from Nepal is characterized by the outflow to India, at least up to the mid-1980s. Nepal and India share a long and open border and no documentation or approval is required to cross the border from either side (DoFE, 2014; Kollmair et al. 2006).

With the intensification of globalizing dynamics and the boom in the oil industry that started in the Middle East in the 1970s, new destinations emerged; the demand for workers in industries in Middle East countries created massive opportunities (DoFE, 2014). The Government of Nepal responded with the promulgation of the Foreign Employment Act, 1985. The Act specified the countries to which Nepali citizens (preferably low-skilled workers) were encouraged to migrate, opening avenues for the private sector to facilitate foreign employment through agreements with companies in the countries to which Nepalese were encouraged to migrate for labor. With the restoration of democracy in the country in 1990, followed by liberalization, the Government expressed its commitment to a market economy, opening up to the wider world. This resulted in the increase of Nepali migrants travelling beyond India.

The new destinations for foreign employment were so attractive that the 2001 National Population Census detected a decrease in Nepali migrants to India. Of the total emigrant population from Nepal, 89.2 percent went to India in 1991 but only 77.3 percent in 2001 (Kansakar, 2003). According to DoFE (2014) more than 100,000 labor permits have been issued each year since 2001, peaking at 249,051 in 2007/08. The total population of Nepal in 2001, as shared by the Census, was about 24 million. The most attractive destination countries for Nepali foreign labor migrants since 1993 have been Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE; from 1993/94 to 2007/08, these countries received nearly 97 per cent of all labor migrants

from Nepal (DoFE, 2014). It is estimated that more than 100,000 and perhaps as many as 200,000 Nepali migrants were living in Gulf countries by the early twenty-first century, including both men and women (Williams, 2009).

Nepalese have migrated to different parts of the world and a pattern of migration can be established according to the economic status. Gurung (2000) presents that Nepalese workers opting to work in the Gulf countries are found to be less educated and less wealthy (Group D) than those heading for North America, Europe or to Far East countries. He shares that Nepalese with the highest resources and education (Group A) migrate to Anglo-Saxon countries like Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, The United States of America and Japan whereas people in Group B migrate to countries in Europe like Belgium, Germany, Switzerland; people in Group C migrate to East Asian countries like Malaysia, Maldives, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Guam; the ones in Group D migrate to Gulf Countries and the people in Group E migrate to India. Migration of large number of Nepalese to Portugal is a fairly recent phenomenon which is not discussed in Gurung's study. But it can be predicted that the large majority of labor migrants coming to Portugal, also a European country, show the same characteristics as the other migrants in Group C.

The Government of Nepal did not maintain sex-disaggregated data until 2005/06; but the Nepali labor migrants have predominantly been men. Available records from the former Department of Labor and Employment Promotion (2001) show that only 161 women migrated for foreign employment between 1985 and 2001 (Gurung & Adhikari, 2004). The most popular destination countries for women in that time were Hong Kong (China), Israel and the Republic of Korea. As of 2013/14, 46,274 permits were issued to women going abroad to work (DoFE, 2014).

The National Population Census, carried out every ten years, elaborates further on the migration status of the Nepali population. Since 1961, the Census collected information on the absent population (the census considers absentee to be any member of household who has been abroad for six months or more prior to the time of enumeration) with the records revealing a substantial increase in absolute terms. Kansakar (2003) suggests that the increase in the absent population as a proportion of total population, however, is not so compelling; in the 1991 Census, there was an increase of 63.4 percent in the absent population in absolute terms from the previous Census, but it accounted for only 3.4 percent of the total population. In the subsequent decade's data (2001), the rate of increase in absolute terms slowed significantly, to 15.8 percent, accounting for 3.2 percent of the total population (ibid.). In 2011, Nepal had a population of 26,494,504 (CBS, 2014) of which 6.8 percent were absent. The number of Nepalese leaving Nepal is significantly increasing every day.

Department of Labor of the Government of Nepal reports that everyday 500 persons officially leave the country to work in foreign countries other than India as migrant workers. A large number of Nepali migrants go to India---The ailing economy of the country has been propped up by remittances sent by these migrant workers (NIDS, assessed April 29, 2016, available at : <http://www.nids.org.np/current-activities.htm>)

The World Bank shares that Nepal is a low income country with a GDP of \$19.77 billion in 2014. According to Nepal Rastra Bank, the monetary, regulatory and supervisory authority of banks and financial institutions in the country, the total inflow of remittance during the fiscal year 2013-14, equaled to 25 percent of its GDP. “A recent study by the World Bank has ranked Nepal in third position in the world in terms of the contribution of remittance to the GDP.” ([www.globaltimes.cn](http://www.globaltimes.cn), assessed April 29, 2016). Thus migration of Nepalese has accompanied significant socio-economic changes in the country indicating a need to study this phenomenon.

## 2.4 Immigration statistics in Portugal

### 2.4.1 Migration of South Asians in Portugal

Despite not being the poorest region in the world, South Asia has some of the worst human development outcomes, with millions lacking access to services like clean water, electricity, vaccinations and schooling (Domínguez, 2015). For centuries, upward mobility has often depended on aspects such as gender, location, or caste and shares that a recent World Bank report has found that substantial upward mobility in the biggest countries in the region is now being driven by jobs and migration, even among socially disadvantaged groups (ibid.). This brief description of the South Asian region provides significant insights into the ground realities and illuminates the changing landscape of the region in terms of gender and migration.

As discussed earlier, gender in this region significantly impacts life course. The changes in life course within the context of migration, more often than not, translate into changes in the understanding and practice of gender. The significant migration of Nepalese to Portugal also needs to be contextualized in the frame of South Asians residing in the country because of the similarities their region exhibits in terms of culture, food and language. The statistics of South Asians in Portugal throws some light into this.

#### *South Asians in Portugal, 2013*

Table 1: Inflow of South Asians to Portugal, 2013

Country of nationality	Men	Women	Total (n)	Total (%)
Afghanistan	3	2	5	0.1
Bangladesh	469	49	518	18.7
Bhutan	-	-	-	-
India	674	296	970	35.1
Maldives	-	-	-	-
Nepal	611	236	847	30.7
Pakistan	281	122	403	14.6
Sri Lanka	8	6	14	0.51
Total	2046	711	2757	100.0

Source: Bajracharya, 2015 based on SEF, 2014.



In the year 2013, India was the biggest contributor to the inflow of South Asian migrants in Portugal contributing 35 percent and Nepal was the second, contributing 31 percent of the total. Bangladesh contributed 19 percent and Pakistan 14 percent respectively. The sex segregated data on immigrant inflow also places Nepal in the second position in South Asia contributing 33 percent of the female migrants from the region, giving significant information about the mobility of Nepalese (Bajracharya, 2015)<sup>2</sup>

#### *South Asians residing in Portugal, by sex till 2013*

The table represents the total number of residence permits granted to South Asian immigrants in Portugal, till the year 2013. It shows that migrants from India occupy the biggest share in Portugal, occupying 46 percent of the total. One fifth of the South Asian migrants held Pakistani national identity (20.1 percent) and another fifth held Nepalese (19.8 percent). Migrants from Bangladesh make 13 percent of the total South Asian population in Portugal. The figures of women immigrant from South Asia residing in Portugal shows that Nepalese women contribute around 22 percent of total South Asian women population, second highest for the region (Bajracharya, 2015).

Table 2: South Asians residing in Portugal, by sex till 2013

Country of citizenship	Men	Women	Total (n)	Total (%)
Afghanistan	18	13	31	0.2
Bangladesh	1440	293	1733	13.2
Bhutan	-	-	-	-
India	4201	1821	6022	46.1
Maldives	-	-	-	-
Nepal	1736	852	2588	19.8
Pakistan	1785	843	2628	20.1
Sri Lanka	35	12	47	0.3
Total	9215	3834	13049	100.0

Source: Bajracharya, 2015 based on SEF, 2014.

#### *2.4.2. Migration of Nepalese to Portugal*

A bigger wave of Nepalese immigration to Portugal is estimated to have started recently,

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<sup>2</sup> The systematization and analysis of the data provided by Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF) and Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE) was done by Bajracharya (2015). Since no new data is available, Bajracharya's data analysis has been referred to in this section.

especially from 2008. The 2011 Census showed a population of 959 Nepalese residing in Portugal (INE, 2015) and according to SEF (2014), there are total of 2588 legal Nepalese residing in Portugal in 2013 out of which 32 percent are Nepalese women residing in Lisbon (Bajracharya, 2015). The official data indicates 2,050 people in the metropolitan area of Lisbon alone in 2013; 671 misdemeanor proceedings initiated over stay in the country and 200 notifications for voluntary abandonment of the country to Nepalese in 2013 suggest an important immigration and illegal stay in recent years, which is not captured by official statistics (SEF, 2014). The Nepalese consulate and Non Residential Nepalese Association estimate around 15,000 Nepalese to be in Portugal (Alexandra Pereira<sup>3</sup>, email communication, February 28, 2016). The alarming gap between official and unofficial data stresses the need to establish a formal mechanism to assist people who might be facing various problems as problems faced by a migrating individual tremendously impacts her/his family and the relations within the family, including gender relations.

#### *Nepalese residing in Portugal: 2000-2013*

Table 3 and figure 1 demonstrate the total number of resident permits granted by the Immigration and Borders Service (SEF) to Nepalese immigrants from 2000 to 2013. From only two Nepalese to be granted resident permit in 2000, the number increased to 2588 in 2013 (Bajracharya, 2015).

Table 3: Residence permits granted to Nepalese nationals in Portugal from 2000 to 2013

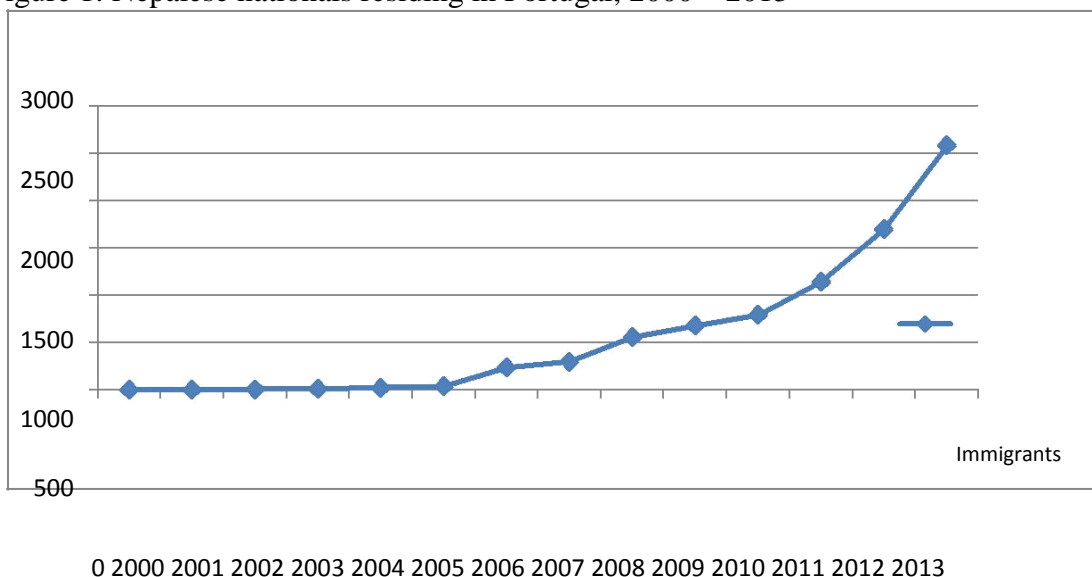
<b>Years</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Annual growth in percentage (%)</b>
2000	2	-	2	-
2001	3	-	3	50.0
2002	5	6	11	266.6
2003	6	7	13	18.1
2004	15	10	25	92.3
2005	25	17	42	68.0
2006	173	67	240	471.4
2007	196	106	302	25.8
2008	390	170	560	84.3
2009	470	215	685	22.3
2010	586	211	797	16.3
2011	770	375	1145	43.6
2012	1094	608	1702	48.6
2013	1736	852	2588	52.0

Source: Bajracharya, 2015 based on SEF, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Pereira is pursuing a PhD in Sociology with OpenSoc PhD Programme at ISEG/ICS-University of Lisbon. Her PhD work comprises of exploring Nepali networks in UK and Portugal.

The population of Nepalese residing in Portugal increased gradually until 2005 and rapidly in the following years. SEF recorded that 1145 Nepalese (including 375 women) were granted residence permit in 2011 which increased significantly to 2588 (including 852 women) in 2013 (ibid.).

Figure 1: Nepalese nationals residing in Portugal, 2000 – 2013



Source: Bajracharya, 2015 based on SEF, 2014.

The socio-economic performance of immigrants is largely affected by the levels of education. Albeit one of the challenges faced in integration by Nepalese immigrants in Portugal is the non-recognition of their academic degrees from Nepal (Bajracharya, 2015) their prior academic experiences do largely shape the outcomes of migration. The education level of Nepalese prior to migration can be seen through the table below:

Table 4: Education Level of Nepalese residing in Portugal, by sex, 2011

Educational level	In numbers			In percentage		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Without education	60	38	22	6.3	5.4	8.8
Pre-primary education	3	1	2	0.3	0.1	0.8
Primary education	68	40	28	7.1	5.6	11.2
Secondary education	578	426	152	60.3	60.3	61.0
Tertiary education	250	205	45	26.1	29	18.7
Total	959	710	249	100.0	100.0	100.0

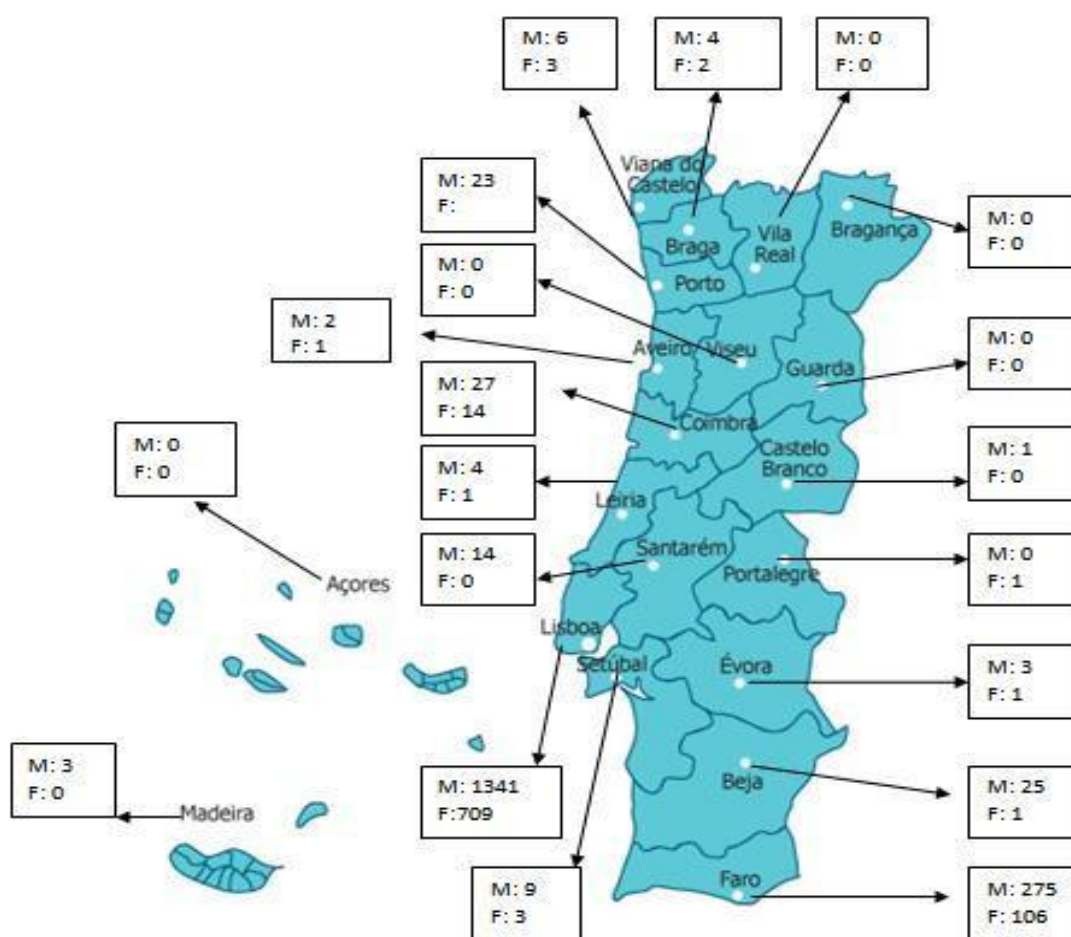
Source: Bajracharya, 2015 based on INE, 2014.

Among Nepalese migrants who were in Portugal in the year 2011, a majority had

completed secondary education (60 percent); one quarter (26 percent) tertiary education and a few (14 percent) had education below secondary level (Bajracharya, 2015). This represents that majority of the Nepalese immigrants (around 86 percent) have completed at least secondary level of education, which is in agreement with Gurung's (2010) claim that majority of Nepalese travelling to America and Europe have gone through formal education (ibid.). The table also shows that among the women immigrants, around 61 percent have completed secondary education; 18 percent tertiary education and around 21 percent have education below secondary level (ibid.).

Nepalese reside in many parts of Portugal, with Lisbon and Faro districts showing the highest concentration. The micro-ethnographic study covered these two areas. The distribution of Nepalese in Portugal by district and sex can be seen in the figure below:

Figure 2: Distribution of Nepalese in Portugal by district and sex in 2013



Source: Bajracharya, 2015 based on SEF, 2014.

## 2.5 Nepali society and gender

Nepali society is strictly stratified by sex; men and women experience very different opportunities and expectations regarding work, relationships, and personal autonomy (Williams, 2009). Although Nepal is ethnically, economically and geographically heterogeneous, in general it is a patrilineal, patrilocal society (Niraula & Morgan, 1996). The rates of marriage are very high in Nepal, the mean age of first marriage for women is 19.5 and 98.8 percent of women are married by the age of 49 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011). It is therefore likely that most women will marry and consequently migrate at least once because most women move into the husband's house after marriage. The high value placed in marriage and the participation of the majority in this social institution calls for a study of gender relations within marriage and household. In the earlier section on Nepal and migration, it could be seen that migration is an increasing phenomenon significantly contributing to socio-economic change therefore calling for a look into gender within family and migration.

The lower socio-economic status of Nepalese women should be seen in the context of the prevalent social structures that limit women's agencies and their exercise. In this regard, a general overview of women's status in Nepal can be inferred from the available data. According to National Population and Housing Census, 2011, CBS, Nepal, percentage of households with female ownership on land only is just 9 percent in the country; 10.7 percent of households in Nepal have female ownership on land and house and in an alarming 79.5 percent household, females have ownership neither on land nor on house; mere 19.7 percent households in the country have women owning some fixed assets, despite women heading 25.7 percent of the households. To add to this data, 81 percent of the agricultural holding in the nation is by males and females hold a mere 19 percent.

It is important to look into the access to service that households in Nepal have because most often women are the ones who are responsible for managing the household including fetching water and fuel.

More and more communities around the world are forced to survive with limited or no access to clean water, and the burden of collecting water usually falls on the shoulders of women and girls. It's estimated that globally they spend 200 million hours every single day simply collecting water for themselves and their families - time that could be spent in education, working and earning, with their family, or contributing to the community" ([www.unwater.org](http://www.unwater.org), Assessed on May 2, 2015).

Only 47.8 percent of the Nepali populace has access to tap/piped water, 35.1 percent to tubewell/pump, 2.4 percent to covered well, 4.7 percent to uncovered well, 5.7 percent to spout and 1.1 percent collect water from river/stream (CBS, 2014). So a majority of Nepalese (52.2 percent) spend notable time in fetching water which could be used otherwise and since it is mostly the women who shoulder this responsibility, not having access to running water limits their opportunities. The kind of fuel used in the Nepali households also gives an insight into how everyday life practices can limit women: in percentage of the use of fuel for cooking, the

following data can be seen: wood/firewood 64.0, kerosene 1.0, liquefied petroleum gas 21, cow-dung 10.4, bio-gas 2.4 and electricity 0.1. The use of firewood and resultant smoke has been established to be an important contributor to respiratory problems, thus impacting the females in the households largely.

There are significant differences in the levels of education on the basis of sex. The male literacy percentage in Nepal in 2011 was 75.1 and female literacy was 57.4; the male adult literacy rate was 71.7 whereas female adult literacy rate was 48.8 percent (CBS, 2014). This significant difference in the educational status of male and female can predict the difference in social engagement and economic outcomes too. The percentage of economically active population by sex in 2011 was 62.5 for males and 46.8 for females; 94.8 percent males were usually active economically as compared to 85.4 percent women and the percentage of female employees in Nepal was 18.37 (CBS, 2014). These data present the strikingly large gender gap that exists in Nepal. The normalization of this gap significantly places women in the category of secondary citizens, influencing the perception and practice of gender in general, by everyone.

The discrimination of women can also be seen in some popular cultural expressions. One of the most popular idioms when a woman gives birth to a child is “*chhora paye khasi, chhori paye farsi*”, which means if a woman gives birth to a boy she may eat goat meat and if it’s a girl then she will have to do with pumpkin (Pokharel, 2007). This gendered expression is an example of blatant sex preference. Religious, social and economic compulsions make sons valuable and indispensable asset whereas daughters are taken as financial burden to their parents (Lamsal, 2013). The transfer of parental property takes place from the father to the sons; except for a one time dowry (the practice of which is decreasing in recent days) no significant material or financial contributions are made to the daughter as she is considered the responsibility of her husband. In a traditional Hindu marriage, the bride’s father gives her hand to the groom and says “*aba yo hajurki bhai, mare paap pale punye*” meaning now my daughter is your responsibility, if you kill her you will be sinned, if you provide for her, you will be blessed. *Manusmriti*, known as the divine code of conduct in Hinduism, guides that girls must be in the custody of their father when they are child, women must be under the custody of their husband when married and under the custody of her son as widows. Provided that a majority<sup>4</sup> of the country follows Hindu religion, the blatant expression on a very important occasion and ceremony and the code of conduct provides hindsight into the subordinate position of women inside a family and thus illuminates unequal gender relations existing in the Nepali society.

## 2.6 Analytical framework

### 2.6.1 Migration and gender

Migration is a field to which so many disciplines now contribute. It is important to point to theoretical work on gender and migration that is now influencing empirical research in a number

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<sup>4</sup> According to CBS, 2014 the percentage of the population according to religion was as follows: Hindu 81.34, Buddhism 9.04, Islam 4.39, Kirat 3.05, Christianity 1.42, Prakriti 0.46, Bon 0.05, Jainism 0.05 and undefined 0.23

of related disciplines and to understand which disciplines are theorizing, or responding to theorizing, across disciplinary boundaries (Curran et al., 2006). Establishment of women's studies programs and research on migration in universities during the 1980s and 1990s contributed to knowledge about the gender issues that affect migrants (Ross-Sheriff, 2011). Sheriff also highlights that feminist-oriented scholarship brought attention to how migrants' situations are affected by unequal power relationships between men and women and by the control that men exercise in social relationships.

### *2.6.2 The analytical concepts*

Since the categories female and male are endowed with certain traits defined as feminine or masculine concepts such as gender must be found in the meanings people bring to them (Lindsey, 2005). Gender emerges not as an individual attribute but something that is "accomplished" in interaction with others; people, therefore, are "doing gender" (Fenstermaker & West, 2002). The "doing gender" based on differences contribute to the social construct; social difference is constructed and seeped into social privilege (ibid.). In this light, the study looked at the perception and praxis of gender among Nepalese in Portugal as uncovered by the micro-ethnography involving participant observation and qualitative interviews. It carefully examined the ethnographic data to evaluate whether Nepalese men under consideration were 'doing gender' as described by West & Zimmermann or 'undoing gender' called for by Deutsch.

#### *2.6.2.1 Doing gender*

West & Zimmerman (1987) in their seminal work "doing gender" share that when gender is viewed as an accomplishment the attention shifts from the individual to the interactional and, ultimately, institutional arenas. They view that although individuals do gender, it is a situated operationalization, carried out in the virtual or real presence of others who are presumed to be oriented to its production. They conceive gender as an emergent feature of social situations rather than as a property of individuals.

West & Zimmerman critically examine the use of gender as a *role* enactment in the conventional sense and as a "*display*" in Goffman's (1976) terminology. Both gender role and gender display focus on behavioral aspects of being a woman or a man as opposed, for example, to biological differences between the two. They contend that the notion of gender as a role obscures the work that is involved in producing gender in everyday activities, while the notion of gender as a display relegates it to the periphery of interaction and argues that participants in interaction organize their various and manifold activities to reflect or express gender, and they are disposed to perceive the behavior of others in a similar light.

West & Zimmerman argue that gender is not a set of traits, nor a variable, nor a role, but the product of social doings of some sort. They claim that gender itself is constituted through interaction. They look into Goffman's (1976) account of "gender display" to explore how gender might be exhibited or portrayed through interaction, and thus be seen as "natural," while it is being produced as a socially organized achievement. Goffman (1976) formulates that if gender

be defined as the culturally established correlates of sex (whether in consequence of biology or learning) then gender display refers to conventionalized portrayals of these correlates. Goffman further argues that human beings themselves employ the term 'expression', and conduct themselves to fit their own notions of expressivity. Gender depictions are less a consequence of our "essential sexual natures" than interactional portrayals of what we would like to convey about sexual natures, using conventionalized gestures (ibid.). Goffman argues that our human nature gives us the ability to learn to produce and recognize masculine and feminine gender displays which is a capacity we have by virtue of being persons, not males and females.

West & Zimmerman present that doing gender is unavoidable and although individuals do gender, the enterprise is fundamentally interactional and institutional in character. Whenever people face issues of allocation—who is to do what, get what, plan or execute action, direct or be directed, incumbency in significant social categories such as "female" and "male" seems to become pointedly relevant (West & Zimmerman, 1987). They also discuss Berk's (1985) investigation of the allocation of household labor and the attitudes of married couples toward the division of household tasks showed little variation in either the actual distribution of tasks or perceptions of equity in regard to that distribution where wives, even when employed outside the home, do the vast majority of household and child-care tasks; moreover, both wives and husbands tend to perceive this as a "fair" arrangement. Noting the failure of conventional sociological and economic theories to explain this seeming contradiction, Berk (1985) contends that something more complex is involved than rational arrangements for the production of household goods and services: hardly a question simply of who has more time, or whose time is worth more, who has more skill or more power, it is clear that a complicated relationship between the structure of work imperatives and the structure of normative expectations attached to work as gendered determines the ultimate allocation of members' time to work and home (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

Doing gender also renders the social arrangements based on sex category accountable as normal and natural, that is, legitimate ways of organizing social life (West & Zimmerman, 1987). In this light, the institutional arrangements of a society can be seen as responsive to the differences—the social order being merely an accommodation to the natural order. (ibid.) They highlight that if, in doing gender, men are also doing dominance and women are doing deference the resultant social order, which supposedly reflects "natural differences," is a powerful reinforcer and legitimator of hierarchical arrangements (Goffman 1967).

Frye (1983) observes that when we are trained to behave so differently as women and men, and to behave so differently toward women and men, this contributes to the ways we act as women and men, and the ways we act toward women and men, mold our bodies and our minds to the shape of subordination and dominance; we become what we practice being. West & Zimmerman propose, if we do gender appropriately, we simultaneously sustain, reproduce, and render legitimate the institutional arrangements that are based on sex category. If we fail to do gender appropriately we as individuals—not the institutional arrangements, may be held accountable (for our character, motives, and predispositions). Hence if individuals do gender



appropriately, in other words, confirm to the prescribed gender roles, they are perpetuating socially constructed prescriptions and if they do not prescribe then they are scrutinized thus making it challenging to not do gender 'appropriately'.

#### *2.6.2.2 Undoing gender*

Deutsch's (2007) proposal on undoing gender comes as a critique to West & Zimmermann's (1987) conceptualization of doing gender, highlighting the social processes that underlie resistance against conventional gender relations and on how successful change in the power dynamics and inequities between men and women can be accomplished. Along with appreciating the contributions of doing gender approach to the study on gender, Deutsch (2007) claims that it has become a theory of conformity and gender conventionality. Deutsch argues that the language inherent in the phrase "doing gender" undermines the goal of dismantling gender inequity by, perhaps inadvertently, perpetuating the idea that the gender system of oppression is hopelessly impervious to real change and by ignoring the links between social interaction and structural change and stresses the need to shift from talk about doing gender to illuminating how we can undo gender.

Deutsch (2007) reflects that West & Zimmerman's (1987) terminology "doing gender" changed the focus of study in four important ways: de-emphasizing socialization as the basis for gendered difference between men and women; exposing the weaknesses of deterministic structural accounts of gender; alerting us to the taken – for – granted expressions of difference that appear natural but are not; and implying that if gender is constructed then it can be deconstructed. The key argument Deutsch forwards is that gendered institutions can be changed and the social interactions that support them can be undone.

Deutsch (2007) contends that West and Fenstermaker's (2002) definition of doing gender and their assumption of the universality and ubiquity of doing gender are incompatible with a theory of change. Doing gender applies whether one conforms to gendered norms or resists them because, based on their definition, in either case one is acting "at risk" of being judged according to those norms (ibid.). By emphasizing the definitional equivalence of compliance and resistance, the theory renders resistance invisible, particularly because West and Zimmerman's emphasis on evaluation by gendered norms makes it easy to see why men and women would comply and difficult to explain why they would resist (Deutsch, 2007) and it does not help understand how gender inequality could be dismantled.

Citing Lakoff (2004) that the language we use shapes what our minds are drawn to, Deutsch proposes adoption of a new convention, namely, reserving the phrase "doing gender" to refer to social interactions that reproduce gender difference and the phrase "undoing gender" to refer to social interactions that reduce gender difference. Deutsch appreciates that "doing" is an excellent word to emphasize that gender is created continually in ubiquitous ongoing social interactions and contends that if "do" refers to something that is accomplished, or brought about, then "doing gender" will bring to mind the accomplishment of gender difference rather than the dismantling of difference.

Deutsch (2007) emphasizes the importance of words and presents the feminist argument that use of the generic "he," although ostensibly referring to men and women, in fact made women invisible and contends that the phrase "doing gender," which ostensibly means either conformity or resistance, renders resistance invisible. She argues that paying attention to how gender can be undone will keep focus on the core consideration of how the gender system can be dismantled to create equality between men and women.

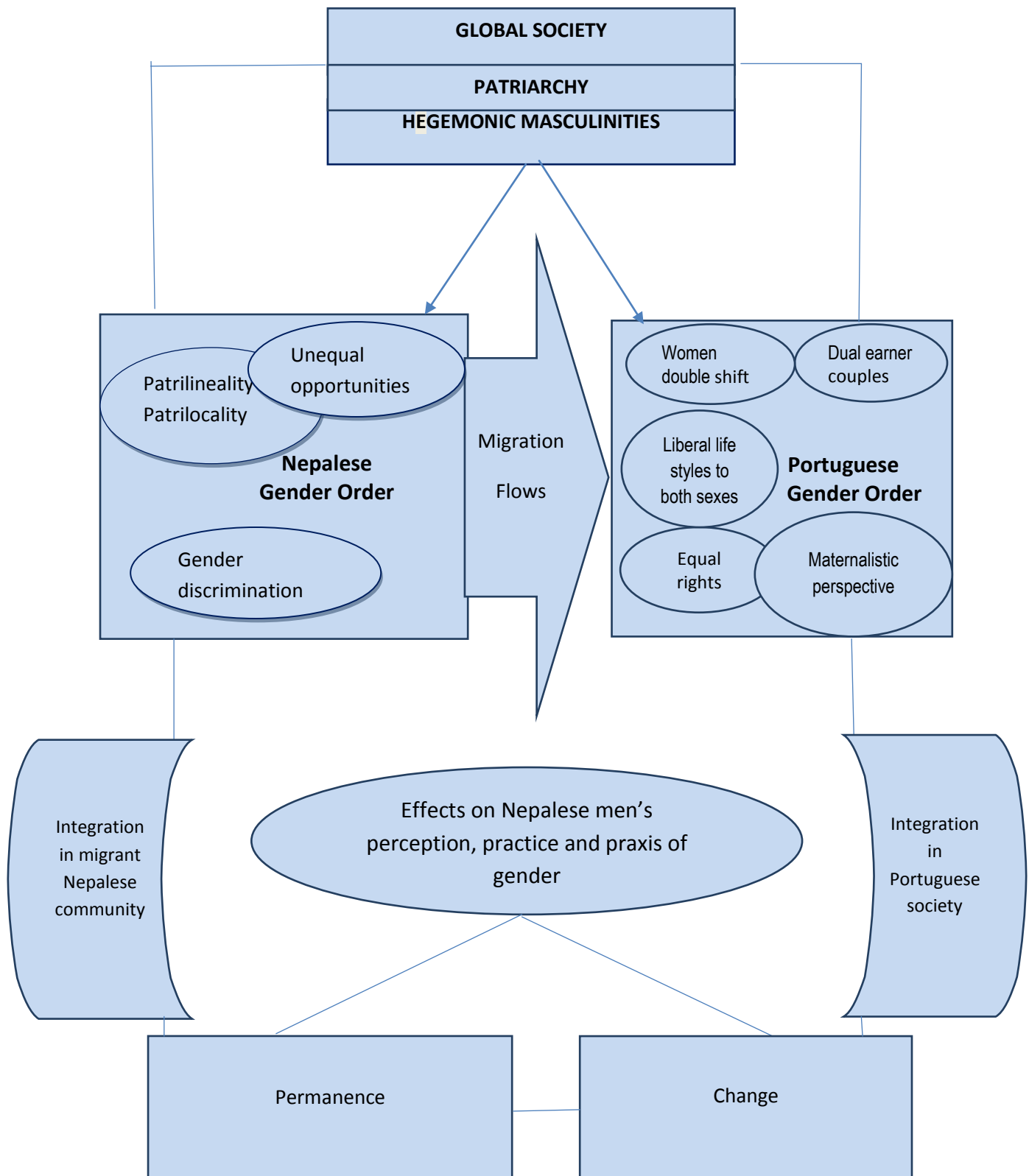
### *2.6.2.3 Perception, practice and praxis*

This study will use the expression 'doing gender' to look at the discourses Nepalese men bring in their interactions and the practices they exhibit inside the household and beyond in terms of reproducing the differences socially constructed in relation to gender. Doing gender would speak of the continuation of the roles prescribed to a particular sex in the Nepali context. Doing gender in the Portuguese context would also mean adherence to the popular roles prescribed to a particular sex by the Portuguese society, featured widely in the discourses and practices in Portugal. Thus 'undoing gender' would mean doing difference to this socially constructed prescription of gender roles within both the Nepali and the Portuguese context.

Perception of gender in this thesis means the understanding of Nepalese about the roles and responsibilities of a man and a woman inside the family; their perception of emotions that are associated with a man or a woman and the tasks assigned to a particular sex. Perception of Nepalese men on gender also incorporates their view of gender relations, viz. the relationship between Nepalese spouses and Portuguese partners. Similarly practice of gender in this thesis refers to the exhibitions of actions of Nepalese men within and beyond the household as observed by a gendered lens. Their actions or practices are analyzed to see if they are 'doing gender' in alignment to the socially constructed gender roles in the context they live (whether it is Nepal or Portugal) or are 'doing difference', i.e. their actions exhibit difference to the social prescriptions of gender roles and conduct. It can also happen that some men do things differently to the ones popularized in a particular context, without reflecting on it or without the realization of doing it differently. This is referred to as 'doing difference' or 'undoing gender' and 'doing difference' accompanied by the realization of the need for it because gender relations are unequal and therefore the gender arrangement is unjust, is referred to as praxis. Thus the analytical framework for this study comprises of three key elements: perception, practice and praxis, referring to the discourses, practices and practice coupled with realization of the unjust social construct of gender, respectively.

The transformation in perception, practice and praxis of gender among Nepalese men in Portugal, informed by literature review, is analyzed within the framework given below:

Figure 3: Illustration of analytical frame



### 3. Research methodology

#### 3.1 Population of the study

Nepalese living in Portugal is the population of study for the study entitled “Perception and Practice of Gender among Nepalese in Portugal. A Male Perspective”. Keeping intact of the outline of the study, the researcher interviewed 5 Nepalese male migrants, all of who were married. Three of these interviews were conducted in Lisbon and the rest two in Faro. These two districts in Portugal have the highest concentration of Nepalese as per the latest data; among 2588 Nepalese living in Portugal 2050 lived in Lisbon and 380 lived in Faro district (Bajracharya, 2015). The names of all the interviewees have been changed in order to protect their identities. The table below gives more information about the interviewees:

Table 5: Details of the interviewees

Name	Age	Educational Qualification	Occupation		Duration of stay in Portugal (in years)	Household Composition	
			In Nepal	In Portugal		In Nepal	In Portugal (living with)
Arun	33	Bachelors in Environment Science	NGO worker	Waiter	5	parents, wife and daughter	a Nepali couple and 2 males
Bikram	32	Bachelors in Physics	teacher	Chef	4	parents and wife	a Nepali couple and a male
Dorje	31	High School graduate	un-employed	shop owner	2	mother and sister	wife
Uday	35	Masters in Business Administration	college administrator	dish-washer	2	wife and daughter	a Nepali couple and 2 males
Narendra	38	Secondary School graduate	restaurant owner	restaurant owner	7	parents	wife & in-laws

#### 3.2 Research method

The researcher employed “micro-ethnography” for the study (Wolcott, 1990). Bryman (2012) shares that ethnography is a research method where the researcher is immersed in a social setting for an extended period of time; makes regular observations of the behavior of the members of that setting; listens to and engages in conversations; interviews informants on the issues that are not directly amenable to observation or that the ethnographer is unclear about; develops an

understanding of the culture of the group and people's behavior within the context of that culture and writes up a detailed account of that setting. Albeit the researcher followed ethnographic method in nature, aim and practice and was immersed in the social setting under study, it is presented as micro-ethnography provided the relatively short duration and volume of data collected from the field.

Since the beginning of the engagement in the European Masters in Social Work (MFamily) program, the researcher made contacts with the Nepalese in Portugal. The Nepali identity of the researcher aided to an extent in building an interface with prospective contacts as respondents and the researcher managed to develop close ties with many of the Nepalese he met during his stay in Portugal for a period of four months in 2014 and then since January 2016. He had been in touch with these contacts through telephone and facebook even after leaving Portugal for a while, and reconnected with them in person again from January onwards after his arrival in Lisbon. During his four month stay (August-December) in Lisbon in 2014 he immersed himself with the Nepalese, in particular with three families where he was invited to their homes for meals and participated in social events like *Mha Puja*<sup>5</sup> (a celebration of the Newar community). He frequented a Nepali restaurant in Intendente neighborhood which is considered as a hub for Nepalese. A platform of such offers space to build relations and observe social interactions in a public space. During this period he also spent few days with Nepali families in Albufeira and Vilamoura in Faro district in Algarve. The access to these families was provided through two of his friends who were living with the families for more than two years leading to affinities and associations among us. Bonhomie feel coming out of this has provided enough ground to be a part of the conversations that took place among us, and also be a participant observer.

The researcher conducted his first interview with Arun<sup>6</sup> (33 years, Quarteira) whom he knew from Nepal. He was a source of avenue for ethnographic research in Vilamoura and Quarteira. He was one of the researcher's bases in Faro and while planning to visit there, he was asked for a favor by Uday, his friend for bringing his stuff from Lisbon. Knowing the purpose of the visit, Uday offered himself to be an interviewee in return, provided that his complete identity was kept confidential. The researcher accepted this exchange which created trust and openness and stilled confidence in the interviewee even before meeting the researcher. After spending half a day along with Uday, the researcher conducted an interview with him ((Uday, 35 years, Quarteira) while helping him in the kitchen, which was followed by eating together, playing cards and conversations about each other's lives; this broke the hesitation between the researcher and the interviewee and a significant relationship emerged. Uday also introduced the researcher to his flat-mates Akash and his wife Pooja who joined them in playing cards. The researcher spent the next few days with Uday and his flat-mates. Coincidentally, Akash's sister was also a

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<sup>5</sup> *Mha Puja* is an annual ritual; it means "worship of the self", and celebrates the spirit within oneself. It coincides with New Year's Day of the Nepal Sambat, a calendar used by the Newar people. Based on lunar calendar, it was celebrated on October 24 in 2014.

<sup>6</sup> All the names used in the report are pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of the interviewees

social work student in Nepal and when he shared about the researcher's background and research work with her she spoke enthusiastically and positively of him, adding dimensions of trust and openness to this acquaintance which developed into friendship over commonly prepared meals, playing cards and watching movies. Uday also shared more openly about his personal life and kept in close contact even after the researcher's return to Lisbon. Until the next visit to Faro, such a bond had developed that he so looked forward to spending time with the researcher, coupled with celebrating Nepali New Year<sup>7</sup>, that he delayed joining work for few days. When in Vilamoura, the researcher accompanied him in his search for work and the researcher was also almost offered work to which Uday clarified that he was a University student and was just visiting him. Uday's flat-mate Pooja asked for the researcher's help in organizing a surprise gift for her husband Akash for the Nepali New Year and the researcher did, which further added to their bonding. This significant bond with Uday, Akash and Pooja provided the researcher with avenues for further participant observation, conversation and follow up interviews while they were continuing with their lives, providing a non-reactive "gender display" (West & Zimmermann, 1987). Beginning as a mixed method of data collection using qualitative interviews and observation, the fieldwork built into micro-ethnography through the course of research.

#### Covert-Overt continuum

During the period of ethnography the researcher was moving between covert and overt roles. Bryman (2012) shares that to assume covert role is not to disclose the fact that you are a researcher whereas in overt role your identity as researcher is shared. While the families of the interviewees were shared in advance about the research and a verbal affirmation for interview was received, he was spontaneously invited to other families and social settings where participant observation was conducted covertly. He could blend in, in the social interactions being a Nepalese and because of the covert role at times (e.g., during the New Year Celebrations in Faro on April 12) he had to remind himself of his role as a researcher and not fall into 'going native' (Bryman, 2012) due to the time limitations within which the study had to be carried out.

On the other hand, interesting issues came up at times unexpectedly because of the lingering of going native: once the researcher went to a Nepali restaurant in Alameda for dinner; while talking to the restaurant owners, a young man sitting alone in the next table contributed to the conversation. Seeing his openness in interaction the researcher asked if he could join him and he happily welcomed him and offered the food on his plate; a normal conversation that began with introduction and sharing life in Portugal unfolded various aspects of the life of this young man over drinks, snacks and Nepali songs of researcher's choice which he was enjoyed. He shared some intimate details about the relationship he has with a married Nepali women, which he had not even shared with his closest friends, according to him. This stirred the researcher asking him questions related to the research area and his responses were interesting. To sum up,

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<sup>7</sup> *Bikram Sambat* is used in a Hindu calendar. It uses lunar months and solar sidereal year. The New Year begins with the first day after the new moon, in the month of *Baishakh* which usually falls in March–April in the Gregorian calendar.

what as planned to be a quiet and quick dinner unraveled into data collection in a covert researcher role.

### 3.3 Data collection tools and analysis

#### 3.3.1. *Data collection tools*

The research was qualitative in nature and exploratory in design. The following data collection tools were chosen for the purpose of this research.

- a. Participant observation
- b. Qualitative interviews

The inquiry on perception of gender was conducted through qualitative interviews which were the key sources of data bringing out the discourses on gender and praxis of gender was ethnographically observed. The researcher observed the study group in their homes as well in public spaces like communal gatherings, e.g. *Mha Puja* and *Nepali New Year Celebration* and restaurants for additional and neutral data on practice of gender. The interviews aimed at exploring the understanding and practice which observation alone could not sufficiently provide for.

##### 3.3.1.a. *Participant observation*

Observation of the respondents in terms of their attitude and behavior with other females within the Nepalese and non-Nepalese in their locality was made as part of data collection. As a part of the regular life, the researcher had been observing the respondents in their natural environment such as home and public spaces (e.g., restaurants, roads, shops, train, metro and bus stations). Getting to spend time within families in their everyday life situations also gave the researcher additional advantage on use of observation for data collection. In the process of data collection in Faro district, the researcher stayed at the homes of Nepali families including the families of the respondents. In Lisbon he was invited to meals at the homes of some Nepali families and he developed significant relations with other Nepalese, among which he interviewed three men. So participant observation was conducted both at public space and private homes.

##### 3.3.1. b. *Qualitative interviews*

In addition to observation, the research engaged in qualitative interviews. The researcher had an interview guide to his aide but used conversational style of interviewing and avoided interview schedules, similar to the strategy used by Malbon (Bryman, 2012). The interviews used the flexibility that Bryman (2012) describes: “in qualitative interviewing, interviewees can depart significantly from any schedule or guide that is being used. They can ask questions that follow up interviewees’ replies and can vary the order and even wording of questions” (p.470). Interviews were conducted in Nepali as it is the first language for most Nepalese so that respondents could express themselves freely and were not limited by the language barrier. The interview guide was translated into Nepali by the researcher which was then back-translated into English and compared to the original to ascertain that no meaning was lost in translation.

The network for data collection for the research was established through real life encounters and adoption of snow ball sampling in Lisbon, and subsequently snow balling through two key contacts in Faro was possible. But the interviewees were chosen through purposive sampling which “depends on the criteria in the context of the units of analysis to exclude, respectively include them” (Bryman 2012). Nepalese families show diversity in terms of geographic region they identify with, educational level, ethnicity, religion and the work engagement both at origin and destination, viz. Nepal and Portugal might contribute to this and the researcher was sensitive to this diversity and its impact on the data collected. All the men that were interviewed were between the ages of 30 and 40 as the researcher feels this population is significantly changing family forms and the practices within households. The interviewees were purposefully selected to incorporate the ethnic diversity in Nepal, which have shown varying gender order, including respondents of the following ethnicities: Brahmin, Chhetri, Newar and Lama. Although the respondents were purposefully sampled, the analysis of data did not look into the ethnicity of the respondents to avoid the risk of generalization and thus incorporated all responses as those of Nepalese men living in Portugal.

The researcher had built significant contacts with many Nepalese living in both of the areas of data collection since his first semester in Portugal. This advantage of having an already established relationship to Nepalese with the identity of a student placed the researcher in a much better position to pitch in the idea of research. This discounted the hesitation and ambiguity of presenting the self as a researcher in the first instance. The researcher made two trips to Faro for the purpose of data collection and spent 6 days in the first trip and 4 in the second. In his first visit, he planned to conduct four interviews but could do only one and invested in building trustworthy relationship with proposed interviewees. In the second trip, he conducted one more interview and a second round of interview with his first respondent. In Lisbon, the researcher made multiple contacts with the respondents at various occasions and collected data through conversations and interview.

### 3.3.1. b.1 The interview guide

With regard to the interview guide, the questions were very general at an outset and were formed in a non-threatening manner but seeking the gender perspective and the views of respondents on gender relations. The interviews began with generic questions aimed at putting the respondents to ease but also exploring their perception of the host society and their attachment to the society of origin, viz. Nepal. Some examples are given below:

- How is life in Portugal?
- How do you feel about the Portuguese society in general?
- What do you think of the live-in relationships that are normal in Portugal?
- Do you think that Portuguese state gives more value to women? More privileges?
- Do you miss anything about Nepal? About the Nepali culture?
- What are some values that you associate with the Nepali culture? What comes to your mind when I say Nepali culture?



While drafting the questions, the researcher bore sensitivity to even those respondents not likely to be gender sensitive. The questions were framed to be non-threatening, non-suggestive and non-probing thus aiming to bring out non-manipulated and non-reactive responses. Some of the questions are shared below:

- As a man, what do you think are your most important responsibilities within the family?
- What do you think are the most important responsibilities for a woman within the family?
- Do you think that there should be roles associated with a particular sex? (e.g. child care or earning)
- Do you see any difference between gender relations in Portugal and in Nepal?
- Do you think men and women have equal rights here? Do you think men and women have equal rights in Nepal? Do you think they should have?
- Do you think women should be solely responsible for child care and care of elderly in the family?

The questions in the interview guide were also informed by literature reviews, an example of which is shared below.

Literature review:

In the Hindu communities initially established in Trinidad, the shortage of women that disrupted traditional patterns of family life and the group's social norms was corrected with arrival of more women, resulting in reestablishment of family life that acted as a source of social cohesion. Alongside this development, the freedom and autonomy of the few women who were previously a minority in Trinidad diminished as a consequence of male efforts to reinstall the patriarchal family system (Cohen, 1997 in Lourenço, 2011, p.38).

Resultant question:

- Many Nepalese, including lot of women, have recently migrated to Portugal creating a bigger social network. Do you think this augmentation of Nepalese has any impact on life of Nepalese?

Some of the questions also informed by gaps found in literature review. Some questions included the historical experiences of women and men's perception of these. The researcher looked into exploring the perception of respondents on the recent significant changes in the Nepalese law relating to women:

- Do you think women have been oppressed in Nepal for a long time? Do you think they have been denied equal rights? Do you think they deserve better treatment and privileges because they have been wronged for long?
- How do you see 33 percent reservation for women?
- What do you think of the recent change in constitution regarding providing citizenship to the children on the basis of descent from the mother?

Being a male also gave the researcher gendered advantage of data collection that facilitated bringing the gendered perspective of the male respondents. He chose to use the semi-structured interview, as it is less invasive and avoids to be seen as a element of power seeking out for information from the perspective of the researcher, as it would be the case in a structured interview ((Bryman, 2012). The interviews were recorded and transcribed and translated into English to look into the discourses on gender as shared in them.

### *3.3.2. Data analysis*

The data collected was looked with thematic content analysis. The data, guided by interview schedule and enriched by spontaneous unstructured interactions, was looked at to identify the themes that came up prominently. These themes were then brought under the three key research questions looking at perception and practice of gender among Nepalese males in Portugal and the effects migration, as a process, had on it. The discussion on data was aided by literature review and the theoretical framework.

## **3.4 Ethical considerations**

The researcher took extreme caution to carry out the overall research process ethically. To live up to ethical considerations, the researcher has diligently followed research ethics during field work and up to writing stage. Diener and Crandall (1978) mainly focus on four aspects of ethical issues in research: harm to participant, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception. Extra care was taken to obtain informed consent from the interviewees who were communicated in advance about the purpose of the research project and the treatment of data. They were explained that their participation is voluntary and they could, at any point of time in the research process, withdraw their participation and can skip any question that they did not want to answer. Discussed in the interview schedule earlier, the questions were general at an outset, non-threatening and sensitive.

It also happened that the researcher had to distance from his researcher's frame of mind as significant relations had been developed with the proposed interviewee Akash and his wife Pooja. They had given so much space into their lives that getting back into the researcher's role seemed intrusive and invasion of their privacy running the risk of affecting these relationships. So the researcher identified more potential interviewees that prolonged data collection.

The identities of the participants are kept confidential; fictitious names have been used instead of their real names and the data collected was carefully handled. The interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewees so that no information was missed out and what the participants said could be recorded verbatim. This highly reduced the chances of misinterpretation of the data and provided avenue to go back to the data for cross-checking. Telephone number and email address of the interviewer had been provided to the respondents in case they wanted to get in touch with the researcher for anything related to the research and for cross checking and verification of the data collected.

### 3.5 Limitations

The biggest limitation for the study was the length of time in which the study had to be carried due to which the research was limited to micro-ethnography. Getting access to the respondents was also not easy due to their work schedules. The interviews were conducted in Nepali and transcribed and translated into English thus it is likely that some of the discourses might not have come out in English in the same manner of the responses.

Another limitation of this research is its inability to delve adequately into the intersectionality that shapes the perspective of the Nepalese males, also due to the time limitations. Intersectionality is useful as a handy catchall phrase that aims to make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it (Phoenix & Pattemana, 2006). Nightingale (2010) shares that many feminist theorists have argued that a narrow focus on gender is inappropriate and rather how people are subjected by race, ethnicity/ caste, class, gender and other forms of social difference must be seen as simultaneous, called intersectionality and it could not receive as much space as the researcher wanted. Another important consideration is the tremendous ethnic, religious, linguistic and topographical diversity in Nepal which plays an important role in gender discourse and practice. Although the research is sensitive to this diversity and addresses it to an extent through purposive sampling, it needs a much detailed exploration.

## 4. Findings and discussions

This section presents the discussions along with and based on the findings of the study. The data coming out of the micro-ethnography was looked into to identify emerging themes. These themes were then grouped according to the key research questions that guide the discussion.

The research questions are: i) how do Nepalese men migrants in Portugal perceive gender relations; ii) how are Nepalese men migrants in Portugal performing gender and iii) has migration affected the perception and practice of gender in Nepalese men. And the findings and discussion for each of them are presented below.

### 4.1 Nepalese men's perception of gender

This section discusses the perception of gender by Nepalese men migrants in Portugal looking at their views on division of work based on sex, gender relations in Nepal and gender relations in Portugal. All Nepalese men expressed that coming to Portugal and being away from Nepal gave them an opportunity to reflect on many things in life, including the bureaucratic system in Nepal, the expectations of the wider society and family from an individual, the culture of work, the relationship between members of the family. It was highlighted that this opportunity to reflect helped them to see these things in a different light, thus changing their perception on various matters including gender relations.

#### *Division of work on the basis of sex*

All 5 Nepalese men interviewees mentioned that there should be no division of work on the basis of sex, i.e., work should not be gendered. Some of them emphasized on the availability of time, "There's no work that either man or women can only do. Anyone can do anything and therefore it is about managing the household: whoever wants to do, whoever can, or whoever has the time should do" (Dorje, 31 years old, Lisbon)<sup>8</sup>. Some emphasized the competency of the individuals "I don't think that work should be divided on the basis of sex. But what should be seen is how qualified the person is and how can s/he work; competency of the person is what matters more" (Uday, 35 years old, Quarteira). It was unequivocally expressed that it is about maintenance of family and largely a matter of understanding between the members. Berk (1985) contends that something more complex is involved than rational arrangements for the production of household goods and services; it is not simply a question of who has more time, or whose time is worth more, who has more skill or more power, it is clear that a complicated relationship between the structure of work imperatives and the structure of normative expectations attached to work as gendered determines the ultimate allocation of members' time to work and home. And the later discussions involving Nepalese men's perception and practice of gender in Portugal and Nepal brings out clearly about their involvement in household chores to be influenced by the social relational contexts.

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<sup>8</sup> As mentioned in the chapter on research methodology, all the names of respondents used in this report are fictitious in order to protect their privacy

### *Nepalese men's perception of gender relations in Nepal*

Nepalese men in Portugal shared they were aware about the unequal gender relations that existed in the Nepali society. They expressed that women in Nepal are largely dominated by and dependent on men: “in terms of relationship between men and women, in Nepal male are dominant” (Uday, 35); considered subordinate: “the women have been behind men” (Arun, 33, Quarteira) and are treated in the same manner. They admitted that the involvement of men in household chores did not change much despite women's economic contribution. And the general perception in Nepal, as shared by Nepalese men, was that housework is women's responsibility and men were involved very little in everyday practices within families.

Nepalese men also shared that the continuation of this inequality is due to the reinforcement of inequality and resistance to change by family. It is important to remember that majority of the households in Nepal usually lives in extended families where the couple lives with the parents of the husband. They shared that the differential treatment between sexes was because of the mentality of the parents, i.e., social construct because they have only seen such type of relationship, they feel it is working and they cannot think beyond that or are risk averse to change. And the men expressed the need to confirm to this social construct because they do not want to upset the parents. They also linked it with social prestige, implying that if there is no adherence to the socially constructed norms, then there is no prestige.

It [differential treatment of men and women] is because of the parents' mentality, how they have grown, worked. Traditionally this has been done and they feel that is good. For that reason, we also have to do as they say; also for social prestige (Uday, 35).

One respondent (Arun, 33) shared how the perpetuation and reinforcement of inequality is aided by continuation of traditions without questioning. He shared an example of how a picture of the Chief Secretary of Nepal extending his feet to his wife and the wife putting her head on his feet raised media outcry. Basing on this belief that husband and wife should be *jeevansaathi* (life partner), he pondered over and reflected on this incident to reach an understanding that until such practices continue, inequality in relations will continue. Such reflections have been referred to as meta-cognition by some scholars.

He also shared his wife did not agree to his understanding and was reluctant to change, probably defining herself through religious practices and following traditions. This raises an important consideration: when individuals define themselves according to the social constructs then it is likely that they do not want to change it because they construct their identities as suggested by the popular social construct which they normalize, making it difficult to depart from these identities. Arun (33) also shared his wife not letting him cook or get involved in the household chores when he is in Nepal. It is probably her perception of a good wife being the one who does the household chores and provides comfort for the man. And for her, acting according to that perception was important, for her realization of being a good wife and maybe to fulfill the expectations of a good wife in the eyes of the society. Ridgeway & Katz (2013) present similar discussion that widely shared gender, race, and class stereotypes are hegemonic beliefs because they are not simply held by individuals but institutionalized in the media, in the images of people

implied in organizational structures, in laws, and in the arrangement of public spaces. They argue that the power of these gender, race, and class beliefs to coordinate behavior in social relations derives not so much from individuals' personal endorsement of them as from individuals' sense that these beliefs are what "most people" believe and thus are the public rules by which they will be judged and expected to act. The hegemonic nature of these beliefs is what allows them to act as cultural schemas for enacting systems of inequality.

### *Nepali men's perception of gender relations in Portugal and their reflections*

Although all the interviewees were married and this their response to gender relations between Nepalese were expressed in relation to marriage, their perception of gender relations in Portugal included relationships between men and women in general: both within and outside marriage. Although their perception of gender relations might not reflect the multiple realities that are existent because of possible generalizations based on their limited exposure and interactions, nevertheless it was significant because they reflected on their own gender relations based on this perception.

Nepalese men had one voice about the gender relations in Portugal that both men and women in Portugal were more independent and experienced egalitarian relations as compared to Nepal. They also shared their appreciation for the collaborative type of relationship that exists between spouses in Portugal, giving significance to the relationship men and women shared and expressed. The observation of gender relations among men and women in Portugal was found to provide an avenue for Nepalese men to reflect on those in Nepal and also their own relations.

Relation between spouses in Portugal was seen as being intimate. Some respondents shared that they were not so in Nepal. Although people were not happy in a relationship and were fighting constantly, it was important to continue being in the relationship because that is expected of them from the society:

In Portugal, they feel relation should be intimate. We don't have that, e.g. mum and dad have arguments very often, suppose. But they are together. Well, how do you take it? Do you say that is right or this is right! Here they feel if we do not have an understanding then we should not be together in a relationship, that's their value (Arun, 33).

Arun's reflection if this is 'right' or 'wrong' shows that he has thought about this and the change has happened for him in terms of how he perceives relationships and the dynamics in them. Nepalese men also shared their views on living-in relationships that are normal in Portugal but new to the Nepali society. There were interesting responses with some men accepting it in the Portuguese context but arguing that it will not work in Nepali context and some sharing ambiguity on this issue. Uday (35) expressed that it was better to live together only after marriage in Nepal but shared his awareness that getting married or separating is personal matter and therefore others should not comment on it.

In Nepal living together after marriage is better than living together before. But here we need to adapt, we need to learn. Because we cannot do everything like we do in Nepal.

Living together, getting married, separating is also personal and inseparable matter. And if this is normal, a few of us saying that it should not happen is not legitimate (Uday, 35).

He normalized it for the Portuguese society but expressed resistance for the practice in Nepali society. A respondent reflected that it was advantageous to know the person before marriage but it needed commitment too, sharing that “after marriage we [Nepalese] look for commonness in each other, they [the Portuguese] look for differences in living together” (Arun, 33). He believed that marital relations in Nepal were stronger because of looking at commonness and readiness to compromise.

Another respondent shared about the lack of trust among partners in Portugal. He also brought out that each partner is independent and therefore do not rely on the other. He shared his thought that it might be because they are not sure if they will be together forever and therefore always keep this space and “see how it goes” (Bikram, 32, Lisbon). They live together until it works for the both of them. He also adds that people think about themselves only and not care what others say whereas in Nepal we give “too much importance to what others think” (Bikram, 32) and would say. Bikram identifies this importance that Nepalese give to the response of the society as hindrance to put the changed perception into practice.

But all respondents pointed out that the relation between men and women in Portugal some time back was similar to that in Nepal today: heightened emphasis was placed on men and their importance in family and they were seen as the providers for women. They shared gender relations in Portugal are more egalitarian now than before, at the same time, pointing that female subordination, male dominance and gendered division of labor is still existent in the Portuguese society. It was shared that the Portuguese society perceived men and women previously in the same way as Nepalese do nowadays, at some level: assigning men the responsibility to provide for women and establishing that women need men’s support, when the Portuguese say “even if there is one man among several women, none of the women will face hardships” (Arun, 33). This expression throws light on the perception of both men and women, within the social construct, and reinforces the gendered expectation from both sexes by idealizing the male provider and by disempowering the females by projecting them as needing support. Bikram (32) argues that dominance of men over women still exists in Portugal, backing it up with what he heard from others, sharing things might be a little different to Nepal and maybe the work division is less gender stratified. He reflects that the involvement of both men and women in paid work might have contributed to this as they are economically independent, “have separate expenses” whereas in Nepal we have “joint account” (Bikram, 32) treating the income of women as supportive and limiting their participation in decision making. The engendering of work in Portugal was exemplified by Uday through his observation of the exclusivity of some work to women, e.g. child care. He saw this as limiting to women and argued that although the situation of women in Portugal is better than in Nepal it is not *exactly equal*:

The situation of women here is better than in Nepal but not exactly equal. They have some things that are exclusive to women, e.g., child care. Well in the later times child care is shared between man and woman, but if you look a little earlier they also had

similar problems; women has to do household chores even if they worked outside, mostly, so that is here too. I have seen this in the families that I know; it's there! (Uday, 35).

Albeit admitting the change in later times, Nepalese men expressed that household work was exclusive to women in Portugal even when they had paid work outside the household, substantiating it with their own observation. Arun added to this with his own experience with a Portuguese friend who was 40 years old but still dependent on his mother for laundry, even when he lived by himself. He also shared hearing that cooking is considered to be the work of women:

Well they say cooking is for women, even here they say, we hear. I have a Portuguese friend here, he's almost 40 but still his mother does his laundry, once a week. He lives by himself in an apartment but his mother comes and does his laundry. Even for putting clothes in the washing machine, he needs his mother. So dependent! Sometimes I tease him that "you've become a child of 40 years" (Arun, 33).

Nepalese men also highlighted that the development of a much better welfare state in Portugal, as compared to Nepal, significantly reduced the dependence of an individual on family and society. This increased independence of an individual can also translate into their questioning of the social construct, thus decreasing the likeliness of their adherence to the social construct without question.

#### *Nepalese men's perception of roles and responsibilities of a man and woman in the family*

Nepalese men expressed in the interviews that work should not be gendered, i.e., no division of work should be done on the basis of sex or gender. When the interviewees were specifically asked about the responsibilities of a man and women inside the house in order to get a clearer understanding of their perception on gender, there were differences of opinion. Some respondents shared their perception of the roles men and women play inside the household as in the response below:

For me everything from what my parents eat and wear; what my brother eats and wears; my wife and daughter. For me everything is my responsibility, at this time. And in general when you talk of responsibility, the first thing is keeping the members of your family happy, if I had to say. Isn't that what we all do? How is father happy? How is mother happy? How will my wife be happy? How will my daughter be happy? How will my brother be satisfied with me, how will he be happy? Those are the responsibilities (Arun, 33).

Arun's felt responsibility of keeping the family happy also throws light on how family functions. In the order of the responsibilities he felt, as expressed, in keeping the family happy the father receives prime importance followed by his mother, wife, child and his brother. He also expresses feeling responsible to maintain a satisfactory relationship with his brother and keeping him happy. His response illuminates Nepali men's positioning of the self in the family and their



felt responsibilities which throw light on the understanding of family as a collective identity and the placement of an individual within and inseparable to this collective.

Some men expressed there was nothing that either sex could do therefore eliminating the need to assign any particular responsibility to either sex: "Women's responsibilities are the same as men's" (Bikram, 32). But at the same time their expressions were gendered in some manner giving women the role of the supporter and men as the leaders:

I feel that now, my own experience, although the responsibilities of men seem to be more, women have a huge supporting role. Women are kind of driver, the driving force for men. In many things guiding the man, and when sometimes you are tired, really tired, you mostly go, we mostly go, to a women, e.g., a husband gets tired in front of his wife, shares his tiredness; a son goes in front of the mother and says "mummy I can't do it!" And at that time, the one who praises mostly happens to be the woman. More than a father, a brother, mostly the larger responsibility seems to be taken by women. And then the driving force that man has. We say behind every successful man there's a woman's hand. I think that's why they say it. They get the driving force from women, mostly. In family, the role of women is very important to bind the family together (Arun, 33).

Arun's sharing is in agreement to Lindsey (2005) who describes role as the expected behavior associated with a status. She expresses that roles are performed according to social norms, shared rules that guide people's behavior in specific situations; social norms determine the privileges and responsibilities a status possesses. Lindsey shares: the status of mother calls for expected roles involving love, nurturing, self-sacrifice, home-making, and availability.

There was also discussion on the focus men and women have, in general. All 5 Nepalese (including a female) in the room unanimously agreed that men feel responsible for managing the household "a man is worried about how to manage the house" whereas women were "stuck with" what to buy (Akash, 34, Quarteira). This portrayal of gendered perception presented women as self-centered and ignorant, subtly projecting their incompetence, could be translated into their exclusion in decision making. Uday's decision making based on assumption and non-inclusion of his wife provides for an example:

There is no need to share everything. Normally, those things that she thinks is okay, I decide without discussing with her, based on my assumption. Rather than asking for her decisions I share some things to bring to her knowledge, to see her reaction. And some things need to be discussed (Uday, 35).

Uday expressed being sole breadwinner for the family; his wife takes the complete responsibility of child care, stays at home and contributes to the maintenance of social relationships. His portrayal of the self is in line with Lindsey (2005)'s defining of role: the status of father calls for expected roles of breadwinner, disciplinarian, home technology expert, and ultimate decision maker in the household.

The rejection of the division of household chores on the basis of sex shared by Nepalese males was accompanied by a proposal to perform work on the basis of competence. A

respondent shared that if a man is capable of leading; he should and try to balance things, if not then women should lead and the man should follow, cooperate and “work together with her and move ahead” (Uday, 35). Although he provides an emphasis on the role of man to lead, provided that he has the capacity, reestablishing that it is primarily a man’s role, he expresses acceptance of the leadership of woman and sees this as *moving ahead* and not diminishing the male identity as provider. As a man, Arun felt completely responsible to provide for all members of his family and keeping the family happy was of utmost importance to him: “the first thing is keeping the members of your family happy”. Bikram shared similar sentiments about his role as a son sharing “meeting my parents need is my greatest responsibility”.

Bikram contests the question “what is the role of a man within the family?” itself stressing that it is not about a man or women, but about “what role what family member has”. He shared that the positioning of the child was associated with particular roles and responsibilities “*Jetho chhora*<sup>9</sup>(eldest son) and *kanchho chhora* (youngest son) have different responsibility. E.g. elder brother takes responsibility of the younger. He expressed that the role of each member, primarily, is keeping the family happy. And this keeping the family happy might require adherence to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities for each member of the family, depending on their sex and positioning of birth, including but not limited to gender roles. Bikram’s internalization of his role as the son naturalizes his ‘display’ thus ‘doing gender’ as defined by the context. Both Arun and Bikram highlighting that they felt completely responsible for provide for the family can also be seen as an extension of their masculinities, expressed similarly by Mexican migrants in Broughton’s study when they deployed breadwinner masculinity, symbolically dignifying masculinity by taking up migration as an inescapable duty for improving the standard of living of the family (Messerschmidt, 2012).

Normalization of gendered roles due to the social construct was also shared by a respondent: “They have the idea [they should cook] because they do since they were small. If they do otherwise they will do differently” (Bikram, 32). And his later response about who prepares the food when he is home with his wife further substantiates this normalization process that takes places within families: “if she works at night I have to do it. But if both are at home, she will obviously make food” (Bikram, 32). Bikram sees household chores to be the responsibility of the woman, as part of her identity. This can be looked in relation to Ridgeway (2011)’s contentions that if our fundamental understanding of who we are is rooted in our primary identities, including gender, then many of us will implicitly fall back on cultural beliefs about gender to frame what it means to make life choices that “express” ourselves. Also West & Zimmerman (1987)’s argument can be brought into this discussion. They express that household labor is not simply designated as “women’s work,” but that for a woman to engage in it and a man not to engage in it is to draw on and exhibit the “essential nature” of each. They contend what is produced and reproduced is not merely the activity and artifact of domestic life but the

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<sup>9</sup> Nepali culture gives a lot of responsibilities to the eldest son including the responsibility of running and leading the household after the patriarch; an expression throws light on the different perceptions of eldest son and youngest son: *jetho chhora kulko ghero*, *kanchho chhora mayako doro* (eldest son draws the line of the clan, the youngest son is the love of the thread)

material embodiment of wifely and husbandly roles, and derivatively, of womanly and manly conduct. Bikram expressing stepping in only at times when she cannot perform these identities suggests that his involvement is temporary and he's only being supportive but not 'undoing' gender as constructed by Nepalese. His reflection on 'engendering' of work in Nepal, being in the Portuguese context, was not followed by 'ungendering'. The non-recognition of housework as work but extension of female identity was also expressed by other men, e.g., in the comment: "In Nepal they just stayed at home and didn't have to do anything" (Narendra, 38, Lisbon). This view of household work as a part of female identity further adds to the challenges of 'undoing' gender.

The change in perception was not shared by all men. One respondent suggested the researcher to talk to his wife about gender relations because it would make more sense, reflecting his understanding of gender as associated with women: "Well I think it is better if you talk about this with women because they are the ones who are much closer to this issue. We men, we work hard where ever we are; in Nepal or anywhere else" (Narendra, 38) and reinforcing the male provider role.

The above discourses by Nepalese men can also be seen in the light of their educational level. Both the respondents that shared their involvement in household chores had completed higher education (Bachelors and Masters) and the respondents sharing non-involvement had studied only until high school. Although there was a case of a Nepali man completing his Bachelor's degree and involved in teaching in Nepal who expressed his involvement in household chores only if his wife wasn't home, the level of education of Nepalese men could largely be correlated to their expressed involvement in household chores.

#### *Nepalese men's perception of men, women and emotions*

Nepalese men also shared their perception of men and women linked to emotions. One respondent expressed that:

Men share emotions very less, with very close people; to show I am strong. Emotions are linked with weakness. That's the same with women, they share but with more. It's not possible to be dominant if you are emotionally weak, maybe that's why. If others know the weakness, they might use it against you. Women are more emotional, they cry over small matters. (Bikram, 32)

This was expressed on many other occasions too, e.g., in a restaurant in Alameda when a Nepali man was crying, the other responded with popular Nepali phrase '*chhora manchhe vayera rune ho!*' meaning you shouldn't cry because you are a man (Sherbahadur, 23) which exhibits the engendering of emotions in the Nepalese context. These expressions can be seen in light of Rosaldo's (1984) argument, drawing on Bourdieu's notion of the "positioned subject", that the "positioned subject" is structured by such factors as age, gender, and status, which typically afford the individual a set of life experiences that "naturally" and universally produce certain kinds of feelings. It is also in alignment to Montes's (2013) sharing that the both gender and culture determine not only what emotion can be shown to whom and in what contexts, but, most

importantly, what set of emotions is entitled to what gender. In masculine cultures, men have traditionally internalized rigid emotional expressions and have been conditioned not to feel anything or, at least, not to show those feelings (Montes, 2013). She argues that this socially conditioned relation toward emotions in boys and men is one of the most widespread characteristics that define what it means to be a man across cultures.

But during the study some Nepalese men openly shared their emotions with regard to children, acknowledging their vulnerabilities:

I am a little weak in that sense, when it comes to children I can't leave them. There's a reason why I did not go to Nepal this year. I could have gone for a month and half but I knew it will be difficult for me once I see her, so I didn't go. I am very weak in this matter (Arun, 32).

My wife and son left for home today. Life will be difficult for the next four months. I'll have to do everything on my own, cook, clean. But I will miss my son the most; he's 2 years now. You know when I go home tired and just as I open the door he says papa, it feels so good. Sometimes he sleeps on me and hugs, it feels so good (Chakra, 39).

Both men expressed their emotions openly, which Barker (2005) refers to as resistance, which is the ability of some men to position themselves outside the hegemonic masculinity model. Montes's (2013) study reveals that rather than being passive individuals subjugated to cultural structures, these men exercise an agency that allows them to step away from culturally expected masculine identities. She extends that in doing so, their behavior confirms what Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue regarding conditions in which masculinity identity is accomplished by change over time as a result of intersectionality with other social factors. What was interesting in both these responses was the admittance of the vulnerability as a parent due to attachment with the child. These sharing of emotions by Nepalese men can be seen through Montes's (2013) revelation that migration might create the opportunity for men to get in touch with deeper emotions that would be overlooked under normal circumstances as a result of the social association with feminine identities. Charsley & Wray (2015) share that popular governmental and legal discourses often cast migrant men in a negative and homogenizing light, concealing their vulnerabilities and emotional attachments, keeping lives of men as people with affective lives invisible. Nepalese men's portrayed comfort in sharing their emotions can be seen as ungendering of emotions paving way towards 'undoing gender' as constructed in Nepalese society.

#### *Nepalese men's perception of dressing*

Nepalese men shared being open and accepting of the way women dress in Portugal. They shared that their perceptions of dress have changed albeit coming from a social context where women's 'openness' is not welcome: "I think we should be liberal in that aspect. We say women should not be very open, here [in Portugal] they have that freedom" (Arun, 33). What was also interesting was the sharing that it is not just women who are limited by the social constructs in

their behavior, men also were limited by the same constructs. The problems they are facing has the same root, the difference is in the extent of limitations defined for them, the extent of coverage of the socially constructed radar. This was pointed out by one of the respondents:

Not just women, men also do not have freedom in some aspects in Nepal. Suppose, I had long hair until recently and every time I skyped home my father would tell me to trim my hair. They can't see me bearded; the order for shave comes from there! (Arun, 33).

What is interesting in the men's sharing of their perception of dressing is that they are all accepting to the way women dress in Portugal but their acceptance comes within the context. Some men did not extend this acceptance to their family members as they saw themselves coming "from a different context, different way of thinking" (Uday, 35). Even with family members dressing in 'modern' way, e.g. Arun sharing that he has no problem with his daughter dressing in bikini, although strongly objected by his wife, he extends this acceptance in a particular context, i.e., work.

I told [my wife] okay then I will make her [the daughter] heroine in Hollywood and she was like well she'll dress in bikini and then you'll see. I told her so what? If she is a heroine in Hollywood she will have to wear it. She has to wear it at places (Arun, 33).

Thus it is strongly expressed by Nepalese men that their perceptions are guided by the context and most of them expressed hesitation in doing things differently to what is popular in the context.

Well I will be not be uncomfortable if they do what is possible and okay to do, e.g., wearing half pant or skirt is normal, no big deal. My family (wife) is coming and if she wants to dress up modern or like here, she will not have to think oh will he say something? I am open, e.g., but I don't believe that we have to be on a swimsuit. What happens if you go and shake hands with your father but put your head on your son's feet? What would that mean, right? So when we show what is not necessary and not show what is necessary to be shown, e.g., a human is a sensual being too so we have to be able to differentiate what is right and what is wrong among what the overall society thinks is normal (Uday, 35).

#### *Nepalese men's view on social conformity*

Nepalese men also expressed how families were inseparable part of the wider society they live in (the context), therefore making it imperative to conform to the societal expectations, as guided by the popular norms and values. They expressed the powerlessness of an individual within the social context because of the strong social ties and the need to follow its guidelines because it provides social security:

In Nepali context, it will not be done. Because we are social human; have social bonding, all things, relatives and we talk; we cannot be revolutionary in everything, one person needs time to bring radical change and it is not something that one person does. If the

Planning level, government, society does this it is different but for an individual I think it is difficult (Uday, 35).

The collective provides support as well as applies pressure to individuals for the conformity to its structured ideals, values and way of living. This pressure was visibly felt by the respondents in terms of conformity to family forms and its functions, viz. marriage and child bearing:

In our culture, because of the social bonding, we have to think about everyone and we have to put on a lot of thought for the future, socio-economic factors, and in personal life we have to live for others also, will someone say something? Do something? Saving social prestige, we also focus on these things in Nepal (Uday, 35).

Another pressure I had in Nepal is getting married. I had left her there and things were being disturbed. Soon after the papers were in hand, I continued working. And then in December 2012 I went to Nepal and got married and returned in February (Arun, 33).

I don't have sex preference of my children. But I think at home (both mine and my wife's) they'll demand son. I have to look at both families. Maybe they have a preference (Bikram, 32).

*Nepalese men's reflection: 'doing for the others'*

An important realization shared by Nepalese men was the nature of 'display' of everyday life in accordance to the societal expectations, even when their practice was different. They expressed the prevalence of 'doing for others' and giving too much importance to what others think and say as shared by the respondents:

Because we have to get married to someone we have never seen before, maybe because of that too it's not very good. But we do continue to stay in a relationship, for the sake of society. We have such a type of environment (Arun, 33).

We think too much about others: what would they say? Maybe this is why Nepal has not developed much. We are anxious, what would people say if we did something? (Bikram, 32).

When we are living with parents, we should keep restrictions on some things, e.g., I used to tease my wife while at home, we are friends from before, in some things, e.g., we share food and drinks; I would eat from her plate, she would eat from mine, I would snatch food from her hand and eat. I didn't know it shouldn't be done in front of parents! My father called me one day and gave a full lecture on this (laughs) He said, well you did this before me but don't do it in front of others (Arun, 33).

### *Nepalese men's reflections on change in gendered practices*

Nepalese men opined that the practices in Nepal are not fair to women and that it should change but they also admitted not doing much to contribute to the change because it was comfortable for them. But all the men expressed that change is happening, albeit slow.

When in Nepal I realized it's not fair to women; it's not fair to my sisters. I thought I should change it, but I didn't because it was easy for me that way. Now I have brought some of my thoughts into practice (Bikram, 32).

But some places I have also seen the husband playing very supportive role. We can't blame everyone, but when you compare, that [dominance of men] is more (Arun, 33).

A conflict is inevitable between the *naya pidhi*-new generation and *purano pidhi*-old generation; both sides are not happy but the middle path has been followed mostly, for example, conflict might arise between the newer and older generation in issues of dressing, something that I have felt. When women wear miniskirt, pant after marriage, then even when nothing is said there's an uncomfortable feeling. Talking about gender, it can be men and women. And men can have women friends, but if they are close then they are questioned. People doubt that might not be good, this kind of generation gap exists (Uday, 35).

### *Nepalese men's take on undoing inequality*

All Nepalese men shared that they realized unfair gendered practices take place in Nepal and expressed that it will take time to change these practices. When asked about if women needed to be given more privileges because they have been historically marginalized, there were interesting responses, some reflecting that they hadn't thought about it earlier: "I realized I hadn't thought much about this. But probably yes, thinking aloud I feel there's a need" (Bikram, 32). Most of them agreed that women have been treated unfairly but suggested the way ahead should not be just giving women those privileges but thinking about the wider society in general. When the men were asked if reservation could be a solution to the existing inequality, their responses were more generic involving all the marginalized groups and not just women:

I am against reservation. Am not saying that it should not be given at any cost but I think it should not be the priority, or reinforced. Empowerment, capacity building is important. And then people can work. Reservation discourages capable people and when incapable people come into that place, efficiency, dynamism, work done if analyzed, the organization, the nation suffers loss. Instead, people's capacity should be enhanced (Uday, 35).

With regard to reservation, I have different opinion. E.g. 50 percent reservation for women in education, I support this. But when it comes to higher service, I think no one should be given any quota. Jobs should go to qualified people; there is no need to

differentiate between men, women, *dalit*<sup>10</sup>. I think the deserving should get. Maybe I am wrong in certain place about this but I think this way; until now (Arun, 33).

Arun shares the need to be inclusive but also provide space for talent. His responses convey the awareness that his own perception and understanding is changing and therefore he keeps room for change by acknowledging that “until now” he thinks this way.

With regard to the recent provision in the Constitution of Nepal 2015 giving women right to transfer the citizenship to their offspring (citizenship certificates in Nepal could only be obtained through the father before this provision) all men welcomed this as a much needed step, mostly giving practical reasons but also looking at it as an opening towards the wider participation of everyone.

It’s good. You can say it was necessary, e.g. what would you do in a single parent’s case? Here even after divorce, the parents look after the children, they support but in Nepal the contact with family is totally lost. How do you track them men? So it is good that citizenship can be given through mother. If the citizenship has names of both parents, that’s very good (Bikram, 32).

It should have been done long ago: citizenship in mother's name. Because for a child, father and mother are equal, right? I feel you should not differentiate between father and mother. You should have equal right to get the citizenship in the name of father or mother, it should not be differentiated (Arun, 33).

This is very right act. I support this. Because Nepalese culture, Nepalese family composition is patriarchal- it is not necessary that the man does everything. there should be equality in everything and for everyone to go into a process: citizenship certificate, passport, education this is all a kind of system, so it should be making it easy and better for everyone to get into the system, this is a step towards that; I like it (Uday, 35).

## 4.2 Nepalese men’s practice of gender

This section brings out the practice of gender by Nepalese men migrants in Portugal. The findings on this were brought out through qualitative interviews and observation in a micro-ethnographic context. Most men shared their involvement with household chores to be non-existent or minimal before they left Nepal.

I never cooked at home, never did the dishes. When I came abroad, I had to learn (Bikram, 32).

I used to cook 2-3 times in a year but now cooking is my full time job! You have to do what you have to do! (Ankit, 39).

Here [in Portugal] its help yourself; I do everything. In Nepal I did little less (Arun, 33).

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<sup>10</sup> A person of de-privileged caste



Nepalese men shared that their involvement in household chores has changed after they came to Europe. In the beginning all the men who interacted with the researcher shared that they were by themselves when they initially came to Europe and thus had no choice but to do everything within the house themselves. It was evident from the conversations that Nepalese men began doing the household chores because of the context they found themselves in with no choice. But they shared continuation of their involvement in household chores even when they lived with other families or with female members of their own family in Portugal, albeit there were still significant differences in their involvement as compared to their female counterparts.

The researcher spent some time in a household in Quarteira in two occasions observing that all members living in the house participated in the household chores. To give a brief picture of a day: Arun cleaned the kitchen. Uday prepared food, Laxman did the dishes, Pooja reorganized the kitchen and Akash was preparing for the Nepali New Year event. All these males were contributing to the household in egalitarian manners. There seemed no division of labor and each person living there was economically active. However Pooja expressed feeling responsible for looking after the guest (the researcher), latently and manifested: “I feel bad Sanjeev *dai*<sup>11</sup> that I couldn’t look after you. I am free on Saturday, I’ll make you *momos*<sup>12</sup>” (Pooja, 27). Pooja’s expressed worry were about what the guest (the researcher) had eaten; places visited and matters like relationships and lifestyle and the men asked about professional life and future plans. The concerns expressed by males and females within the household resonated with the gender expectations in Nepali families.

Although there was no division of labor in this residence and all members were seen to contribute to the household chores, during the interviews and interaction with them throughout the stay it came out that these changes were largely spatial and not transferred to their families in Nepal. Although the desire to contribute to the household when in Nepal was expressed by a majority of Nepalese men in Portugal, they expressed feeling limited most often by the prevalent practices and the resistance from family members.

There it is like this: when I visit Nepal, they already have a routine, e.g., for my wife, she wakes up in the morning, cleans the house, showers, worships, and in a situation where I could wake up and clean, I am still sleeping. Also when the time to eat comes, it's the same. My wife doesn't let me help. If I cook, *buwa mummy* (Dad, mum) will ask me why I cooked; you have come from outside (abroad) and things like that. So mostly in Nepal I don't work. But I try and help, e.g., I mostly do the dishes when I am in Nepal, all of it. Many people tell me, my parents also, but I feel let them keep saying, I'll keep doing. I feel this is the least I could do. I must have stayed in Nepal for 3-4 months and every day I did the dishes at home. I also help in doing the laundry, mum has some problem; she

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<sup>11</sup> Brother. It is common among Nepalese to address someone as *dai* if you think the person is older than you. And Nepalese do not normally address people older than them by names.

<sup>12</sup> Momos are steamed buns with fillings, usually vegetables, chicken or meat. They are the most popular fast food in Nepal.

(my wife) also has some problem so I help in such things. I help at home; I do things (Arun).

This sharing by Arun resonates with the findings of Mahler (2003) that some stay-behind women re-impose traditional gendered work norms on their returnee husbands, even when these husbands desire to show their wives that they are willing to share domestic tasks. Some men expressed contributing to the household chores too, as shared in this response

This time when I went, I helped my parents with work at home, household responsibilities. We also engage in agriculture; works related to home, e.g., bringing rice, getting the rice grains from the plant, things like that. I also stayed a little while in Kathmandu so I did what was necessary for me to do for all the people I had to do. Rather than behaving like I had come from abroad and I should do or not do something, I took everything comfortably and did (Uday, 35).

One respondent shared that he did not even touching anything at home during his stay in Nepal: “I did not even touch anything! Once I was making tea and my 5 year old son said Daddy is a girl! They got such an impression!” (Laxman, 39). Albeit he works in a restaurant and performs all the work feminized in Nepali context, him not extending it to Nepal can be seen as continuation of ‘doing gender’ in the Nepali context. His 5 year old son declaring ‘*Daddy is a girl*’ on his involvement in the kitchen brings out the deeply rooted gendered social construction. Macrae & Quadflieg (2010) argue that in social relational contexts, the prime categories perceived by individuals make their cultural beliefs cognitively available to implicitly shape the perceiver’s judgment and behaviors in response to others; these cultural beliefs associated with categorization, e.g. gender, often extend as stereotypes. Ridiculing reinforces stereotypes; in this case reinforcing ‘doing’ and resisting ‘undoing’ gender simultaneously in the Nepali context.

The resistance to continuation of ‘doing gender’ in Nepal as they did in Portugal also came from female members of the household, as shared by Nepalese men. Arun (33) exclaims “I am very aware. I am very aware. I and my wife sometimes have arguments about this. I try and give her freedom but she doesn't try and take it!” Arun’s expression of his awareness reminds of Khalid (2011)’s proposition that migrants often become particularly aware of the relational and contextual nature of gender as they attempt to fulfill expectations of identity and behavior that may differ sharply in the several places. The resistance to extend his awareness should be seen within the Nepali context as “gender roles are influenced by multiple sources across culture and time and they cannot be understood outside the context of particular ethnicities, societies and social settings” (ibid.).

Nepalese men mentioned this resistance from family members discouraged them to bring their changed perception to action. The continuation on inequality being reinforced by older family members and resisted by female members because of normalization of gendered roles has been discussed earlier too.

The resistance is reinforced by the social construct; Nepalese men expressed helplessness to work against it adding that they individually cannot challenge them but a macro-level change

was required: “But me alone wanting does not work. Because what we have seen, what we have learnt, there are people in the surrounding; we are also humans, we do the same” (Uday, 35) and also:

Because we are social human; have social bonding, all things, relatives and ‘we talk’; we cannot be revolutionary in everything. Bring radical change is not something that one person does. If the Planning level, government, society does this it is different but for an individual I think it is difficult (Uday, 35).

They projected that this was not always easy to treat men and women the same way because of the perception of wider society.

Nature has also made some distinctions between men and women: men are stronger. I can’t think of an example now, e.g., sometimes I come back home at 9 but I am just asked why I am late? But if my sisters are late, they are under pressure. They argue if you can why can’t I? I answer you have to look into the Nepali society; people question. If people see you outside late and people talk, there might be problems with your marriage later. What will you do then? So these are the differences (Bikram, 32).

One of my friend’s brothers said something I remember: I don’t do any difference between son and daughter. I thought I would drink with my son and daughter when they would be 18. And then one day a thought came to me and all my thinking changed: if my son comes with 4-5 girls at home my heart will expand but if my daughter brought 4-5 boys home I wouldn’t be able to feel the same way. I think we cannot do the same. But we should try and treat them equally (Bikram, 32).

Both the sharing above point out to the importance Nepalese men gave to how the society perceives each action. Although most of the respondents pointed out to the problems to gender equal practices, some men expressed ‘doing difference’: “I used to do earlier too but now I realize I have to do. The mentality has changed in that sense. I probably did not do as much as I could” (Uday, 35). Uday’s expression hint ‘doing gender’ differently without awareness of its need but the change in the context helped him realize that at conceptual level; making it easier to practice it after the realization of necessity of doing it, probably providing impetus to continuing ‘ungendered’ practice. Uday’s sharing that his realization of the need for ‘undoing gender’ facilitated his praxis, illuminates the importance of the realization of changes in perception and practice.

The researcher also came across a family that shared having no division of labor at all which would be ‘undoing gender’ in some avenues in both the Portuguese and the Nepali context. “Whatever is needed, whoever is in there does that. There is no work division. Everyone knows how to cook so that the work is uninterrupted” (Narendra, 38). This might be a special case in that the family was running a Nepali restaurant and all the family members (Narendra, his wife Sangita and his in-laws) shared being involved in it on a full time basis; taking turns to take the son to school and bring him back, to clean the household and anything that was required. But Narendra did share doing all the shopping himself and that he needed to be at the restaurant later

in the evening because there needed to be ‘someone in charge’ as all kinds of people came in that hour.

Narendra’s exclusive involvement in matters outside could either be an exercise of his masculinity or his ability to negotiate but the household chores were shared to be ‘ungendered’. But it should again be contextualized that all members of the household are involved in economic activity, viz. working in the restaurant and the ungendering of household chores could be only in these special circumstances where both men and women were in the same workplace and the kinds of work were similar. However when Narendra was asked about his involvement in child care, he mentioned taking him to and from school and taking him for a walk; he shared he never fed him or changed his diapers. Narendra’s initial sharing that there was no division of labor, was not portrayed in his later discourses.

A Nepalese man shared he would like to be significantly involved in child care. Albeit the Nepalese society associates child care predominantly with women, and that was prominently observed during the ethnography, some men shared enthusiasm to participate.

I will be involved a lot. I like children very much, to begin with. Earlier too, I used to completely look after the children of my uncle. I have raised 2-3 kids by myself. Aunties were busy, couldn't manage time and things like that (Arun, 33).

It is evident from the responses of Nepalese men in Portugal that changes in perception have occurred but they are still not able to ‘do gender’ the Portuguese way in Nepali context. Many Nepalese men find themselves in between: they have seen the changes and they agree that it is how it should be done but they cannot completely ‘undo’ what has been going on in Nepal. And they are much likely to get involved in household chores in Portugal than in Nepal.

The expression of a Nepalese man’s involvement in household chores like doing dishes and laundry albeit resisted by family members and the expressed comfort by another over his involvement highlights the change in their perception and practice because of the changed context; whether they asserted being involved in household chores or continued their practice with a newer understanding, this change was associated with the change of their context, viz. being in Portugal.

#### *Nepalese men’s practice of decision making within the household*

In matters of taking decisions within the household, the men shared varying practices: equal participation and consultation in all matters; discussion but predominance of men in the process or minimal involvement of women, as expressed in the three responses below:

Everything is decided together through discussion; there's nothing that we don't share with each other. That's true (Arun, 33).

In Nepali society, women do not participate in decision making. Although we say we take decision together, they do not participate in all equally. But it has to be equal (Bikram, 32).

We take all decisions together after discussion. But in some matters if it is right, like we discuss and even then if I feel what I have done is right and some unnecessary arguments might happen, then I take decisions. I will say why I took the decision, I will give reasons. Otherwise she has to tell me why the decision is not right, with justification, than I decide. There is no need to share everything. Normally, those things that she thinks is okay, I decide without discussing with her, based on my assumption of how she would respond. Rather than asking for her decisions I share some things to bring to her knowledge, to see her reaction. And some things need to be discussed (Uday, 35).

The sharing of the men above highlights that the involvement of women in decision making within the household is minimal. Although it was mentioned in the discourses of Nepali men that they made decision in discussion, it might not be the same in their practice. A deeper look into the response by Uday can bring out that he made some decisions in discussion with his wife and some decisions on his own, based on his assumptions of her response, and sometimes to see how she reacts, which could be conceptualized with the patriarchal construction with his family.

#### *Individual versus society- a Nepali man's position on gender and professionalism*

It was interesting to note that a Nepalese man took different positions in relation to the society or the collective depending on the matters of negotiation. Two responses below throw light into his shifting positions:

In Nepali context, it will not be done. Because we are social human; have social bonding, all things, relatives and 'we talk'; we cannot be revolutionary in everything. Bring radical change is not something that one person does. If the Planning level, government, society does this it is different but for an individual I think it is difficult (Uday, 35).

I think I will continue more of professional matters than social [when I go back to Nepal]. By professional, I mean professionalism. What is work? How should we work? The mentality: that has to change a little. I think we should take this (to Nepal). For example we have a house; we might have little land, a villa, a garden. We would work for 2-3 hours and then expect everything to be great! And then play: we should play but the mentality that we have is working 2 days and then playing 5 days. Even if one person shows how to do things change might happen. Initially people might laugh, but after the changes are seen, the process will also be seen (Uday, 35).

Uday's different standing in terms of the change an individual can bring to the society is worth pondering. He expressed hesitation translating the changes in the perception of gender in Nepal or 'undoing gender' in the way Nepalese perceive gender roles, in other words getting involved in the areas of the household that are considered predominantly women's responsibilities, instead hinted 'doing gender' in agreement with the collective because people "talk". He shared that not much can be done and suggested that changes should take place at a wider level, society or state. Whereas he expressed that an individual can lead that change with

regard to professionalism. His awareness about people talking, even laughing, would not deter him from practicing it.

Uday's perception of the ability of the individual to bring significant changes in the society can be linked with his perception of the society's views and probably his own conceptualization. Since the society perceives gender related issues sensitively, he probably does not want to trigger the effects by continuation of 'doing gender' as in the Portuguese context which could be 'undoing gender' in the Nepali context, e.g. he was involved in all the household chores in Portugal when he was doing gender according to the Portuguese society and to meet his own practical needs whereas his involvement in the same chores in Nepal could be seen as 'undoing gender' in the Nepali context which does not expect this from men. With regard to the continuation of the 'professionalism' (Uday mentioned work culture: being on time, working fixed hours, adequate pay, use of theories in his expression of professionalism) he expressed he does not care even when the society ridicules him.

Could this difference be because of the clarity he has with regard to 'professionalism' that he might not have on 'gender'? Could this lead to the need for a conceptual clarity on gendered perceptions in order to empower individuals to challenge social structures and the gender norms? This brings us to what is the right question: is the society ready to accept changes? Or, is the individual ready to accept the changes? How do we know if the society is ready to accept the changes or not unless we have tried them? This raises an important question: can 'undoing gender' be practiced even if the society is not ready for it, if the individual is ready? An answer to this might open up many avenues of engagement for social workers working with families.

#### 4.3 Effects of migration in the perception and practice of gender

This section looks into the changes experienced by Nepalese men due to migration, in particular, the changes in the perception, practice and practice of gender within the context of the host country Portugal.

##### *Changes in perception*

All Nepalese men shared that they found huge differences between Nepal and European countries. The differences between Nepal and the countries of Europe Nepalese men saw, as expressed by them, come out clearly in the response below:

When I went to UK what struck me was the way people walked, sat, the environment, lifestyle, the behavior, means of transportation, locality, way of thinking, way of working, it was totally different. You have to learn how to walk, how to talk when you are in new place, right? Development, progress, lifestyle. I realized there's a big difference between us and them; overall, holistic perception (Uday, 35).

And all Nepalese men shared that being in a different context helped them reflect about their lives in Nepal, the culture and everyday practices.

“Our Nepali culture, I realized, is such that in order to show that you are right, we hide some things, exaggerate some things, right? I knew the difference between that after I came here. I had never been able to accept the reality, e.g. if I didn't know something I would never say I didn't know it. I would somehow make myself believe that I can. Well sometimes you would have to hide what you knew in order to not get into trouble, that's different. So I feel the culture of hiding certain things and exaggerating certain things is prevalent in our society, because it was within me too. And after coming here, I saw the respect for people in any level- and I became more open. The biggest truth is to accept the self the way we are. It is all acceptance- accepting each other in the way one is. That will take us towards prosperity. I feel this might be the reason for their prosperity. We can't accept, e.g. if we know a person is from a certain background, we immediately put restrictions accordingly. Here they just say okay he is from this background and accept him the way he is. In that sense I am more open than before. I wasn't before. I have to accept that” (Arun, 33).

I realized how lazy we were and why Nepal has not seen development. After coming here I realized, we haven't done even a bit of what we should be doing! (Uday, 35).

They also expressed that their perceptions, in particular, regarding gender had also changed. “Men are as equal as women. And regarding relation too, husband and wife, both have equal role in maintaining a relationship, to breathe life in it. Should I say that we learn this here or that I learnt it?” (Arun, 33). Nepalese men expressed that the changes were not just in perception of the way things worked in Nepal but also change in their own lives and some expressed considerable enthusiasm to continue these changes in their return to Nepal.

It is 100 percent true that I have changed; when I entered Poland in 2009 June and today 2016 February 28, I sometimes compare the self then and the self now; if I have to compare, the mind I have now is very different with what I had then. I wasn't probably that strong (with excitement) I am much more open now! Like I am telling you everything without hesitation, I have been able to say the things I want to say, without any hesitation. And another thing, I have changed a lot in that sense. I have become mentally strong. Because I had to face so many difficulties, had to think so much; after getting through all that, I felt liberated (Arun, 33).

Many things changed [due to migration]. I had always known life had problems but I understood when I experienced. You don't change unless you experience. For example, I never cooked in my life before I came here. Studying science helped and I learnt basic cooking by observation (Bikram, 31).

The responses by Nepalese men in the above discourses clearly bring out the change in perception in their discourses.

### *Changes in perception and practice of gender*

The changes in the perception of life accompanied by introspection also brought out changes in conceptualization and practice of 'doing gender' in most men. It can be seen in the conversation between the researcher (Q) and the respondent (A) (Arun, 33) on gender relations:

Q: Has anything changed after you came to Portugal?

A: Yes there has been change (laughs). I told you earlier about being open (laughs again), we have become more liberal. E.g., I would earlier tell my girlfriend or later wife that women should not do this and this, you have to think these things and I would apply restrictions at times.

Q: Would you like to share an example?

A: Actually I don't have that in mind right now but I remember putting restrictions. And in later times I have learnt that we have to accept them as they are.

Another respondent shared that not many things changed for him because he used to involve in the household chores earlier too and that he included his wife in decision making:

Actually there was not much difference. Because I used to do earlier too [household chores] but now I realize I have to do. The mentality has changed in that sense. I probably did not do as much I could. But there was not much difference (Uday, 35).

As seen in the response above some men were already 'doing gender' differently without awareness of it but the change in the context helped them realize that at conceptual level; and they expressed that it was easier to do it after the realization of necessity of doing it. Hence Nepalese men's sharing suggests that the changed context helped the praxis of gender.

Even when I was in Nepal I would not feel anything to do a simple work to top level work. I didn't feel the difference, I don't. I do, I did. But there even if I wanted to do I could not do everything alone: I have my family; my society; my relations. But here even if people don't do things in the beginning, slowly they understand and do. But me alone wanting does not work. Because what we have seen, what we have learnt, there are people in the surrounding; we are also humans, we do the same. We did not know what was beyond the box! Maybe because of that too. Earlier I had the mentality that I should do but I did not put into daily practice. But that has become easy after coming here (Uday, 35).

When in Nepal I realized it's not fair to women. It's not fair to my sisters. I thought I should change it, but I didn't. Because it was easy for me that way. Now I have brought some of my thoughts into practice (Bikram, 32).

The transformations in perception and practice of gender have been associated with the change in context by the respondents: "some people have learnt this beforehand, even in Nepal. But for me this environment helped to learn these things" (Arun, 33). Nepalese men who shared



they were involved in household chores even in Nepal expressed that these changes have been smaller and more than increasing their household involvement the changed context helped them understand and realize the importance of the practice, thus helping in praxis.

### *Inflow of Nepalese in Portugal and associated changes*

The huge inflow of Nepalese migrants in Portugal has been associated with changes in everyday lives and interactions. The number of Nepalese migrants recorded to have come to Portugal has been increasing significantly, in particular, after 2008 (Bajracharya, 2015). All respondents shared that with the significant presence of Nepalese in Portugal, there has been increase in avenues for interaction and developing connections among them through celebration of festivals (*Dashain, Tihar, Teej, Mha Puja*) and other occasions (Buddha Jayanti, Nepali New Year) which has resulted in the widening of interaction among Nepalese. The responses below are testimonies:

When there are many people living alone and then there are few (families) coming, its importance is greater attachment, celebrating festivals these happen (Uday).

Initially we did not celebrate Teej, now we do. Actually, what are you saying! I did not celebrate even *Dashain*<sup>13</sup> for 4-5 years. When in Coimbra we were only 15-20 people and everyone was busy with work. When I came to Lisbon I celebrated *Tihar*<sup>14</sup> because I stayed with a family there. I've noticed that when there is a woman in the family, then the likeliness of celebrating festivals increases. And after that one family arrived in Coimbra and I received *Tika*<sup>15</sup> from a *bhauju*<sup>16</sup>, the first one after Nepal. So that's true! On one side, there is preservation of culture; when there is a team, you can preserve your culture. On the other side we bring certain negative things along with us and that also expands. Positive things also increases and so do negative things (Arun, 31).

The changes in the life of Nepalese in Portugal associated with the recent formation of a significant Nepali population corresponds to the changes cited by Lourenço (2011) from Cohen (1997)'s study that the Hindu communities initially established in Trinidad where the shortage of women disrupted traditional patterns of family life and the group's social norms and the arrival of women corrected this imbalance and reestablishment of family life that acted as a source of social cohesion was observed. Alongside this development, the freedom and autonomy of the few women who were previously a minority in Trinidad diminished as a consequence of male efforts to reinstall the patriarchal family system. Arun's expression "as the population of Nepalese is increasing, the traditional way of living is also increasing" is also in agreement with Cohen's findings.

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<sup>13</sup> The biggest Nepali festival; also called *Bijaya Dashami*, is celebrated for 10 days where all members of the family get together and receive *tika* and blessings from the elders.

<sup>14</sup> Tihar is the second biggest festival in Nepal. Also called Deepawali, it is the festival of lights.

<sup>15</sup> A mixture of rice grains, yoghurt, sugar and vermillion powder applied on the forehead by elders in the family with blessings

<sup>16</sup> Sister-in-law

Besides the reinstatement of traditional gender roles, the increasing population of Nepalese in Portugal could also lead to further segregation among Nepalese themselves, as expressed by a respondent:

But if it keeps increasing, suddenly then there might be discrimination, not getting along, hmm, kind of disinterestedness. I have felt that. If there are many, there might be negative impact. There might be segregation of class, caste, things like that (Uday, 35).

Narendra and Saroj augment Uday's prediction:

It has been very difficult to get places to do programs now. They are not giving public spaces to Nepalese anymore. Earlier we used to do programs in parks but they don't allow that anymore because we are too many. Also we litter too much. And there are many formal programs<sup>17</sup>. Also many of these events see arguments, quarrels and fights among the Nepalese (Narendra, 38).

When we are here, we are all Nepalese right? So why say Bahun, Chhetri, Rai, Magar? We all are in similar situations and problems so why not help each other? Why fight amongst ourselves? (Saroj, 24).

The significant increase of Nepalese in Portugal has also resulted in the formation of numerous organizations. Bajracharya (2015) in her study spotted as many as 20 different associations based on gender, geographical region and ethnicity. Most of these organizations expressed celebrating festivals and raising funds for the needy (e.g. suffering serious ailment or repatriation). The significant presence of these organizations, most of which are started and led by men, can also be seen as the exercise of their masculinities. It has come in the discussions earlier that the Portuguese state offers more social security to Nepalese as compared to Nepal and this was seen to facilitate the independence of the citizens. On a different note it, the stronger presence of the state can also contribute to the weakening of social structures and therefore the socially constructed status roles, gender being a prominent one. Kleist (2010) shares men's difficulties are articulated as a transfer of male authority to the welfare state, reflecting female empowerment and male misrecognition, causing multiple losses of social position and upheavals in gender relations. He argues that Somali men negotiate and enact respectable masculinity through associational and community involvement, creating alternative social spaces of recognition and the presence of male dominated Nepalese organizations can also be seen in this light.

The increase in the population of Nepalese in Portugal was also reported to contribute to the limiting interaction with the host society.

When we were 15-20 people in Coimbra, we used to go out more often. When we came to Lisbon, the Nepali community was so big that we did not need Portuguese friends. We

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<sup>17</sup> It is a common practice in all Nepali events to have a formal program in the beginning where the organizers are called on stage and almost all members on stage give a speech. This requires moving chairs on and off stage; organizing flower bouquets, etc needing lot of preparation.

were shrunk back into our own community. Being open and understanding the wider community was restricted (Arun, 33).

Junctions for Nepalese are increasing (cafes to hang out, meet people, discourse, plan and organize events); places to eat out (restaurants) with authentic Nepali food and occurrence of events (celebration of festivals; movie shows; dance parties; performances by renowned artists) which is changing the dynamics of their lives in Portugal.

I don't feel that I am in *bidesh*<sup>18</sup>. There's no difference in my life; from morning to night, I interact with Nepalese, very little with the others; I eat the same *dal bhat*<sup>19</sup>, listen to same songs, and engage in the same conversations! (Dorje, 31). Arun and Dorje's expressions clearly bring out that the significant presence of Nepalese in Portugal is in some ways limiting them to be part of the host society, hence limiting their integration (Pires, 2001).

Some other aspects of changes accompanying migration of Nepalese to Portugal were also shared by the respondents:

On the other hand, sexual liberation is happening, which is not the positive aspect of increased Nepali population, e.g. in Lisbon girls are free; over free. They are even using guys. In Nepal, it was predominantly the other way round. But within individuals, particularly unmarried young people, lot of change can be seen in this regard but within families there's less change. Live in relationship also is increasing (Bikram, 32).

You are an educated person, am sure you know this. Sex has been accepted as a basic need already, among the Nepalese too. I am sure people sleep around, even in villages back home, under the carpet but here it is evident (Dorje, 31).

It can be said from the study that migration to Portugal helped Nepalese men reflect on their lives in general and also on how gender was done; they shared being more open after migrating to Portugal. The findings were similar to Khalid's (2011) study on migrants who returned to Pakistan from UK in which he concludes his study highlighted the belief that exposure to alternative lifestyles tends to make people less traditional and more open to change.

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<sup>18</sup> Foreign land

<sup>19</sup> Rice and lentils; they make up the two main meals of the day for most people in Nepal

## 5. Conclusion and scope for further research

### 5.1 Conclusion

As soon as we hear the term gender, we think of similarities and differences mostly focusing on the male-female dichotomy. This understanding of gender, focusing on and limited to male-female, needs to be expanded as the conception of gender is changing because it is socially constructed and societies around the world are changing. It was seen in the study that Nepalese men are moving beyond the gendered stereotypes of masculinity, or undoing masculine stereotypes popular in the Nepali context. The understanding and acceptance of the fluidity of socially constructed gender including, but not limiting to masculinities and femininities, provides an opening for undoing gender.

#### *5.1.1 Transformations in Nepalese men's perception of gender*

Nepalese men residing in Portugal mentioned that there should be no division of work on the basis of sex but on the availability of time and competence of the individuals. It was unequivocally expressed that it is about maintenance of family and largely a matter of understanding between the members. Some respondents perceived the roles men and women play inside the household in line with the socially constructed masculine and feminine models-reinforcing the male provider and female homemaker and some others emphasized on the capacity of the individuals to perform, differing from the popular model to look beyond socially constructed gender roles. As men they felt responsible to provide for all members of the family and keeping them happy was given utmost importance. Since Nepalese men saw families in Nepal as inseparable from the wider society (the context), they felt pressurized to confirm to the societal expectations. This importance that Nepalese give to the response of the society was identified as hindrance to put the changed perception into practice and expand the practices to praxis. They expressed the powerlessness of an individual within the social context because of the strong social ties and the need to follow its guidelines because it provides social security. The society and networks were shared to provide support as well as apply pressure on individuals. This pressure was visibly felt by the respondents in terms of conformity to family forms and its functions.

Nepalese men in Portugal shared being aware about the unequal gender relations that existed in the Nepali society; that women in Nepal are largely dominated by and dependent on men and considered subordinate. Normalization of gendered roles was expressed viewing household chores to be the responsibility of the woman. And the general perception in Nepal as shared by Nepalese men was that housework is women's responsibility and limited involvement of men was seen in everyday practices within families.

An important realization among Nepalese men was the nature of 'display' of everyday life by most Nepalese, in accordance to the societal expectations. They expressed the prevalence of 'doing for others' and giving too much importance to what others think and say, an exercise of social vigilance. And being in Portugal helped them see this disguised 'display'. The observation

of gender relations among men and women in Portugal was shared to provide an avenue for Nepalese men to reflect on those in Nepal and also their own relations.

Nepalese men perceived men and women in Portugal were more independent and experienced comparatively egalitarian; intimate and collaborative relations. But they also felt there is lack of trust among partners in Portugal. They shared gender relations in Portugal were more egalitarian now than before with less gender stratified work division, reflecting that the involvement of both men and women in work might have contributed to this as they are economically independent. All respondents pointed out that the relation between men and women in Portugal some time back was similar to that in Nepal today with men being seen as the providers for women, pointing that female subordination, male dominance and gendered division of labor is still existent in the Portuguese Society despite women's economic participation.

Nepalese men were accepting of living-in relationships in Portugal, some accepting it in the Portuguese context but arguing that it will not work in Nepali and some sharing lack of clarity on this issue. The openness and acceptance of the way women dressed in Portugal was also similar in that it was largely limited to the Portuguese context. Some men did not extend this acceptance to their family members. It was strongly expressed by Nepalese men that their perceptions are guided by the context and most of them expressed hesitation in doing things differently to what is popular in the context, sharing that not just women but men were also limited by the social constructs in their behavior with difference lying in the extent of limitations defined. It was mentioned by the respondents that the changed context helped them reflect over these.

Perception and practice of gender is displayed through the presentation of the gendered self either in alignment with or alienation from perceived masculinity or femininity, as constructed by the popular culture. Perception influences practice; but the perception of gender by Nepalese men migrants in Portugal was not totally reflected in or translated into practice as they expressed their perception in non-context (individual opinion) but while practicing they located themselves in the context, hence the same men although exhibited 'doing differences' in Portugal and Nepal, they were largely 'doing gender' in both these contexts. Doing gender, for most men, was context specific and in accordance to the needs and practicalities rather than an extension of their gendered understanding or praxis.

Some Nepalese men shared their view that men express emotions less to show they are strong because emotions are linked with weakness. Nepalese exhibit masculine culture which not only supports but praises assertive emotions such as anger, and pride reinforcing their portrayal by men. But some others exhibited 'resistance' (Barker, 2005) by expressing their emotions openly; moving away from culturally expected masculine identities. Nepalese men's portrayed comfort in sharing their emotions can be seen as ungendering of emotions paving way towards 'undoing gender' as constructed in Nepalese society.

Nepalese men opined that the unfair gender practices in Nepal should change. Expressing it will take time; they also admitted not doing much to contribute to the change because it was comfortable for them. But all the men expressed that change is happening, albeit slow. Some of

them shared they hadn't reflected on giving women more privileges to address the inequality but expressed agreement to this. With the agreement was also suggestion that the way ahead should not be just giving women those privileges but thinking about the wider society and investing in building capacity of all individuals. All men welcomed the provision in the Constitution of Nepal giving women right to transfer the citizenship to their offspring as a much needed step, mostly giving practical reasons but also looking at it as an opening towards the wider participation of everyone.

Nepalese men's sharing of change in perception of gender, because of being in a different context and seeing how things can be and should be done differently, suggests that they are already in the walk towards gender equality. The travel from an egalitarian gender perception to egalitarian gender display takes time; by sharing that their perception of gender has changed within the context of migration, they are acknowledging their realization. But for this realization to be internalized and materialized into corresponding praxis might take time and is influenced by external factors.

### *5.1.2 Changes in Nepalese men's practice of gender*

Most men admitted their involvement with household chores to be non-existent or minimal in Nepal which changed after they came to Europe as they were by themselves and had no choice. They share being involved in all household chores in Portugal but these changes were largely spatial and not transferred to their families in Nepal. Few men expressed contributing a little to the household chores and some men did not contribute to household chores at all, admitting that the involvement of men in household chores did not change much despite women's economic contribution. In matters of taking decisions within the household, the men shared varying practices: equal participation and consultation of both men and women in all decisions; decisions taken in discussion but predominance of men and minimal involvement of women.

Nepali men's involvement in the household chores in Portugal, which are considered predominantly the female domain in popular Nepali culture, cannot be solely interpreted as changes in gender relations or attributed to their changed perceptions. What largely shapes their doing gender is the context in which they do so and not the act itself. Thus what can be concluded from this micro-ethnography is that Nepalese men are doing gender in both Nepal and Portugal and their doing gender is largely shaped by and limited to the context in which they live; they are 'doing gender' while in Nepal in accordance to the gendered norms, values and expectations of the family and society and they are also 'doing gender' in Portugal in accordance to the gendered norms, values and expectations from the Portuguese society. But 'doing difference' due to 'doing gender' in diverse contexts have helped them reflect on gender related issues. The reflections are yet to be adequately transformed into praxis.

Although the desire to contribute to household chores when in Nepal was expressed by a majority of Nepalese men in Portugal, most often they felt resistance. The shared that the resistance to 'undoing gender' and the continuation of 'doing gender' came from female members of the household and reinforced by older family members. Many Nepalese men found

themselves in difficult position regarding doing gender: they have seen the changes and agree with them but they cannot completely ‘undo’ what has been going on in Nepal. They shared getting involved in household chores more in Portugal than in Nepal which could mostly be interpreted as finding it easier to conform to societal expectations than to challenge them. Some men shared ‘doing gender’ differently in Nepal without being aware mentioning the change in the context helped them realize that at conceptual level; making it easier to practice, probably providing impetus to continuing ‘ungendered’ practice. This realization of the need for ‘undoing gender’ facilitating praxis illuminates the need for change in perception.

While doing gender in Nepal in accordance to the popular culture might be easier due to the largely dominant, monolithic Hindu perspective on gender and gender relations (despite the ethnic and religious diversity), doing gender in Portugal for the Nepalese might be a constant struggle between continuation of the popular Nepali gendered expectations and keeping up with the more ‘liberal’ Portuguese culture. But ‘doing gender’ in different contexts, therefore doing gender differently helped men reflect not only on the differences between the Nepalese society and Portuguese but also on the perception and practice of gender in the Nepalese socio-relational context.

Thus it can be concluded from the study that there have been significant changes in the perception of Nepalese men about gender relations. This change in perception is accompanied by changed practices in Portuguese context. However it was mentioned in the discourses of Nepalese men that these practices were not transferred to the Nepalese context in the same manner. So it can be argued that the transformations of perception and practice of gender as a result of the changed context has contributed to Nepalese men’s praxis as well to some extent and it can be hoped that this change will be transferred to their families in Nepal. But in order to make this transfer easy, acceptable and sustainable larger social changes are necessary: policies should be sensitive to the understanding and practice of gender; everyday discourses in any social context should reflect this understanding; education should inculcate adequate understanding and praxis of gender including but not limiting to households, which are the key sites for its construction and reproduction.

### *5.1.3 Effects of migration in the perception and practice of gender*

Nepalese men shared that being in a different context helped them reflect about their lives in Nepal, the culture and everyday practices. They shared that their mentalities changed after coming to Portugal and they are more open now. Nepalese men shared their life experiences and perceptions changed, extending the change in conceptualization to the practice of ‘undoing gender’ through reducing the restrictions they previously put to women.

The study concludes that increasing inflow of Nepalese migrants in Portugal in the recent years has resulted in creation of Nepalese enclaves that perform two functions: i) provide space for Nepalese to exercise, enhance and extend Nepalese identity; and ii) limit their interactions with the Portuguese. Besides the reinstatement of traditional gender roles, the increasing population of Nepalese in Portugal hinted to the growing segregation among Nepalese, based on

ethnicity and geographical region they associated with in Nepal. It could also be seen that the growth of Nepalese in Portugal also gave some men an opportunity to enact their masculinities through associational involvement; as many as 20 associations and self help groups of Nepalese in Portugal, was spotted by Bajracharya (2015). Some other aspects of changes accompanying migration of Nepalese to Portugal as shared by the respondents were sexual liberation and increasing incidences of living in relationships and extra marital affairs, pointing out to increasing incidences of non-adherence to the social constructs. But it was largely observed that the increased size of ethnic Nepali enclaves has resulted in decreased frequency and space for interaction of Nepalese in Portugal with non-Nepalese, limiting the space for understanding the different perception, practice and praxis of gender.

### *Overall Conclusion*

The new social context of the host country Portugal, where Nepalese men live in, played a major role in the transformation of their perception and practice of gender. Albeit all interviewees shared not being able to do gender in Nepal in the same manner as they did in Portugal, their exhibitions of ‘doing gender’ in the Portuguese context can be seen as ‘undoing gender’ in the Nepalese. What remains to be done in the move towards gender equality, is to facilitate their awareness of the benefits of ‘undoing gender’ in both contexts. It would be useful to illuminate their practice of ‘doing gender’ out of the context in order to eliminate their practice of ‘doing gender’ limited to a particular context.

The heterogeneities in perception and practice of gender among Nepalese could also be seen in the light of educational qualifications and the level of interaction with the Portuguese. It was evident through the micro-ethnographic study that Nepalese men with a higher level of education showed more liberal perception of gender relations and also showed more involvement in household chores. At the same time they also shared interacting more with the Portuguese, in other words becoming part of the host society, which could be related to educational level. Hence it came out quite clearly that the educational attainment was a significant factor in the transformations of perception and practice of gender among Nepalese men in Portugal.

### *Typologies identified*

An overall analysis of the perception, practice and praxis of gender brought into the discourses and display by Nepalese men during the micro-ethnography was analyzed to reach the typologies presented below in the table. These typologies largely reflect the discourses brought by Nepalese men because of limited observation of their practices. Nevertheless, the typologies give a fair idea of the changes (due to migration) in perception, practice and praxis of gender among Nepalese men in Portugal.



Table 6: Typologies of Nepalese men identified in the study

The Nepali context		Migration to Portugal	The Portuguese Context		Resultant changes in Nepal	Exemplifying cases
Perception	Practice		Perception	Practice		
gendered	doing gender		no change	seemingly undoing gender in the Nepali context because of the work in Portugal (i.e. no division of labor)	no praxis; doing gender	Narendra
			some realization of the unfair gender arrangement in Nepali context	doing gender	minimal practice of undoing gender	Bikram
			doing gender in Portugal in practice	ungendering of perceptions (including ungendering of emotions)	extension of praxis by some undoing of gender in Nepal	Arun
	undoing gender		doing gender in Portugal	realization of the need to undo gendered practices	some undoing of gender in practice with praxis	Uday
un-gendered	undoing gender		doing gender	praxis	praxis and commitment to undoing gender in practice	Dorje

Migration, thus, has significantly impacted the perception and practice of gender among Nepalese by providing different contexts for doing gender though awareness of this change might not have expanded much among Nepalese migrants in absence of critical discourses. We do not learn from experience...we learn from reflecting on experience (Dewey, 1986). Migration per se might not bring changes in the way people perceive and practice gender as they might be merely complying with the spatial norms and values, either in Nepal or Portugal and are largely doing gender. But Nepalese men shared that these changes were significantly impacted because

of the changed context, viz. being in Portugal. A reflection on this changed perception and practice of gender can help them see the changes in a newer light and thus understand how they are already ‘undoing gender’ in the Nepali context. In other words the intentional intervention of social workers can help Nepalese men expand their transformations (on gender discourses and practice within the context of migration) to praxis, and move towards egalitarian gender relations that will benefit all sexes; this would need an organized structure and the total alphabetization of population in Nepal could play a bigger role.

## 5.2 Scope for further research

Apart from the perception, practice and praxis of gender and the changes associated with migration, social capital and networking surfaced significantly in the study. The recurrence of this theme compelled the researcher to explore if it has any relation to the discussion presented above. Informed by the data collected in the micro-ethnography, the researcher asked the following question: could the reliance of Nepalese men on social networks impact their perception and praxis of gender?

Nepalese men in Portugal rely heavily on the social networks at an everyday level beginning with the decision of migrating to Portugal. From obtaining information about the situation of work and living to exploring the routes to enter Portugal; organizing food and accommodation; getting in touch with the Portuguese ‘system’ (through obtaining fiscal number) and later interactions (e.g. SEF, Hospitals); finding work; travelling; procuring economic support when in need and two way flow of goods between Nepal and Portugal, to name a few, heightened exercise of networking was observed among the Nepalese. Could this high reliance put them in a vulnerable situation to conform to the collective as the collective only offers its benefits to its membership? Could it go as far as giving up individuality in order to continue association with the collective? Does the collective reflect and reinforce gendered norms and values as in Nepal? Or does it provide an avenue for deconstruction and reconstruction of gender roles and norms? It would be interesting to look into how social networks and associations of Nepalese are organized in Portugal and what perception and practice of gender they express in their ‘doing’. At the same time it will also be significant to look at how these networks and associations attract and engage membership, leading to an important and interesting avenue for further study: Are Nepalese associations in Portugal ‘doing’ or ‘undoing’ gender in relation to the Nepalese as well as the Portuguese social context?

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# Appendix 1: Interview Guide

## ***Demographic Profile***

Full name ..... Age .....

Duration of stay in Portugal ..... Duration of stay outside Nepal .....

Marital Status .....

Time of living with partner ..... away from partner .....

Family Type .....

Duration of living in family type (nuclear ..... Joint .....

Reason for migration: ..... (economic reason, family reunification, better educational opportunities for children, political reasons, others)

Educational level

Type of Work: ..... (Self employed, hospitality: hotel, restaurant, parlor, hairdressing, etc)

## ***Questions***

### Perception of Portuguese Society

1. How is life in Portugal?
2. How do you feel about the Portuguese society in general?
3. What do you think of the live-in relationships that is a norm in Portugal?
4. Do you think that Portuguese State gives more value to women? More privileges?

### Perception of Nepali Society

5. Do you miss anything about Nepal? About the Nepali culture? [How do you cope with it ? Do you talk/share about it?- Reference to emotions, masculinity, migrants]
6. What are some values that you associate with the Nepali culture? What comes to your mind when I say Nepali culture?

### Migration: Reason, Routes, Ramifications

7. Why did you leave Nepal? How did you end in Portugal?
8. Has this experience of living outside Nepal changed you in any way?

### Gender Relations and Changes

9. Did you have to adjust to anything within the family after you came to Portugal? Could you share an example? Why did you have to adjust? Are you happy with the adjustment?
10. As a male, what do you think are your most important responsibilities within the family?
11. What do you think are the most important responsibilities for a female within the family?
12. Do you think that there should be roles associated with a particular sex? (e.g. child care with women and earning with men)

13. Do you see any difference between gender relations in Portugal and in Nepal? What difference do you see?
14. Do you think male and female have equal rights here? Do you think male and female have equal rights in Nepal? Do you think they should have?
15. Do you think women have been oppressed in Nepal for a long time? Do you think they have been denied equal rights? Do you think they deserve better treatment and privileges because they have been wronged for long? How do you see 33 percent reservation for women?
16. What do you think of the recent change in constitution regarding providing citizenship to the children on the basis of descent from the mother alone? Do you support/ not agree? Could you share why?
17. Do you think women should be solely responsibility for child care and care of elderly in the family?
18. Do you feel/think that there is a change in how you look at your own relations with your partner or with other female members within the family?
19. Do working women have more freedom in Nepali families?
20. Do you think there has been change in gender relations within your family? Are you unsatisfied/comfortable/satisfied/happy with these changes?
21. So many Nepalese, lot of women, have recently migrated to Portugal creating a bigger social network. Do you think this augmentation of Nepalese has any impact on Gender roles?

#### Understanding of family

22. What type of family do you live in?
23. What is a perfect family for you?
24. Would you call yourself religious? Your family? What aspects of religious practices do you follow and what does your partner follow?
25. How many children do you have? Do you want to have? What sex of the child would you prefer and why?

#### Power Relations within family

26. How are decisions taken within your family? [Do you discuss everything with your partner? What do you not discuss?]
27. What work within the house do you do? What work does your partner do?
28. Can Nepali women have a professional career in Portugal? In Nepal?
29. Have you had any conflict with your partner? Would you like to share? If any conflict arises in the family how do you deal with it?

#### Perception of Dress

30. How do you feel about the dress code practiced in Portugal?
31. How do you compare the dressing of women in Portugal and Nepal? Do you approve of the females in your family adhering to the dress culture here?
32. Do you think that dressing is related to job largely or is it a matter of choice?
33. Had there been negotiations about the change, if any, in dress code?



Time spent in paid and unpaid work

34. How much time do you spend in paid and unpaid work? Did you spend the same amount of time in Nepal? What has changed?
35. How often do you wash your own clothes? Iron them? How often do you clean the house? Common areas, living room? How often do you prepare food for everyone in the family?
36. How often do you involve yourself in child care? (putting the baby to sleep, changing diapers, feeding the babies, walking the baby out, waking up during the night)

## Appendix 2: Interview Guide in Nepali (Devnagari script)

### अन्तर्वार्ता सूचक (प्रश्नावली)

पोर्तुगलको बसाई कस्तो छ?

नेपाल किन छाड्नु भयो? यहाँ कसरि आइपुग्नु भयो?

पोर्तुगिस समाज यहालाई कस्तो लाग्छ?

नेपाल भन्नेबितिकै तपाईंलाई पहिलो कुरा के याद आउँछ ?

नेपाली संस्कार भन्दा यहाँले के सम्झिनु हुन्छ ?

पोर्तुगल आएर परिवारभित्र केहि कुरामा परिवर्तन आएको छ? के कुरामा? कृपया उदाहरण दिनुहुन्छ?

एउटा पुरुषको रूपमा परिवारमा तपाईंको दायित्व महत्वपूर्ण रूपमा के के कुरामा देखिनुहुन्छ?

एउटा महिलाको परिवारमा के के दायित्व देखिनुहुन्छ?

के तपाईंलाई लग्छ पोर्तुगिस राज्यले महिलालाई पुरुषभन्दा धेरै महत्व दिन्छ? धेरै सुविधाहरु दिन्छ?

नेपालबाहिर बस्नुको अनुभवले तपाईंमा केहि परिवर्तन आएका छन्? कृपया भन्नुहुन्छ?

के तपाईंलाई लाग्छ कुनै निश्चित लिङ्ग (महिला/पुरुष ) संग जोडेर काम/दायित्व तोकिनुपर्छ? (उदाहरण : बच्चाको स्याहार )

नेपाल र पोर्तुगलमा महिला र पुरुषको सम्बन्धमा केहि भिन्नता देखिनुहुन्छ? त्योबारे मा केहि भनिदिनुहुन्छ?

के तपाईंलाई लाग्छ यहाँ पुरुष र महिलाले समान अधिकार पाएका छन्? नेपालमा?

के तपाईंलाई लाग्छ महिला र पुरुष को अधिकार समान हुनुपर्छ?

के तपाईंलाई लाग्छ नेपालमा महिलाहरु पिछडिएका छन्? पिडित छन्? यदि छन् भने के उनीहरुलाई अहिले थप सुविधाहरु दिनु पर्छ? महिलालाई ३३% आरक्षणको दिने कुरा तपाईंलाई कस्तो लाग्छ?

भर्खरै नेपाल भएको आमाको नामबाट नागरिकता दियिने कुराबारे तपाईंको के धारणा छ?

तपाईंको परिवार (श्रीमती) र अन्य सदस्यहरुसंगको तपाईंको सम्बन्धमा केहि परिवर्तन आएको छ?

तपाईं कुन किसिमको परिवारमा बस्नु हुन्छ? एकल परिवारमा बस्दा र संयुक्त परिवारमा बस्दा केहि भिन्नता हुन्छन जस्तो यहाँलाई लाग्छ?

तपाईंको परिवारभित्र निर्णय लिदा कसरि लिने गरिन्छ? के तपाईं सबैकुरा श्रीमतिसंग भन्नुहुन्छ?

घरभित्रको कए के काम गर्नुहुन्छ? अनि तपाईंकी श्रीमतीले?

के तपाईंलाई लाग्छ बालबालिका तथा बृद्धको स्याहारको जिम्मेवारी महिलाले लिनुपर्छ?

तपाईंको आफ्नी श्रीमती संग कुनै कुरामा मतभेद भएको छ? त्यसोहुँदा के गर्नुहुन्छ?

बिहेपूर्वकै संगै बस्ने पोर्तुगलमा भएको चलन यहाँलाई कस्तो लाग्छ?

नेपाल र पोर्तुगलको लुगा लगाईमा केहि परिवर्तन देख्नुहुन्छ?

पोर्तुगलको पहिरन (लुगा लगाई) यहाँलाई कस्तो लाग्छ? बिशेषतः महिलाको?

पहिरनका बिषयमा परिवार भित्र केहि कुराकानी/परिवर्तन/सम्झौता भएका छन् ?

तपाईं रोजगार (पैसा आउने काम)मा कति समय दिनुहुन्छ? अरु काममा? यो कुरामा नेपाल हुँदा र अहिले केहि फरक महसुस गर्नुभएको छ?

तपाईंका सन्तान कति छन्? कति चाहनु हुन्छ? छोरा/छोरी मा केहि प्राथमिकता छ? किन?

तपाईं सन्तानको स्याहारमा कति समय दिनुहुन्छ?

तपाईंको परिवारमा लैंगिक सम्बन्धमा केहि परिवर्तन आएको छ? यो परिवर्तन को बारेमा केहि भनिदिनु हुन्छ?

पछिल्ला दिनमा पोर्तुगलमा निकै ठुलो संख्यामा नेपालीहरु एक छन्; यो विकासक्रमले गर्दा केहि परिवर्तन भएको महसुस गर्नुभएको छ?

*(मैले सोध्न चाहेका प्रश्नहरु अहिलेलाई यति नै हुन्; यहाँ लाई केहि सोध्नु छ भने कृपया सोध्नु होला)*

*(यहाँको समयको लागि धेरै धेरै धन्यवाद)*