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Transnational parenting from the views of fathers: a study on Nepalese immigrants living in Portugal

Ritu Pant

Erasmus Mundus Master's Programme in Social Work with Families and Children (MFamily)

Supervisor

Ana Raquel Matias (PhD), Invited Assistant Professor,
ISCTE- University Institute of Lisbon

November, 2021

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Department of Political Science and Public Policy

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Abstract

Title: Transnational parenting from the views of fathers: a study on Nepalese immigrants living in Portugal

Author: Ritu Pant

Keywords: Transnational parenting, fathers, Nepalese migration, gender roles (in a family), family reunification

This study discusses the experiences and perceptions of Nepali transnational fathers who are practicing or have practiced parenting from distance in Lisbon, Portugal. It explores their migration trajectories, transnational parenting experiences before reunification (if already united with children) and their family reunification plans (of those who are yet to be united with their children). Symbolic interaction theory provides basis of analysis, which is supported by theoretical concepts on transnational parenting. The eight participants of this qualitative study were selected by non-probability sampling using snowballing technique. Most in-depth interviews were taken online due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Thematic analysis was employed to categorize the findings into themes and sub-themes. According to the study's findings, Nepalese travel to Portugal with aim of bringing their families to settle in Europe. Despite many family reunification requirements set out by the Portuguese immigration policies, Nepalese migrants perceive Portugal as flexible gateway to enter Europe and invite their families. Furthermore, available social networks allowed the migrants to sustain their lives and get jobs after moving to Portugal, which encouraged them to plan family reunification. In terms of transnational parenting practices, regular communication and sending of remittances helped Nepali fathers to maintain transnational ties with their families at home. Significantly, social interaction with different relations influenced their perception on fathering and parenting practices.

Resumo

Título: A parentalidade transnacional na perspectiva dos pais-homens: um estudo sobre os imigrantes nepaleses em Portugal

Autor: Ritu Pant

Palavras-chave: Parentalidade transnacional, migração nepalesa, papéis de gênero, reunificação familiar

Este estudo discute experiências e percepções de pais transnacionais nepaleses que praticam ou praticaram a parentalidade à distância em Lisboa, Portugal. Explorei trajetórias de migração, experiências parentais transnacionais quando já vivem com os filhos em Portugal ou planos de reunificação familiar quando ainda não se uniram aos filhos. A base de análise é a teoria da interação simbólica, apoiada por conceitos sobre parentalidade transnacional. Os oito participantes deste estudo qualitativo foram selecionados por amostragem não probabilística através da técnica de bola de neve. A maioria das entrevistas foi realizada online devido à pandemia Covid-19. A análise temática permitiu categorizar os resultados em temas e subtemas, observando-se que os nepaleses migram para Portugal com o objetivo de trazer as suas famílias para se estabelecerem na Europa. Apesar dos muitos requisitos de reunificação familiar definidos pelas políticas de imigração portuguesas, os participantes consideram Portugal como uma porta de entrada flexível para entrar na Europa e trazer as suas famílias. As redes sociais disponíveis permitiram ainda encontrar recursos de sustento e arranjar emprego em Portugal, incentivando-os a planear o reagrupamento familiar. Nas práticas parentais transnacionais, a comunicação regular e o envio de remessas ajudaram os pais nepaleses a manter laços transnacionais com suas famílias no Nepal. Destaca-se que a interação social em diferentes relações influenciou percepção sobre a paternidade e práticas parentais.

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List of abbreviations

MIPEX: Migrant Integration Policy Index

EU: European Union

TCN: Third Country National

EEC: European economic Community

PALOP: Portuguese-speaking African countries

URSS: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

SEF: Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras

ACIME: High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue

ACM: High Commission for Migration

CNAI: National Immigrant Support Center

CLAII: Local Immigrant Support Centers

UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

IOM: International Organization for Migration

UAE: United Arab Emirates

FY: Fiscal Year

DoFE: Department of Foreign Employment

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

INE: Instituto Nacional de Estatística

NRNA: Non- Resident Nepali Association

ISCED: International Standard Classification of Education

ISCO: International Standard Classification of Occupations

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1 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Nepal is largely a patriarchal society (Niraula and Morgon, 1996), meaning that Nepalese society has an established tradition of fathers supporting the family. Fathers are typically considered the providers of the family as their role is primarily linked with traditional breadwinner model (Ghimire, 2018). Due to this assigned and expected role from male members of the family, they are inclined to focus on economic responsibility. However, due to lack of financial support from the country and low-income opportunities, migration to abroad is a common phenomenon in Nepal. The main reason why Nepalese migrate to developed countries is to get better economic and social opportunities that could help them get rid of economic struggles they endured in their own country (Maharjan, 2018). This has been concerning towards the country's economic sustainability and development since most educated work force is leaving the country as Thieme & Wyss (2005) mentioned in their case study on patterns of migration and transfer of remittances that migration to abroad has been one of the primary strategies of livelihood and survival for Nepalese.

In Nepal, emigration is basically understood in three forms: i. movement of Nepalese to be recruited for military (Gurkha recruitment) as British Indian army started recruiting Nepali as Gurkhas¹ from the early 1990s, ii. movement for agriculture or other economic activities in low wage works such as watchman or prostitution mostly to India fostering Indo-Nepal migration until 1960s and iii. movement of married women (marriage migration) as marriages between Nepal and India is common (Subedi, 1991). Similarly, destinations for labor migration in Nepal are mainly categorized into three types: one, inside the country i.e., to other villages, cities or towns (internal); two, to India, and three, to other countries (external). Migration of Nepalese to Gulf counties, USA and Europe is new and started only about 15 years ago (Bhattarai, 2007). Nepalese who mostly have access to resources (such as money and education) migrate to European countries or USA, while those who do not have those resources available migrate to Middle Eastern countries (Bhattarai, 2007). Migrating to Europe for Nepalese is a way of getting access to higher income jobs and better lives. For Nepalese moving to Portugal, the attraction is mostly associated in terms of flexible immigration policy with possibility of family reunification despite low-income opportunities than other European countries.

Padilla and França (2016) mention that Portuguese migration policies have been evaluated with good impression and that Portugal is recognized as welcoming country for immigrants. As per the Migration integration Policy Index of 2019 (MIPEX²), Portugal was among 'Top ten' countries to introduce flexibility in the integration process whereby the citizens and migrants have access to equal rights (Solano & Huddleston, 2020). Portugal is known to have more immigrant-friendly laws and policies in comparison to other European countries. For these reasons, many Nepalese migrate to Portugal. Migration of Nepalese to Portugal is a recent

¹ soldiers native to South Asia of Nepalese nationality

² Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) measures national integration policies and laws in 52 countries across 5 continents. In the fifth edition (MIPEX 2020), covers the period 2007-2019. (Retrieved on March 20, 2021 from <http://www.mipex.eu/portugal>).

development, majority of them travel from other European countries in the quest of settling residency (Dahal, 2016).

1.2 Problem statement

The topic of the study is “Transnational parenting from the views of fathers: a study on Nepalese immigrants living in Portugal”. I chose this topic because little research is present on transnational fatherhood. Most commonly, a mother is seen as important parent because she takes care of children’s emotional needs while a father is ignored because his role is limited to look after the children’s financial needs. Because of which, contributions of mothers are taken into account while father’s contributions are overshadowed many times. Thus, for these reasons, I aim to explore this stereotype by assessing fathers’ roles and perception in parenting from distance.

Acknowledging that reuniting with family requires both the father and his family (partner and children) to adjust in new environment and culture (Dangol, 2015), the research will also explore the family reunification aspect of transnational parenting. This will be further explained by discussing the expectations of fathers from their children once they are reunited in Portugal. There have been little to no research on family reunification among Nepalese in Portugal, which has exposed study gap in the subject.

Overall, transnational studies on Nepali migrants living in Portugal is very new subject, which have been only studied by Former alumni of MFamily (Dangol, 2015; Dahal, 2016 and Budal, 2018) so far. On the top of that, the study on experiences and perception on parenting of Nepali fathers living in Portugal is relatively new subject. Thus, the present study is an attempt to contribute to the study on Nepalese in Portugal and the growing literature on transnationalism.

1.3 Rationale of the study

While I was living in Portugal in 2019 during my first semester of master’s study (MFamily), I was amazed to learn that Nepalese, especially men come to Portugal leaving their families at home country. They come to Portugal, try to settle by finding jobs before they are able to sponsor their family’s (wife and children) migration. Till then, they maintain transnational ties and play the roles of transnational fathers with their children in Nepal.

The interactions I had with Nepalese immigrant fathers living in Portugal instilled a strong interest in me to explore ways these transnational fathers practice parenting from distance. Migration of Nepalese to abroad in search for better life opportunities has led to family separation, resulting in maintaining transnational ties. My focus is to describe these fathers' accounts on parenting as immigrants from Nepal. This study is thus the result of my interest on discovering their migration trajectories, transnational experiences, parenting practices, and future plans.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to understand and discuss experiences and perceptions of Nepali fathers living in Portugal who are practicing or have practiced transnational parenting, for which their communication patterns, parenting responsibilities and challenges, and future prospects will be assessed.

Precisely, the research objectives are as follows:

- To assess ways of communication between Nepali fathers and their children while maintaining transnational ties.
- To explore the parenting responsibilities of Nepali fathers and way they perceive it.

- To understand the challenges and its impact experienced by the Nepali fathers in Portugal
- To study the expectations of Nepali fathers from their children

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions mainly address concerns regarding Nepali fathers' parenting practices from distance on the basis of their perception, faced challenges and future aspirations.

The research questions are as follows:

- How do Nepali fathers in Portugal maintain parental relationship with their children in Nepal?
- What are the perceived parenting responsibilities by Nepali fathers?
- How do integration and economic challenges impact transnational fatherhood?
- What are their future aspirations and expectations as fathers?

1.6 Structure of the study

The current study is divided into six chapters. Chapter one gives introduction to the study by providing description on the background of the study. This chapter also addresses the purpose of the study by explaining the research objectives and questions. Finally, it gives the structure of the study that would be followed.

Chapter two gives the review of literature on immigration and family reunification laws by use of several books, articles, journals, digital reports to give relevant information on the topic. It is done with the aim of discussing the immigration policies in Portugal in relation to family reunification and integration of immigrants. The number of Nepalese in Portugal is also revealed to present the further discussion on role of remittances and availability of migrant network to maintain transnational family life.

Chapter three offers the analytical and theoretical framework of the study. By the use of symbolic interaction theory, the analytical framework is developed explaining the macro, meso and micro level aspects of transnational fathering in regards to their perceptions and experiences as transnational fathers. The chapter further explains the role of marital relation in quality of parent-child relation. Similarly, it also elaborates on communication patterns and role of remittances to discuss how transnational ties are maintained. The themes discussed in this chapter provide the context for the chapter five (findings and analysis).

Chapter four discusses the methodology of the study, describing the research design that explains the sampling procedures, data collection techniques, data analysis, along with ethical considerations and limitations of the study. This chapter describes the major themes along with subthemes using thematic analysis. It also includes self-reflection as a researcher throughout the fieldwork and research process.

Chapter five presents the discussion on findings and analysis of the study. The chapter initially introduces the participants by summarizing their profile following socio-demographic information on the participants. It then defines and discusses the main dimensions for the analysis of the study based on the themes generated in methodological chapter. The findings are discussed alongside theoretical concepts and the analytical framework (macro-meso-micro levels) as described in chapter three, and with reference to literature review in chapter two. Extracts from the in-depth interviews jotted in grid analysis are used to support the discussions.

Chapter six discusses the summary of the main research findings alongside the research objectives of assessing the perceptions and experiences of Nepali fathers living in Portugal and provides implications for social work practice and recommendations on future research.

2 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of existing literature concerning the context of immigration laws in Portugal along with aspects related to the migration of Nepalese to Portugal. The aim here is to provide contextualization for the study. Initially, it explores the evolution of immigration laws and policies in Portugal from 1970s to 2000s. Then, it further discusses the integration of immigrants in relation to family reunification laws in Portugal by illustrating the differences of immigration laws for EU nationals and Third Country Nationals (TCNs). Later in this review, it covers the trends of emigration in Nepal and its impact on families left behind along with the role of remittances and its contribution to Nepal's economy and transnational families. Furthermore, the presence of Nepalese immigrants in Portugal is explained in order to elaborate migration of Nepalese in Portugal. In addition, I will bring into discussion the social and demographic differences between Nepali and Portuguese families to understand family life in both settings. At last, the role of both formal and informal social networks for Nepalese immigrants in Portugal is also discussed in this chapter.

2.2 Immigration laws and policies in Portugal

Portugal saw inflow of migrants with the removal of colonization after mid-1970s (Sabino, Peixoto, & Abreu, 2009). The changes in Portugal's immigration policy included four time periods (Sabino et al., 2009). In first period, the country's immigration evolved with the collapse of the Portuguese empire in 1974, which resulted the inflows of migrants from the former colonies³. During the second period, the increase in immigration occurred when Portugal became part of European Union (EU), previously known as European economic Community (EEC) in 1986, with inward movement of people from Western European countries, plus significantly from Brazil and Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP⁴). Since the 1980s, the aim of regularizing immigrants' situation has led to several changes in immigration policy of Portugal with the evolution of inflows (Sabino, Peixoto, & Abreu, 2009). Then, another increase occurred in the late 1990s when people from neither previous historical nor socio-economic links like PALOP and Brazil started migrating such as from Eastern Europe countries with the collapse of the URSS⁵, and its subsequent economic and political crisis in the independent countries, and the construction boom in Portugal demanding for more hand labour. Finally, with economic recession in Portugal from the beginning of 21st century, there was change in immigration which demonstrates noticeable fall in migration from East European countries, stability among African migrants and continuous migration of Brazilians (Sabino et al., 2009).

³ Refer to <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/former-portuguese-colonies.html> (Retrieved on October 29, 2021)

⁴ Portuguese-speaking African countries: Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique and São Tomé e Príncipe (Equatorial Guinea adopted Portuguese as their third official language in October 2011)

⁵ Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, was a socialist state that spanned Europe and Asia during its existence from 1922 to 1991

Considering the time around third period as mentioned above, specifically, in the first half of the 1990s, namely in October, 1992 and March, 1993, the Portuguese government introduced extraordinary regularisation processes with the intention to regularize immigrants living under irregular situations that occurred through Decree-Law n. 212/92 and Law n. 59/93 respectively (SEF, 2010). Sabino et al. (2009) mention that this extraordinary regularization process of 1992 was launched after Decree-Law n. 264-B/81, September 3, known as the first immigration law that was found to be inadequate in addressing the increase of irregular migration. The 1992 process of regulating migrants' situation enabled the migrants living under irregular situation to get legal status (39,000 immigrants were legalized), however, the family reunification was ruled out in order to avoid permanent stay of more migrants, also known as "zero immigration" (Baganha, 2005, as cited in Sabino et al., 2009, p. 182). As the first regularization included a greater number of immigrants from PALOP, the second regularization was introduced in 1996 (namely, Decree-Law n. 17/96, 24 May) to include missed out immigrants, enabling 35,000 immigrants to get resident permit (Sabino et al., 2009). Similarly, the Portuguese government adopted less restrictive approach by allowing easy access to permanent residence visas with recognition to family reunification as a right in 1998 (Sabino et al., 2009).

The irregular situations of immigrants were not solved with the turn of the century and increased again with the construction boom in Portugal which resulted in further changes in the policy. Following the changes in policy, Decree-Law n. 4/2001, 10 January was introduced in 2001 in order to allow the immigrants to obtain a temporary stay visa, according to which the immigrants needed to have valid employment contract (Sabino et al., 2009). This "*Temporary stay permit*" was valid for a year and could be renewed until five years, after which immigrants could finally apply for a resident permit giving them the possibility to sponsor their family reunification (Sabino et al., 2009). Later in 2004, the Decree-Law n. 6/2004, 26 April allowed the regularization of immigrants who were able to prove that they had paid taxes and were already actively involved in labor market (Sabino et al., 2009).

Revised immigration law was again introduced in 2007, defined as a "soft regularization" (Sabino, et al., 2009, p. 186). Under Article 88⁶, this regularization allowed immigrants living under irregular situations to regularize if they had: valid employment contract, proof of being engaged in legal labor, and registration with social security. If the immigrants could fulfill the earlier mentioned criteria, they were not required to hold a visa, which is normally needed to apply for residence permit. For this purpose, they were required to give interview with *Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras*⁷ (SEF) who takes the final decision (Sabino et al., 2009). Similarly, Article 109⁸ was introduced, according to which a residence permit without residence visa may be granted to foreigners who were victims of trafficking. Furthermore, Sabino et al. (2009) mention that under Article 122⁹, residence permit maybe also applied without prior visa for immigrants under specific conditions, like, third country nationals with minor children who were born in Portugal with a proof of having attended a basic pre-school,

⁶ Retrieved on from March 21, 2021 <https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/solicitar/trabalhar/art88-2/>

⁷ The Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service (SEF), a security service within the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MAI). Retrieved on March 21, 2021 from <https://www.sef.pt/en/pages/conteudo-detalhe.aspx?nID=1>

⁸ Retrieved on March 21, 2021 from <https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/solicitar/residir/art109/>

⁹ Retrieved on March 21, 2021 from <https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/solicitar/especiais/art122-1-k/>

secondary or professional education (Sabino et al., 2009). Similarly, the introduction to Golden Visa in 2012 was another change in the Portuguese immigration policy which was passed through Decree n. 305-A/2012, 4 October, enabling the TCNs to obtain temporary residence permit in order to carry out their businesses with an investment of equal or above 1 million euros, known as Residence Permit for Investment Activity (SEF/EMN, 2020). The Golden visa holders can travel within Schengen area and can obtain a temporary residence permit for a year renewable for a period of two years with ability to apply for permanent visa after five years and Portuguese citizenship after six years.

In summary, this section explains the several changes in Portuguese immigration policies from 1970s to 2000s. Many significant changes and revisions have been introduced to the policies in the above-mentioned time periods with the intention of regularizing the situation of immigrants (as explained above). After briefly explaining the changes in Portuguese immigration policies, the next section will follow the discussion on integration and family reunification of immigrants in Portugal.

2.3 Integration and family reunification of immigrants in Portugal

The study on immigrants' integration in Europe by Bijl & Verweij (2012) describe that immigration and integration are interlinked in two ways. One, the migrants who enter host country with stay permit seek immediate economic independence, and two, those who have already settled try to bring their family members. Cook's (2018) study on Portuguese immigration and integration policies mentions that the Portuguese policies on integration of immigrants were designed in mid-2000s by the involvement of many institutions, namely: i. the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIME), presently recognized as High Commission for Migration (ACM); ii. the National Immigrant Support Center (CNAI); and iii. Local Immigrant Support Centers (CLAII).

Cook (2018) further explains that ACM was responsible for coordinating with governmental Ministries of Health, Education, Social Security and Labor, to develop programs that provide and promote cultural space to immigrants and ethnic minorities. The professionals involved in this institution were prominently known for their expertise on immigrant works through churches, social work, and so on (Cook, 2018). The study on immigrant's association, integration and identity by Sardinha on 2009 pointed that one of the important aspects of ACM was to involve immigrant's network in encouraging individual immigrants' participation. This institution also collaborates with SEF, the later responsible to oversee and administer the regularization of immigrants and their application renewal in Portugal. Their collaboration aims to support in designing policies aimed at promoting the integration of immigrants as well as the ethnic minorities in (Santos, 2004 as cited in Sardinha, 2009). The study on monitoring immigrants' integration in Portugal by Oliveira (2012) mention that the concept of integration in Portuguese context changed in 2002 when immigrants were considered to be integrated only if they learn and accept the Portuguese language and culture. This change however, recognized and respected the immigrants' origin. As a result, Portuguese for all (PPT) programme came into existence to encourage integration and inclusion that aims to provide Portuguese language courses to the immigrants without any cost under ACM's management. Hence, learning Portuguese language would allow the immigrants to obtain a certificate that can be used in future for getting citizenship or permanent residence (Oliveira, 2012).

According to the handbook on how to implement one-stop-shop immigrant integration by Oliveira, Abranches & Healy (2009), CNAI and CLAII are the structure within ACM that

follows one-stop-shop model, which works for “strengthening the capacity of public and private service providers to interact with third-country nationals via intercultural interpretation and translation, mentoring, mediation services by immigrant communities – all in ‘one-stop-shop’ information points in order to build sustainable organisational structures for integration and diversity management” (p. 18). Specifically, the National Immigrant Support Center (CNAI), established in 2004, operates as an information center for the immigrants (Cook, 2018). This center helps the immigrants to obtain necessary information and get easy access to related services such as housing, health services, language classes, and visa. This One-Stop-Shop service in Portugal provides services to all the migrants no matter what their legal status is, which means that their services are not limited to legal migrants only. Not only that, some immigrants are also offered jobs at CNAI, who are recruited via immigrants’ networks in order to build migrant-friendly environment by bringing people onboard with migrant backgrounds (Cook, 2018). SEF is also located in the same building as CNAI where immigrants living in irregular situations sought information and assistance, with the agreement to not arrest anyone with irregular status who came to the center seeking for information and services (Cook, 2018). With this, local network of service offices, namely Local Immigrant Support Centers (CLAII) came into existence in 2003 (Cook, 2018). According to Sardinha (2009), these local support centers were set up by ACM as a part of One-stop-shop in smaller urban centers that are spread throughout the country.

Migrant’s integration is dependent upon their income and housing situation in the host country which could be a deciding factor for reuniting with family members (OECD, 2019), meaning that integration has direct effect on family reunification. According to study on family reunification laws by Oliveira, Cancela & Fonseca (2012), family reunification is an important facet of immigrants’ integration in the Portugal. Hence, the policies and the amendments concerning family reunification will be described further in this section. The Decree-Law n. 244/98 first recognized the family reunification as a way to integrate migrants and the legislative was reformed by Decree-Law n. 97/99, Decree-Law n. 4/2001, Decree-Law n. 34/2003 and Decree-Law 23/2007 (Oliveira et al., 2012). Decree-Law n. 4/2001 included the rights to be reunited with family, for which the TCNs were required to hold a valid resident status under the clause of “*Temporary stay permit*¹⁰” (Sabino, et al., 2009). With this temporary stay permit, the applicant could apply for permanent residence permit after five years that would allow to apply for family reunification (as mentioned in earlier section). This resulted in a huge number of TCNs unable to reunite with their families as over 40% of immigrants living in regular situation in Portugal were holding temporary stay status in 2001 (Oliveira et al., 2012). Additionally, the only eligible family members for this were spouse with marital conformity, dependent children up to 21 years of age and dependent siblings with proof of custody (Oliveira et al., 2012). Later, Decree-Law n. 34/2003 addressed the shortcomings of Decree-Law n. 4/2001 by making it possible for temporary migrants with minimum one-year regular stay to apply for family reunification for the first time, however limiting the age of dependent children to 18 years.

In relation to focus on integration and family reunification, the study on monitoring immigrants’ integration in Portugal by Oliveira (2012) mentions there are two main legislations: Nationality law of 2006 - which made obtaining Portuguese nationality flexible,

¹⁰ One-year work permits given to migrants which could be renewed until 5 years every year. The holders of these permits were considered temporary immigrants and were denied several rights, including family reunification.

and Immigration Law of 2007 (Decree-Law n. 23/2007) - which reduced the complications and bureaucratic requirements in order to promote legal migration and aided family reunification. When the Immigration law (Decree-Law n. 23/2007, 4 July) was passed, it made some family reunification criteria changes in the former acts, namely: the removal of the requirement of minimum stay period (under Article 98), children who are adult could apply as long as they are single and to be enrolled in Portuguese education system (under article 99), partner reunion also gained recognition, and spouse or partners who joined through family reunification could apply for jobs (under article 99 and 100). The family reunification legislation can later be defined in two processes (Oliveira, Cancela & Fonseca, 2012). The first is the amendment in immigration act of 2007 by Decree-Law n. 29/2012¹¹, specifically in revision of article 64: giving more authority to the consulates in granting visas, which may make the administrative hindrance to the family members more obvious. However, the good aspect of this that is that it exempted the former partners of criminally convicted migrants from two-year ban by allowing them to apply for residence title independently (Oliveira et al., 2012). Similarly, the second is Decree-Law n. 37/2006¹² that describes the free mobility and stay of the EU nationals¹³ and their family under the Directive of 2004/38/CE¹⁴ of the European Parliament. EU nationals have the liberty to practice rights equally as of Portuguese citizens with only one difference being the place of birth, whereas the TCNs have to go through more complicated bureaucratic procedures (as explained later in this section) for family reunification (Oliveira et al., 2012). For all cases including EU nationals and TCNs, SEF is the responsible agency to look into matters of family reunification by assessing and evaluating the applications within six months deadline (Oliveira et al., 2012). Considering all these changes, it can be said that the immigration laws have become more family reunification friendly for TCNs over time.

Although family reunification is recognized as right under Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948, p.5) under article 16, according to which, “family is entitled to be protected by the state and society”, it has been conditioned by several requirements (as shown in table below), thereby controlling or preventing the family to live together. Table 2-1 below shows the requirements to be fulfilled by TCNs, refugees and EU nationals for the family reunification.

The main differences between EU nationals /Portuguese citizens and TCNs on the basis of requirements to apply for family reunification as seen in table 2-1 are: EU nationals and Portuguese citizens are not required to present the proof of accommodation whereas TCNs must. Another difference is the age limits, whereby the children of TCNs can reunite with the sponsor parent only until 18 years while the children of EU nationals and Portuguese citizens can reunite until 21 years of age. Additionally, the TCNs are required to show proof of criminal record which is not the requirement for EU nationals and Portuguese citizens. On the other hand, there are not many restrictions or requirements for refugees and subsidiary protection holders except for authorization of temporary residence because of humanitarian reasons.

¹¹ Retrieved on March 21, 2021 from [https://www.sef.pt/en/Documents/LeideImig\(Lei29_2012\)EN.pdf](https://www.sef.pt/en/Documents/LeideImig(Lei29_2012)EN.pdf)

¹² Retrieved on March 21, 2021 from https://www.sef.pt/en/Documents/Lei_37_2006_Versao_EN.pdf

¹³ EU nationals are citizens of European Union member states

¹⁴ Retrieved on October 21, 2021 from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32004L0038&from=EN>

Table 2-1: Requirements to family reunification in Portugal

| Requirements | Third Country Nationals | Refugees / holders of subsidiary protection | EU nationals including Portuguese citizens |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|
| Income | Proof of means of subsistence under provisions of Order number 1563/2007 | Not applicable | Proof of means of subsistence under provisions of Order number 1563/2007 |
| Accommodation | Proof of housing conditions (to prove adequate accommodation) | Not applicable | Absent in the law |
| Integration ¹⁵ | Not defined as a requirement | Not applicable | Not defined as a requirement |
| Age limits | For partner: there is no age limit; For child: until 18 years; Disabled descendants are always eligible, regardless of their age; For parents: if dependent on sponsor (no age limit defined) | No age limits underlined | For partner: there is no age limit; For child: until 21 years; Disabled descendants are always eligible, regardless of their age; For parents: if dependent on sponsor (no age limit defined) |
| Other requirements | Proof of: - Family relationship - Criminal registry of applicants - Authorization of residence (temporary or permanent) | Authorization of residence (temporary or permanent) | Proof of: - Family relationship - Authorization of residence (temporary / permanent) |

Source: Family reunification (relative in national territory)¹⁶

¹⁵ Under the Consultation on the right to family reunification of third-country nationals living in the EU - Directive 2003/86/EC (further at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/public-consultation/2012/consulting_0023_en.htm), the Portuguese government declared that “Portugal is opposed to the a priori establishment of integration requirements or policies for any immigrant, whether they be a minor or above the age of majority. Integration should always be seen as a two-way process which must accommodate change by both the immigrant and host society, within the limits of the Constitution and the law.”

¹⁶ Article 98, paragraph 2 – Family reunification (Relative in national territory: Documentations required). Retrieved on March, 2021 from <https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/solicitar/residir/ART98-2/>

It is clearly seen that family reunification for TCNs in Portugal is generally challenging due to more requirements in comparison to requirements set out for EU nationals. This can be a barrier for TCNs to reunify with their families when they are not able to meet all the requirements due to their own limitations as a result of bureaucratic administrative and documentary issues. Thus, after understanding the legal implications for integration and family reunification in Portugal for immigrants, the study will further focus on socio-demographic differences in Nepalese and Portuguese families.

2.4 Family in Nepal and Portugal

As per the study on demographic and social trends affecting families in the South and Central Asian region by De Silva (2003), countries like Bangladesh, India and Nepal all showed decline in primacy of large households. This is because families tend to migrate to urban areas (cities) from rural areas (village) because of lack of income opportunities, which is prevalent in South Asian countries, including Nepal (Perera, 1992, as cited in De Silva, 2003), alongside the rural-to-rural migration which is also very common. Additionally, De Silva (2003) mentions that the decline in family size is somehow linked with the high cost of living in big families whereas better life can be sustained with the same earning in small family. In context of Nepal, there is a shift in conceptualizing family as smaller group (nuclear) rather than big or large group (extended). However, in Nepal, extended families are not negligible as extended relatives are considered important segment of the families. According to Allendorf & Ghimire, in their study on determinants of marital quality in Nepal on 2013, childcare is not only limited to the couple. Meaning, the couple often share the same household with other family members who are actively engaged in child care.

Allendorf & Ghimire (2013) also mention that with majority of Nepali population being Hindu, Hindu values and norms have influenced the Nepalese family life. They also explain that Nepalese culture did not value personal freedom of choosing own spouse until mid-1970s when the Nepalese King¹⁷ opened entry of foreigners to the country, which then increased exposure to foreign culture. Since choosing spouses for own self was not known, arranged marriages from one village to another village was highly predominant in the past. However, in the present scenario, Nepali societies have been highly influenced by the urbanization as migration from rural to urban enhances urbanization (De Silva, 2003) which according to study on impact of globalization on Nepalese women by Sharma (2015) has shown to have both positive and negative impacts.

As per World Bank (2020), the urban population in Nepal is 20.576% and rural population is 79.424%. Similarly, the annual urban population growth is 3.906% (World Bank, 2020). Even though urban population growth is low, urbanization has influenced Nepalese society in some way. The urbanization is also influenced by emigration as Nepalese migrating to abroad is a common phenomenon. With urbanization, the value for education for all generations is understood among families and societies. This can be seen in adult literacy rate (15 years and above) in Nepal, which increased from 59.63% in 2001 to 67.9% in 2018 with 8.28% increase since 2011 (World Bank, 2021). Even with these progressive changes, gender disparity still exists which can be seen in large numbers where preference is given to sons than daughters in the families. The study on Nepalese women's property rights and empowerment by Pradhan, Meinzen-Dick & Theis on 2018 gives an example of predominant patriarchal norms whereby

¹⁷ Monarchy in Nepal existed from 1768 to 2008 (240 years). Retrieved on October 20, 2021 from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_of_Nepal

the Nepali family do not consider property rights of women important and head of the family is either father or husband or son. Similarly, the International Organization of Migration (IOM)'s study by Rawal & Agrawal published on 2016 mention the presence of patriarchy in Nepalese society being the barrier for women to ownership of family land, which is mostly passed on to male members of the family.

According to the study on impact of globalization on Nepalese women by Sharma (2015), government has included positive discrimination towards women which was introduced by the Thirteenth Plan (2013-2015) that promotes inclusion of women in all sectors (economic, social, cultural) by safeguarding their rights. In addition to that, women are seen to be taking lead roles in the family, resulting increase in female-headed households (De Silva, 2003). They are seen as commanding mostly among their children and daughters-in-laws. This indicates significant shifts in gender roles as women have decision making authority unlike patriarch headed households. This is mostly influenced by high number of internal migration (within country) and international migration (to abroad, out of country) of men in the families to work (De Silva, 2003).

Like Nepal, Portugal has gone through demographic and social changes over time, as explained in the study by Guerreiro, Torres & Lobo (2009) on demographic changes in European families, especially in the Portuguese context that these changes have led to smaller size of family households. According to these authors, modernization has most impact on the South Portugal as more traditional way of living including high rate of Catholic marriages still persist in Northern Portugal. With traditional values being stronger in the North, it also has low divorce rates (Guerreiro et al., 2009). The family support system is very similar both in Nepal and in Portugal as indicated in the study by Wall, Aboim, Cunha & Vasconcelos (2001) on family and informal support networks in Portugal, Portuguese families heavily rely on support from traditional informal networks such as kinship relations. The study by Wall, et al. (2001) showed that support specially in taking care of children is mostly received from the wife's side of the family. However, this is dependent upon the family's social position, for instance, families with low economic conditions may limit the support over time (Wall, et al., 2001). It is believed that informal support is more prevalent in rural societies whereas the services of formal support system is practiced in urban cities which are mostly taken up by non-governmental institutions so as to bridge the gap of state to provide the support.

The above-discussed concept on families in Nepal and Portugal gives a picture of socio-demographic aspects of families in both settings. Since the study is focused on Nepali immigrant living in Portugal with possibility of living a family life in Portugal, it is necessary to understand the socio-demographic similarities and differences in both families. The next section will discuss the trends of emigration in Nepal along with its impact in order to further elaborate on migration aspect of this study.

2.5 Trends of emigration and its impact in Nepal

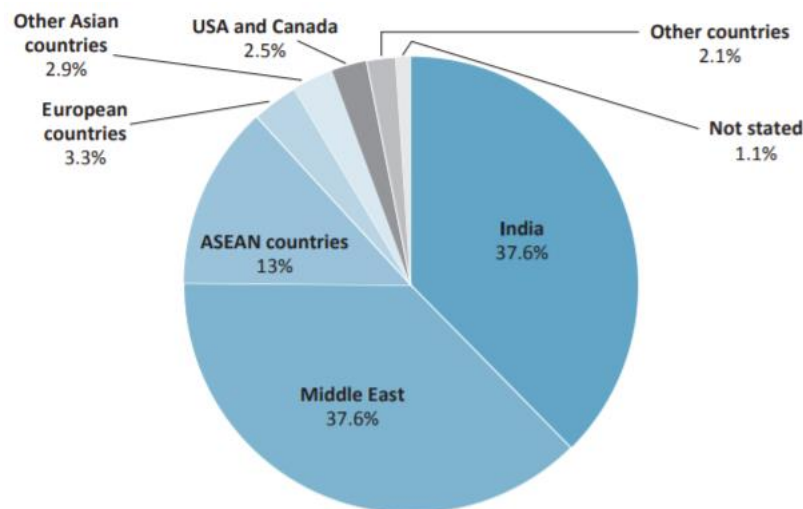
In common understanding, emigration is the phenomena of leaving one's home country in order to settle permanently or temporarily in other countries. It is highlighted in the study on labor market, foreign employment and remittance in context of Nepal by Sapkota (2018) that migration is a vital aspect of Nepalese labor market. Kunwar (2015), in his study on emigration of Nepalese and its impact points out that India is one of the top host countries for Nepali labor migrants, however, the number of emigrants cannot be exactly traced as Nepali people do not require specific travel documents such as visa and passport to travel to India. Furthermore, labor migration to other countries occurs via bilateral agreement between the government of Nepal and the migrant receiving countries that enable migration of migrant workers with a

temporary working contract labor and this type of temporary labor migration is known as foreign employment (Bossavie & Denisova, 2018).

There are several factors linked with emigration in Nepal. According to Kunwar (2015), the leading reasons are poverty, lack of employment opportunities, political instability and armed conflict as a result of ten years long Maoist insurgency. Specifically, Nepal has a history of 10-year long internal conflict from 1996 to 2006, which is recognized as Maoist insurgency¹⁸ period, believed to born out of staggering unemployment rate in the country (Sapkota, 2018). As a result, foreign employment became a medium to tackle problems of unemployment and depleted economic growth in Nepal (Sapkota, 2018). In addition, the report on migration in Nepal published by International Organization of Migration (2019) mentions that in developing countries like Nepal, less employment opportunities in the country and prospect of higher earning abroad act as motivating agent for young people to migrate. Even though many migrate in hope of improving economic status, it may be a compelling factor to survive for some with poor socio-economic conditions.

Sharma, Pandey, Pathak and Sijapati-Basnett (2014) mention in their research paper on status of migration in Nepal that going to India has been one of the favorable destinations for migration for Nepalese (majority of them go to India) along with instances of migration to European and other countries as shown in the Figure 2-1 below. The following graph is National Census (2011) record on distribution of Nepali migrants by destination taken from the study by Sharma et al. (2014), according to which, 37.6% migrants went to India and Middle East while only 3.3% went to European countries in 2011.

Figure 2-1: Distribution of international Nepali migrants by destination

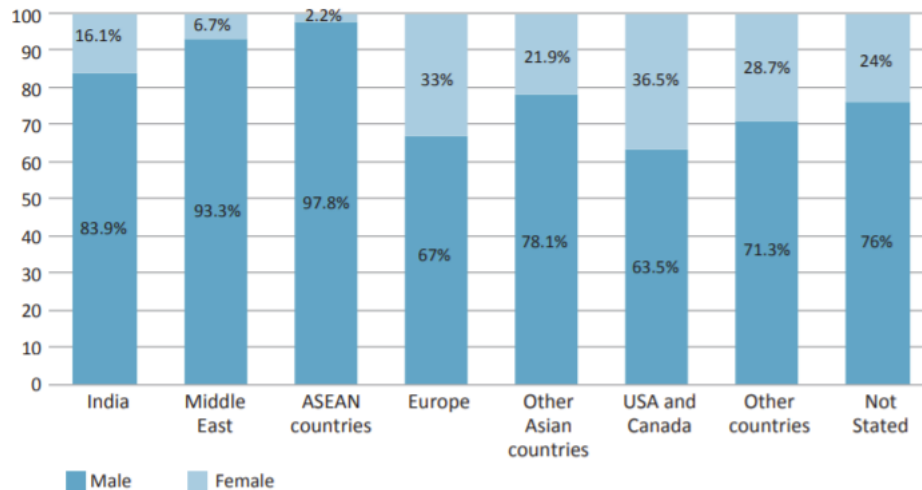


Source: National Census, 2011 as cited in Sharma, et al., 2014, p. 40

¹⁸ Maoist-led 10 years-long armed conflict in Nepal (1996-2006)

The following figure 2-2 is National Census (2011) record on gender distribution of Nepali migrants in destinations taken from the study by Sharma et al. (2014). According to the graph, it can be seen that majority of the international Nepali migrants are males accounting to 83.9%, 93.3% and 67% males and 16.1%, 6.7% and 33% females who went India, Middle East and European countries respectively in 2011.

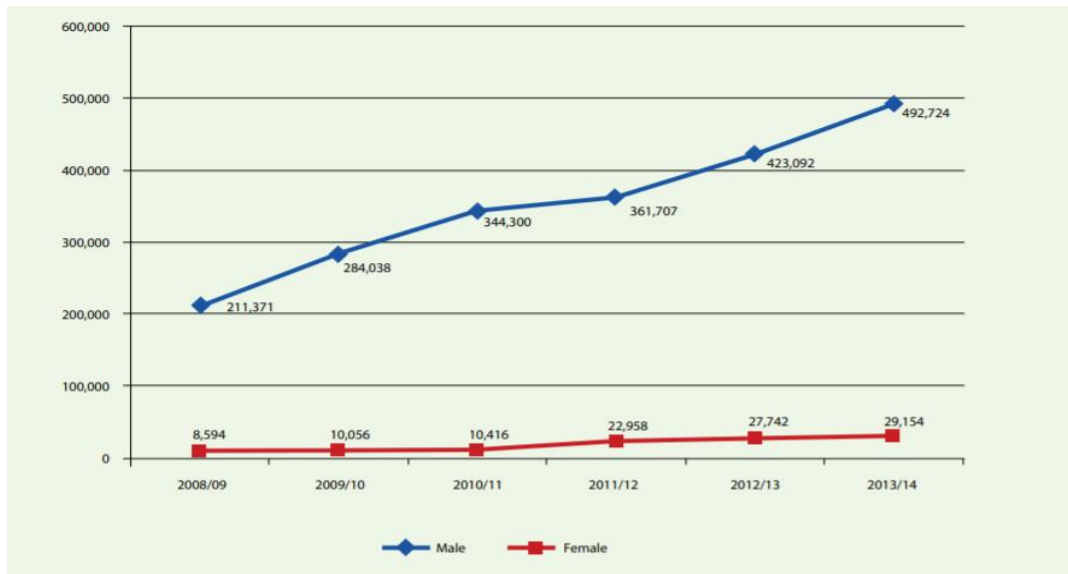
Figure 2-2: Distribution of international Nepali migrants in destination by gender



Source: National Census, 2011 as cited in Sharma, et al., 2014, p. 40

As per the fiscal year (FY) 2013/2014 national report on the status of labour migration for foreign employment from Nepal prepared by Ministry of labor and employment in Nepal, more than 520,000 labor permits were issued to Nepalese planning to work abroad. The same report concluded that overseas employment is heavily male dominated: roughly 95 per cent of all labor permits accounting to 492,724 permits are given to men as shown in Figure 2-3 below. These workers mostly go to countries like Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and United Arab Emirates (UAE). This data only refers to regularized labour migrants that leave the country already with a work permit that are recorded by the government of Nepal, which also shows the bilateral agreement between Nepal and above the mentioned countries.

Figure 2-3: Number of labor permits issued in Nepal (FY 2008/9-2013/14)



Source: Department of foreign employment, as cited in Ministry of labor and employment, 2014, p. 19

Similarly, in the fiscal years 2017/18 and 2018/19, 80% out of total Nepali labor migrants between 18 and 35 years were males as per the Nepal labor migration report published by Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security in 2020. The same report mentions that there has been rapid increase in total labor migrants over two decades - the number of total labor emigrants were 3,605 in 1993/94, which reached to 106,660 in a decade i.e., in 2003/2004; similarly, it increased to 519,638 in 2013/14. However, the decrease in number of labor migrants has been reported in 2017/18 and 2018/19 as 354,098 and 236,208 respectively. The migrants who go to work abroad gets a valid employment contract and thus the validity of employment contract is vital for labor migration because of which this report includes migrants who migrate back and forth including the returnees (as migrants may return home after employment contract expires). The report indicates the employment status of returnees as issued by Nepal Labor Force Survey 2017/18¹⁹, which shows that 42.8% are employed, are 13.4% unemployed and 43.8% are out of labor force.

In context of Nepal's history of emigration, working as labor migrant in Gulf countries, Malaysia and other South East Asian countries is a recent phenomenon which only started in the last 30 years (Kunwar, 2015). According to FY 2013/14 report on Labor Migration for Employment by Ministry of Labor Employment (2014), 74 % Nepali immigrant workers are unskilled and thus choose to go countries that pay less than Europe, USA and Australia such as: Malaysia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Kunwar (2015) also highlights that the work nature of labor migrants issued by Nepal Government's DoFE²⁰ in 2014 were categorized as 3Ds²¹: Difficult, Dirty, Dangerous. This was the case mostly in

¹⁹ provides vital statistics related to labour and employment in Nepal, conducted by Central Bureau of Statistics in 2017-18

²⁰ Department of Foreign Employment

²¹ The 3Ds were presented in English in the paper

countries such as Qatar, Israel, South Korea and Malaysia, with only small number of Nepali labor migrants being engaged in proper jobs with good position (Kunwar, 2015).

Migrating to another country comes with both positive and negative impacts (Kunwar, 2015). According to the study on remittances and their influence on development of Nepal by Adhikari (2021), one of the important and positive impacts of emigration are remittances brought by foreign employment, and its contribution towards upliftment of the country's economy in a macro level. In the micro level, remittances increase household income, thereby improving the chances to afford quality education, because allowing the recipient households to provide their children with education of their choices. Nonetheless, as mentioned in the study by Sapkota (2018) on labor market, foreign employment and remittance in context of Nepal, too much dependency on remittances has its own downside that can impact economic sustainability. Also, according to Phadera (2016) in his evidence-based study on the effects of international migration on labor supply in the households of migrants, there are other negative impacts of international migration, like the associated high costs that includes preparation, travel, lodging and food expenses. Additionally, it may also cause psychological effect on families staying in home country due to family separation (Massey, 1998, as cited in Phadera, 2016). On the top of that, as mentioned in the study on youth labor migration, there have been instances where the migrants end up with high debts coupled with expensive and fraudulent processes to apply for foreign employment (Bossavie & Denisova, 2018). The study on emigration of Nepalese and its impact by Kunwar (2015) further explains the risks associated with foreign employment where majority of migrant workers are exposed to vulnerable conditions with no legal protection by the governments of both Nepal and the host countries. It is actually sad because exploitations of these workers continue and have been reported many times in the past without any immediate legal support or action from the Nepalese government (Kunwar, 2015).

In conclusion, emigration in Nepal is a common phenomenon driven by various (above-mentioned) reasons. Thus, after understanding the trends and the advantages and disadvantages of emigration in Nepal, it is important to understand the contributing role of remittances in Nepalese economy and transnational families.

2.6 Role of Remittances in Nepalese economy and transnational families

Remittance is a process of transferring money earned through foreign employment by the migrant to his/her home country (Kunwar, 2015), however, sometimes the source may not be employment. As per the study by Datt, Wang, & Badji (2020) on contribution of emigration in schooling outcomes in Nepal, remittances that emigrants send to Nepal are considered the most prominent contribution to the country's economy. Similarly, according to Barbora, Thieme, Siegmann, Menon & Gurung (2008), in their study on migration matters in South Asia, it cannot be ignored that labor migration and associated remittances are the foundations of Nepalese economy. Furthermore, the study on migration social networks by Poros (2011) explains that the way remittances are received and utilized by a migrant's ties in their home country impact it's development. Poros (2011) adds that remittances sent by migrants hold a long history "that demonstrates the maintenance of interpersonal and organizational ties across home and host countries" (p. 3). According to Adhikari (2021) in his study on remittances and development in Nepal, Nepalese migrant workers mostly maintain strong connection with their families at home country and so send some portion of their income as remittance.

The World Bank reported that in 2018, Nepal received 8.2 billion US\$ as international remittances, which makes 30.1% of its GDP. The study by Ojha (2019) on role of remittances in the GDP of Nepal reveals that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and per capita income in Nepal is substantially affected by the remittances. Furthermore, Ojha (2019) concluded that

remittance plays noteworthy role in the economy of the country since these are the main sources of income in the majority of the households. Similarly, Adhikari (2021) reveals that the economy of Nepal is becoming increasingly dependent on remittances sent through foreign employment. It is portrayed in data by Nepal Living Standard Survey III of 2010 that shows total remittance received by the country was approximately US\$ 3.5 billion, which is almost four times more remittance inflow since 2004 (Datt, et al., 2020). The amount of money differs according to the destination country of the migrants, while it is seen that 75% of remittances to Nepal are sent by migrants in Gulf countries, USA and Australia (Barbora et al., 2008).

In conclusion, remittances play important role in uplifting economy of both Nepal and transnational families, however it is also creating a structural dependency of the Nepalese economy, which cannot be good as a future prospect. The next section will discuss the presence of Nepalese in Portugal.

2.7 Nepalese in Portugal

In context of Portugal, there are basically two sources available on foreign population as defined by Baganha (2009) in the study on Portugal's migration statistics: the first one is data collected through census every ten years by Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE) which refers to the population living in Portugal; and the second one is continuous reporting carried out by SEF. SEF collects data on all the foreigners who have applied or have already obtained residence permit and also gathers data on withdrawal or expiry of residence permits as a result of death, acquiring nationality or leaving the country (Baganha, 2009). In order to delineate foreign population, SEF is preferred over censuses because census fails to register all the foreign population and also misses out changes in data that occurs over time. Nonetheless, SEF also has its shortcomings since it does not cover all the foreign population including foreign students and those who travelled in an irregular situation (Baganha, 2009).

In order to find out demographic information on Nepalese in Portugal, the researcher had conversation with Ms. Sita Shrestha, one of the active members of working committee of Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) in Portugal (explained later in the chapter). Ms. Shrestha mentioned that NRNA Portugal do not have access to exact number of Nepalese immigrants in Portugal, though according to her, there are approximately 30 to 35 thousand Nepalese living in Portugal. This data was different in SEF website, which showed that the total number of people from Nepal residing in Portugal in 2019 was 16,849, with more than half population being male (SEFSTAT, 2019). According to this data, Nepalese reside in many parts of Portugal, with Southern side that covers Lisbon, Faro and Beja districts having highest concentration. The distribution of Nepalese in Portugal by district and sex can be seen in the table 2-2.

Table 2-2: Distribution of Nepalese living in all districts of Portugal by Sex

| | Total | Male | Female |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Portugal | 16849 | 10759 | 6090 |
| Lisbon | 10080 | 6113 | 3967 |
| Aveiro | 78 | 61 | lower than 20 |
| Beja | 1796 | 1321 | 475 |
| Braga | 144 | 105 | 39 |
| Braganja | 26 | 20 | lower than 20 |
| Castelo Branco | 56 | 48 | lower than 20 |
| Coimbra | 392 | 250 | 142 |
| Evora | 77 | 50 | 27 |
| Faro | 2293 | 1533 | 760 |
| Guarda | lower than 20 | lower than 20 | lower than 20 |
| Leiria | 186 | 143 | 43 |
| Portalegre | lower than 20 | lower than 20 | lower than 20 |
| Porto | 240 | 152 | 88 |
| Santarem | 91 | 70 | 21 |
| Setubal | 1285 | 822 | 463 |
| Viana do Castelo | lower than 20 | lower than 20 | lower than 20 |
| Vila Real | lower than 20 | lower than 20 | lower than 20 |
| Viseu | lower than 20 | lower than 20 | lower than 20 |
| Azores | lower than 20 | lower than 20 | lower than 20 |
| Madeira | 63 | 42 | 21 |

Source: SEFSTAT²², 2019

In her Master dissertation on social integration of Nepalese women migrants in Portugal, Bajracharya (2015) mentions that in 2000, only two Nepalese were granted resident permit, which gradually increased in the following years. There was rapid increment in 2006 where the population increased by almost six times than the previous year (Bajracharya, 2015). Similarly, the population rose in 2008 by around 84 percent. This increase in Nepali population indicates that the introduction to simplified visa processing, with reduction in bureaucratic procedures since 2007 along with favorable family reunification law, has led to flexibility for the immigrants in obtaining nationality (Oliveira, 2012).

2.8 Support to Nepalese immigrants in Portugal

From my fieldwork experience, I found that Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) and Magar Sangh are two active institutions run by group of Nepalese to serve Nepalese in Portugal, which is why discussions on these two organizations will be the focus in this section.

NRNA is a global organization that represent the network of Nepali diaspora, which was established in Portugal in 2006 with the same general motto as all the other NRNA associations all around the world i.e. “For Nepali By Nepali”²³ (NRNA, 2021). Keeping Nepali people’s interest at the core, this organization is legally recognized under Non-Resident Nepali Act

²² Retrieved on March 10, 2021 from <https://sefstat.sef.pt/forms/distritos.aspx>

²³ Retrieved on May 7, 2021 from <https://nrna.org/nrna-association-who-we-are/>

2064²⁴ (National law commission, 2008) by the Government of Nepal. The NRNA in Portugal is geared to support and help Nepalese living in Portugal so as to build a network of Nepalese in Portugal.

In the conversation with Ms. Sita Shrestha, an active member of working committee in NRNA Portugal, she mentioned that there are 30 members in the working committee currently. She claims Portugal as '*Mini Nepal*' because the increasing number of Nepalese immigrants in the last few years. She further adds that there are also increasing problems associated with migration such as family separation leading to broken families, failed marriages, isolation, depression, etc. According to her, the objective of NRNA in Portugal is to promote and protect the rights of these immigrants as much as possible. In regards to providing support to these immigrants, she says that NRNA guide the immigrants in finding jobs, housing, and so on. NRNA help the Nepalese immigrants, especially those with undocumented to obtain their passports. They do so by collecting their required information and filling up forms, which they send to embassy of Nepal in France so that these Nepalese do not have to travel to France on their own. NRNA also provides support to families left behind, intervening in personal family issues when families in Nepal reach out to them with specific family concerns.

Similarly, Ms. Shrestha also referred to other active association in Portugal, Magar Sangh, formerly known as Magar Samaj, created by an ethnic group of Nepal called *Magars*²⁵. This association works in collaboration with NRNA for social service activities such as by helping Nepali immigrants to settle in Portugal, charity and fund raising for any Nepali living in Nepal and in Portugal, and collaborating and organizing festivals of all ethnic groups to celebrate different Nepali ethnic cultures. This organization also has given a platform for Nepalese living in Portugal to unite and help each other in need. This is a small organization in comparison to NRNA but still has been able to influence many Nepalese in Portugal. However, this organization has its limitation since it only includes people from Magar ethnic group as their member even though it does not discriminate while providing services to Nepalese.

In conclusion, the literatures on above mentioned topics (such as immigration laws and policies in Portugal, trends of emigration in Nepal, support to Nepalese in Portugal) gave context to the study.

In relation to the discussion above, the next chapter will provide basis for analysis of the study by discussing how the transnational fathers practice parenting using symbolic interaction theory that will be further backed up by analytical framework.

²⁴ "it is expedient to provide for the legal provision to motivate non-resident Nepalis to take part in all round development of Nepal by enhancing their attachment towards Nepal" (Non-resident Nepali Act, 2064) <https://www.lawcommission.gov.np/> The Act Designed to provide for the Legal Provisions Relating to Non-Resident Nepalis (Non-resident Nepali Act, 2064 or Non-resident Nepali Act, 2007) defines a non-resident Nepali as a foreign citizen of Nepali origin or a Nepali citizen residing in a foreign country.

²⁵ The third largest ethnic group of Nepal (Retrieved on May 7, 2021 from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magars>)

3 CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will give theoretical background in order to analyze transnational fatherhood among Nepalese in Portugal. The main concept of the study about perceptions and experiences of transnational fathers that affect their parenting is based on discussions related to concepts of masculinity, fatherhood, transnational parenting and transnational fathering. These discussions are illustrated through the relationship between transnational family and the migrant father that influences his fathering patterns and behaviors. As the research focuses on understanding parenting from transnational father's perspectives and experiences, I am taking symbolic interaction theory into account while bringing discussions about fathering attitudes and behaviors. I will further build an analytical framework to explain the relevance of this theory in relation to transnational fathering when applied to the present study.

3.2 Symbolic interaction theory

The term '*symbolic interactionism*' was coined by American sociologist Herbert Blumer in 1969 in his pursuit to study social behaviors of humans. According to Blumer (1969), there are three assumptions of symbolic interactionism: (i) people's behavior and actions are based on the meanings they assign to the things or objects, (ii) the meanings they create are the result of social interaction they engage in; and (iii) these meanings are the product of interpretation of those social interaction. Furthermore, Blumer (1986) states later that social interaction is imperative in creating human behavior, meaning people give considerations to actions of each other during interaction and hence they handle or understand the situation accordingly. The behavior of people is the result of the actions of others, implying that, "in the face of the actions of others one may abandon an intention or purpose, revise it, check or suspend it, intensify it, or replace it" (Blumer, 1986, p. 8).

Broadening the study on Blumer's concept of symbolic interactionism, sociologist Snow (2001) suggested *the principle of interactive determination*, postulating that the idea of self, own identity and roles, are not only the product of one's inherent or fundamental nature. This will further imply that the concept of self is not enough to understand oneself because the context of interaction and the relationships one engages is also essential. In other words, for Snow (2001) the existence of self in a society is relevant because of the relationships one has with others, and thus interaction (be it face-to-face, virtual or imaginary) plays a vital role in order to understand self-concept.

Using the idea of symbolic interaction theory, it can be said that interaction with others highly influence on shaping perception of self among the fathers, as previously shown in different studies. For instance, Fox and Bruce (2001) studies on parents' identity and investment, apply symbolic interaction theory by assuming that fathers identify themselves in regards to their relationship with their children and others involved in child-rearing processes. Similarly, the study on men's fathering and youth experiences by Marsiglio (2009) states that a father gets the sense of fathering through his experiences with the children and the partner involved in parenting. It is revealed in the study about parental identity and behavior by Maurer, Pleck, & Rane (2001) that fathering patterns and behavior are also influenced by their significant other or parenting partner. This indicates that fathers who think they are perceived by their partner

as a good and responsible partner and father, considering themselves as responsible parent and continue to be so in the future (Maurer, Pleck, & Rane, 2001). Supporting this statement, Bouchard, Lee, Asgary & Pelletier (2007) in their study on links between father's motivation and perception mention that fathers tend to feel competent and involve more with their children if their partner shows confidence in their parenting ability. This sense of evaluation is generally achieved through social interactions (Henley & Pasley, 2005; Maurer et al., 2001, as cited in Bouchard et al., 2007).

Self-concept is a rudimentary subject of symbolic interaction theory, which implies that our perception on social roles is also an important aspect of this theory. Concepts on roles of each family member keep shifting with ongoing change in social interactions. To explain this, sociological study on marriage and family in Canada by Little (2016) gives an example on how the concept of 'good father' has changed over time. Little (2016) explains that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a father was considered 'good' if he worked and provided financial support to the children, but at the present time (twenty first century), he is considered 'good' if he makes time to spend with his children and provides emotional support. This implies that father's notion on self and relationship with his children and family members is evolving. Little (2016) also posits that in the present, fathers also want to be involved in caring processes besides the financial aspect if they internalize that they are more responsible to support their children emotionally. Furthermore, the role that fathers play is also dependent upon the what society expects from them, as LaRosa & Reitzes (1993) in their study on symbolic interactionism explain that person in the family identify oneself as a group and as an individual on the basis of societal expectations and roles defined by the society through social interaction.

The study on men as fathers, sons and lovers from 1930s to late 1990s by West (1996) shows how the relationship between men and their fathers impact their own fathering attitude and experiences. For instance, the boy in his boyhood may plan to be a rigid father if his father was rigid with him (West, 1996). This is relevant as the interaction with fathers and their actions may have helped to shape their thoughts and behavior in future, as Blumer (1986) mention actions of others affect one's own actions. Similarly, the Master dissertation on experiences of transnational Filipino fathers in Portugal by Vigil (2017) concludes that the fathering notions that men have are majorly impacted by the interactions with others as well as their own overall life experiences in relation to childhood and family relations.

In conclusion, the symbolic interaction theory in relation to fathering perspectives and experiences explain that social interaction plays a vital role to influence the fathering patterns even from distance. In terms of transnational fathering, *principal of interactive determination* by Snow (2001) can be taken into account to explain that any type of interaction, even virtually interaction, playing a vital role in shaping a person's behavior and mindset. This means that fathering patterns and relationship with the children can be impacted among fathers who are parenting from distance by the use of technology. In the same way, I will now discuss the relevance of the concepts of fatherhood and masculinity in the next section.

3.3 Masculinity and Fatherhood

According to the study on masculinity and the social construction of fatherhood by White (1994) in Australia, the basic social definitions of masculinity and fatherhood are similar, which means fatherhood is the ability to earn and provide for partner and children. White (1994) concluded that the fathers highly demonstrated traditional gendered (masculine) roles i.e., to provide financial support to the family, even while having desired to be physically and

emotionally involved in child rearing activities. These masculine roles demanded providing economic support to the family while the female partner (mother) took on responsibility of tending to child care. Cunha and Marinho (2018) on their study on parenting experiences for Portuguese men and women as they negotiate gender roles in family life, also explains that fathers were generally regarded as bread-winners and mothers as care-takers of the family. Stets and Burke's (2000) study on femininity and masculinity reveal that a person's gender identity, as male or female (in here, as masculine), was defined by the individual's link with their gendered role (in this case, as male) in the society one lives in. Stets and Burke (2000) mentioned that this concept of self-meaning to measure gender identity was first used in method introduced by Burke and Tully in 1977, via which they present their study on identity measurement. This method was conceptualized from symbolic interaction theory, according to which, an analysis on gender roles was conducted among sixth, seventh, and eighth grade school children to describe their understanding on both genders, male and female (Burke and Tully, 1977). Their analysis presented further the components of self-concepts to measure role identity. According to Burke and Tully (1977), one of the findings was that boys who considered themselves in a similar way as girls were found to have shown femininity (identified as physically weak and more emotional in the study) than masculinity (physically strong and less emotional). This represented inappropriate gendered behavior as society expected boys to portray masculinity. This finding shed light to stereotypical gendered notions, on how one gender defined the way individuals should think or behave from early ages.

La Rossa's (1997) study on modernization of fatherhood in USA outlines that newspapers and magazines set up the concepts of parenting among fathers and mothers by indicating that "fathers should be recognised as important players in the child rearing game and as genuine contributors to their children's well being, not simply their mother's helper; and that being a good parent depends on getting a sound parenthood education" (p. 124). Likewise, Le Gresley (2001), in her Master dissertation in psychology on social construction of fatherhood in western Australia explained that there were few discourses that shaped roles of fathers. For instance, the existence of different mediums that draw narratives on fatherhood, thus promoting certain portrayals of how fathers should be, namely books, media platforms, television shows and movies (Le Gresley, 2001). She also mentions that these discourses affect father's motivation for involvement with their children. For instance, if the fathers follow media that portrays fathers as those providing mainly financially, thus reinforcing earlier traditional roles of father and masculinity. Whereas, some may feel inclined to be more involved in parenting activities like mothers if they follow media that promote father's involvement, as Lupton and Barclay (1997) in their analysis on fatherhood, mention that media in the present have shown recognition to fathers' equal involvement as mothers in the children's life.

In conclusion, fatherhood is socially constructed and is highly influenced by the perception on masculinity. The societal expectations play an important role in shaping fathering approaches.

3.4 Transnational parenting

Along with concepts of masculinity and fatherhood as discussed earlier, the discussion on transnational parenting is eminent in transnational studies. A doctoral dissertation on transnational parenting among Angolan and Nigerian migrant parents in the Netherlands (Haagsman, 2015) addressed that transnational family life studies are relatively new concept which gained popularity only from early 2000s. According to the same study, transnationalism involves the different activities that connect immigrants with their countries of origin and of settlement. Bryceson's (2019) study on transnational families, mention that transnational families connect two or more households in different locations, meaning they consist of family

members living away (in different countries), while they maintain familial relations across national borders (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002, as cited in Bryceson, 2019). Bryceson (2019) also mentions that the growing number of transnational families is gaining attention as they represent ways of human interdependence and connection in the present globalising world. Similarly, Haagsman (2015) says that recognition of cross-border networks as an essential aspect of migration studies has increased the attention to transnationalism only since last 30 years, like the concept of transnational families. Before that, the focus was on migratory trajectories linking host countries and country of origin, neglecting large group of migrants who maintained constant contact with their families and friends across borders (Kofman, 2004, as cited in Haagsman, 2015).

There are several international studies that have revealed parenting practices in transnational contexts. In the study on fathering among Latino fathers in Mexico and the U.S. (Taylor and Behnke, 2005) discuss the impact of family separation, according to which, migrating to another country has great effect on family life with direct influence on parenting styles. Taylor and Behnke (2005) found that overall immigration process, including life before moving to the new country (i.e., life in home country) as well as the motive for migrating had a huge role in their parenting ways. Furthermore, the study on Angolan parents in transnational and non-transnational families in Netherlands by Haagsman (2018) explain the impact of immigration mentioning that even though transnational parenting provides financial support to the family, both transnational parents and children suffer negative impact of family separation.

Transnational parenting, particularly among Nepali immigrants around the globe is scarcely researched. There are some Master dissertations done by Nepali researchers in the similar topic, especially on Nepali immigrants in Portugal. In the Master dissertation on parenting among Nepalese immigrants living with their children in Portugal, Dangol (2015) specifically covers the parenting perspective among Nepalese mothers and fathers. The research also dwells on parenting culture that impact on integration of their children who arrive to Portugal from Nepal through family reunification process. His study aimed to identify parenting styles among Nepalese parents in Portugal, for which he applied Baumrind's parenting style. The parenting styles introduced by Baumrind (1967) in USA was categorized into three types on the basis of control and responsiveness, namely: Authoritarian, Authoritative and Permissive. The authoritarian parents had high level of control over their child's life but portrayed low level of responsiveness; the authoritative parents showed high level of control as well as responsiveness; and the permissive parents portrayed low level of control but high level of responsiveness (Baumrind, 1967). As per Dangol's (2015) findings, Nepalese parents exhibited both authoritative and authoritarian parenting, implying that their parenting portrayed a balance between supportive and restrictive care in child-rearing process. This meant that Nepalese parents involved in this study were associated with both high level of control and high level of responsiveness.

In order to understand transnational context of parenting, the study on determining factors of parenting in USA (Belsky, 1984) can also be observed. Belsky (1984) described three factors that influence parenting, namely: parents' characteristics, child's characteristics, and the social context. The parents' characteristics included parent's general characteristics and well-being both defined by the parenting they received in their childhood and their own personality in general (responsible or irresponsible) that influence their parenting patterns. Parent's characteristics was also earlier described by Baumrind's parenting styles which indicated that if the individual receives nurture and care during childhood, he/she turns out to be a friendly and responsible adult in future (Belsky, 1984). Other factor of parenting is the child

characteristics, which means the child's behavioral patterns that affect the parental functions. For instance, when mother is tending to a 4-month-old infant with difficult temperament, she mostly does not respond positively towards her infant's emotions (Kelley, 1976, as cited in Belsky, 1984), meaning interaction and response to the infant's cries become less and neglected. This can mean that behaviors of child that are difficult for parents to handle can impact their parental functioning. Lastly, the social context includes the context of parent-child relationship derived from: marital relationship, parents' employment and work conditions, and social networks parents are associated to. Belsky (1984) points out that quality of marital relation not only affects parental functioning but it is the reflection of individual's personal characteristics and personality. Marital relationships have indirect influence on parenting as it impacts general well-being of the parents that reflects on how they display parenting (Brown & Harris, 1978; Carveth & Gottlieb, 1979; Johnson & Lobitz, 1974; Wandersman, Wandersman, & Kahn, 1980, as cited in Belsky, 1984). Similarly, employment and work conditions also influence characteristics of parents that is reflected in the ways they handle and balance parenting roles (Belsky, 1984). For example, if fathers are engaged in jobs that promote decision-making and independence, they tend to value or expect similar independent quality in their children (Kohn, 1963, as cited in Belsky, 1984). Not only that, this can also mean that if work environment is not too stressful and hectic, the parent may be able to give more attention and quality time to their children. In the same way, social networks as in relationship with friends, relatives and neighbors influence individual characteristics that can be observed in parental function (Belsky, 1984). For example, support from social networks can boost self-esteem among parents that consequently improves their parenting abilities (Cochran and Brassard, 1979, as cited in Belsky, 1984).

Social network of the immigrant father would be one of the highlights in this study as the study on migrant's social network by Poros in 2011 revealed that social networks play an important role in the immigrant's arrival and settlement. The immigrants mostly find jobs through different connections, according to the findings of Granovetter's (1973) study on strength of weak ties, connections with acquaintances that are generally 'weak ties' can be more useful in finding jobs rather than connections with close friends and relatives that are 'strong ties'. According to Granovetter (1973), this is because weak ties mostly give reliable information about relevant jobs than that of ties known to be strong, especially if the help is received from people who are at better job positions than their known friends or relatives. According to van Meeteren & Pereira (2018) in their study on migration of Brazilians to Portugal and Netherlands, the use of internet has made it easier for the migrants to get help from different sources other than the known network. It is now common among migrants to connect with unknown people via social media in order to access information on destination country and related migration processes. There are several actors such as employers, consultancy brokers or agents, government workers, or even strangers sometimes who facilitate migration (Krissman, 2005; Schapendonk, 2014; Dekker & Engbersen, 2014 as cited in van Meeteren & Pereira, 2018). However, it is not that strong relationships such as friends and relatives do not help in settling down. Potential migrants get in contact with their network in destination country with the hope of increased possibility in getting jobs (van Meeteren & Pereira, 2018). Most immigrants consider migration to a particular country where they have access to familiar network in order to minimize the risks with the hope of getting help to settle down. These kinds of connection via social networks make migration more convenient and possible. According to the study on migrants' social network by Poros (2011), a migrant's social network is dependent on many aspects, starting from moving to a host country, trying to settle down by finding a job to earn and place to live, access to health services, maintaining link with people and family back at home country. Poros (2011) explains that these networks also determine the extent of

immigrant's integration into their country of destination while they maintain transnational ties with their family in the home country. Thus, besides making migration more convenient, majority of transnational activities depend primarily on migrant networks (Poros, 2011). The study on parenting in transnational families by Jordan, Dito, Nobles, & Graham (2018) mention that when the immigrants get job through their social networks, it allows them to earn money, which is often invested on the children's education for better schooling and also to have their other expectations fulfilled.

In the study on central themes of transnational parenthood (Carling, Menjívar, & Schmalzbauer, 2012), six different themes of transnational parenting were discussed, namely: gender, legislation, class, care arrangements, communication, and moralities. According to Carling et al. (2012), gender means concerns related to differences in transnational motherhood and fatherhood, as well as children's gender. "Parenting roles across borders are strongly gendered, meaning that transnational motherhood and transnational fatherhood are distinct phenomena" (Carling et al., 2012 p.194). Gender differences were also addressed in the study on transnational families by Jordan et al. (2018), which describes that expectations from mothers and fathers on the basis of their gender as well as the gender of the child can influence the parenting among transnational parents. They further explained that gendered expectations from fathers could be associated with financial provider and mothers with care givers. They also mentioned that the gender of child could create some sort of biasness in behavior exhibited by the parents. For, instance, when a mother migrates, daughters were generally assigned to look after the household chores instead of sons (Jordan et al., 2018).

Carling et., al (2012) explain another theme i.e., legislation, in terms of immigration laws that defined the length of separation, plans for reunification and parenting practices from distance. These immigration laws can affect transnational parenting as they can be decisive for family separation and reunification. Another theme introduced by Carling et al., (2012) is class, which is about analysing how differently transnational parenthood is practiced and experienced among people belonging to different social classes. In the context of transnationalism, distance can contribute to inequalities in accessing "resources, mobility and decision-making" (Parreñas 2005, as cited in Carling et al., 2012, p. 201). This theme highlights the aspects of structural hierarchy and how it shapes the decisions related to migration among transnational families. Transnational parents who live in poor conditions may decide to lengthen the separation due to their inability to afford added expenses of a family member in the host country. The study on transnational parenting among Angolan and Nigerian migrant parents in the Netherlands by Haagsman (2015) mention that low socio-economic status is mostly associated with undocumented and unemployed immigrants. However, the study on impact of immigration in fatherhood among migrant fathers in Canada and Israel by Roer-Strier, Strier, Este, Shimoni & Clark in 2005 mentioned that immigration also provides opportunities to have a better life. It implies that if positive aspects of transnationalism are viewed, immigration can result to upward social mobility of the immigrants.

Another theme i.e., care arrangements is simply understood as responsibilities of the parents that defines their ways of maintaining parenthood. As explained by Carling et al. (2012), this theme assumes that mothers take on the role of care giver when fathers migrate, which is typical gendered role. UNICEF's 2008 report about impact on children left behind due to international migration by Cortes (2008) shows that mothers take on the role of primary care giver when fathers migrate while fathers depend on other family members to take care of their children when mothers migrate. Carling et al. (2012) on transnational parenthood study explained that care arrangement also depend on the age of child, according to which, older children have

access to direct communication with their parents and are also capable of evaluating the care arrangements. The child's age during separation shapes parent-child relationship while they maintain separation as well as when they are reunited later (Artico 2003; Dreby 2010 as cited in Carling et al., 2012).

Most important theme in relation to this study is the fourth theme given by Carling et al. (2012) i.e., communication. It is about keeping contact while maintaining long distances, which can be fulfilled through technological, financial and emotional aspects. Carling et al. (2012) explained that the practices of transnational parenting are highly dependent on "long-distance communication" (p.203), which is carried out via various technologies. The study on use of communication technology among transnational families by Francisco (2015) who mentions that the transnational family situation and the maintenance of ties is aided by how the migrants and family at home connect with each other. Francisco (2015) further added that the relationship between migrants and families (in home country) has been maintained by the migrants communicating historically from handwritten letters and cassette tapes, to phone calls using landline and mobile phones, text messages using mobile phones, and to emails and internet connections in the present. The case study by Gartaula, Visser & Niehof (2012) on migrants' households in Nepal mentioned that the innovative development of communication technology along with high-rise in labor migration to developed countries has contributed to transnational family situation. The role of media was prominent in maintaining transnational ties with family and children back home. Madianou & Miller's (2011) study about historical perspectives on communication among Filipino transnational families revealed that the media is not only used as a medium to send and receive the messages back and forth, but has been found to greatly facilitate the relationships. Additionally, Madianou & Miller (2011) also mentioned that communication was important in parent-child relationship as visits are not common for transnational parents due to high travel expenses or restrictions for those who do not hold legal status.

According to the ethnographic study on migrant's use of internet by Felton (2012) in Brisbane, Australia, online communication also allowed to express feelings and emotions that helps to bolster connection between the users (in this case being between the migrant and his family). Felton (2012) mentioned that in case of migrants, these communication technologies serve as a way to connect, whenever they feel alone and isolated. On top of that, being able to see faces through video calls, even when physically away, facilitates closeness, as Francisco (2015) informed in her study on use of communication technology among transnational families that it provided feeling of being physically present for both migrants and their families at home. In the context of transnationalism among Nepalese, as case study on migrants' households in Nepal by Gartaula et al., (2012) revealed that communication has allowed the Nepali migrants (mostly husbands) abroad to take part in managing house even from distance. This study showed that use of mobile phones for communication had also enabled the women or wife in Nepal (home country) to discuss family situation, household decisions as well as any decisions related to their children and themselves. Jordon et al. (2018) cite Asis & Ruiz-Marave (2013) to highlight that whenever migrant parents communicate with their children, they mostly talked about their school activities, as the child's education is one of the primary reasons of migration for most of the migrants. However, various responsibilities of job and new life in host country (for instance, busy or inconvenient work schedule in host country and time difference between host and home country) may create communication barriers with the family back at home (Jordon et al., 2018).

Besides communicating through calls, it is mentioned in study on transnational parenthood that remittances are also essential and additional method of connecting to the families back home, as it helps the family in keeping up with the expected life (Parreñas, 2005; Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012, as cited in Carling et al., 2012). Similarly, the 2019 study of Zharkevich on how Nepali migrants practice transnationalism by sending money home pointed out that remittances have become increasingly significant in maintaining ties among transnational families. Flow of remittances ensures connectedness among transnational families despite long distance and gives them hope of better future for their children (Zharkevich, 2019). Additionally, Jordon et al. (2018)'s study on parenting in transnational families indicated also that remittance sending activities helped to maintain connection among migrant parents and children, which resemble engaged parenting. However, this may not be relevant for *well-resourced migrants* (with good socio-economic situation at home), since they may not necessarily have to send remittance to the family at home (Jordon et al., 2018).

The final theme i.e. moralities of transnational parenthood focus on the appropriate and contextual behaviours linked with transnational parenthood (Carling et al., 2012). Moralities are described in terms of transnationalism, marital relation and parenthood. Moralities regarding transnationalism is about give and take relations between migrant and family (Gowricharn, 2004, as cited in Carling et al. (2012), whereby the migrant is obliged to show personal commitment through giving. Similarly, moralities concerning marital relations is about maintaining relation with conjugal partner and co-parenting while being away from each other. And moralities on parenthood includes both aspects of parenting views and perspectives such as, decisions regarding how a child will be brought up (Carling et al., 2012).

In conclusion, parenting from distance is dependent upon how communication is maintained along with other concepts such as gender, social class, legislations as discussed above. After discussing the concepts on transnational parenting, discussions on transnational fathering in the next section will give elaborative theoretical background to the study.

3.5 Transnational fathering

Transnationalism studies have focused highly on experiences of mothers whilst ignoring the experiences of fathers (Haagsman, 2015). As per the study on transnational families with migrant men in Philippines, Salazar Parreñas (2008) mentioned that migration of fathers made very less differences in families. Father's migration brings minimal change in families leading to father's return (to home) being extended to a few months instead of every day after work (Salazar Parreñas, 2008). This idea could have been generated because the role of transnational fathers is overlooked and account of men's experiences and perspectives has been ignored. Which is why, the study on Ghanaian transnational fathers in Netherlands by Poeze (2019) pointed out that men's perspective is equally important in order to understand transnational family life as a whole. It is however, not untrue that there is more flexibility in terms of societal expectation on fathers than that of mothers, which could be the reason why studies on experiences of male migrants are mostly ignored (Carling et al., 2012). However, flexibility on societal expectation does not mean that fathers are unaffected by the process of separation, as Carling et al. (2012) mentioned that fathers suffer from family separation like mothers do. This claim is supported by a Master dissertation on the experiences of transnational parenting among Nepalese migrants in Portugal by Budal in 2018, according to which migrant fathers are also affected by the long family separation and not just his family who are in the home country. Similarly, the study on Guatemalan migrant men and their families in Guatemala and California, USA by Montes in 2013 also concluded that men pay an emotional price due to

transnational situation, however these experiences of men are not acknowledged as they should be.

The study on transnational Filipino families with migrant men by Salazar Parreñas in 2008 reveal that transnational fathers highly perform role of “conventional fathering” (p. 1058). This meant they exhibit fathering roles from distance fundamentally by showing authority and imposing discipline onto their children. However, sociologist Medina, in her the study on Filipino family structure in 2001 contradicts Parreñas’ idea by stating that fathers were becoming more caring and nurturing with time. Medina (2001) explains that this did not mean that they did not involve in disciplining their children but they maintained supportive relationships with their children while displaying authority simultaneously. Similarly, the study on Ghanaian fathers in Netherlands by Poeze (2019) mentioned that although men as fathers highly played the role of ‘bread-winning’, the majority also showed ‘engaged’ parenting practices. This also explained the shift in stereotypical gendered roles. Similarly, the study by Cunha and Marinho (2018) on parenting experiences for Portuguese men and women as they negotiate gender roles in family life highlight that there has been increasing involvement of fathers in taking care of the child since mothers are increasingly involved in contributing financially to the families.

However, Poeze (2019) in her study on Ghanaian fathers in Netherlands explain that the way a transnational migrant father is emotionally engaged in care arrangements is directly influenced by his socio-economic conditions in the host country. This means that the structural conditions such as legal status and economic situations of the transnational father in the host country defines or shapes his involvement with the children in home country. Poeze (2019) cited Baldassar and Wilding (2013); Fresnoza-Flot (2009) to explain further that migrant fathers living under regular conditions with access to more resources are capable of frequent visits to home country due to easy mobility and take part in caring transnational parenting. Furthermore, the study on impact of immigration in fatherhood among migrant fathers in Canada and Israel by Roer-Strier et al. (2005) mentioned that unemployment and language barriers in the host country could impose threat in father’s role as provider of the family. Whereas, there is also positive aspect to immigration and that is, the host country may also provide opportunities to the immigrant fathers in learning and redefining their parenting roles in a better way (Roer-Strier et al., 2005). The study by Roer-Strier et al. (2005) also explained that fathers in transnational context could view immigration as a chance to expand their parenting roles by bringing positive changes in both personal and family life.

Besides socio-economic situations, the relationship of transnational parents with their children is also directly related with the relationship with their partner. In this instance, the father-child relationship is dependent upon the father-mother relationship, as Schluterman (2007) suggests that mothers and fathers who are engaged in marital conflict or have poor relationship are likely to have poor relations with their children. This can be linked with social context of Belsky’s model of parenting. Belsky (1984) mentioned that marital relation affects parental functioning, meaning father’s parenting may be impacted by the state of his marital relationship. This may imply that men who get support from their parenting partners may do better as fathers.

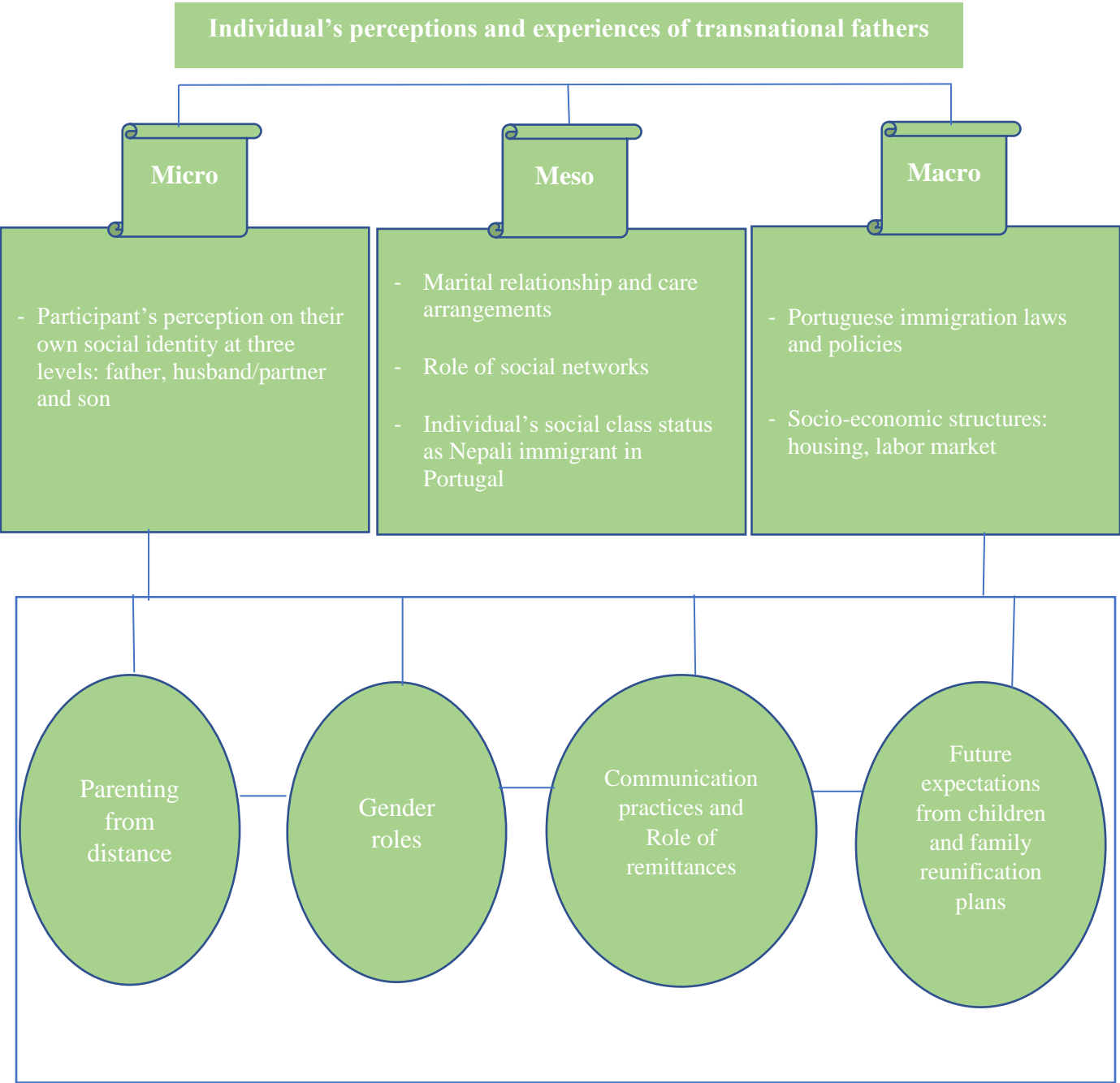
In conclusion, the researcher has made use of literatures based on symbolic interactionism, transnational parenting and transnational fathering to provide theoretical justification to the study. The above discussed concepts have revealed that relationship and interaction influence transnational fathers’ perspective on parenting. The studies by different authors (some examples include: Bulmer, 1969, 1986; Carling et al., 2012; Belsky,1984) brought aspects of transnational parenting and fathering into light. This chapter also shows available evidences

pointing out the importance of communication in parenting from distance. The insights presented from the theoretical concepts of fatherhood also showed the influence of expected gender role (instances such as where fathers are generally viewed as financial providers) and social interaction in generating perception of fatherhood among the fathers. Thus, with this conclusion the next section will further dissect the analytical framework, which will underpin the study.

3.6 Analytical Framework

The following analytical framework will inform my study by drawing on the relevance of symbolic interaction theory in relation to transnational fathering among Nepali immigrants in Portugal. The main idea of this analytical framework is to discuss the individual perceptions and experiences of transnational Nepali fathers in regards to parenting across three main level of analysis: micro, meso and macro. The three levels of analysis are further categorized into four subthemes that discuss concepts of transnational parenting.

Figure 3-1: Analytical Framework²⁶- Relevance of Symbolic Interaction theory in relation to transnational parenting



²⁶ This analytical framework is inspired from Master dissertation on "Resilience Among Ghanaian Migrants in Lisbon in Accessing Family Reunification and Learning of Portuguese Language " by Rita Adoma Parry(2020) published by ISCTE, Lisbon, Portugal

3.6.1 Micro level

Micro level includes participant's perceptions on their own social identity at three different levels: as fathers, husbands and sons. Taking symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1967) into consideration, men's thoughts or perceptions about themselves at these various roles (father, husband and son) is the result of social interaction they are engaged in. It can be said that the quality of father-child relationship is the result of what and how the father perceives about oneself. Similarly, the quality of relationship with his partner is manifested through interaction that builds his perception about himself as a partner/husband. And his perception about himself as a son is also the reflection of his relationship with his own parents. Hence, overall parenting from distance of a father is impacted by his thoughts about his roles and expected gender roles. These expected gendered roles can be the result of fatherhood as provider of the family, therefore leading fathers to portray more masculine roles as described by the society. These gendered parental expectations from these fathers instill expectations on them from their children too.

These perceptions can be the result of communication practices between their family members: children, partner and parents as a part of maintaining transnational ties. The perception of oneself as a father can be influenced by the communication patterns and sending of remittances to their children. The fathers who are able to communicate regularly and able to send remittances to their families at home feel more responsible which may influence their parenting roles from distance, as Carling et al. (2012) mentions that communication is the key to maintain transnational parenting. Not only that, the moralities aspect of transnational parenting as explained by Carling et al. (2012) describes that parenting from distance is about giving as a way to show commitment to the family that can be reflected through sending of remittances. Hence, the perception on these relations can be deciding factor for their future family reunification roles and their expectations as fathers from their children.

Thus, in micro level, the individual perceptions and experiences of transnational fathers is influenced by their engagement in social interactions. These social interactions influence their expected gendered roles, which is portrayed by the communication patterns and sending of remittances that directly or indirectly influence their future family reunification plans and expectations.

3.6.2 Meso level

Meso level covers three most important aspect of transnational parenting, they are: marital relationships and care arrangement and the role of social networks. Marital relationships largely affect the father-child relation in regards to transnational fathering. As Belsky (1984) mentions relationship with partner can influence the role of parents. Similarly, marital relationship and care arrangements come side by side as the they are mostly decided by both father and mother. Parenting from distance can be based on how care arrangements are made. The moralities aspect of transnational parenting introduced by Carling et al. (2012) also can be used in this aspect to understand that functioning of co-parenting is the influenced by the quality if marital relations between the migrant fathers and their partners. The expected gender roles can come into play while parenting from distance which can influence care arrangements, whereby mothers usually tend to children's emotional needs while fathers are mostly engaged in fulfilling economic responsibilities. Carling et al. (2012) mentions the transnational parenting is influenced by gender, since transnational motherhood and fatherhood can lead to different experiences and and these gendered expectations may change over time and with the individual experiences in different contexts. Thus, it is important to consider the role of gender while mentioning parenting across borders. Furthermore, maintaining transnational ties by the use of communication technologies and sending remittances can be influence both marital and care

arrangements. Finally, the quality of marital relations and care arrangements influence the transnational father's expectations from their children and their decision to family reunification.

Furthermore, the role of social networks also has influence on the parental functioning (Belsky, 1984). The amount of support they receive in the host as well as home country can impact the father's parenting approaches. For instance, the support from caregivers/ partners at home can enhance involvement with their children. Similarly, the support from host country (migrant's network) can help them attain better income opportunities (jobs) by which they can take care of their children's needs and fulfill their responsibilities as fathers. The support received from social network can help the fathers to maintain good relations with their families in home country through regular communication and sending of remittances. This ability can foster good relationships with their spouses leading to mutual understanding between fathers and their partners to portray expected gendered roles in parenting. As a result, this may influence the migrant fathers' decision to family reunification and their expectations from children.

Not only that, meso level in relation to transnational parenting also includes the immigrant's social class. As explained by Carling et al. (2012), socio-economic status of migrant influences decisions that are taken among transnational families. In this case, socio-economic status of migrants (Nepali) is defined by their working or employment status in Nepal, previous country of origin and in the host country (Portugal). For instance, the person who was involved in professional /formal job in Nepal could be involved in informal / low paying jobs in Portugal, which could influence his approach to life in Portugal. This ultimately influences their parenting practice from distance which also includes their communication patterns with families at home. The socio-economic status of the migrants also affects their decision in regards to family reunification which shall lengthen or shorten the family separation.

Thus, in meso level, the individual perception and experience as transnational fathers is influenced by marital relationship, care arrangements, migrant's social networks and their socio-economic status in relation to parenting from distance while portraying expected gendered roles through communication and sending of remittances that finally influences their family reunification plans.

3.6.3 Macro level

At macro level, the role of Portuguese immigration laws and Portuguese socio-economic structure defines possibilities for Nepali transnational fathers to be reunited with their families. Most of the Nepalese, like any other immigrants, have a future hope and plan to apply for family reunification in Portugal which motivated their immigration from Nepal initially. In order to be eligible to apply for family reunification, the Nepali immigrants have to fulfill all the criteria set out by the immigration law (as explained in contextualization chapter). The possibility and obstacles are also influenced by the socio-economic structures in Portugal that the Nepali immigrants are exposed to (for instance, the economic opportunities, housing/accommodation situation). The family reunification plan derives expectations among the migrant fathers. The fathers expect to bring their children to the host country and be able to provide them better educational opportunities so that they can build a better life in future. The decision to family reunification is also influenced by their communication patterns and involvement in their children life while maintaining transnational ties.

Thus, in macro level, the perceptions and experiences of transnational fathers are influenced by the immigration policies as well as their socio-economic structures in host country which

affect their possibility to reunite with their children so that they fulfill aspiration and expectations associated with parenting.

In conclusion, the figure above illustrates the interrelation of four mentioned subthemes along the three levels of analysis. It also explained the relevance of symbolic interaction theory and theoretical concepts on transnational parenting that provided a framework for the study on the perceptions and experiences Nepali transnational fathers in Portugal. Hence, the figure shows that the above-mentioned macro, meso and micro factors influence the transnational father's perceptions and experiences in one or the other way.

4 CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and methodology applied in the study. Qualitative approach was used in the study to describe and discuss the transnational experiences of the participants in detail. The methodological chapter provides information on how the research was carried out including steps such as: selection of the participants, data collection methods, data analysis, ethical considerations and associated issues, researcher's self- reflection, and the challenges and limitations of the study.

4.2 Sample of the study

The researcher's preliminary target was to gain information from 8-10 respondents. Being a Nepali myself, I had met and interacted with many Nepalese in Lisbon, Portugal during my four months study in 2019 as a part of my first semester of master program (MFamily). After meeting and having few conversations with some of the Nepalese immigrants living in Lisbon, I found out that many Nepali males come to Portugal leaving their families behind in Nepal. This made me focus my research on experiences and perceptions of Nepali men, particularly fathers, on how they maintain transnational ties with their families back home. Hence, I initially characterized potential participants and decided to search for Nepali fathers who are experiencing and have experienced parenting from distance.

The sample population of the study were those who fulfilled the following criteria:

- The participant should be Nepali man (in terms of origin/nationality) living in Lisbon, Portugal for at least 6 months.
- The participant must have a child or children living or have lived in Nepal (before reunification) who should be 18 years or younger.

In order to decide the setting for my study, I tapped into my familiarity of the location and the data collected from SEF. While going through SEF's website for the purpose of literature review, I found out that the highest number of Nepalese in Portugal reside in Lisbon, because of which it became my central base for contacting possible interviewees. I started approaching few Nepali men I met during my stay in Lisbon in 2019. Through that, I was able to identify possible participants for my study with the use of snowball sampling technique. I first started by approaching an active NRNA member in Portugal, who helped me identify more possible participants. Not only that, my supervisor also assisted me on finding more participants through a former alumnus²⁷ of MFamily from Nepal.

Hence, the participants of my study are individual Nepali fathers who are still living in transnational situation at the present or have already been reunited and have experienced transnational parenting in the past.

²⁷ Ms. Ashima Budal (MFamily alumnus 2016-18)

4.3 Research Design

The research is qualitative in nature. The qualitative method was chosen because of a smaller number of respondents available to participate, which would be small for quantitative study (Parry, 2020). Qualitative research stresses upon the understanding formed by the interpretations and interactions by the interviewees and participants (Bryman, 2012). For this purpose, in-depth semi-structured interviews is used to gain the relevant required information, using a guided open-ended semi-structured questions which was the primary source of data collection. Furthermore, as the research focused on assessing the lived experiences and self-perceptions of transnational fathers, in-depth interviews seemed more appropriate to generate their narratives. By the use of an interview guide, semi-structured interviews were conducted as the primary source of data to obtain an in-depth analysis of participant's perspective and experiences.

The in-depth semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to get into conversation with the respondent more openly as it is not based on a set of pre-structured questions to be answered. As Bryman (2012) explains, "qualitative interviewing allows researchers to depart significantly from any schedule or guide that is being used by asking questions that follow up interviewees' replies and can vary the order and even wording of questions" (Bryman, 2012, p.470). Thus, the intention of making interviews more flexible was to deviate from following strict questioning pattern in order to collect additional information that would add value to the study, that would be useful to know and comprehend the events, patterns and perceptions of the interviewee (Bryman, 2012). This implied also that, during the interviews carried for the purpose of this study, the participants were given more time to answer while I tried to encourage the conversation by adding and confirming the points said.

Due to challenges of finding the participants (mentioned above), the fieldwork was extended until August, which was originally expected to be until June, and hence the research in the field was conducted from March to August, 2021. Other reason to why the field time was extended was also because of Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. Before Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, I had planned to conduct this study physically in Lisbon, which would allow to me to make this study more participatory. I was also looking forward to have a focus group discussion after all the individual interviews were completed. Face to face interviews and focus group discussion would help me carry out a participant observation that could be an essential aspect of the data collection. However, I was not able to stay in Lisbon due to Covid-19 pandemic outbreak and decided to come back to my home country i.e., Nepal because of which I dropped out the idea of conducting focus group discussion. I also decided not to conduct focus group discussion because I was already facing difficulties in finding participants for interviews.

Out of total 8 interviews, I was able to conduct only one face-to-face interview that took place in a public café in Nepal. This one interview was not sufficient to provide a participant observation for my study. Other 7 interviews were conducted online and it made me realize that online interviews offer both advantages and limitations in data collection. Despite being unable to offer participatory observation, telephone or online interviews can help to gather data more quickly and effectively as online meetings could be arranged according to both researcher and interviewee's convenience with comparative more protection of interviewee's anonymity than what face-to-face interviews offer (Burnard, 1994). The desired sample was possible to achieve because I was able to gain trust from the participants by sharing my own experiences of childhood and observations as a migrant student in Lisbon, Portugal. The sharing made participants more eager to participate, facilitating the interviews in a great deal.

Besides interviews, the secondary sources of data were based on relevant literature reviews on transnational parenting, fathering and immigration laws Portugal. Another source of secondary data was statistical reports from different sources such as, such as number of Nepalese in Portugal from SEF's website.

4.4 Data Collection methods - Qualitative Interviews

By the use of qualitative interviews, transnational parenting practices of the fathers involved in the study was discussed and inquired. The qualitative interviews were primary sources of data collection that helped the researcher to bring in the discussions related to perceptions and experiences of fathers on transnational parenting. In order to get the participants accustomed with my research idea, I started the interviews by explaining aims and objectives of the research. I also provided brief information on structure and outline of the interview including their rights as participants. The interviews were based on the interview guide that provided a general idea on questions that were to be asked and discussed.

The interview guide was based on the questions about personal and family information that included education, employment and migration trajectory of the participant. Similarly, there were also questions on transnational parenting in order to find in-depth information about their experiences, perceptions and roles as fathers. This briefly helped to assess their views about parenting from a distance, roles as fathers before and after migration, challenges they have faced while parenting from distance and aspirations in regards to their child's future and family reunifications. The interview guides were prepared in both Nepali and English languages for the convenience of the participants²⁸ as Nepali language is the official and widely spoken language of Nepal. According to 2011 Nepal Population Census, 78% Nepalese either speak Nepali as their first (mother tongue) or their second language in Nepal (Translators without borders, 2020). Being a Nepali national whose first language is Nepali, I had an advantage in terms of communicating with the participants. It was my luck that all the participants spoke and understood Nepali language. Speaking the same language allowed more clarity during the discussion and made it easier for the participants to understand the research objectives. Not only that, from my experience it also fostered trust that helped me to gain their confidence in sharing personal experiences and perceptions on transnational parenting. This also allowed them to openly share their life stories and struggles of settling down in Portugal. Use of Nepali language in the interviews avoided any forms of language barrier it would have caused if the interviews were taken in English, Portuguese or any other foreign languages.

The semi-structured interviews of total eight participants were conducted who are Nepali immigrants living in Portugal. Initially, all the participants came to Portugal with the motivation of settling down in Europe leaving their families behind in Nepal. Out of eight semi-structured interviews, seven interviews were taken over the telephone due to the inability to be physically present. There were few challenges in conducting online interviews. One particular challenge encountered was that I had to interview one participant twice because during the grid analysis preparation I found some important information was missing. Out of eight interviews, I was able to conduct one interview face-to-face during the time the participant was visiting his family in Nepal. Overall, the semi-structured interviews lasted from a minimum of forty-seven minutes to a maximum two hours and seventeen minutes. All the interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent. This ensured the accuracy of data as it allowed me to produce honest transcription of the interviews.

²⁸ "For the interviewees 1, 2, 4, 7 and 8 Nepali is second language, for the interviewees 3, 5 and 6 Nepali is first language."

4.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study required me to do translation and transcription of the collected data from the interviews, coding of the data, grid analysis preparation and generation of themes. I also used ISCED codes for the analysis of educational levels and ISCO codes for professional categories of the participants in order to allow a better international contextualization of the respondents' profiles.

I audio recorded the interviews so as to transcribe the interviews later. The interviews were carried out in Nepali language and later translated and transcribed in English language. While transcribing, audio recording allowed me go back and listen to the conversations and analyze the discussions. In order to analyze the collected data from the interviews, thematic analysis was applied, according to Bryman (2012), thematic analysis is regarded as a common method in qualitative analysis of data to identify and assess themes in the transcripts (p. 624). I applied thematic analysis through de-naturalized approach so as avoid any misinterpretations of the meanings that translation may cause (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). Also, according to Mero-Jaffe (2011), de-naturalized approach helps in presenting clear data that will be useful in capturing important information related to the participants' experiences and perceptions on transnational parenting. The interview guide was a starting point to generate themes via sub-categories of different topics, allowing to highlight the main themes on the basis of objectives of the study during the data analysis.

To analyze the data, I applied Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework that offers six phases of thematic analysis. The phases include: "familiarizing yourself with your data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and producing the report" (p.87). Following these mentioned phases, I started by getting to know the data collected by thoroughly studying it. In order to do this, I listened to the audio records, translated and transcribed the entire interviews from Nepali to English language (as explained above). Then for coding, I underlined important sections of the interview by creating short phrases from the long sentences recorded. With the help of codes generated, I sorted out the most repeated and overlapping ideas that may form a theme. For this, I combined two or more codes to generate a single theme. After theme generation, I reviewed them in order to check if they qualify as theme or need to be divided into two or more themes. For instance, I first had made a single theme as parenting role from distance which would include the participants' communication patterns with families, relationship with partner, role of remittance, perception on parenting and roles before and after migration. I later realized that this is a broad theme and needs to be further broken down into two themes namely, parenting from distance and fathering responsibilities.

Grid analysis helped me to review the themes as it included overall discussions of the interviews. For my study, I identified six themes and thirteen sub-themes from the grid analysis (appendix 5). After reviewing the themes, the fifth phase was to define the themes in order to assign meanings to them. And lastly, the sixth phase is to produce a report on the basis of themes generated, which is discussed in Chapter 5.

Table 4-1: Thematic analysis

| Themes | Subthemes |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Reasons for migration | Primary motivations to migrate |
| | Previous migration experiences |
| Arrival and Settlement in Portugal | Initial feelings and challenges while accessing work, visa and housing |
| | Role of migrants' support network before, during and after migration |
| Current living situation in Portugal | Work and Visa conditions |
| | Portuguese Language learning |
| Parenting roles from distance | Communication patterns with partner and children |
| | Relationship with partner and care arrangements |
| | Role of remittances |
| Fathering responsibilities | Perception on parenting and fatherhood |
| | Fathering roles before and after migration |
| Future prospects | Plans for family reunification |
| | Expectations from children (concerning future educational achievements and family relations) |

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethics keep the researcher grounded to the honesty and discipline of the research and hence it cannot be overlooked (Bryman, 2012). Ethical principles in social research keep check of four basic areas of research that include: “whether there is harm to the participants; whether there is a lack of informed consent; whether there is an invasion of privacy; whether deception is involved” (Diner and Crandall, 1978 as cited in Bryman, 2012, p.135).

Being a student of social work, I was very mindful of the ethics I should abide by throughout the study. Thus, I conducted this research adhering to the ethics of social work research, namely: informed consent, principle of confidentiality, protection from harm and deception as explained below.

4.6.1 Informed Consent

I kept everything about the research open to the respondents, including the objective of the research, the information related to them to be published and how helpful their participation would be in this study. Being the participants in my study, they had every right to know what and why they gave answers to my questions. The conversation only proceeded after they agreed to talk about it, along with the right to refrain from answering any questions they did not want to. This was a crucial step and is termed as ‘informed consent’, meaning that the people who are researched should be fully aware that they are being studied and have given their approval of consent to proceed (Bulmer, 2001, p. 49).

Thus, I took oral informed consent from individual participants which was audio recorded at the beginning of each interviews. The reason I took the oral consent was because of my inability to conduct the research physically. I tried to get signed consent from the first interview which was taken face-to-face, but I felt his resistance to sign written paper in fear of raising any legal issues later in the future considering his means of regularizing (since he entered Portugal

through Denmark, which was discussed in the interview as well). Even after I clarified what was mentioned by handing over the written consent form in Nepali language, he justified that he was comfortable in agreeing to oral consent only. This is why I accepted the oral consent so as to not make him feel too pressured. Furthermore, it was also made clear to all the participants that the interviews would be audio recorded and would be translated in English language for research purposes framed in MFamily master program.

4.6.2 Principle of confidentiality and protection from harm and deception

Since this study is based on assessing the perceptions and overall experiences of Nepali transnational fathers living in Portugal, discussions could lead to matter of privacy and confidentiality. According to Pittaway, Bartolomei, & Hugman (2010), maintaining confidentiality is vital in order to protect the identity of the participants and also the information shared during interview. Sobočan, Bertotti, & Strom-Gottfried (2019) also mention that harm can arise sometimes unintentionally by publishing the research without paying much attention to whether the participant's identity is well protected or not. This is why I put principal of confidentiality into consideration throughout the research period. For this, I had clarified with the participants beforehand that personal information (such as names, specific addresses) they shared in the interviews will be not be disclosed in the research.

The research with considerations to ethics of social work inclines towards balancing the advantages of being involved in the research as well as the risks it carries by reflecting upon the after-effects of the researcher's activities (Sobočan, Bertotti, & Strom-Gottfried, 2019). This means that the researcher should be well aware about how beneficial the outcomes of the research could be through the participants' involvement and at the same time if it possesses any risks to them. In order to avoid risk, I was also very careful about being empathetic and culturally sensitive to make the participants feel more comfortable. I made sure to avoid questioning the validity of their answers to make the participants feel trusted. The participants were also clearly told that they have the right to remove themselves from participating if they feel any risk or harm. I was also honest about the taping the interviews, future use of the transcripts in the research including their rights as participants so as to make them feel they are not being deceived at any point.

4.7 Self-reflections

During my childhood, I have experienced and endured separation from my father when he shifted to another city in Nepal for work, leaving my mother and us (children) behind. Even after years have passed, he still feels guilty as me and my siblings would not get close to him and communicate with him as much as we did with our mother. He says that even though regular communication made this experience easier, he still had to face many challenges due to distance. This experience of my childhood has somehow directed me to study this subject.

Even though my father was in the same country, the visits were very rare which helped me understand the impact of family separation. Even though this is not similar to international family separation, I acknowledge that any type of migration with less possibility of visit creates impact both fathers and children. Also, after talking to few Nepali immigrants during my stay in Lisbon made me understand more about how migration laws, financial situation of migrants and family expectations prolong family separation. All these experiences helped me collect idea on how fathers maintain ties with their families from distance, which became the departing point for my study.

Describing my personal feelings while conducting this study, I would say there were few distractions that made me feel demotivated on multiple occasions. Some distractions involved feeling detached to the study because of no physical reach to the setting and participants. Even after completing the study, I have few regrets that mostly include my inability to have physical meetings with the participants as I had planned initially. Due to which I missed out an opportunity to take notes based on observations. Not only that, if I would have been able to take face-to-face interviews, it would probably have been much easier to find more respondents.

Nevertheless, reaching out virtually also helped me learn despite the challenges. Even from distance, I was able to encourage the participants to share openly which allowed the narratives to flow more naturally and avoided my presumption on their experiences. This also helped in easing the participants to talk more freely without any doubts towards my intentions of asking personal questions. When they felt more open to talk, there were undoubtedly some irrelevant information shared, which was not important for the study however, it encouraged open sharing environment. Even though this brought some distractions, it ultimately fulfilled my goal in collecting all the required information.

4.8 Challenges and limitations of the study

The major challenge I faced while doing this research was difficulty in finding the respondent willing to participate. Since I had already been in Lisbon and met some possible respondents, I was initially confident in finding at least 10 respondents. However, after I started reaching out to possible respondents, I realized it was not as easy as I thought. One of the major reasons that made it difficult in finding participants was distance and time constraints. As I was in Nepal while conducting this research, I did not get expected responses from most of the people I reached out. I approached over 25 possible respondents through mutual contact and recommendations, but majority of them did not respond at all or gave late replies. Some could not participate because of their busy schedule and time constraints between Nepal and Portugal, even when they initially showed interest in participating. Other biggest challenge was network disturbances or problem during interviews. This not only made some of the interviews lengthy, but also created problems in making the discussions clear.

In some occasions, time difference between Portugal and Nepal also created barrier in the interview process. For instance, one particular interview was conducted at almost midnight in Nepal because of the participant's availability and convenience in Portugal. In this interview, many details of the discussions were missing because I could not concentrate and ask all the important questions. Due to which, I had to set another date to discuss the remaining questions with the respondent. In order to set another meeting for this interview, I had to wait few more days as per the respondent's convenience, which made the interview process longer.

The tendency of Nepalese to be "too friendly" sometimes became a hinderance while conducting interviews. Nepalese have a tendency to call each other by linking with relations. For example, we even address a random Nepali stranger as 'Brother' or 'Sister' or 'Aunt' or 'Uncle', and so on. From the perspective of a Nepali, it sounds polite to address in the earlier mentioned ways rather than calling out by names (as it may be rude to call the elders by name in Nepali culture). It is common practice among Nepalese to create relations instantly. This is however, a very common issue while working as a professional in Nepal that I have faced earlier in my previous jobs as well. Similarly, this caused some disruption while taking interviews because some interviewees started calling me as 'Daughter' and felt too comfortable to share irrelevant (off the topic) issues with me. For instance, one of the interviewees started asking me about my marriage plans in the middle of interview.

In addition, I found it challenging when the participants wanted to talk more. It not only derailed the interview but also the interviews took longer time than it would actually take. Even though I tried several times to point out the focus of discussion, I allowed them to talk for a while so as not to sound rude. I also was facing difficulty to find the participants so I did not want to risk losing their participation by trying to show too much control over the conversations.

In the next chapter (5), I will discuss the findings and analysis of the study

5 CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings by analyzing and exploring the perceptions and experiences of transnational parenting among eight Nepali migrant fathers living in Portugal. In the beginning, the chapter discusses the socio-demographic and family information summarizing the participants' profiles. Then, the main dimensions of the analysis for the study will be described by exploring six main themes identified by the use of thematic analysis (as explained in methodology chapter), namely: reasons to migrate, arrival and settlement in Portugal, current living situation in Portugal, parenting roles from distance, fathering responsibilities, and future prospects of the study participants. Extracts from the participant interviews are taken in order to present the findings of the data collected. The interviews that were taken in Nepali language which was later transcribed and translated into English for data analysis.

5.2 Socio- demographic and family information

This section provides short personal and family information on each eight-interview participant. It entails interviewee's educational background, occupational experiences, general family background including marital status and children's information. Table 5-1 illustrates the details of this section below.

All the interviewees were Nepali males aged between 30 to 45 years. Out of eight participants, three of them have completed their education with master degree, two have secondary level education (schooled until 8 or 9th grade), one has higher secondary level education (until 12th grade) and one has completed a vocational diploma degree in electrical education. Based on their educational levels, none are working on the same field as their education, except for 44-year-old man, who owns a business as per his expertise. Most of the participants started their occupational journey in Portugal by working in restaurants as a helper and chef which resembled downward social mobility for some in terms of their job qualifications. However, for most, working in Portugal has opened doors for more income as an opportunity to secure better future for their families while for others it has been a gateway to stay and invite families in Europe.

All the participants in the study are currently married, and have children either living with them in Portugal or living in Nepal, aged between 1.5 and 18 years. Out of eight participants, three are already reunited with their children, except for 44-year-old participant, who is reunited with only one child out of two children. Among all eight participants, the 45-year-old man is living with his second wife and her daughter (from her previous marriage) in Portugal, while his children (biological) are in Nepal with their mother (his former wife). The children who stayed behind (in Nepal) were mostly taken care by the participant's spouses (former spouse, in case of 45-year-old-man), and grandparents of their children (by grandmothers in most cases).

Table 5-1: Participants' socio-demographic and family information

| Pseudonym | Age | Marital status | Highest Education | Last Occupation in Nepal | Occupation in Portugal | Educational level of partner | Present Occupation of partner | Number, sex and current age of children (current location) |
|-----------|-----|--|--|---|--|---|---|---|
| Bishal | 38 | Married | Master in Rural Development and Sociology from Nepal (ISCED level 7 – 2 years education after completion of ISCED level 6) | Project Manager of a private NGO working in the area of farming and agriculture (ISCO-08 Unit Group 1219) | Chef in a private sushi restaurant (ISCO-08 Unit Group 3434) | Master in Business studies from Nepal (ISCED level 7 – 2 years education after completion of ISCED level 6) | Finance Officer in private NGO in Nepal (ISCO-08 Unit Group 2411) | 1 child: Son – 11 years (Currently in Nepal) |
| Manoj | 30 | Married | Higher Secondary from Nepal (ISCED level 5- 2 years education after completion of ISCED level 3 or 4) | Shopkeeper in a family-owned (private) retail shop (ISCO-08 Unit group 1314) | Chef (ISCO-08 Unit Group 3434) | Higher Secondary from Nepal (ISCED level 5- 2 years education after completion of ISCED level 3 or 4) | Worker in Automotive industry in South Korea (ISCO-08 Unit Group 7213) | 1 child: Daughter – 10 years (currently in Nepal) |
| Himal | 41 | Married | Master in Business Studies from Nepal (ISCED level 7- 2 years education after completion of ISCED level 6) | Secondary Public-School Teacher in urban area (ISCO-08 Unit group 2330) | Business Manager / Owner of a mobile shop (private) (ISCO-08 Unit group 1420) | Bachelor in Business Administration (ISCED level 6 - after completion of ISCED level 3 or 4 with access to tertiary education or after completion of ISCED level 5) | Government Officer in Water supply corporation in Nepal (ISCO-08 Unit Group 2421) | 2 children: Son – 13 years and Daughter – 9 years (currently in Nepal) |
| Prem | 39 | Married | Secondary level from Nepal (ISCED level 3- 11 to 13 years of education) | Security guard in a private office (ISCO-08 Unit group 5414) | Independent Uber Driver (has registered own company in Uber) (ISCO-08 Unit group 8322) | Primary level from Nepal (ISCED level 1 – typically six years of education) | Housewife | 2 children: Daughter – 12 years and Son – 1.5 years (currently in Nepal) |
| Aditya | 45 | Married (divorced with 1 st wife) | Secondary level from Nepal (ISCED level 3- 11 to 13 years of education) | Ticket collector / conductor in public transport (ISCO-08 Unit group 5112) | Receptionist in a public hotel (ISCO-08 Unit group 4224) | N/A (for both partner) | Helper in grocery store in Portugal (ISCO-08 Unit Group 9112) | 3 children: Daughter – 12 years and Son – 6 years (currently in Nepal) |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------|----|---------|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| | | | | | | | | Daughter – 11 years (currently in Portugal) |
| Ritesh | 35 | Married | Higher Secondary level from Nepal (ISCED level 5- 2 years education after completion of ISCED level 3 or 4)) | Care taker/Clerk in local public aged care organization in urban area (ISCO-08 Unit Group 4110) | Administrative staff in public migration agency (ISCO-08 Unit Group 4229) | Master in Arts from Nepal (ISCED level 7 – 2 years education after completion of ISCED level 6) | Helper in Department store in Portugal (ISCO-08 Unit Group 9112) | 1 child: Daughter – 8 years old (currently in Portugal) |
| Ashok | 44 | Married | Diploma in Technical Education from Nepal (ISCED level 5 - 3 years education after completion of ISCED level 3 or 4) | Electrical Technician in a public/government office (ISCO-08 Unit Group 7137) | Business owner of private construction company and sushi restaurant ((ISCO-08 Unit Group 7411 and 1420) | Secondary level from Nepal (ISCED level 3- 11 to 13 years of education) | Housewife | 2 children: Daughter – 16 years (currently in Nepal) Son – 18 years (currently in Portugal) |
| Krishav | 40 | Married | Master in Education from Nepal (ISCED level 7 – 2 years education after completion of ISCED level 6) | Administrative staff in private secondary school (ISCO-08 Unit group 3343) | Business owner of private restaurant and minimarket (ISCO-08 Unit Group 1420) | Bachelor in Nursing (ISCED level 6 - after completion of ISCED level 3 or 4 with access to tertiary education or after completion of ISCED level 5) | Business owner / partner in Portugal (ISCO-08 Unit Group 1420) | 2 children: Daughter – 14 years and Son – 5 years (currently in Portugal) |

5.2.1 Summary Profile of participants

Bishal

He is 38 years old. He studied Master in Sociology and Rural Development from Tribhuvan University in Nepal. He was born in a rural area of Nepal, where he studied until high school. He did his higher education in city area of Nepal. He worked as a project manager in an organization for more than 8 years in Nepal. His work was specifically focused in the area of farming and agriculture. His responsibility in the organization was to manage funds and oversee workshops and trainings applicable to farming and agriculture techniques in different parts of Nepal. Currently in Portugal, he is working as a sushi chef in one of the restaurants in Portugal since 2018.

He is married for more than 12 years and has a wife in Nepal. His wife has a Master degree and is working as a finance officer in a non-governmental organization. They have one son aged 11 years old. His wife takes care of his son and also his parents who live together in Nepal with them. Both of his parents are above 65 years old and stay at home. His son studies in one of the private schools in Nepal. His family live in city area of Nepal.

Manoj

He is 30 years old. He has completed his study up to higher secondary level in arts. He got married right after completing his high school in 2009. He did not continue his study and started focusing on work in order to support his family. He and his wife were classmates before getting married in 2009, and she also has same educational background as him (i.e., up to high school). They have a daughter who is 10 years old now.

Manoj started taking responsibilities of his family from young age after his marriage. He and his wife had a daughter when they both were only 19 years old. Due to their young age, they had to struggle to provide for their daughter. Even though, the family owned a retail business, it was not enough to run the family with increasing demands.

He has experience of working as a shopkeeper in his father's retail shop in Nepal for about three years. Currently, he works as a chef in one Portuguese restaurant in Lisbon, Portugal. His wife is currently working in an automotive industry in Korea where he worked before (see Table 5-2a). His wife moved to South Korea in 2016, three months before he moved to Portugal. Their daughter lives with his parents. His father runs the same retail business and his mother is a housewife who mostly takes care of his daughter. His daughter studies in a private school near their house, which is in city area of Nepal.

Himal

He is 41 years old. He has a Master degree from Nepal in Business Studies. He was born and raised in village (rural) area of Nepal with minimal facilities. Despite the hardships his parents bore while raising him and his other two siblings (one older brother and a younger sister), his parents always gave him opportunity to study and excel in his life. From his young age, he was determined to study hard and fulfill his goal of achieving better life than he had in his childhood. He therefore, moved to city area of Nepal after his high school to attend Bachelor degree in Business Studies. He always dreamt of studying abroad but could not at that time due to some personal family reasons so he joined Master degree in Nepal. After it's completion, he got married and had two children. In Nepal, he was a teacher in public school where he taught science subject to secondary level (grade 9 and 10) students for seven years. Currently, is currently working as manager in a mobile he owns along with two other business partners since 2018.

Himal has been married since 2008. He and his wife have two children, a son who is 13 years old and a daughter who is 9 years old now. His wife works as an administrative officer in an electricity company in Nepal and holds a Bachelor degree in Business Administration. His parents and older brother live in the village where he was born and they own animal farming business whereas, while his wife and children live in the city area of Nepal. The son and daughter study in a private school in seventh and third grade respectively.

Prem

He is 39 years old. He was born in a poor family and lived in an extremely under developed rural area of Nepal due to which he could not continue his study after completing grade 9. After getting married, he shifted to city area of Nepal with his wife for employment purpose. He worked as a security guard in a private office in city area of Nepal. Currently in Portugal, he is working as a driver and has registered his own company in Uber since 2020.

Prem is married since 2008 and has a wife in Nepal. His wife is a housewife and has studied until primary level school. They have one daughter who is 12 years old and one son who is 1 and half years old now. The children live with his wife in city area of Nepal. His daughter studies in one of the private schools in Nepal. The wife stays home to take care of their son, and her sister also comes to help sometimes. His parents live in village and sustain life by doing small scale farming and animal husbandry.

Aditya

He is 45 years old. He was born in an underdeveloped village in Nepal due to which he could only study up to secondary level. In Nepal, he worked as a bus conductor in a public bus for almost 2 years. He has been married two times. He was married with his former wife from 2008 to 2018, which ended in divorce. He got married to his present (second) wife in 2019.

Aditya has two children from his former (first) wife, one daughter aged 12 years old and one son aged 6 years old. His former wife owns a small tailoring business near her home. She lives with her mother and his children in city area of Nepal. Both children study in private school.

His present wife was a widow with one daughter aged 11 years old, and was living with her husband in Portugal, who died of cardiac arrest in 2017. At the present, she and her daughter live with the interviewee in Portugal. He is currently working as a receptionist in a hotel. while his present wife works as a helper in an Indian grocery store in Portugal. Her daughter attends public school in Portugal.

Ritesh

He is 35 years old. He was born in a rural area of Nepal, where he studied until high school. After completion of his higher secondary education in 2009, he moved to city area of Nepal in order to study further. Due to financial difficulties, he could not pursue his studies so he started looking for job in the city and settled there.

Ritesh got married to his wife on 2012. His wife has a Master degree in Arts, and used to work as a teacher in a private school before giving birth to their daughter in 2013. Their daughter is now 8 years old. After moving to the city area of Nepal in 2009, he first worked as a receptionist for about two years in a hotel owned by a neighbor in his village. After that, he got job in a local organization that worked to provide care to the aged people. He got this job through a person who became his friend while living in the city. She (friend) recommended him for this

job through her connection with manager of the organization. He worked in the organization as a caretaker of the elderly for three years. During this time, he got married and had a daughter, and lived city area of Nepal together with his mother. before moving abroad. His mother is widowed and is currently living alone in their village home in Nepal.

He currently lives with his wife and daughter in Portugal since 2018, and works in a migration agency as an attendee (administrative staff) where he first started working as a volunteer in 2014. His wife works in departmental store and their daughter studies in public school in Portugal.

Ashok

He is 44 years old and has a diploma degree in technical education from Nepal. He got his diploma as an electrical technician in 2000 and has been working since then. He worked for around 5 years as an electrical technician in Nepal until 2005. While he was working in Nepal, his office was raided by Maoists, which made his working condition difficult to an extent where he had to leave the job. After losing his job in Nepal, he decided to go abroad because he could not see his career flourishing in Nepal (see Table 5-1). Currently in Portugal, he owns a construction company and a sushi restaurant in Portugal.

Ashok got married with his wife in 2001. His wife has studied until grade 9 and is a housewife. They have two children: a son aged 18 years old and a daughter aged 16 years old. His wife lives in city in Nepal with their daughter, while their son is living with him in Portugal since 2020. His daughter studies in private high school in Nepal and his son studies in a university in Portugal. His extended family (parents and younger brother) live in his childhood home which is situated in a different city.

Krishav

He is 40 years old and was born and raised in village (rural) area of Nepal where he completed his secondary school. Later, he moved to the city area of Nepal in order to achieve higher education. He has a Master degree in Education from Tribhuvan University in Nepal. In Nepal, he worked as an administrative staff in one private school for almost nine years until 2013. Currently in Portugal, he owns minimarket and Nepali restaurant business since 2015 and 2017, respectively.

Krishav has been married since 2006. He and his wife have one daughter aged 14 years old and a son aged 5 years old. His wife has a Bachelor degree in Nursing and currently supports the family business in Lisbon, Portugal. The daughter and son study in a private school in seventh and kindergarten level, respectively, in Portugal. His mother lives in city area of Nepal with his two elder brothers and their wives. His younger sister lives in Portugal with her husband and kids.

5.3 Dimensions of analysis

This section gives detailed description on the collected data from the eight in-depth interviews, covering the themes identified by thematic analysis on the basis of research objectives of the study. The themes were identified and categorized on the basis of answers they provided to the study's research questions. It specifically highlights the experiences and perceptions on transnational parenting of Nepali fathers living in Portugal while also explaining their migration trajectories. Table 5-2 a and b provide brief information on the main dimensions along which the analysis of the study is conducted.

The identified six themes are: reasons to migrate, arrival and settlement in Portugal, current living situation in Portugal, parenting roles from distance, fathering responsibilities, and future prospects of the study participants. These themes are further divided into thirteen sub-themes for the better analysis of the findings.

Table 5-2 a: Dimensions of Analysis – Migration Trajectories

| Pseudonym | Current transnational family situation | Previous migratory experiences | Occupation in previous migration experiences | Role of migrant's network in decision to come to Portugal | Reasons to migrate to Portugal | Length of separation from partner and children | Visits to Nepal while in Portugal | Family reunification plan |
|------------------|--|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| Bishal | Wife and son in Nepal | Denmark (to attend conference) on 2018 for three days | N/A | Nepali friend who was living in Portugal | Child's future | Separated from wife and son for 2 years since 2019 | Yes – one time (40 days stay) in 2021 | Yes – already applied in 2021 for family reunification to bring both wife and son (waiting for visa) |
| Manoj | Wife in South Korea since 2016 and daughter in Nepal | South Korea (economic reasons) on 2012 for four years | Worker in Automotive industry in South Korea (ISCO-08 Unit Group 7213) | Relatives (cousin and her husband) | Future settlement and child's future | Separated from wife and daughter for 9 years since 2012 | Yes – two times (minimum of one month stay each time) in 2019 and 2020 | Yes – haven't applied yet, plans to bring both wife and daughter in 2022 |
| Himal | Wife, son and daughter in Nepal | Denmark (study and settlement) on 2014 for one year | In Denmark - Student in a public university (Master in Tourism and Hotel Management) with part-time job at private restaurant as kitchen helper (ISCO-08 Unit Group 9412) | Nepali friend who had recently moved to Portugal from Denmark | Future settlement | Separated from wife, son and daughter for 7 years since 2014 | Yes – three times (minimum of 20 days stay each time) in 2016, 2018 and 2019 | Yes – plans to bring wife and both children after obtaining his passport by 2023-24 |
| Prem | Wife, daughter and son in Nepal | Afghanistan (economic reasons) on 2011 for four and half years, France (to apply for French Legion Army) on 2016 for more than 15 days | In Afghanistan- Security guard in a private hotel (ISCO-08 Unit group 5414) | Nephew in France | Future settlement and children's future | Separated from wife and daughter for 10 years since 2011, and from son 2 years since 2019 | Yes – one time (35 days) in 2018 | Yes – already applied in 2021 for family reunification to bring wife and infant son (waiting for visa), will apply for daughter's reunification 3-4 years |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|--|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| Aditya | Son and daughter (from 1 st wife) in Nepal Currently living with present wife and her daughter in Portugal since 2019 | Malaysia on 2003 for four and half years, Dubai on 2010 for four years (for economic reasons), Russia on 2015 for about 40 days (to enter Europe) | In Malaysia -Security guard in a private office (ISCO-08 Unit group 5414) In Dubai – Kitchen helper in a private restaurant (ISCO-08 Unit Group 9412) | N/A Entered Portugal with a Nepali group | Future settlement | Separated from son and daughter for 5 years since 2015 | Yes – one time (40 days) in 2018 | Not able, because of poor relationship with former wife (children’s mother) Currently living with present wife and her daughter |
| Ritesh | Wife and daughter in Portugal (since 2018) | Denmark on 2014 for (with student visa to enter Portugal) | N/A | Relative whose son had travelled to Portugal from Denmark | Financial security and child’s future | Separated from wife and daughter for 4 years from 2014 to 2018 (now reunited) | No | Already reunited since 2018 (applied on 2017) |
| Ashok | Son in Portugal since 2020, wife and daughter still living in Nepal | Belgium on 2006 for 9 years (economic and settlement reasons) | In Belgium - Electrical technician in a private construction company and later as a freelance electrical technician (ISCO-08 Unit Group 7137) | Nepali friend who was living in Portugal at that time | Future settlement and children’s future | Separated from wife and son for 14 years from 2006 to 2019 (now reunited) Still separated from daughter for 15 years since 2006 | Yes – once (40 days) in 2018 | Yes – already applied in 2020 for family reunification to bring wife and daughter (waiting for visa) Already reunited with son since 2020 (applied on 2019) |
| Krishav | Wife, daughter and son in Portugal since 2016 – son was born in Portugal in 2016 | No | N/A | Sister who was already settled in Portugal with her family | Future settlement and children’s future | Separated from wife and daughter for 2.5 years from late 2013 to 2016 (now reunited) | Yes – three times (with minimum of 35 days stay each time) in 2015, 2017 and 2019 | Already reunited since 2016 (applied on 2015) |

Table 5-2 b: Dimension of Analysis – Current situation and Transnational parenting

| Pseudonym | Current Portuguese language learning (level) | Institutional involvement and support received in Portugal | Communication patterns and its potential in parenting practice | Relationship with partner | Major caregiver of children (in Nepal and Portugal) | Current role of remittance in child rearing (family support) | Influence on perception on parenting and fatherhood | Expectations from children |
|------------------|--|--|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| Bishal | Plans to take formal language classes in future | Not involved in NRNA but a member of NRNA helped him find job | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Medium to express love to the child | Based on understanding and feeling of responsibility towards family | Participant's wife and parents | No need to send regular remittance because of family savings | Mostly by friends | Hopes that his son continues his further study in Canada after finishing his high school in Portugal. He also hopes that his son would look after them (he and his wife) in future |
| Manoj | Completed A1 level (took classes in private language center) | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-4 times a week Medium to feel attached and to encourage the child | Based on trust and tolerance | Participant's mother | Sends some money in Nepal every three months | Mostly by childhood experiences and wife | Hopes that their daughter feels connected and not grow detached from their culture |
| Himal | Completed A1 and A2 level (government provided) | Actively involved with NRNA- have received support in personal health issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Medium to share life activities and to assist the children in studies | Based on trust and understanding | Wife | Sends some money in Nepal every month | Mostly by childhood experiences and parental support | Hopes that his son doesn't get negatively influenced by the western culture. Confident that his daughter will obey them. |
| Prem | Plans to take formal language classes in future | Recently got involved in NRNA – a member of NRNA and Magar Sangh helped him find a job during his initial days in Portugal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Medium to connect and engage with children | Based on understanding and sharing | Wife | Sends 300 to 400 euros every month | Mostly by childhood experiences and friends | Hopes they study and lead a better life in Portugal |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|--|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| Aditya | Plans to take formal language classes in future | Not involved in NRNA but have received help in settling down and finding job from members of NRNA during initial days in Portugal | No communication due to difficult relationship with former wife (children's mother) | Strained relation with former wife who is primary care giver of children in Nepal Relationship with present wife is based on understanding | In Nepal: former wife (to his children) In Portugal: his present wife (to her daughter) | Doesn't send money after divorce with former wife in Nepal | Mostly by childhood experiences | Hopes to invite his children in Nepal to Portugal and apply for their Portuguese passports |
| Ritesh | Completed A1 and A2 level (government provided) | Involved as a member of NRNA – NRNA helped him find job | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used to communicate daily Medium of connecting with daughter and wife before reuniting | Based on support and care | While in Nepal: Participant's wife and mother Now in Portugal: He and his wife | No need to send remittance because reunited with his family Before reuniting – used to send some money every month | Mostly by childhood experiences and parents | Hopes that his daughter studies and succeeds in life and always stay connected to them (he and his wife) |
| Ashok | Completed A1 and A2 level (government provided) | Actively involved in Magar Sangh – which helped him broaden public relation with Nepalese society in Portugal and also hire trustworthy people in his business | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily Medium to share everyday happenings of life and connect | Based on understanding | In Nepal: wife In Portugal: He takes care of his son | Sends some money every month | Mostly by parents and wife | Hopes that his children study and settle in Portugal |
| Krishav | Completed A1 and A2 level (government provided) | Actively involved in NRNA – it has helped him connect with Nepalese in Portugal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used to communicate daily Medium to connect with family and deal with everyday struggle before reuniting | Peaceful and based on partnership | Wife | No need to send remittance because reunited with his family Before reuniting – used to send some money every month | Mostly by wife and friends | Hopes that his children understand their (he and his wife) struggle and maintains connection in future |

5.4 Reasons to migrate

This section discusses the participants' motive to migrate along with the trajectory of migration. It is important to track their previous migratory experiences so as to understand their decision-making process, which will help to understand the migrant's reason to move to Portugal.

5.4.1 Primary motivations to migrate

International migration is a part of family strategy to sustain life, earn more and have a better chance to avoid socio-economic and political issues in home country (Grillo, 2008). In the case of my study, the participants shared that their reason to migrate was hope of achieving economic prosperity. More specifically, they expressed their motivations to migrate to Portugal were either in search of future settlement with family and/or future security of child's future in regards to their education and life as a whole. They basically expressed their wish to bringing positive changes in the lives of their families and themselves by providing better future in Europe.

Looking at the micro level, the aim of participants to migrate was in search of future settlement through opportunities of employment, providing their children a better and secured future in Europe. Most of them migrated to Portugal after hearing lived-stories of other Nepali immigrants through different networks that gave them hope of better life and future in Europe (meso-level influence). Some of them were motivated to come to Portugal with an understanding that Portuguese labor market is more flexible in terms of gaining jobs. They thought that getting jobs help to obtain a residence permit that would facilitate their family reunification plans.

After almost 4 years of working in South Korea, I started thinking about my daughter's future and our settlement. Getting residence in Korea is not at all easy so I got in touch with my cousin and brother-in-law who were living in Portugal since few years. They suggested me to come to Portugal. They said that getting residence card is easy here.

(Manoj, 30 years)

I have had a hard childhood. I lived in hardships and could not even pursue my studies further. Due to low educational qualification, I had to go through so many struggles in life. I do not want that to happen for my children. Since I do not have strong base (own house and property) in Nepal to offer to my children, all I can offer them is life in Europe so that they can have the future they deserve.

(Prem, 39 years)

Like many other Nepalese (I mean, my Nepali friends in Portugal), my intention was to settle in Europe with my family. My daughter's future was my first motivation to choose to come here (Portugal). I wanted to give her the best future I could.

(Ritesh, 35 years)

5.4.2 Previous migration experiences

Some of the participants' migratory trajectories revealed that their actual purpose to move to other countries prior was a part of strategy to enter Portugal, while others spent some years in other countries for economic reasons and finally came to Portugal in search of settlement. There were only one out of eight participants (40-year-old) who came directly to Portugal from Nepal without any previous experiences of migration. Most of them came to Portugal one way or the other through the influence of their social networks.

I had travelled to Denmark in 2018 to attend one conference from my office. On the first night of my conference, I called my friend who had recently gone to Portugal from the UK. While I was in Nepal, I used to call him once in a while in Facebook and we used to have several conversations about how life could be in Europe. I had shared with him that I was coming to Denmark, then he was the one who suggested me that it was the best time to come to Portugal and try my luck in settling in the Europe.

(Bishal, 38 years)

Getting direct visa to Portugal from South Korea was not easy so I first took Schengen visa and travelled to France, stayed there with one of my friends for two days and flew to Portugal.

(Manoj, 30 years)

My earning was not enough to fulfill my family's needs. After having our daughter, we (me and my wife) were worried about our future expenses. I used to support my family with my earning alone. So, I started talking to my friends and relatives about this situation to figure out what to do. One of my relatives said that his son went to Portugal from Denmark. He further told me that going to Denmark with a student visa (since I had Higher education degree) would be feasible, and from there I could enter Portugal. Most of my relatives also said that it is a good idea.

(Ritesh, 35 years)

As explained in contextualization chapter, Portuguese immigration policies have undergone several changes with the intention to regularize the living situations of migrants and allow them opportunities to reunite with families. These reasons have fostered migration to Portugal among the participants of the study as some of them revealed their struggle about being undocumented motivated them to come to Portugal. According to Prem (39-year-old) and Ashok (44-year-old), they came to Portugal from other part of Europe on the basis of heard success settlement stories of other Nepali immigrants in Portugal. They also revealed that their failure to achieve legal status in other European countries motivated them to try their luck in Portugal.

I had heard a lot of things about life in Europe from my relatives in Germany and France. My cousin in Germany offered me invitation letter to apply for visit visa from Afghanistan so I took my chance and went to Germany. When I was in Germany, I got a call from my nephew (cousin's son) who was studying in France. He told me that there was an opening in French legion army and I should try applying for it. My mistake was I got too excited about it and depended on half information I received from my nephew. After I reached France and applied for it, I got rejected in the first step of the test and realized that I was not qualified. Then my nephew consoled me and said that many Nepalese go to Portugal and have been successful in getting residence. Although I was skeptical about it, I did not have much choice left as I did not feel confident to get settled in France after getting rejected for French army.

(Prem, 39 years)

After living for 9 years in Belgium, I could not acquire legal status and also lost my business. So, I realized that Belgium was not a place for me to settle. Thus, I came in contact with one of my friends from Nepal who was living in Portugal for three years. He suggested me to come to Portugal

(Ashok, 44 years)

One of the participants also took a risky and expensive route to enter Portugal in search of future settlement in Europe. Aditya (a 45-year-old) decided to enter Portugal through multiple European countries because of lack of legal documents. After living in Malaysia for 4.5 years and Dubai for 4 years as a labor migrant, he came back to Nepal. During this time, he heard

about a process by which Nepali people were going to Russia as a medium to enter desired destination in Europe through the help of brokers.

After so many years of working in different counties like Malaysia and Dubai, I was tired of that life. I did not have hope of living a better life in Nepal, so Europe was last hope for me. This why I chose this do or die way entering Europe.

(Aditya, 45 years)

He applied for visit visa to Russia from Nepal as a part of setup via a broker's help and received visit visa of 45 days. He paid around 9000 euros for this processing to reach Russia. He went to Russia with a group of 4 other Nepali travelers. After reaching Russia, five of them bought a car together in order to travel. They travelled from one state to another for about 40 days and stayed in the car throughout the time. They finally reached Murmansk state in Russia (border near Finland) and stayed 18 more days while they waited to cross the border to enter Finland. After entering Finland, they were held by the immigration officials. So, to avoid deportation, they left behind their car and all their documents including passports and decided to go to Sweden. They hired a taxi to go to Sweden, from where they went to Denmark via train and taxi. Then they travelled to Germany from Denmark. Again, they went to France from Germany, from where they reached Spain via bus. Then from Spain, they finally entered Portugal via train. He arrived Portugal in almost 5 months from the time he left Nepal. The total travel cost from Finland to Portugal was about 900 euros per person, which amounted to around 10000 euros total expenditure per person.

In conclusion, the participants migrated to Portugal from different parts of the world (see table 5-2a) with the intention to settle in Europe. This shows that the participants considered Portugal as more friendly destination in comparison to other European countries to settle with their families.

5.5 Arrival and settlement in Portugal

This section explores the participant's initial feelings and challenges they encountered, and the help they received from their social networks, while trying to settle in Portugal. The findings also show how they accessed support before and after migration from different social networks. It also draws on the role of social networks in migrants' life to deal with challenges they faced while settling down in Portugal.

5.5.1 Initial feelings and challenges while accessing work, visa and housing

Most of the participants expressed that they experienced feelings of nervousness and worry which were mostly associated with the challenges they encountered in initial days of their arrival in Portugal. The initial challenges basically included getting access to work, due to which they were worried getting accommodation and sustaining their lives. Some expressed their nervousness about being immigrant in a foreign place while being hopeful about the future. The findings revealed that the immigrants were able to deal with their initial challenges after arrival in the country via access to jobs that allowed them to have a place to stay and hope for better future.

I was confused and worried. I had some savings that I earned in Denmark but still not getting a job for almost a month made me panic.

(Himal, 41 years)

First few months was very difficult for me as I did not have any place to stay or any job. The money I brought from Nepal was almost finished and I was feeling tensed and scared until I found a job.

(Aditya, 45 years)

It was a mixed feeling. I was hopeful for the future but at the same time I was worried and nervous about being in a completely new place.

(Ritesh, 35 years)

It was my first time in abroad so I was obviously a little confused and worried.

(Krishav, 40 years)

5.5.2 Role of migrants' support network before, during and after migration

The participants of this study mentioned the social networks available before and after their migration in Portugal have paramount role in their decision to come to Portugal as well as their settlement in Portugal. Some social networks were known whereas some were unknown to the migrant before arrival in Portugal. These networks, either known or unknown (weak or strong) were important medium to advance the participants' migration journey.

For Ritesh, a 35-year-old, social network available to him in Nepal was one of the major motivating sources of migration. When he was presented with a viable option to go to Portugal by one of his relative (whose son has chosen same course of migration), it triggered his migration decision.

(...) One of my relatives said that his son went to Portugal from Denmark. He further told me that going to Denmark with a student visa (since I had Higher education degree) would be feasible, and from there I could enter Portugal. Most of my relatives also said that it is a good idea.

(Ritesh, 35 years)

Krishav, a 40-year-old expressed feelings of relief because of support available in Portugal even prior arrival that motivated him to migrate in the first place.

I have good relationship with my sister who was already in Portugal. She offered me an invitation letter to come to Portugal, as she was already settled here (in Portugal) with her family, which made me think it was a good idea. (...) But thankfully, I had a Nepali friend and my sister who helped me look for jobs. Through my friend's contact, I got a job in Chinese restaurant after two months of arrival. Only after getting a job, I felt more hopeful.

(Krishav, 40 years)

Aditya, a 45-year-old shared that strangers (Nepali) helped him sustain during his initial days of arrival in Portugal. Similarly, Prem (39-year-old) mentions the support he received from a Nepali person he did not know before arriving to Portugal, who was his nephew's friend and also an active member of *Magar Samaj* and helped him find job in his initial time in Portugal. He also let him stay at his apartment for about 15 days before he found a job. This shows relevance to Granovetter's (1973) findings about 'weak ties' being more important in finding jobs for immigrants than the 'strong ties', which implies that sometimes help is received from unknown people who are at better job position than their known friends or relatives.

In this difficult time, I met some kind Nepali people who let me stay in their apartment for few days. Even though I didn't know them personally, they helped me a lot. I lived in many people's place to survive while I had temporary job with less earning.

(Aditya, 45 years)

This person whom I didn't even know before coming to Portugal was a friend of my nephew. It is so amazing that he helped me so much. He helped me find job and also let me stay at his place for free while I looked for jobs.(...)

Since I live in a foreign land, I believe keeping people of my nationality close would be beneficial to learn and grow. If I take part in helping Nepalese immigrants now, I may need help in future and I'll know who to ask help at that time.

(Prem, 39 years)

There are some who received tremendous help from their relatives and family members who were already in Portugal before their arrival.

The biggest support I have ever received is from my family relation. My cousin sister and her husband have helped me a lot. I still go to their house almost every weekend. They invite me on any special occasions like: festivals, birthdays, and so on. They are my family here. When I did not have temporary card, I also have been able to send some gifts and remittance in the past through them (when they were visiting Nepal).

(Manoj, 30 years)

The participants also mentioned the role of NRNA Portugal in their settlement in Portugal (see table 5-2b). Some also believe this association gives them space to get close to their identity as a Nepali and also allows them to serve other fellow Nepalese in return of help they received while settling down in Portugal.

One time, when I had just started engaging in NRNA, I fell sick. I had bad leg cramp due to which I could not walk or stand. The friends I made through NRNA helped me a lot during this phase. They carried me and took me to the pharmacy. After consulting to the doctor there, I took medicine and got fine. This is one instance I always recall because if I did not have them, no one would help me because I do not have my family here.

(Himal, 41 years)

I recently got myself registered as a member in NRNA, but my link with NRNA goes back to 2014 when I had just arrived in Portugal. This association gave me job when I was new and jobless in the country. Not only that, due to NRNA I got involved in the agency I am working now. I owe a lot to this association, which is why I signed up to be an official member so that I can give back and also stay connected to the Nepali society in Portugal.

(Ritesh, 35 years)

Another association besides NRNA Portugal that was mentioned by two of the participants (Prem, 39 years) and (Ashok, 44 years) was *Magar Sangh*. According to Prem, the person who helped him in his initial days was an active member of this association (mentioned earlier). Similarly, according to Ashok, getting involved in Magar Sangh has helped him broaden his connection among Nepalese in Portugal, through which he also could hire some people for his business.

Thus, the findings of my study show that the migrant support networks not only influenced their decision to migrate but also facilitated their settlement in Portugal. By the help received from the social networks, they were able to find jobs, that directly influenced their parenting practice from distance (as explained in theoretical chapter, that social networks influence transnational parenting).

5.6 Current living situation in Portugal

This section provides information on participant's current state of living in Portugal. It typically includes participant's present work and visa condition along with the challenges they have faced or are facing in regards to learning Portuguese language. It also presents the strategies the participants have used or are planning to apply to encounter those language learning challenges.

5.6.1 Work and visa condition

All the participants of the study are currently living in regular situation concerning they stay in Portugal, with a temporary residence permit. Most of the participants obtained residence permit after a year or more of arrival in Portugal. They were able to obtain residence permit after being able to pay off regular taxes through the jobs they were engaged in. In addition, obtaining temporary residence card opened up opportunities of better jobs, family reunification and a settled life in Portugal for all the participants, as it is explained in theoretical chapter that immigrant's socio-economic situation influences family reunification.

After six months of paying regular tax, I collected all the documents required like: SEF entry paper, address paper, salary sheet, criminal record from Nepal. I was then eligible to apply for temporary residence card, which I got within a year of my arrival in Portugal.

(Bishal, 38 years)

Manoj (a 30-year-old) and Himal (a 41-year-old-man) claimed that not getting a proper work contract from the places they have worked initially made it challenging to start paying taxes which would facilitate the application for residence permit.

I worked in two restaurants as a dishwasher but both did not give me work contract. I also worked in cash in an Indian grocery shop as a helper for a short time. Getting a job that gives work contract was so difficult. It took me a year and half to get work contract so that I could start paying tax.

(Manoj, 30 years)

I worked in Chinese mini market initially for four months where I did not get job contract but it helped me in my initial expense in Portugal. Although I had some savings from Denmark, I used some of it during the first month when I had no job. Luckily, I found a job contract in a Chinese restaurant by which I could start paying tax.

(Himal, 41 years)

Ashok, a 44- year-old mentioned that obtaining the residence card allowed him to open his own company through which he could advance his skills and expertise by starting his own company.

While working as an individual freelancer, I was offered a job in a construction company owned by a Nepali person. He hired me as an electrician with a job contract. This helped me pay my taxes legally, due to which I could apply for temporary residence. I got my card and I opened my own company in 2017.

(Ashok, 44 years)

Krishav, a 40-year-old shared that he was able to apply for family reunification and invite his wife and children to Portugal after obtaining temporary residence card in 2015.

I applied for family reunification in 2015 right after receiving my first temporary residence card. It took 9 months for my family to arrive here (Portugal).

(Krishav, 40 years)

5.6.2 Portuguese Language learning – motivation, strategies and challenges

The personal experiences of participants in language learning are mostly dependent upon their work place and living situations. For some participants, lack of Portuguese language made settlement in the initial period more challenging while for some it did not really affect. Also, the purpose of learning the language for most of the participants is either focused on future plans associated with obtaining passports /citizenship or for living an easier life in terms of occupation. All the participants wish to reunite with their families in future so learning the language was part of their future plan.

Manoj (a 30-year-old) shared communication was more challenging because of poor English language skills while he had not yet learned the Portuguese language. In the present, he has good language skills which has made his life easier in Portugal.

At first, it was very challenging. My English is not good, so I used to struggle while trying to communicate. There have been few funny as well as embarrassing moments in the past because of that. However, while I worked in Indian restaurant and Indian grocery, it was somehow easy because I can understand Hindi even though I cannot speak so well. (...) Now since, it has been already over 4 years in Portugal, I can speak, read and write basic Portuguese very well. I took a class in a private language center for basic A1 level, which helped a lot. I do not remember the name of the place. It was near (...) metro station, which is now temporarily closed due to Corona.

(Manoj, 30 years)

In case of Himal (a 41-year-old) he faced communication challenges in his former work place, before learning the Portuguese language, despite having English language skills.

In the beginning, while I worked in the restaurant, communication was difficult due to language barriers between me and the other workers and the owner. The owner and most of the workers were Chinese so they either understood Chinese or Portuguese. We used to use sign language (informal) to communicate. So, I used to have lot of confusion while communicating. Even though I knew English, it was not much of use because they did not understand. If the owner was not impressed by my work, he would have probably asked me to leave.

(Himal, 41 years)

Himal used both formal and informal strategies to deal with the challenges. The formal strategy of language learning involved taking formal language classes and informal strategy involved his personal method of learning language through language book and YouTube videos.

Since I worked in a Chinese restaurant before, I had to learn basic language very quickly. Within three months of joining the restaurant, I had learnt to speak very well. I had bought a language book that has Nepali to Portuguese translation in it, which made it easier to understand the meaning of words. I also used to watch videos in YouTube to learn new words and the way to use them in a sentence. I used to learn language every evening before going to bed. (...) Until now, I have cleared A1 and A2 levels in the language. I took formal classes in (name of the school), which is government-provided program, for which I paid 25 euros. After studying there, I gave language test on (an institute) (for which he paid 75 euros) and passed both the tests. This is why I can speak basic Portuguese very well.

(Himal, 41 years)

Krishav (a 40-year-old) also used both formal and informal strategies of language learning.

I have cleared A1 and A2 level in the language. I took formal classes in (name of the school) and gave my tests. It was a government-provided program. (...) I also used my own strategy to

learn language. I bought a language book that has Nepali to Portuguese translation in it, which made it easier to understand the meaning of words. I also used to practice the language with my colleagues in Chinese restaurant.

(Krishav, 40 years)

Some participants like Bishal and Aditya do not have Portuguese language skills until now. They expressed they haven't faced much challenges associated with language barrier because of their English language skills and also for of working in a place/position which did not require them to speak Portuguese.

I work in a restaurant where most of my workmates are Nepalese, so we speak in common Nepali language with each other. I don't have to engage in daily direct conversation with the customers. And luckily, I have good working knowledge in English, which is useful when talking with my boss.

(Bishal, 38 years)

I worked as a dishwasher initially so I was not required to have language skills. Even now, I work in a hotel where many foreigner guests come, so I speak in English. I learnt English while living in Malaysia and Dubai. I do not need Portuguese language for my job.

(Aditya, 45 years)

Bishal and Aditya want to learn the language in future because of basic language learning requirement associated with obtaining Portuguese passport/citizenship.

I plan to take formal classes in future but now I am doing fine with how much I know. I can reply and understand very basic Portuguese. I understand that I will need more language knowledge because many Portuguese people do not want to talk if we don't speak their language. Also, in future I will need basic reading and writing language skill to apply for passport.

(Bishal, 38 years)

Due to many struggles in my life, I feel older than I am. It is challenging for me to learn new language. Still, I will take formal class in future because I need passport.

(Aditya, 45 years)

Similarly, Ashok (a 44-year-old) have learnt the language to pursue his future plan to apply for Portuguese passport.

I took basic A1 and A2 classes and gave tests from (name of the school). I paid 25 euros. I took these tests to get certificate, which will be useful to apply for passport in future.

(Ashok, 44 years)

Thus, the motivations leading to strategies and challenges associated to language learning are part of participants' settlement in Portugal. The experiences and strategies were not the same for all the participants depending on their own jobs. For some, learning language was necessary at their jobs while for some the knowledge on Portuguese language was not so important. The study also found that most of the participants have taken or are planning to take formal language learning in order to apply for citizenship in future, as explained in contextualization chapter that accepting and learning the language fosters immigrants' integration in Portugal.

5.7 Parenting roles from distance

The study aims to explore participants' transnational parenting practices by assessing their communication patterns, marital relation, care arrangements and role of remittance in parenting across borders. This section offers discussions on transnational family practices of the participants which is facilitated via virtual parenting and associated challenges. The virtual way of parenting is practiced by communication along with the sending and receiving sending of remittances. All the participants of this study have either lived or are living in a transnational family situation with experiences of parenting from distance.

5.7.1 Communication patterns with partner and children

The participants shared their ways of maintaining transnational ties especially with their partner and children, which revealed that maintaining regular communication with their families (see table 5-2b) in Nepal is a way of practicing transnational parenthood. They also expressed that being able to communicate on regular basis has helped them maintain strong familial connection despite the distance, adding the role of social media to be paramount in maintaining communication with family back at home.

The only thing that got me connected with my family is my phone and laptop. My son uses Facebook so I called him on a daily basis during nighttime in Nepal in his messenger. I have been lucky since I do not have to work many hours in a day, which allows me to have personal time. But whenever I got busy or could not make a call around the regular time, he used to call me himself and ask why I didn't call. Although he lives with his mother, sometimes when his mother was in different room, three of us even used to talk on group call.

(Bishal, 38 years)

I call them almost every day. It was a bit difficult to manage time when I was in Afghanistan because of long duty hours. It was not that easy to talk over phone while I was working in restaurants also but now since I have started working in Uber, I have had more free time to talk to them, which has made our communication regular. I talk to my wife and then talk to my daughter and ask her what she is doing and how her day was. I even try to communicate with my son through video calls by making faces and making him laugh. He recognizes me and comes near phone whenever he sees me.

(Prem, 39 years)

After coming to Portugal, I used to call my family on a regular basis. I would do that because I wanted to talk to my family and also make sure that my daughter sees me and recognizes my voice. By doing this, I would feel assured that she would not grow detached from me. Slowly, she started to engage in video calls, which helped a lot to build an involved relationship with my daughter.

(Ritesh, 35 years)

Talking over audio and video calls made it easier to participate in children's life even from far. I talked with them regularly after leaving Nepal and even now I talk with my wife and daughter almost every day.

(Ashok, 44 years)

There wasn't a single day that went without talking with my daughter and wife. Talking with them every day helped me to cope in a better way with new life and struggle here (in Portugal). I called my wife on her messenger application and we used to do video calls. My daughter used to also engage in the conversation.

(Krishav, 40 years)

They shared that even though the communication helps in maintaining translational fatherhood, it is still difficult because of the distance between them and their children. Thus, participants also shared the challenges they face in regards to parenting from distance.

No matter how convenient the communication has become with the use of technologies, it is never as convenient as physical conversation. For instance, it can be difficult to discipline the child through phone. There have been few times when he gives his mother a hard time by not listening to her, I try to tell my son few things and I feel it could have been different if I were able to explain him in person.

(Bishal, 38 years)

Being a parent from distance is challenging no matter what. I have some kind of communication with my daughter because she is old enough to understand the situation but I am worried that my son won't feel much connected to me because he didn't get any physical love and attention from me during his initial years.

(Prem, 39 years)

Talking over phone is never the same as being together. Like I can feel so much more attached with my son after he arrived here. I am close with my daughter but it's not the same.

(Ashok, 44 years)

Distance is itself challenging. No amount of video calls could actually fulfill the physical presence. My daughter always listens to me so I did not really face other parental challenges but surely the distance affected our relationship to some extent. I think that my daughter felt a little distant with passing years away from me.

(Krishav, 40 years)

Thus, communicating on a regular basis with their partner and children has made it easier for the participants to participate in parenting from distance. However, they have faced emotional challenges and difficulty in parenting despite maintaining regular communication.

5.7.2 Relationship with partner and care arrangements

It has been discussed in theoretical chapter that marital relation affects parenting (as pointed out by Belsky, 1984 and Carling et al., 2012). In case of this study, it is found that quality of relationship between the participants and their partners has influenced relationship between them and their children. Not only that, the participants also shared that good relationship with the partners has made it easier for them to get more involved in their children's life despite distance. In sum, participants reveal that relationship with their spouse (or their children's mother) influences the relationship with their children.

My wife and I trust each other a lot. She is the one who has constantly supported me. She constantly pushes me to do better for our family. Even though I have been away, we take any important decision together. My wife has full liberty to take decision but she always tries to take my point of view in most of the decisions we need to make. Like the school our children are going is the one I recommended because I know the Principal of that school.

(Manoj, 32 years)

My wife deserves a lot of praise. We have been living away for more than a decade now and she still makes me feel loved and cared for. It is because we have a very good understanding among us. This has helped us to maintain such good relation. (...)

My children are more attached with their mother and it is understandable because they spent more time with her than me. Since, I have good relation with my wife, my children feel connected to me even when I have been able to spent so less time with them.

(Ashok, 44 years)

On the other hand, one participant (Aditya, 45-year-old) shared about his inability to maintain a good relationship with his children because of strained relationship with their mother (his former wife).

My former wife doesn't allow me to engage with my children. She doesn't want me to get close to the children. As she lives with them, I cannot talk to them but I ask about them with my relatives who live nearby to know how they are doing. She doesn't allow to maintain communication with my children and tries to put bad impression about me to my children.

(Aditya, 45 years)

5.7.3 Role of remittance

Since the participants are all migrants from Nepal and are working in Portugal to earn their livelihoods, they have or are involved in sending remittance to support their families back at home. Sending money is also part of being involved in transnational parenting for these fathers.

I earn around 950 euros and save around 300-350 euros every month, after spending for room rent and food. Only sometimes due to some other personal needs, I save less. I usually send some money in every three months.

(Manoj, 30 years)

I own two business i.e., construction company of my own and a sushi restaurant in partnership with my friend. My overall saving after spending for rent, food and sending money back home is around 1300-1400 euros every month. I pay for both my children's education in Nepal and in Portugal.

(Ashok, 44 years)

Himal, a 41-year-old shared he sent most part of his income back at home due to the facilities provided in his previous job. The money he sent was used to support his family and also to pay off his debt that he took for his previous migration journey. At the present, he sends some amount of his income every month and shares the children's educational expenses with his wife.

I was given basic salary in that restaurant. The owners really liked me so they even offered me a room to stay. Since I could eat and stay in the restaurant, I saved all my earning which were around 600 at that time. I used to keep only 100 euros for myself and send all the money to my wife. I also sent some to my brother to pay off the debt he took for me to send me to Denmark. I worked in that restaurant for 2 years and earned good money. (...) My wife earns around 500 euros per month, which is a good salary in Nepal. And on top of that, I also send some amount every month. We send our children to private school and life is also expensive in city than in village. Both of our earnings cover that.

(Himal, 41 years)

In summary, remittances can be an important aspect of maintaining transnational tie with children and partner for Nepali fathers. As explained by Carling et al. (2012) in theoretical chapter that remittances aid transnational parenthood, the participants who are able to send money to their families in Nepal are involved in financing their children's education and future. Also, the migrant fathers who are able to send remittances can show commitment towards their family as an act of giving (Carling et al., 2012). This also resembles portrayal of expected gendered roles by fathers being involved in providing financially to the families.

5.8 Fathering responsibilities

This section offers discussion on the responsibilities undertaken by the fathers and the ways their perception on parenting and fatherhood is influenced. The participants in the study revealed that the fulfillment of responsibilities as fathers are derived from their own perception on parenting and fatherhood as well as their ability to perform expected roles in regards to parenting from distance.

5.8.1 Perception on parenting and fatherhood

Most of the participants shared that their perception on parenting is based on their wish to provide a better and secure future to their children. Not only that, they also expressed their hope to instill good family values in their children.

As a parent, our biggest and important responsibility is to secure our child's future. If it wasn't for our children, me and my wife would not be making these compromises. I am struggling here in abroad and my wife is handling our children while also working.

(Himal, 41 years)

I always want my children to take good habits and lessons from me and my wife. I want them to understand that life involves struggle and hard work. But the main thing is never to forget family values.

(Ashok, 44 years)

Me and my wife (both) are working day and night for our children. We expanded our business so that they will not have to struggle like us. For me, being a parent is not only providing financially but also giving them time and good moral values.

(Krishav, 40 years)

The participants mentioned that their perception on parenting or fathering is the reflection of their interaction and relationship with different people (with wife/partner, parents, and so on) in their lives. As mentioned in theoretical chapter, interaction with others shapes the concept of self among fathers (symbolic interaction theory). The participants shared that their view on parenting is mostly affected by their relationship and experiences of life.

I grew up in a village with lot of difficulties. I was ambitious from my childhood because my parents especially my father used to tell me that we (me and my brother) should be able to do a lot more for our children than what they were able to do for us. My parents have always been supportive of me and that is why I am here. Because of this motivation, I think that being a parent means providing our children with a better future than we have.

(Himal, 41 years)

My parents always taught me good values and encouraged me to work hard with patience. My wife always supported me through thick and thin (good and bad times). All these made me overcome the struggles and hard times I went through while I was trying to settle in Europe. I failed several times but I never gave up. So, I want my children to understand these things.

(Ashok, 44 years)

My wife always tells me we have to do this and that for our children. She is very organized and a good planner. She says even though we are away from our home country, we should teach our children our culture and morals. Also, my friends in Portugal who are working hard to offer best life to their children and wife motivate me to think about my family's future.

(Krishav, 40 years)

Similarly, the participants also further shared their perception on fathering (being father themselves) according to which, most of the fathers expressed their responsibility towards providing better educational opportunities to their children. Not only that, as fathers they also hope to make their children understand the value of hard work and respect family.

It is about laying a base for the children so that they can lay their foot and start paving their own way. This means giving them better educational opportunities so that they can build a secure life. And more than that, it is about providing them with opportunities to secure their life. This is the reason I chose to come to Europe – to give them a better place to live.

(Himal, 41 years)

I am the father, so I provide financially for my children but I don't think my job is limited to that. Even though I am far, I always have tried my best to make my children understand the value of education, hard work and good morals to succeed in life.

(Ashok, 44 years)

Being a father is about being a role model for the children. Even though my children are mostly attached to their mother, they also learn a lot from me. I always make sure I am giving good lessons from how I behave and speak with my children so that it helps them in their future. As a father, I think I am responsible to give them good education and make them feel more responsible as they grow up. Along with that, I also want to make them feel connected to us (me and my wife). So as a father I also make them feel loved and protected.

(Krishav, 40 years)

In conclusion, the participant fathers involved in parenting from distance had similar perception on parenting and fatherhood, which were mostly based on securing their children and family's future (see table 5-2b). The perception among these participant fathers was mostly influenced by their life experiences and social interaction they are involved in. Most of them accepted their roles as financial provider of the family while also declaring that they do not perceive their roles to be limited to only economic aspects. They also shared their wishes to be emotionally attached to their children and be as involved as possible. This challenges the typical stereotypical gendered role of fathers being only breadwinner of the family.

5.8.2 Fathering roles before and after migration

The participants shared their fathering roles before and after leaving Nepal. Along with that, they shared the challenges they faced during separation and parenting from distance. Some fathers expressed guilt for not being able to get more involved with their children because of early separation. They also shared that they tried to make the most of the time and moments they could get with their children before migration.

I got to be very less involved with my daughter. This makes me feel incredibly guilty. It is hurting actually. However, there are small but important things I was involved in during my daughter's initial young days. I used to help my wife in taking care of our daughter like changing her clothes, feeding her, bathing her, and so on. Even though my sister and mother helped in great deal and I was busy in business, I got involved whenever I had chance. I vividly remember one day when my wife was sick and I spent whole day with my daughter. That day, I actually felt like a father. It was the best day.

(Manoj, 30 years)

I haven't been able to get involved with my children so closely due to long years of separation. But the times I have been able to share with my daughter during her young age until 2 years. I shared my intimate moments as a father by cuddling and talking with her. I also tried my best to help my wife in taking care of our daughter whenever I was at home. I used to teach her good manners and take care of her by being involved in activities such as: bathing, feeding and making her go to sleep.

(Prem, 39 years)

Some also shared that they tried to do their best as a father by being involved as much as possible with their children before migrating to Portugal.

Although I did not help my wife that much in household chores, I always was involved in taking care of our children. I was mostly involved in taking care of our son since our daughter was little and needed more constant maternal care. We were both working as well as raising our children, so I did not want to burden my wife with all the work. I used to bathe my son, take him to bed. As I was a teacher, I was responsible in taking care of his home assignments. I also used to check with his teacher about his academic performance. I used to play with him during holidays. With my daughter, I used to feed her sometimes and comb her hair.

(Himal, 41 years)

My son was not born at that time (he was born in Portugal after reunification), but we had our daughter. Since I worked in a school for nine years, I knew how to be around children even before my daughter was born. This skill helped me to get to be a good and responsible father. I made sure she felt loved. About my responsibilities, I did almost everything I could to help my wife. Not only that, I took that opportunity to enjoy my fatherhood. I used to help our daughter get ready to go to school, cook for her and also used to help her in home works. As my daughter was already 7 years old when I left Nepal, she was equally dependent on me as on her mother.

(Krishav, 40 years)

The participants also mentioned that visit to Nepal from Portugal while maintaining transnational ties helped to increase closeness with their children.

When I went to Nepal for the first time, we celebrated my daughter's 8th birthday so that she could be happy with my presence and also, I could make her feel special. I took a lot of presents and chocolates for her from here (Portugal), so she was very happy. The following year again I went on Dashain and we celebrated together. I think she missed her mother less because at least I was there to fill her absence. (...)

To visit to Nepal helped a lot. It brought my daughter a lot closer to me. I can see now she feels a lot more excited to talk with me, which I did not feel before I visited her in Nepal. After my visit, we talk for more than we usually did. She even cries over in video call saying that she misses me. I console her with loving words. I always make sure she knows that whatever her mother and me are doing is only for her. And now that she is growing, she understands these things.

(Manoj, 30 years)

Going to Nepal brought my children closer to me. I took lots of gifts for them. They were really happy. During my stay, I spent quality time with them. I helped my wife with household chores and also engaged with my children. I also used that time to teach them about good and bad behavior. I could actually express my love and make them feel that.

(Himal, 41 years)

Ashok, a 44-year-old also shared his involvement in parenting from distance where he mentioned that he encourages the children to share whereabouts and their daily life activities as a medium to facilitate communication.

I used to call my children (before my son came here in Portugal) every day on group video calls and encouraged them to share their daily routine and happening. I still continue that with my daughter. Nowadays, she talks more over phone as her brother is here with me.

(Ashok, 44 years)

Similarly, Himal (a 41-year-old) mentions that he engages with their children by assisting them to do their school assignments, which he used to do while living together in Nepal.

Sometimes my children call me and ask me random help for their assignments, I ask them to send picture of the question and try to solve for them. My son mostly asks help in science subjects whereas my daughter asks mathematics questions.

(Himal, 41 years)

In summary, lengthy family separation leads to difficulty in getting involved with the children. Transnational fathers tend to feel guilty for not being able to participate in their children's life, and find home visits help in facilitating the closeness with their children. The home visits are usually possible only after obtaining residence permit which implies that immigration laws (as discussed in contextualization chapter) to be deciding factor for either lengthening or shortening family separation.

5.9 Future prospects

As migrants, all the participants have their own plans and expectations for the future that is discussed in this section. Being fathers, they also have associated expectations from the children. The study reveals that all that participants hope to reunite with their family in the host country (i.e., Portugal). Similarly, they also expressed their desire to give better life and secure future to their children.

5.9.1 Plans for family reunification

“Many immigrants, once they are settled in their new country of residence, seek to sponsor the migration of other family members to join them” (Khoo, 2003, p. 177). This has been evident in the study as the participants shared their hope of living together with their families in Portugal (see table 5-2b). Some of the participants are already living with their families, while others are planning to apply or have already applied and waiting to live together.

Bishal, a 38-year-old has already applied for family reunification for both his wife and son and is awaiting their visa. He expresses excitement towards fulfilling his hope to live with his family soon.

I am very happy and excited about getting to live with my family in Portugal. Even though, I lived with my friends, I always felt lonely but soon I'll be able to live with my own family and plan future ahead.

(Bishal, 38 years)

Manoj, a 30-year-old is planning to apply for family reunification in future (see table 5-2 a) once he is able to settle other family priorities.

My wife and I have planned that my wife will go back to Nepal by end of this year (2021) or early 2022 and then I will start collecting documents. We are also keeping our daughter's study

on mind so we will apply in a way that she can finish her school year. We do not have fix date yet but I am certainly looking forward to invite them.

(Manoj, 30 years)

Ashok, a 44-year-old is already reunited with his son in Portugal while he is waiting for his wife and daughter's arrival after they receive the visa (see table 5-2a). He shared that the spread of pandemic (Covid) delayed the processing of his wife and daughter's visa.

My wife and I have planned this mutually. Since our son is two years older than our daughter, we planned to invite him first as he was about to start his university. Then I applied for my wife and daughter too after 6 months of my son's arrival. The processing took a longer time than expected because of Covid-19 situation. The application got approved by SEF in Portugal after 4 months and has now reached Embassy of Portugal in India. We are waiting to hear more from the embassy right now.

(Ashok, 44 years)

Krishav, a 40-year-old is already reunited with his wife and daughter in 2016 (his son was born in Portugal, see table 5-2a). The total time for his family to arrive in Portugal was 9 months from the time of application.

After I applied for family reunification in 2015 right after receiving my first temporary residence card. It took 9 months for my family to arrive here (Portugal).

(Krishav, 40 years)

5.9.2 Expectations from children

Having expectations from children is a common thing among any migrant parents. The participants in this study shared their wishes in regards to their children's future, which were mostly based on their expectations of educational achievements and family closeness without forgetting culture and values.

Both my wife and me plan to wait until he finishes his high school in Portugal and then send him off to Canada (where my close relatives live) to get his Bachelor degree. He is our only son and we want him to be looking out for us. (...)

My biggest fear is he getting in relationship with foreigner (non-Nepali). I am just hoping he marries a Nepali girl in future so that we can have more family type of bond and can be closer to him.

(Bishal, 38 years)

I want my children to continue their studies in Portugal and look for settlement here.

(Ashok, 44 years)

I just wish we are able to make our children realize our struggle so that they respect it and do better in future. I also hope that they feel connected and do not grow detached from us.

(Krishav, 40 years)

In conclusion, the future prospects of Nepalese migrants in Portugal explores how macro level (immigration) policies on family reunification decides their future plans and hopes for themselves and their children. As discussed in contextualization chapter, the immigration laws and policies decided the family reunification among the participants. The possibility to reunite with partner and children in future for those who have not been reunited and also the ones who have already been reunited developed expectations from their children. As parents, the

participants were mostly hopeful about their children's educational success and family closeness in future.

6 CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter offers the summary of study's findings and analysis explained in Chapter 5. It concludes the study by reflecting on overall recap of the study as presented below. The chapter then briefly explains the study's implication for social work practice as it is part of a social work academic research along with recommendations for future research.

6.2 Summary of the findings

This qualitative study explores the perception and experiences of Nepali fathers who have practiced or are practicing transnational parenting in Portugal. The study starts by discussing the migration journeys of these Nepali migrants in order to reflect upon their motivation to move to Portugal. The role of migrant's social network before, during and after migrating to Portugal is also analyzed in order to discuss its influence in their decision to migrate, their settlement and current situation in Portugal. The migrants' current living situation in Portugal is further explained to discuss their experiences and challenges they have faced while integrating into Portuguese society. Furthermore, their transnational parenting experiences are assessed by discussing the communication patterns with their children and partner along with their participation in children's education and family livelihood through remittances. The relationship of the migrants with their partner is also analyzed in order to argue the influence of marital relationship in parenting. The study then focuses further into the migrants' fathering roles before and after migration by discussing their perception on parenting and fathering. This is done by exploring the role of social interaction and migrants' overall life experiences using symbolic interaction theory given by Blumer (1969,1986). The findings are concluded by discussing the migrants' future plans associated with family reunification and their expectations from their children as fathers.

One of the major findings of this study is that most of the migrated to Portugal with the aim of settling down in Europe for their children's future. The migrants were also motivated to learn the language in order to acquire nationality in future (as discussed in Chapters 2 and 5). The intention of these migrants in moving to Portugal was associated with their feeling of being responsible fathers. Their decision to move to Portugal was influenced by the social networks and resources available to them in Portugal and in Nepal (meso level). Most importantly study revealed the role of immigration policies of Portugal on the macro level as most of the participants wished to be reunited with their families in future (family reunification), which was one of the motivating factors for them to migrate in the first place. Additionally, the labor market of Portugal (macro-level) was found to be much more welcoming for the migrants due to the presence of their known social networks or through organizational links (not personal). This was found beneficial for the participants to find jobs and regularize their visa situation which would help (in future) or have helped their family reunification process (who have already been reunited). However, the study also recognized that there are some requirements to be met in order to apply for family reunification as explained in contextualization chapter which may be barrier and lengthen family separation.

Another interesting finding while attempting to assess the participants parenting roles from distance, it was found that the relationship with their partner or caregiver of children is

extremely important in shaping the relationship with their children. The findings revealed that positive relationship with their partner led to positive relationship with their children. Similarly, the use of communication technology to maintain relationship with partner and children at meso level was discussed, according to which regular communication allowed the participants to practice parenting from distance. The study found that regular communication helped the transnational fathers, as Carling et al. (2012) mentioned, to participate in their children's life despite distance. Not only that, being able to send remittances home helped the fathers to fulfil their parental roles and be part of co-parenting. This had been discussed along the gender expectations (as described under masculinity and fatherhood in Chapter 3) from mothers and fathers and how it can be a challenge in parenting, however the findings suggest this as not much of an issue for the transnational fathers which is because of good relationships with their partners.

Most important finding of the study was that the perception of these transnational fathers on parenting have been influenced by their engagement in social interaction or relationship with different people mostly including their wives/partners, their parents or friends. Not only social interaction, their perception on parenting were also influenced by their childhood experiences and struggles of life. These findings were supported by the use of symbolic interaction theory as explained in the theoretical chapter (Chapter 3).

In summary, the experiences of these transnational Nepali fathers in Portugal have been demonstrated through their individual situation as migrants, their perception on parenting and display of parenting, support from the available migrant networks as well as the flexible national policies that encourages family reunification.

6.3 Implications and Recommendations

This section discusses the implications and recommendations based on the findings of the study that could be suggested for academic social work and future research.

6.3.1 Implications for Social work practice

The study is an attempt to contribute to the growing literature in transnationalism (migration). Moreover, this dissertation mainly focuses on parenting experiences which can also contribute to the field of social work with family and children. The dissertation also points out the processes of migration and family reunification which can help to understand family separation and its impact on families. Therefore, the study encourages the social workers to advocate for flexible immigration policies that allows family reunification with shortened family separation. The dissertation highlights the importance of social networks in order to adapt and adjust in the host country. This can be a part where social work could be practiced by liaising with different agencies and network groups that work to support migrants. Social work can also address the influence of social network in their socio-economic status and self-perception as fathers, as discussed in chapter 3. And lastly, this study aims to fulfil the aims of MFamily program and contribute to the growing academic research on the area of social work with family and children.

6.3.2 Future research

As mentioned earlier, this study is an attempt to contribute to the growing literature in transnational studies, however the assessment on the experiences of transnational fathers is very scarce. The dissertation focuses mostly on migration trajectories and parenting

experiences in general by exploring their perception on parenting. Future studies can focus more emotional consequences on fathers linked to family separation and delayed family reunification. Until now, the studies on transnationalism in the context of Nepalese living in Portugal is only carried out by former students of MFamily, there are still plenty of opportunities to explore the transnationalism experiences of Nepalese in Portugal.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

CONSENT FORM

Project title: Transnational Parenting from the views of fathers: the study on Nepalese immigrants living in Portugal

Name of Supervisor: Ana Raquel Matias

Contact of Supervisor: Raquel_Matias@iscte-iul.pt

Name of Researcher: Ritu Pant

Contact of Researcher: rptui@iscte-iul.pt

Name of the Institution: ISCTE - Lisbon University Institute (Instituto Universitário de Lisboa)

Consent Type: Oral Consent

The following were accepted and agreed by the interviewees before going ahead with the interviews:

- I have been given information about the research project and the way in which my contribution to the project will be used.
- I agree to participate in the above study. However, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind by contacting the researcher.
- *I agree to give permission for the information collected to be used for research purposes only (including research publications and reports) with strict preservation of anonymity. I understand that extracts from my interview will be quoted that may be used in the research publication, reports and presentation.*
- I understand that my identity will be kept anonymous unless I give permission for my name to be used. My address will not be used or mentioned for the same reason.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially and with access to others with the permission from the researcher only anonymously.
- I agree for my interview to be audio-recorded and that the audio recordings will be retained only until the researcher receives final grade for the dissertation.
- I understand that the transcript of my interview will be transcribed in Nepali and translated in English for research purpose only.
- It is my understanding that the material will be preserved as a permanent research resource for use in research and publication under a set of terms and conditions mentioned in this document.

APPENDIX 2

CONSENT FORM IN NEPALI

अन्तर्वार्ताको लागि सहमति फाराम

प्रोजेक्ट शीर्षक: बुबाहरूको दृष्टिकोणबाट बहुराष्ट्रीय अभिभावककरण: पोर्तुगलमा बसोबास गर्ने नेपाली आप्रवासीहरूको अध्ययन

सुपरवाइजरको नाम: आना राकेल मटियास

सुपरवाइजरको सम्पर्क: Raquel_Matias@iscte-iul.pt

शोधकर्ताको नाम: रितु पन्त

शोधकर्ताको सम्पर्क: rptui@iscte-iul.pt

संस्थाको नाम: ISCTE - लिस्बन विश्वविद्यालय संस्थान (Instituto Universitatorio de Lisboa)

सहमति प्रकार: मौखिक सहमति

अन्तर्वार्ताका साथ अगाडि बढ्नु अघि मैले निम्न पक्षहरू स्वीकार गरे:

· मलाई यस शैक्षिक अनुसन्धान प्रोजेक्ट र यसमा प्रयोग हुने मेरो योगदानको तरीका बारेमा जानकारी दिइएको छ।

· म माथिको अध्ययनमा भाग लिन सहमत छु। यद्यपि, म कुनै पनि समय फिर्ता लिन वा अनुसन्धानकर्तालाई सम्पर्क गरेर कुनै पनि प्रकारको परिणाम बिना कुनै प्रश्नको जवाफ दिन अस्वीकार गर्न पाउछु।

· संकलन गरिएको सूचनालाई अनुसन्धान उद्देश्यहरूको (शैक्षिक अनुसन्धान प्रकाशनहरू र रिपोर्टहरू) लागि मात्र प्रयोग गर्न अनुमति दिन सहमत गर्दछु र यसमा अज्ञातको कडा संरक्षणको हुन्छ भन्ने बुझेको छु।

म बुझ्छु कि मेरो अन्तर्वार्तामा मैले भनेका कुनै कुरा र टिप्पणीहरूबाट निकालिएका उद्धरणहरू शैक्षिक अनुसन्धान प्रकाशन, रिपोर्ट र प्रस्तुतीकरणका लागि मात्र प्रयोग गर्न सकिनेछ।

· म बुझ्छु कि यस अध्ययनको लागि मैले प्रदान गर्ने सबै जानकारीहरू गोप्य रूपमा राखिनेछ र अरुको पहुँचमा शैक्षिक अनुसन्धानकर्ताको अनुमति लिएर मात्र व्यवहार गरिनेछ।

· मैले बुझें कि मेरो पहिचान अज्ञात राखिनेछ जब सम्म म मेरो नाम प्रयोग गर्न अनुमति दिनेछैन। मेरो ठेगाना यसै कारणका लागि प्रयोग वा उल्लेख गरिने छैन।

· म मेरो अन्तर्वार्तालाई अडियो-रेकर्ड गर्न सहमत गर्दछु र सो अडियो रेकर्डिङ्ग शैक्षिक अनुसन्धानकर्ताले अन्तिम अंक प्राप्त नगरेसम्म मात्र कायम राख्नेछ।

· म बुझ्छु कि मेरो अन्तर्वार्ताको ट्रान्स्क्रिप्ट नेपालीमा लिखित हुनेछ र शैक्षिक अनुसन्धान कार्यको लागि मात्र अंग्रेजीमा अनुवाद हुनेछ।

· म बुझ्छु कि यस अनुसन्धानका लागि संकलन गरिएका सामग्री र सूचनाहरू माथि उल्लिखित नियम र सर्तहरू अन्तर्गत अनुसन्धान र प्रकाशनमा प्रयोगको लागि स्थायी शैक्षिक अनुसन्धान स्रोतको रूपमा सुरक्षित गरिनेछ।

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Date:

Time of Interview:

Duration of Interview:

Mode of Interview:

Socio-Demographic Information:

- ◆ Name:
- ◆ Age:
- ◆ Marital Status:
- ◆ Highest Education level:
- ◆ Current Occupation in Portugal:

Family Information:

1. With whom did you live in Nepal? How close are you with them?
2. Would you mind sharing information about your partner / mother of your children? (age, place of residence, education, occupation, any migration experiences)
3. How many children do you have? What age group and gender?
4. Do any of your children currently live in Nepal or any other country? How old were they when you first left Nepal?
5. If any children in Portugal, how many? What age group and gender? In which year did they come to Portugal?
6. Do your children attend school? In which grade? Public or Private school? If they go to school, who supports their education (financially)?

Migration Decisions and Previous Migratory Experiences:

1. What was your primary motive of coming to Portugal?
2. Have you been to any other countries before Portugal? If yes, why did you move to Portugal?
3. What was your previous working experience (previous occupation) in Nepal or any other country?
4. How supportive were your family members about you leaving Nepal?
5. What was your child/children's response with this decision? Was/Were they big enough to understand the situation?

Arrival and Settlement in Portugal:

1. When did you arrive to Portugal? Did you come alone to Portugal at first or with any of your family members, relatives and/or friends?
2. Are you living alone in Portugal? Do you have any family/relatives in Portugal?
3. What were the difficulties during your preliminary stay in Portugal? Did anyone help you at that time?
4. Can you describe your initial feelings (nervousness/ fear/ loneliness, and so on) when you first arrived in Portugal? Have they changed over time? If yes, how?

Current Situation in Portugal and Challenges faced:

1. With what visa did you travel to Portugal? What is your visa status now? How does this impact your livelihood?
2. How would you describe your life in Portugal? How different is it from life in Nepal in terms of culture and living style?
3. How aware are you about the legal systems and policies here in Portugal in current scenario?
4. What do you think are the main challenges as an immigrant from Nepal in Portugal that you have faced or are facing? (could be in terms of adapting to new culture, language and legal system)
5. Can you please share your challenges particularly associated with the language? How easy or difficult is to learn the Portuguese language? How is your language proficiency? Which strategies have you applied to learn the language?
6. What is your current employment status? Is the pay good enough to sustain life in Portugal? What kind of challenges have you faced while seeking a job?
7. Have you experienced any kind of cultural shock? If yes, please describe. (may be in terms of family attachment, parenting styles, or any other)
8. Are you in contact with Nepalese Association in Portugal (NRNA or any other)? Have you sought any kind of help from them for any situation? What type of relation do you have with them? (if any instance of seeking help during any crisis situation like corona time or participated in any programs organized by them)

Transnational Parenting:

1. How long have you been away from your children after leaving Nepal? If already reunited, how long were you separated before reunification?
2. If the children are currently in Portugal, how was the care managed before they arrived Portugal?
3. If they are not in the same country as you, who is responsible for providing care in your absence?

4. Please share about your previous parenting responsibilities while you were in Nepal?
5. How different has it been since you are in Portugal? How involved are you or were you in your children's life from afar (decision-making in regards to child's life)?

Long-Distance Parenting Roles as Fathers

1. Can you tell me how you maintain contact with your family back in Nepal? Mode of communication? How often (daily/weekly/monthly)? How much of it involves/involved communication with children?
2. From your experience, could you describe the major challenges of parenting from distance? What are the contributing factors of those challenges?
3. How have these challenges impacted you and your relationship with your children?
4. Has the situation been easier with time or are you still struggling?
5. While maintaining long-distance parenting roles as a father, how were/are you able to fulfill the expectations from of your family in Nepal?
6. Do you have any financial challenges? Are your children dependent on you financially?

Perceptions as a Long-Distance Parent

1. What are your feelings about parenting from distance? How difficult is/was it?
2. Being a father, what do you think is your main responsibility towards your children? How have you been able to fulfill those?
3. Has your parenting role affected after coming to Portugal in anyway? Could you explain how?
4. In your view, how different would it be if you were living closely with your children and family?
5. While you are/were parenting from distance, how do you think your children perceive this situation?
6. Do you think there has been any impact on your children due to separation from their father? Do they share anything specifically with you?
7. From your view, how is your relationship with your children?
8. Does or has the stereotypical attitude of society impact on your parenting roles? (For example: there is a common notion in Nepal that fathers are mostly only involved in income generation while mothers do more for the children)

Maintaining transnational family ties

1. Have you visited your family in Nepal after coming to Portugal? If yes, how often? If no, what are reasons?
2. Do you share or have you shared your challenges with your family back home? How do they perceive them?
3. How difficult has/ had it been to maintain relationship with the family at home while living away?
4. How is your relationship with the caregiver of your children? Are you happy with your child's upbringing and rearing?
5. How do you take part in guiding caregiver on any important decisions related to child? How do you handle the misunderstanding with the caregiver, if any occurs?

Family Reunification and Future Aspirations:

1. Do you plan to bring your family and children in Portugal? If yes (may be already reunited or in the process), why? If not, what are the reasons?
2. If in the process to apply or already applied, how is/was the experience?
3. Applicable to those who have been reunited with their family and/or children, how did you go through the procedure? How old were the children by then? How long did it take and how costly was it?
4. Do you think your children will be or are being well integrated in this society? (For instance: in terms of schooling adaptability and language learning)
5. What are your hopes and aspirations on the coming days for your children? (in terms of their future ambition/education and relation with the family)

Recommendation:

1. What advice would you give to those with similar situation as yours concerning long-distance parenting?

If you have any comments or questions for me, please feel free to ask.

APPENDIX 4

INTERVIEW GUIDE IN NEPALI

अन्तर्वार्ता मार्गदर्शक

मिति:

अन्तर्वार्ताको समय:

अन्तर्वार्ताको अवधि:

अन्तर्वार्ताको शैली:

सामाजिक-जनसांख्यिकीय जानकारी:

- नाम:
- उमेर:
- वैवाहिक स्थिति:
- उच्च शिक्षा स्तर:
- वर्तमान पेशा:

परिवारको जानकारी:

१. तपाईं कोसँग नेपालमा बस्नु हुन्थ्यो? तपाईं उनीहरूसँग कति नजिक हुनुहुन्छ?
२. यदि एकल / सम्बन्ध विच्छेद / विधुर हुनुहुन्न भने तपाईंको संगिनी (Partner) कहाँ हुनुहुन्छ? के तपाईं तपाईंको संगिनी को बारे मा जानकारी दिन सक्नु हुन्छ? (शिक्षा, पेशा)
३. तपाईंका कति बच्चाहरु छन्? कुन उमेर समूह र लिङ्ग ?
४. तपाईंका कुनै बच्चाहरु हाल नेपाल वा अरु कुनै देशमा बस्छन्? तपाईं पहिलो पटक नेपाल छाड्नुहुँदा उनीहरूको उमेर कति थियो?
५. पोर्तुगलमा कुनै बच्चाहरू छन् भने कति जना? कुन उमेर समूह र लिङ्ग? कुन सालमा पोर्तुगल आएका थिए? त्यतिखेर उनीहरूको उमेर कति थियो? तपाईंहरुको पुनर्मिलन हुनको लागि कति समय लाग्यो?
६. के तपाईंका बच्चाहरु स्कूल जान्छन्? कुन श्रेणीमा पढ्छन् ? सार्वजनिक कि निजी विद्यालय? यदि उनीहरू स्कूल जान्छन् भने, कसले उनीहरूको शिक्षालाई समर्थन गर्दछ (आर्थिक)?

बसाइ सराइ (माइग्रेसन) निर्णयहरू:

१. पोर्तुगल आउने तपाईंको प्राथमिक उद्देश्य के थियो?
२. के तपाईं पोर्तुगल आउनु भन्दा पहिले अरु कुनै देश जानु भएको थियो? यदि हो भने, तपाईं पोर्तुगल किन जानुभयो?

३. यसअघि नेपाल वा अन्य देशमा काम गरेको अनुभव कस्तो थियो?
४. तपाईंको परिवारले तपाईंलाई नेपाल छाड्ने निर्णयबारेमा कति सहयोगी रहेको थियो?
५. यस निर्णयसँग तपाईंको बच्चा / बच्चाहरूको प्रतिक्रिया के थियो? के उनीहरू सो स्थिति बुझे उमेरका भैसकेका थिए?

पोर्तुगलमा आगमन र बसाई

१. तपाईं कहिले पोर्तुगल आउनुभयो? के तपाईं पहिलो पटक एकलै पोर्तुगल आउनुभयो वा तपाईंको परिवारको कुनै सदस्य, आफन्त र / वा साथीहरूसँग?
२. के तपाईं पोर्तुगलमा एकलै बस्दै हुनुहुन्छ? के तपाईंको पोर्तुगलमा कुनै परिवार / नातेदार छ?
३. पोर्तुगलमा प्रारम्भिक बसाईकोबेला तपाईंले के-कस्ता कठिनाइहरू भोग्नु परेको थिए? कसैले तपाईंलाई त्यस समयमा मद्दत गर्नुभयो?
४. के तपाईं पहिलो पटक पोर्तुगल आउनु भएको बेलाको आफ्नो सुरुका भावनाहरू वर्णन गर्न सक्नुहुन्छ? के तिनीहरू समयसँगै परिवर्तन भएका छन्? यदि हो भने, कसरी?

पोर्तुगलमा जीवन र चुनौतीहरू:

१. पहिलो पटक आउदा कुन भिसाको साथ तपाईं पोर्तुगलको यात्रा गर्नुभयो? तपाईंको भिसा स्थिति अहिले के छ? यसले तपाईंको जीविकालाई कसरी असर गर्छ या गरेको छ?
२. पोर्तुगलमा तपाईंको जीवनलाई कसरी वर्णन गर्नुहुन्छ? नेपालको जीवन भन्दा यो कसरी भिन्न छ?
३. पोर्तुगलको कानूनी प्रणाली र नीतिहरूबारे तपाईं कतिको सचेत हुनुहुन्छ?
४. तपाईंको बिचारमा पोर्तुगलमा नेपाली आप्रवासीले सामना गर्नुपर्ने मुख्य चुनौतीहरू के के हुन्?(नयाँ संस्कृति, भाषा र कानूनी प्रणालीमा सन्दर्भमा)
५. भाषा संग सम्बन्धित तपाईंले भोग्नु भएका चुनौतीहरू साझा गर्न सक्नुहुन्छ? पोर्तुगली भाषा सिक्न कति सजिलो वा गाह्रो छ? तपाईंको भाषा प्रवीणता कस्तो छ? तपाईंले भाषा सिक्न कुन रणनीतिहरू लागू गर्नुभएको छ?
६. तपाईंको हालको रोजगार स्थिति कस्तो छ? कमाई पोर्तुगलमा जीवन धान्नको लागि पर्याप्त छ? तपाईंले जागिर खोज्दा कस्ता चुनौतीहरूको सामना गर्नुभएको छ?
७. के तपाईंले कुनै प्रकारको सांस्कृतिक आघात अनुभव गर्नुभएको छ? यदि हो भने, कृपया वर्णन गर्नुहोस्। (पारिवारिक संलग्नता, अभिभावक शैली, वा अन्य कुनै पनि सन्दर्भमा हुन सक्छ)
८. के तपाईं नेपाली संघ पोर्तुगल (NRNA वा अन्य कुनै) सँग सम्पर्कमा हुनुहुन्छ? के तपाईंले कुनै पनि परिस्थितिको लागि तिनीहरूसँग कुनै प्रकारको मद्दत मागेको छ? उनीहरूसँग तपाईंको कस्तो सम्बन्ध छ? (कोरोनाको समयमा वा तिनीहरूद्वारा आयोजित कुनै कार्यक्रममा भाग लिएको जस्तो कुनै संकटको अवस्थामा मद्दत खोज्ने कुनै उदाहरण)

बहुराष्ट्रीय अभिभावकरण:

१. नेपाल छोडेपछि कति समयसम्म बच्चाहरूसँग टाढा हुनुपर्ने वा हुनुहुन्छ ? यदि पुनर्मिलन भैसक्यो भने, पुनर्मिलन हुनुभन्दा अघि तपाईं कतिजेल अलग हुनुभयो?

२. यदि हाल पोर्तुगलमा छन् भने उनीहरू कसरी पोर्तुगल पुग्नु अघि हेरचाहको प्रबन्ध कसरी मिलाइएको थियो?

३. यदि तिनीहरू तपाईं बसेको देशमा छैनन् भने, तपाईंको अनुपस्थितिमा हेरचाह प्रदान गर्न को जिम्मेवार छ?

४. नेपालमा रहँदा तपाईंको अभिभावकीय जिम्मेवारीहरू बारे साझा गर्नुहोस्?

५. तपाईं पोर्तुगलमा हुँदा कतिको फरक भएको छ? तपाईं कतिको संलग्न हुनुहुन्छ वा तपाईं आफ्नो बालबालिकाको जीवनमा टाढाबाट (बालबालिकाको जीवनको सम्बन्धमा निर्णय लिने) मा हुनुहुन्थ्यो?

बुवाको दीर्घ-दूरी अभिभावकीय भूमिकाहरू

१. तपाईंले आफ्नो परिवारसँग नेपालमा कसरी सम्पर्क कायम राख्नु हुन्छ ? संचारको मोड? कति पटक (दैनिक / साप्ताहिक / मासिक)? बच्चाहरू संग संचार कतिको सम्पर्क वा कुरा हुन्छ ?

२. तपाईंको अनुभवबाट, के तपाईं टाढाबाट अभिभावकत्वको प्रमुख चुनौतीहरू वर्णन गर्न सक्नुहुन्छ? ती चुनौतीहरूको योगदान कारकहरू के हुन्?

३. यी चुनौतीहरूले तपाईं र तपाईंका छोराछोरीसँगको सम्बन्धलाई कसरी प्रभाव पारेको छ?

४. समयसँगै परिस्थिति सहज भएको छ वा अझै संघर्ष गरिरहनुभएको छ?

५. बुवाको हैसियतमा लामो दूरी अभिभावकीय भूमिका निर्वाह गर्दा, तपाईं कसरी आफ्नो नेपालमा रहेका परिवारका इच्छा र आशाहरू पूरा गर्न सक्षम हुनुहुन्छ?

६. के तपाईंसँग कुनै आर्थिक चुनौतीहरू छन्? के तपाईंका छोराछोरी आर्थिक रूपमा तपाईंमा निर्भर छन्?

लामो दूरीका अभिभावकको धारणा

१. टाढाबाट अभिभावकको भूमिका निभाउने बिषयमा तपाईंका भावनाहरू के छन्? यो कति गाह्रो छ / थियो?

२. बुवा हुनुको हकमा, तपाईंका बच्चाहरूप्रति तपाईंको मुख्य उत्तरदायित्व के हो? तपाईं ती कसरी पूरा गर्न सक्षम हुनुहुन्छ?

३. पोर्तुगल आएपछि तपाईंको अभिभावकीय भूमिकामा के - कस्तो असर पर्यो? यो अनुभवलाई कसरी बुझ्नु हुन्छ?

४. तपाईंको दृष्टिकोणमा, यदि तपाईं आफ्ना बच्चाहरू र परिवारसँग नजिक बस्दै हुनुहुन्थ्यो भने तपाईं आफ्ना जिम्मेवारीहरू कति भिन्न ढंगले निर्वाह गर्नुहुन्थ्यो?

५. जब तपाईं / टाढा बाट अभिभावकको भूमिका निर्वाह गर्दै हुनुहुन्छ वा गर्नु हुन्थियो, तपाईंका बच्चाहरूले यो अवस्थालाई कसरी बुझेका छन् वा थिए जस्तो लाग्छ?

६. के तपाईंका बच्चाहरूलाई उनीहरूको बुबाबाट अलग हुनु परेकोमा कुनै असर परेको छ जस्तो लाग्छ? के तिनीहरूले तपाईंसँग विशेष रूपमा केहि भन्ने गर्छन्?

७. तपाईंको दृष्टिकोणबाट, तपाईंको बच्चाहरू संगको सम्बन्ध कस्तो छ?

८. समाजको रुढीवादी दृष्टिकोणले तपाईंको अभिभावकीय भूमिकामा कस्तो असर परेको छ?

बहुराष्ट्रीय सम्बन्ध कायम राख्दै

१. के तपाईं पोर्तुगल आएपछि नेपालमा आफ्नो परिवारलाई भेट्न जानु भएको छ? यदि हो भने, कति पटक? यदि छैन भने के कारणहरू छन्?
२. के तपाईंले आफुले भोगेका चुनौतीहरू आफ्नो परिवार संग कहिले साझा गर्नुभयो वा गर्नुहुन्छ? उहाहरूले यी कुराहरूलाई कसरी बुझ्नु हुन्छ?
३. परिवारसँग टाढा रहँदा सम्बन्ध कायम गर्न कतिको गाह्रो भएको थियो वा छ?
४. तपाईंको बच्चाहरूको हेरचाहकर्तासँग तपाईंको सम्बन्ध कस्तो छ? के तपाईं आफ्नो बच्चाको पालनपोषणसँग खुसी हुनुहुन्छ?
५. बच्चा सम्बन्धी कुनै पनि महत्वपूर्ण निर्णयहरू लिनु परेमा तपाईंको हेरचाहकर्तालाई कसरी सहयोग पुऱ्याउनु हुन्छ या हुन्थ्यो? हेरचाहकर्तासँग कुनै गलत बुझाई भएको खण्डमा कसरी सम्हाल्नु हुन्छ वा हुन्थ्यो ?

भविष्यका आकांक्षाहरू:

१. के तपाईंले आफ्नो परिवार र बच्चाहरूलाई पोर्तुगलमा ल्याउने योजना बनाउनु भएको छ? यदि प्रक्रियामा छ वा पहिले नै पुनर्मिलन भैसक्यो भने, किन यो योजना बनाउनु भयो? यदि त्यस्तो योजना छैन भने, के कारणहरू छन्?
२. यदि आवेदन गर्ने प्रक्रियामा छ वा पहिले नै आवेदन गरिएको छ भने, अनुभव कस्तो छ/रह्यो? के तपाईंलाई लाग्छ कि तपाईंका बच्चाहरू यस समाजमा राम्रोसँग एकीकृत हुनेछन्?
३. आफ्नो परिवार र/वा बच्चाहरूसँग पुनर्मिलन भएकाहरूलाई लागू हुन्छ, तपाईंले प्रक्रिया कसरी पार गर्नुभयो? त्यतिबेला केटाकेटीको उमेर कति थियो? कति समय लाग्यो र कति महँगो भयो ?
४. तपाईंका छोराछोरीहरू यस समाजमा राम्ररी एकीकृत हुनेछन् वा भइरहेका छन् भन्ने लाग्छ? (उदाहरणका लागि: स्कूली शिक्षा अनुकूलता र भाषा सिक्ने सन्दर्भमा)
५. तपाईंका बच्चाहरूको लागि आउँदो दिनमा तपाईंको आशा र आकांक्षा के-कस्ता छन्?

सिफारिस:

१. लामो दुरीको अभिभावाकरण सम्बन्धमा तपाईं जस्तै परिस्थितिमा भएकाहरूलाई तपाईं के सल्लाह दिन चाहनुहुन्छ?

यदि तपाईंसँग कुनै टिप्पणीहरू वा प्रश्नहरू छन् भने, कृपया बिना हिचकिचाई मलाई सम्पर्क गर्नु होला।

APPENDIX 5

GRID ANALYSIS

1.

Date of interview: March 15, 2021

Time of interview: 1 hours 40 minutes

Mode of interview: Face to Face

Demographic Information:

Pseudonym: Bishal

Gender: Male

Age: 38 years

Highest Education achieved: Master in Sociology and Rural Development from Tribhuvan University in Nepal

Occupation in Portugal: Employed as a Chef

Previous Occupation in Nepal: Project Manager in an agriculture and farming project

Current family situation: Transnational family situation awaiting visa (Wife and one son in Nepal)

Introductory notes

He is one of the first persons approached by the researcher for the interview. The researcher first met him in Portugal during her first semester study in 2019. At first, while the researcher approached him in the beginning of 2020 with the research idea, the respondent showed keen interest and willingness to help without any hesitation. He even promised to help find other possible respondents in future. Even though the researcher was in Nepal due to corona, it was the researcher's luck to get hold of him while he came to Nepal for his family's visa processing. So, the interview took place in one of the cafés in Kathmandu, Nepal on 15th of March. The researcher tried approaching him several times knowing that he was in Nepal but due to his busy schedule and visit to places outside Kathmandu city, it was difficult to manage time at first. Luckily, he himself called the researcher to meet as per his availability.

The mode of language used in the interview was Nepali which was convenient for both the interviewer and the interviewee. Since the research idea was explained before, he understood the objective of the research project and was willing to participate. Since, the researcher knew the respondent before the interview (even though not on personal level), the respondent was relaxed and was sharing his experiences with ease. The interview was long because the respondent was willing to talk and share more which in fact helped to gather enough information. Also, because the interview took place in a public place, there were some interruptions due to noise once in a while. Total interview time was 1 hour 40 minutes minutes.

Short information of the interviewee

The interviewee's pseudonym is Bishal. He is 38 years old. He studied Master in Sociology and Rural Development from Tribhuvan University in Nepal. He was born in a rural area of Nepal, where he studied until high school. He did his higher education in city area of Nepal.

Family information of the interviewee

He is married for more than 12 years and has a wife in Nepal. His wife is Master graduate and is working as a finance officer in a non-governmental organization. He has one son aged 11

years old. His son studies in one of the private schools in Nepal. His family live in city area of Nepal. His wife takes care of his son along with his parents who live together in Nepal with them. Both of his parents are above 65 years old and stay at home.

Migration decision and previous experience of migration

The interviewee did not have any experience of migration before moving to Portugal. He had an established career in Nepal with many almost 8 years of working experience. His work as a project manager was specifically focused in the area of farming and agriculture. His responsibility in the organization was to manage funds and oversee workshops and trainings applicable to farming and agriculture techniques in different parts of Nepal. His work required him to travel often inside and outside the country.

His came to Portugal through Denmark when he traveled for his work in 2018. He attended a conference in Denmark and used it as a part of his moving strategy to Portugal. He said:

“I have travelled many other countries in Asia and Europe before for work purpose. Similarly, I had travelled to Denmark in 2018 to attend one conference from my office. On the first night of my conference, I called my friend who had recently gone to Portugal from the UK. While I was in Nepal, I used to call him once in a while in Facebook and we used to have several conversations about how life could be in Europe. I had shared with him that I was coming to Denmark, then he was the one who suggested me that it was the best time to come to Portugal and try my luck in settling in the Europe”.

When he was talking about the primary motivation to come to Portugal, he mentioned his desire to give his son the best and secured life Europe.

“It is not that I was struggling back at home. I had a brilliant career and good income. One of the foremost reasons why I planned to come to Portugal was I wanted to give my son a secured future. I grew up in Nepal and lived most of my life there, I had a good life in terms of economic conditions but I know that life in Europe is far better in many ways. It was not pre-planned as such but me and my wife were definitely thinking of sending our son to study abroad after his secondary school so that he can get better education. However, when this opportunity to travel to Denmark came, me going to Portugal seemed a better idea for both of us because once I could get hold of residence permit, I could apply for family reunification”.

During interview, he also said that his family was totally supportive of his decisions because they believe that whatever he would do would be of their best interest.

“My parents surely were upset about me going away as I am the only son but they understood that it was better choice for their grandson’s future. They are well aware of political instability and other issues in Nepal and knew that these could become a hurdle in future career of their grandson”.

He added saying

“My father was also actively engaged in community works back in our village and has good political knowledge. He worked in the village ward for several years before retiring. In his old age, he shows his frustration about the way politicians are not caring for general public”.

Arrival and Settlement in Portugal

Bishal came to attend the conference in Denmark in 2018. The conference was about modernization of farming techniques in context of rural village. It was a three-day long

conference based on his work so he easily got the visa from Nepal. He obtained three-month tourist visa to attend the conference in Denmark. After attending conference for three days in Denmark, he travelled to Portugal on the fourth day. He said that he gave up the love for his job and income for settling down in Europe. He had a friend in Portugal whom he contacted before leaving Denmark. This friend helped him a lot during his initial time in Portugal.

After arriving in Portugal, this friend got him to meet with one of their common contacts. According to the interviewee, this common contact is an active member of Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) in Portugal and also holds a powerful reputation among Nepalese in Portugal -interviewee shared that this person owns multiple restaurant business and has helped many new Nepali immigrants find jobs. The interviewee mentioned that he could get in contact with this person because of his reputation at home. He shared that working in working in national and international projects back in Nepal has helped him make friends with important people. He said this member of NRNA was important in his migration journey.

“He helped me to get a job within a week of my arrival. It was my luck that I got job at the restaurant with proper work contract in such short notice. I had no experience but because of strong referral, I could get it. Due to my reputation back at home, I have good and important contacts and this man was one of them”.

Because of good recommendation, he could get a job with work contract in a very short time. Since he got a formal job, he could start paying his tax smoothly due to which he could get temporary card within a year of his arrival.

When the interviewee was asked to share his feelings right after arriving Portugal, he said,

“To be honest, I was a bit nervous because this was a big step for me, I had given up my very good job to go to Portugal. But I was equally relieved realizing that I had support from my friends who were willing to help me. It was kind of mixed feelings”.

The interviewee had no relatives besides one friend with whom he was in contact before arriving. So, this friend became family for him on the foreign land in the initial period. On his arrival, he lived with the same friend. After getting the job within a week, he started to share rent of the same apartment with his friend.

“Before I got the job, I lived in my friend’s apartment for free and ate his food. He lived with two other men in that apartment. But after I got the job, I expressed the idea of sharing the rent and food expense, which he agreed to as he had space in his apartment.”

Current life situation in Portugal

Work and Visa situation

After moving to Portugal, he started working in a restaurant as a kitchen helper and soon got promoted as chef. He is currently working as a sushi chef in one of the restaurants in Portugal since 2018 (through recommendation of the NRNA member). He started with monthly salary of around 650 euros, which has increased to 850 euros in the present since last year. When asked about his current visa situation, he said that he holds a temporary residence card,

“After six months of paying regular tax, I collected all the documents required like: SEF entry paper, address paper, salary sheet, criminal record from Nepal. I was then eligible to apply for temporary residence card, which I got within a year of my arrival in Portugal i.e., on 2019”.

He also said he does not have to worry about sending money home on a monthly basis like some of his Nepali friends (immigrants). Due to which, this salary is sufficient to sustain a good living in Portugal.

Housing situation

He shares apartment with the same friend (who persuaded him to come Portugal) and two other Nepali men where he first started living after his arrival in Portugal. He said that the apartment has good water and electricity facility. He further shared that he plans to buy an apartment (on rent) after his wife and son's visas are approved.

Language learning

When questioned about language challenges in his work and daily life, he said

"I work in a restaurant where most of my workmates are Nepalese, so we speak in common Nepali language with each other. I don't have to engage in daily direct conversation with the customers. And luckily, I have good working knowledge in English, which is useful when talking with my boss."

He said that he is slowly learning the language but still find it difficult to engage in continuous long conversations. He added,

"I plan to take formal classes in future but now I am doing fine with how much I know. I can reply and understand very basic Portuguese. I understand that I will need more language knowledge because many Portuguese people do not want to talk if we don't speak their language. Also, in future I will need basic reading and writing language skills to apply for passport".

Knowledge on Immigration law

The interviewee was also further questioned about his knowledge on immigration laws and policies of Portugal, he replied that he knows enough to remain in good books and follow the law as required (*not so clear about what he meant*). He added that he pays regular tax and gets updated on any new change on immigration law through conversation with his friends and colleagues in Portugal.

Networking and support

He said that he hasn't been directly involved in NRNA himself but the person who helped him get the job is an active member of NRNA. He further explains that

"I don't have time to be involved in this association because you have to dedicate time into it. It is not easy for me to give time in the programs they organize. But still, I have good connection with people who can be of help if I need any in Portugal. You know, to be in good position in this association (NRNA), you need vote and support from people, that's why even though I am not engaged, they help me because they know that I can help in return."

He further added,

"No relation is one way – it is about give and take. I am not trying to be ungrateful but this is life. I have also helped people through my good connections in Nepal. Because of my reputation in Nepal, they try to help me because I can be useful to them in building good public relation among people."

He has few good friends with whom he works and shares place to live. He said,

"Some Nepalese people are really good and are willing to help so I keep good relation with everybody even if it involves very limited communication."

He said that because of his working environment and his language limitations, he doesn't have many Portuguese friends or contacts. According to him, friends are either made out of similar interests or similar life situation. So, he said,

“I have more Nepali friends because of my identity as Nepalese and also because I can relate more with them. In regards to friends from Portuguese origin, I have very limited contact. There is one Portuguese family (husband and wife), with whom I have good relation and that is because of our similar interest in Buddhism. I met them in one seminar related to Buddhism. I am passionate about Buddhism and the teachings of Buddha, and so are they. So, when we meet, we share our thoughts about it.”

Feelings about family separation

The interviewee has been maintaining transnational tie with his family since early 2018. The interviewee came to Portugal in 2018 and has since then been living away from his son. His son was 8 years old when he left Nepal. He claims to be one of very few lucky immigrants whose legal status in Portugal as well as stable financial conditions in Nepal allowed him to visit his family on 2021 which is sooner than in other Nepali immigrants' situation. The longest time he has been away from his family without physical contact was 3 years. He stayed for 40 days when he visited his family in Nepal. He mentioned that the initial year had been the toughest time of his life. He said,

“I was mostly busy even while I was in Nepal but this was the longest time I had ever been away from my family. I used to cry in bathroom even during work. I missed my family, especially my son a lot. The worst feeling of being abroad is missing all the important functions and festivals where we as a family shared love and family time together.”

His family in Nepal and a Nepali friend who is currently in the US helped him get through the difficult time in Portugal. He added,

“At one point during the first year of my arrival, I felt so depressed that I thought of giving it all up and return to my family. I used to talk to my wife in Nepal and also my college friend who is in US. He is one of my closest friends with whom I share a very good bond. They always motivated me but also constantly gave me assurance that it is okay to return back to Nepal if things are actually terrible and I am unable to cope up”.

He also said that moving and adjusting in a new country was difficult as it was his first migration experience. However, open communication with his loved ones, especially with his family made it easier to cope up with those challenges. According to him, emotional support he received motivated him during that phase. One comment he gave about his emotional relation with his child was,

“Whenever I felt homesick, I used to call my family, mostly my wife and son. My son has his private phone, so I used to directly get connected with him through video calls. Whenever I saw his face and talked to him, I used to get motivated thinking I should pull myself together so that I can offer him a good future and that's how I carried on for one year”.

Relationship with the partner and care arrangements

When asked about how his relationship with his wife is, he said *“We have good understanding because we both are educated and feel equally responsible to our family. My wife is very supportive”*. The interviewee expressed that he is confident in the way his wife is handling things in his absence. He said,

“My wife has always motivated me when I was away. Whenever I had breakdowns (mostly during the first year away from family), I always called her and consulted about my challenges. People say men are supposed to be strong and not express their emotions but that is not true. My wife always allowed me to share my feelings and also gave me assurance that things will be alright. She not only took care of our son but also my parents.”

Furthermore, he also has been a supportive husband in terms of her career. He said,

“I had a strong network in the last job I was engaged so I got my wife into a nice position through that link. She is now earning good money and also because I left good amount of my saving in our joint account which is why I do not have to worry about sending money on a monthly basis from Portugal”.

According to him, after he shifted to Portugal, his wife has added responsibilities, which she is able to handle mostly by herself He added

“Even though my parents help my wife in taking care of our son as my wife is also a working woman, but they cannot meet his needs as much as she can”.

He also said that care arrangements and any decision related to their son has been mutual and that his wife is supportive. He also gave an instance of mutual decision they made for their son stating,

“We had to change school for our son so my wife and I both decided to send him to the school, he is currently going to. We took this decision considering his poor performance in the last school he was going as it was really far and took more than an hour every day to travel in school bus which consumed his study time at home”.

Perception on parenting and fatherhood

According to him, being a parent means providing educational opportunities and access to the children.

“It is a duty of a parent to make sure the child gets access to proper education. Although yes, I have been more into earning money and my wife’s responsibility was more inclined to taking care of the households overall. Nevertheless, both of us have been almost equally involved in rearing and caring of our child”.

When further asked about what he thinks his responsibilities are as a father, he said

“Besides providing financial security, the most important responsibility as a father is to be able to provide better educational opportunities for their children”.

I asked if there is any reason of why he thinks like that, he said

“The world is progressing and we must prepare our children accordingly. Whenever I had chats with friends of my age (they are all fathers), we mostly talk about family settlement and future plans for our children. This has made me more future oriented and my goal as a father is to give my son access to global education”.

He also said that his relation with his parents have been good which helped him become a good father. Since he is the only son, he received love, support and care from them which instilled family-oriented thoughts into him. According to him,

“I think one of the reasons I have been able to be a good father is because of my good relation with my parents. I have learnt a lot from them and they also have been good grandparents to my son”.

I further asked him about what and how his son thinks of him as a father, he confidently replied
“My son believes in me. We have open conversation about everything. He is very attached to me and I know he misses me a lot especially on special occasions like his birthday and so on. But he was already 8 years old when I left so he is old enough to understand the situation. He knows that I am working hard to give him good future.”

Fathering role before migration

He said that as a father he always made sure to discipline his child when he was in Nepal.

“My son and I have a very friendly relationship. When I was working in Nepal, I took my son to many places inside Nepal as a part of work-related trips. He always enjoyed going out with me and in fact he is closer with me in comparison to his mother. Since I have this kind of bond, it is also easy for me to make him listen to me. While I was in Nepal, I always made sure he is obeying his mother and behaving in a disciplined manner. But now as I am far, although I try, I cannot make much of a difference. This is why sometimes he gets to be naughty”.

When he was in Nepal, he was a responsible and involved parent. According to him,

“Like I said, my son is more attached to me, he always asked me to help him get ready for school. His school was far so the bus used to come early in the morning to pick him up. I used to feed him with my own hands to make sure he doesn't go to school on empty stomach. He was younger when I was in Nepal, so I used to tie his shoe lace for him as he could not do that himself. I even used to help him with his homework after I came back from work. Only on days, they knew I was coming home late or if I was travelling, my wife helped him”

Fathering role after migration

According to him, his fathering role after migration is dependent upon virtual communication with his child. Modern days technologies have clearly helped the interviewee maintain communication with his family and child. He said,

“The only thing that got me connected with my family is my phone and laptop. My son uses Facebook so I called him on a daily basis during nighttime in Nepal in his messenger. I have been lucky since I do not have to work many hours in a day, which allows me to have personal time. But whenever I got busy or could not make a call around the regular time, he used to call me himself and ask why I didn't call. Although he lives with his mother, sometimes when his mother was in different room, three of us even used to talk on group call.”

He added,

“He shares minor details about his life like his new friends, games he plays on his X-box. Even from far, I express my love openly with him because we always had such relation”.

When he was asked about major challenges he faced while parenting from distance, he said,

“No matter how convenient the communication has become with the use of technologies, it is never as convenient as physical conversation. For instance, it can be difficult to discipline the child through phone. There have been few times when he gives his mother a hard time by not listening to her, I try to tell my son few things and I feel it could have been different if I were able to explain him in person”.

Family Reunification and Future Aspirations

He has recently applied for family reunification. He shared that in order to invite his family (wife and son) to live with him, he presented several documents to SEF such as: salary sheet, tax clearance paper, criminal record document, and so on which got verified in a month. After getting approval, he travelled to Nepal to help his family (wife and son) apply for visa. Since the nearest Portuguese Embassy is in India, he travelled to India with his family to get the visa processing done. They are currently waiting for the visa to arrive. When I asked how he feels about it, he said

“I am very happy and excited about getting to live with my family in Portugal. Even though, I lived with my friends, I always felt lonely but soon I’ll be able to live with my own family and plan future ahead”.

When asked about what his future plans are in respect to his child’s future and education, he said,

“Both my wife and me plan to wait until he finishes his high school in Portugal and then send him off to Canada (where my close relatives live) to get his Bachelor degree.”

While sharing his future aspirations, he also shared his reservations about having his family in Europe, he said

“In context of culture, Europe is different than Nepal. I lived with my parents before I moved to Portugal. I feel responsible for my parents and I am fortunate that I get to take care of them while they are getting old. I am a provider for the family. I have savings that my parents can survive on. Not only that, I respect them and listen to their advice. I am a family person and so I want my son to be. I don’t want to depend on him financially, but I wish he remains close with us and looks after our (me and my wife) emotional needs when we grow old. However, once he gets exposed to this culture, I am not sure if he will be as we expect him to be.”

He further added,

“You know as parents in Nepal, we have more saying in our child’s life but here things are different and I am kind of concerned if this western air influences our son’s attitude towards us.”

He meant to say that he is afraid that his son will grow less attached to them.

“He is our only son and we want him to be looking out for us. My biggest fear is he getting in relationship with foreigner (non-Nepali). I am just hoping he marries a Nepali girl in future so that we can have more family type of bond and can be closer to him.”

Beyond this fear is the fact that he is not skilled in Portuguese language. Which is why, he will not be able to understand all issues happening in his son’s life in Portugal while his son could learn the language faster through schooling. And also, he thinks that education in English-speaking countries would open more opportunities for his son in future. He said,

“If our son goes to Canada, we (wife and him) might also move there because by then we will already have Portuguese passport and it is easy to move. It will also be easy as both me and my wife can speak and understand English and can maintain closeness with our son.”

Recommendation

When asked about if he has anything to advice or say to Nepali people living in Portugal with similar experiences of transnational parenting, he said

“Everybody have their own type of struggle so if I give my advice according to things I went through, they may not be as relevant to others. This is totally personal experience and it differs from person to person. As I said, I feel that I am very lucky considering very few years of my stay in Portugal, I am much more established than few who moved there before many years. All I can say is, always thinking why we first came here, keeps the motivation on”.

2.

Date of interview: April 15, 2021

Time of interview: 47 minutes

Mode of interview: Online

Demographic Information:

Pseudonym: Manoj

Gender: Male

Age: 30 years

Highest Education achieved: Higher Secondary Level in Arts from Nepal (Higher Secondary Education Board Nepal)

Current Occupation in Portugal: Employed as Chef

Previous Occupation in Nepal: Shopkeeper in family owned small scale retail business

Current family situation: Transnational family situation (Wife in Korea and one daughter in Nepal)

Introductory notes

The researcher had met the interviewee very briefly in one of the Nepali restaurants during her first semester in 2019 in Lisbon, Portugal. He was a mutual contact of someone whom the researcher was meeting at the restaurant. After that brief introduction, the researcher was connected through Facebook with him but did not have further conversation. The researcher got in contact with this interviewee with the help of the first interviewee. The researcher then approached him on the end of March, 2021 via Facebook message but the respondent was unable to manage time until 15th of April. The interview took place online on Facebook call as per the interviewee's availability. The interview was conducted in Nepali language as it was convenient for both interviewee and interviewer. The interviewee seemed friendly and was answering to the questions attentively. Before the interview started, he had told me that he can only spare an hour because of his work schedule. There were slight network disturbances in between but the interview went smoothly overall and it lasted for about 47 minutes.

Short information of the interviewee

The interviewee's pseudonym is Manoj. He is 30 years old. He has completed his study up to higher secondary level in arts. He got married right after completing his high school in 2009. He did not continue his study and started focusing on work in order to support his family.

Family information of the interviewee

His wife also has same educational background (i.e., up to high school) as him since they were classmates before getting married in 2009. He is married for 11 years. They have a daughter who is 10 years old now. His wife is currently working in an automotive parts manufacturing industry in South Korea where he worked before. His daughter studies in a private school and lives with his parents in city area of Nepal. His father runs the retail business and his mother is a housewife who mostly takes care of his daughter.

Migration decision and previous experience of migration

The interviewee started taking responsibilities of his family from young age after his marriage. He and his wife were only 19 years old when their daughter was born. Due to their young age, they had to struggle to provide for their daughter. Even though, the family owned a retail business, it was not enough to run the family. He has experience of working as a shopkeeper in his father's retail shop in Nepal for about three years.

He also has a younger sister, who was unmarried at that time (in 2012), so he was responsible²⁹ to bear the expense for her marriage as well. Due to added family responsibilities, he decided to go to South Korea. He went to South Korea in 2012 where he worked in an automotive parts manufacturing industry for four years.

"I had my family obligation. That time, I was very young but I had my daughter to feed and send to school when she grew old. And also, being the only son with sister's responsibilities over me, it was like the only choice at that time". He further added,

"The earning in South Korea was really good. Also, it was really tough. I worked very hard. I used to stand for more than 11 hours in my job. I saved and sent money at home every month. This also helped in my sister's marriage".

However, South Korea could not offer him a family future as per his wish due to which he started thinking on other possibilities. He said that his primary reason to move to Portugal was his desire to give secure future to his daughter. He came to Portugal in 2016 after working four years in South Korea. He took the suggestion of his cousin who was living in Portugal with her husband who persuaded him to move to Portugal.

He said,

"After almost 4 years of working in South Korea, I started thinking about my daughter's future and our settlement. Getting residence in Korea is not at all easy so I got in touch with my cousin and brother-in-law who were living in Portugal since few years. They suggested me to come to Portugal. They said that getting residence card is easy here".

He had come to Portugal from South Korea with Schengen visa in 2016 by which he travelled to France and then flew to Portugal. He had a valid working visa of South Korea, so getting Schengen visa from Korea was not difficult. He decided to go to France and rest for two days in his Nepali friends' apartment. He knew this friend from Nepal as they both lived in the same neighborhood before he came to France. He explained

"Getting direct visa to Portugal was not easy so I first took Schengen visa and travelled to France, stayed there with one of my friends for two days and flew to Portugal".

²⁹ It is sometimes common in a Nepali family for sons to take over father's responsibility (as per my personal experience and observations as a Nepali)

His migration made he and his wife to consider some adjustments in the family situation. To compensate financial support he was providing to the family, his wife had to migrate to South Korea. He said,

“I talked to my wife and my parents about my plan. My wife was a bit hesitant at first. You know, money was good in South Korea but we knew it wouldn’t be as good in Portugal because my cousin had told me so. We then planned to get my wife in South Korea so that we wouldn’t have financial problem while I try to settle in Portugal”.

When asked about family support in the decision, he replied

“It was hard for both of us. Both of us (parents) were being away from our daughter so even my father was trying to convince my wife not to leave the child in so young age. But my mother consoled my father saying it was for their granddaughter’s future. She told my wife and me not to worry and that she will take good care of our daughter. Her words made somewhat easy to take that decision.”

He further said that the decision about his wife’s migration to South Korea was taken only because of financial needs of the family.

“If we had good financial condition, I would never ask my wife to go to South Korea. I know that it is not an easy job. She has to work with a lot of chemicals. She sometimes tells me that she has headache due to lots of fume in the workplace”.

Arrival and Settlement in Portugal

The interviewee first travelled with a Schengen visa of France from South Korea to Portugal on 2016. Since he had valid Schengen visa, he made legal entry to Portugal and started looking for a job within two days of his arrival, however, getting job was difficult initially. When asked about his initial feelings, he said,

“It was not my first time abroad so I was not much nervous but surely confused about if I took the right decision. I did not get a job for almost 20 days after arrival so I was getting worried. But when I got the job in the fourth week, I felt relieved. I felt a lot more confident after getting a job”.

He said although he travelled alone from South Korea to Portugal, he had support from his relatives (cousin and her husband) in Portugal who helped him after his arrival. He added,

“My cousin brother-in-law helped me a lot in my initial days of arrival. He came to pick me up at the airport. He showed me main places to look for job. He also helped me get metro card and other things. He and my cousin sister gave me a room to stay in their apartment.”

He said he did part-time informal jobs without contract for a year. In the first year of his arrival, he worked in two different restaurants as a part-time dish washer and later as a helper in a grocery store. After one and half year of arrival, he started working in a Portuguese restaurant as kitchen helper in 2017 and got promoted to chef in 2019.

“I worked in two restaurants as a dishwasher but both did not give me work contract. I also worked in cash in an Indian grocery shop as a helper for a short time. Getting a job that gives work contract was so difficult. It took me a year and half to get work contract so that I could start paying tax”.

After getting a stable job in the Portuguese restaurant, he moved to a different apartment. He lives with three Nepali friends he made in Portugal who worked with him in the same restaurant where he got the job contract.

Current life situation in Portugal

Work and Visa situation

At the present, he holds a temporary residence card from 2019. The interviewee is currently working in one Portuguese restaurant as a chef. At the present, he earns about 950 euros monthly (including tips).

Housing situation

He lived in the apartment owned by his cousin and her husband for one and half year, where he paid 100 euros per month. At the present, he lives with three Nepali friends with whom he worked in the past. Although he works in the same restaurant where he made those friends, two of them now work in different places. However, they still share the same apartment and have good relation. He says that the apartment has amiable environment because they share household chores and also divide grocery expenses equally.

Language learning

When questioned about challenges related to language in his work and daily life, he said,

“At first, it was very challenging. My English is not good, so I used to struggle while trying to communicate. There have been few funny as well as embarrassing moments in the past because of that. However, while I worked in Indian restaurant and Indian grocery, it was somehow easy because I can understand Hindi even though I cannot speak so well.”

In the present, he says that he has learnt basic Portuguese which has helped him abundantly in his work life. He said that learning language made him feel more confident and it also made his job easy.

“Now since, it has been already over 4 years in Portugal, I can speak, read and write basic Portuguese very well. I took a class in a private language center for basic A1 level, which helped a lot. I do not remember the name of the place. It was near intendente metro station, which is now temporarily closed due to Corona.”

Knowledge on immigration law

The interviewee was also further questioned about his knowledge on immigration laws and policies of Portugal, he replied,

“I know what I need to know. I am paying tax and am not committing any crime. If I need any help regarding visa issues, I always ask my cousin sister and brother-in-law. In the past, they have helped me in applying for my temporary residence card. They made me aware of documents I needed to collect. But now I am much more aware than I was before. I also have few friends from work who have similar migrant living situation like me so we share information with each other if there are any new changes in the system (application, and so on)”.

Networking and Support

He said that he hasn't been directly involved in NRNA or any other associations himself nor has he directly received any support from them. According to him,

“I am a kind of shy person. I do not like getting engaged in social activities that much. It doesn't mean I do not have friends but getting involved in any association is a different thing.”

He further explained,

“The biggest support I have ever received is from my family relation. My cousin sister and her husband have helped me a lot. I still go to their house almost every weekend. They invite me on any special occasions like: festivals, birthdays, and so on. They are

my family here. When I did not have temporary card, I also have been able to send some gifts and remittance in the past through them (when they were visiting Nepal)."

He said besides his supportive relatives in Portugal, he has some Nepali friends whom he can rely on if he needs any support whether emotional or financial. He said,

"I have three very close Nepali friends with whom I share the apartment. There have been times when I borrowed some money from them and have lent money to them as well when they needed. We reciprocate in relationship, that's how it works. Also, sometimes when I was sad, they cheered me up. Because of them, I do feel too lonely even when I miss my family."

Feelings about family separation

He has been maintaining transnational ties with his family since 2012. His daughter was only one and half year old when he left Nepal. He travelled to Portugal from South Korea without visiting Nepal. He could not visit Nepal from South Korea because he could not get long holidays and was only granted short term holidays of 5-6 days when requested.

The longest time he has been away from his family without physical contact was almost seven years i.e., from the time he left Nepal in 2012 to 2019. After leaving Nepal, he has visited his daughter twice in 8 years period only after coming to Portugal. He stayed for a month both times he went to Nepal. He visited his wife in South Korea on 2019 before he went to Nepal as she could not visit Nepal because of the same reason as his. He went to Nepal after getting his temporary residence card in 2019 for the first time after leaving Nepal. He visited his daughter again in 2020 with paid leave from his work.

He shared about his initial feelings of family separation as brutal and painful. He explained it as the hardest punishment he received from God.

"When I first went to Korea, it was so difficult. Maybe I cannot express properly in words. I used to think being poor is the biggest punishment God gives to people. It is brutal. If I had money, why would I leave my family, isn't it?"

He again said,

"My daughter was not even 2 years old that time. I missed her so much. I still miss her every day. But now I can deal with it in a better way. The first few years was like hell for me. I felt frustrated about always getting up in the morning and going to work. It was monotonous and on top of that I was alone. I used to be so busy. I did not have much time to talk with my family. I could not share much of my feelings to them, not even my wife because I was immature and also was unhappy about the way my life was. My daughter was too small to understand but my wife used to feel abandoned".

When asked how he feels about it now, he said that he can deal with things in a more matured way. He said that he feels a sense of guilt because of not being available for his daughter.

"Even though it has been long years now but when I sit and think about everything, I want to cry wondering how unlucky I am. Just imagine being away from your family for these long years. I lost most of my daughters growing years. I feel so guilty. I also feel guilty about my wife having to be away from our daughter because of me."

He also said that coping up with challenges of family separation got a little better after getting temporary residence.

"One good thing is I have temporary card now. I am getting closer to fulfilling my dreams of giving my daughter a better future and my wife a better life. I am also happy about getting to visit my family after getting the card".

Relationship with the partner and care arrangements

The interviewee said that the relationship with his wife is exemplary despite the distance and challenges they have faced.

“I am very lucky to find a partner like her. She is not only my wife but also my best friend. We know each other from high school so even when we have some misunderstandings, it doesn’t last long. People from our home town give our example of how relationship between a husband and wife should be. Our relationship has a lot of trust and tolerance. I am thankful for my wife for that”.

He also shared the difficulty in relationship he faced due to distance and lack of communication in the past.

“When I was in Korea, I could not give much time due to busy schedule. Also, I was all alone, not like in Portugal with my sister’s family (cousin). So, she felt a bit insecure about it. But after I moved to Portugal, things have started getting much better between us”.

The interviewee expressed that he is happy about having a hardworking and disciplined life partner.

“My wife is a very hard-working woman. I know how hard it is to live away from the child. I know she feels the same way but for the sake of our daughter’s future, she is working hard abroad. Both of us are compromising for our daughter’s future so we have good understanding among us”.

When asked about how involved both are in care arrangements and decision about their child, he said

“Although we both are away from our child, we have good and responsible parents (his father and mother) who listen to us and also keep the communication open with us”.

There are very less moments he has been directly involved with his child’s life, nonetheless, he has always tried his best to be involved as much as possible. He gave a recent instance of him taking mutual decision for their daughter with his wife.

“When I went to Nepal the second time on 2020, I visited my daughter’s school and met with her teachers to understand her academic situation. My parents are not educated so they could not think of doing this on their own. That’s why me and my wife had discussed about this. The school had reopened after Dashain³⁰ and also the corona situation was in control at that time. We wanted to know how our daughter was doing in her school. Afterall, we are working hard for her”.

When further asked about financial sharing in regards to supporting child’s education, he said

“We both send money. Mostly my wife sends money every month but I send in the interval of three months, but not regularly. This was discussed and decided among us because she knows I am saving for future plans in here (Portugal)”

He also said that he helped his wife get the job in South Korea, which is the major source of income at the present.

“My wife takes care of most of the expenses because she earns more than me. I do not send all the money because I am saving up for future plans”.

He added,

³⁰ 10 days festival in Nepal widely celebrated by Hindus

"I earn around 950 euros and I save around 300-350 euros every month, after spending for room rent and food. Only sometimes due to some other personal needs, I save less. I usually send some money in every three months".

Perception on parenting and fatherhood

For him, being a parent involves a lot of resistance and struggle.

"Me and my wife are struggling and this is only because we are parents. Living in foreign country and staying away from family was not our choice, it was an obligation. If we did not have a child, we would live in Nepal and survive with whatever we had. But for our daughter, we realized that it is not enough."

He also said that this thought is influenced by his childhood experience.

"We went through a lot of hardships when I was a child. I was the oldest son and I had a younger sister. My father always said that I should learn to take responsibility of my house. So, for me, my sister is like my child. I have seen my sister making compromises because of our financial condition but I could not do anything as I was also almost the same age as her. We were not so poor but still we did not have enough resources available for education. I mean, our parents did not face crisis to feed us but they could not invest a lot in our studies so we both studied on government schools. I did not want my daughter to go through it even if I have to struggle a lot."

When I asked him, what he perceives to be a father, he said that it is about being beyond breadwinner. According to him, the duty of father is not only to bring food on the table but also provide good education. He says that this thought has been influenced by his wife.

"One thing my wife says has really influenced me. She always says that it is not only about feeding food, it is also about feeding good culture and education in the child that makes a good father. I agree with her. I do not just want to earn money and fulfill my daughter's materialistic needs. I hope to fulfill her educational needs that will go a long way in developing and securing her future."

Further, when he asked what kind of father he thinks he is, he said,

"Before I could visit my daughter in Nepal, I was not sure. I thought she is not as attached to me as she is with her mother and my parents. It is kind of obvious since I left in her early age. But after the visit, I think her perception towards me has changed. I feel she is happy with me now and that she misses me more than ever. It is also because she is growing and that she can now understand why I am away."

Fathering role before migration

When he was asked if he had any particular role as a father before leaving Nepal. He said,

"I got to be very less involved with my daughter. This makes me feel incredibly guilty. It is hurting actually. However, there are small but important things I was involved in during my daughter's initial young days. I used to help my wife in taking care of our daughter like changing her clothes, feeding her, bathing her, and so on. Even though my sister and mother helped in great deal and I was busy in business, I got involved whenever I had chance. I vividly remember one day when my wife was sick and I spent whole day with my daughter. That day, I actually felt like a father. It was the best day."

Fathering role after migration

The use of technology has made his family nearer to him. He said,

“I do not talk with them every day but at least 3-4 times in a week. I also talk with my wife almost the same time I talk to my parents and daughter in Nepal. But it is not always easy to arrange the same time because my wife and I have different working hours. I sometimes talk to them on my way to work and sometimes my wife is getting back from work at that time. I cannot even imagine to not being able to talk with my family for a long time. I have to talk with them at least 3 times in a week anyhow. So, I always make sure my parents have paid for the internet in Nepal”.

He mentioned that his role as a father from distance is maintaining communication regularly and encouraging his daughter to share her daily activities and feelings. He also said that he sometimes tries to fulfill his wife’s place (duties) when his wife is not available to talk online in group video call with them.

“Whenever I call my daughter, ask her to show me her face. I like doing video call as I can see her face and feel more connected. I also think so because I want her to see me and feel connected. Whenever I am on video call with my daughter, I invite my wife to join the call but sometimes my wife is busy and cannot manage time to come online. So, I make sure my daughter is not upset and be present for her on behalf of her mother too”.

Despite maintaining regular virtual parenting, he said that he got chance to be actually involved in his daughter’s life first time after travelling to Nepal from Portugal.

“When I went to Nepal for the first time, we celebrated my daughter’s 8th birthday so that she could be happy with my presence and also, I could make her feel special. I took a lot of presents and chocolates for her from here (Portugal), so she was very happy. The following year again I went on Dashain and we celebrated together. I think she missed her mother less because at least I was there to fill her absence.”

When he was asked about major challenges he faced while parenting from distance, he said, *“There are several challenges. I cannot say how difficult it is. Before my visit to Nepal, I used to feel that my daughter is not attached towards me and does not miss me so much. Maybe she felt abandoned. It can be because I left when she was very young. Although social media helped but still there was a hollow feeling somewhere”.*

He said that physical visit made the relationship between him and his daughter more smooth and closer.

“The visit to Nepal helped a lot. It brought my daughter a lot closer to me. I can see now she feels a lot more excited to talk with me, which I did not feel before I visited her in Nepal. After my visit, we talk for more than we usually did. She even cries over in video call saying that she misses me. I console her with loving words. I always make sure she knows that whatever her mother and me are doing is only for her. And now that she is growing, she understands these things.”

Family Reunification and Future Aspirations

He has not yet applied for family reunification but he plans to apply soon. Before he applies for family reunification, he plans to send his wife back to Nepal so that his wife can join their daughter. He said that they are both mindful of their daughter’s school year so they will apply accordingly. He said,

“My wife and I have planned that my wife will go back to Nepal by end of this year (2021) or early 2022 and then I will start collecting documents. We are also keeping

our daughter's study on mind so we will apply in a way that she can finish her school year. We do not have fix date yet but I am certainly looking forward to invite them."

He further explained his future hope,

"I will be the happiest when I can have them both here with me. I will make sure I compensate all the lost years I could not be as involved as I wanted to be with my daughter and my wife."

However, he is a little concerned regarding child rearing in a foreign place.

"Since I have been away most of her young years, I am nervous if my daughter will listen to me as much, I want her to. I am afraid if she feels less responsible towards us as we were not physically present for her. Although I believe in my parents' rearing, I fear if she will forget all that and be negatively influenced by western sense of freedom."

Recommendation

When asked about if he has anything to advice or say to Nepali people living in Portugal with similar experiences of transnational parenting, he said *"I have seen some Nepalese have been negatively influenced by this culture. They forget their family in Nepal and they do whatever they want to do. But we should never forget our roots. And about transnational parenting, I would say communication is the key. Always communicate with your children and wife. That's all I can say."*

3.

Date of interview: April 20, 2021

Time of interview: 58 minutes

Mode of interview: Online

Demographic Information:

Pseudonym: Himal

Gender: Male

Age: 41 years

Highest Education achieved: Master in Business Studies from Pokhara University in Nepal

Current Occupation in Portugal: Manager and share-holder in Mobile shop

Previous Occupation in Nepal: Science Teacher of secondary level in public school

Current family situation: Transnational family situation (Wife and two children in Nepal)

Introductory notes

The researcher got in contact with the interviewee through the key informant, who is also the member of NRNA. She shared his contact details with the researcher and hence the researcher contacted the interviewee via WhatsApp. The researcher approached him on 16th of April, 2021 and had preliminary conversation where she explained all the objectives and aims of the research. The interviewer showed his interest and said that he could only take part after few days because of his busy schedule. Hence, the interview took place on 20th of April via WhatsApp call and lasted for almost an hour (58 minutes). The interview was conducted in Nepali language as it was convenient for both interviewee and interviewer. Overall, the interviewee was cooperative but showed some hesitations to answer few personal questions that were based on his recent occupation. This is because he did not want to give information

regarding his earning from the business, he is currently engaged in. There were slight network disturbances because of which the call dropped twice during the conversation.

Short information of the interviewee

The interviewee's pseudonym is Himal. He is 41 years old. He has a Master degree from Nepal in Business Studies. He was born and raised in village (rural) area of Nepal with minimal facilities. He moved to city area of Nepal after his high school to attend Bachelor degree in Business Studies. He always dreamt of studying abroad but could not at that time due to some personal family reasons so he joined Master degree in Nepal.

Family information of the interviewee

He has been married since 2008 after completing his Master study. He and his wife have two children together who live in city area of Nepal. They have a son who is 13 years old and a daughter who is 9 years old now. The son and daughter study in a private school in seventh and third grade respectively. His wife works as an administrative officer in an electricity company in Nepal and holds a Bachelor degree in Business Administration. His parents and older brother live in the village where he was born and they own animal farming business.

Migration decision and previous experience of migration

In Nepal, he was a teacher in public school where he taught science subject to secondary level (grade 9 and 10) for seven years. Later, as the responsibility started increasing with birth of children, his earning was not enough. He then started realizing that Europe would be a good place to settle. So, he decided to go Denmark because he saw many people moving to Europe and inviting their family during that time. He hoped to complete his study simultaneously while he tries to settle down.

In 2014, he moved to Denmark with a student visa and had joined Master program in Tourism and Hospitality Management.

"I always dreamt of having a better life than what I had in my childhood. By the time I was married, I had achieved a lot but it was not enough to bear the responsibility of two children. I wanted to give them a better life."

He further added,

"Me and my wife were not planning this but it happened all of a sudden. I mean, I moved to Denmark within six months after planning. Like most Nepali parents we thought Europe can be a better place for our children's future."

He moved to Denmark with student visa as it felt the safest option for him. He took financial help from his family for that.

"I went to Denmark with student visa. I hoped that by the time I settled, I will also have a degree, which will be beneficial in future as I was planning to settle there."

When asked about how his family and children reacted to this decision. He said,

"Everyone was supportive but my elder son was upset. He cried a lot when he learnt that I was going away. But my daughter was too young to understand this. However, I convinced my son and later it was fine."

He had planned to settle down in Denmark after completing his study. This plan changed when he realized that obtaining residence card is not easy as he imagined. He did not complete his Master in Denmark and dropped out in the second year.

“After being in Denmark for 6 months, it wasn’t as easy I imagined it would be. Studying abroad was my dream but I had responsibilities over my head and I realized that settling in Denmark is not easy in terms of getting residency.”

He then started looking for alternatives and found out that Portugal is a good place to obtain residence permit that can help him settle down and invite his family in future. He started getting into conversation with a Nepali friend who had recently moved to Portugal from Denmark, who advised him to come to Portugal. He knew this friend from when he was in Nepal (friend of work colleague in Nepal). He was also one of the first few people he met after arriving to Denmark. Thus, his primary motivation was to obtain a residence permit by which he could plan his future ahead in Europe.

“At that time, I discovered that it was like a trend; many Nepalese were moving to Portugal from Denmark. When I talked to my friend in Portugal who had recently moved from Denmark, he said that getting residence in Portugal is easy. For me, settling in Europe was my goal, which I did not see in Denmark. So, when I talked to my friend and few other senior Nepali colleagues, I was convinced to go to Portugal.”

When he was asked how supportive his family was with his decision of moving to Portugal, he replied

“My parents believe in me. They have always supported me. My brother was a bit upset because I decided to drop out from University, however, he knew what I was doing was good for me and my children in future. My wife was totally supportive because she understood staying in Denmark wasn’t going to serve our future.”

Arrival and Settlement in Portugal

He came to Denmark with a student visa in 2014 from Nepal. He moved to Portugal on 2015 with the same student visa with one more year of remaining validity. After arrival, he started looking for jobs in many places such as restaurants, supermarkets, and so on. After almost a month, he found a job in Chinese mini market (fruit shop) and started working. When asked about his initial feelings, he said,

“I was confused and worried. I had some savings that I earned in Denmark but still not getting a job for almost a month made me panic”.

He said although he travelled alone from Denmark to Portugal, he had support from his friend who came to Portugal before him.

“This friend helped me a lot. Although he was also new in Portugal, but he had other contacts so he helped me in getting a place to stay. I lived with a Nepali couple initially where I had to pay minimal rent and food was free. The couple are relatives of that friend.”

He said he worked in a mini market for four months before getting a formal job in Chinese restaurant where he got work contract and started paying tax.

“I worked in Chinese mini market initially for four months where I did not get job contract but it helped me in my initial expense in Portugal. Although I had some savings from Denmark, I used some of it during the first month when I had no job. Luckily, I found a job contract in a Chinese restaurant by which I could start paying tax”.

According to him, he got the job in restaurant through a Nepali person he knew from his village who worked there. He worked in the restaurant for two years after leaving the job in mini market. He then started paying his taxes after 5 months of arrival (as it took a month for him to find the first job).

“I got the job in the restaurant through a Nepali person who was working there as a kitchen helper. He was from my village in Nepal, so we knew each other, even though not much on personal level. As he was leaving that job, he referred me in his place. At first, I worked as a dish washer, and then was promoted as a kitchen helper”.

Current life situation in Portugal

Work and Visa situation

The interviewee is currently working as manager in a mobile he owns along with two other business partners since 2018. He said that the current earning totally depends on the sales and there is no definite earning, however is enough for him to save and send some of the savings back to Nepal.

He holds a temporary residence card of Portugal since 2016.

Housing situation

After arriving in Portugal, he lived in an apartment for 5 months which belonged to a couple who are relatives of his friend (who suggested him to move to Portugal from Denmark) where he had to pay rent only and the food was free. After 5 months, he got a room to stay for free offered by the Chinese restaurant where he worked for two years. He currently lives with two Nepali friends whom he first knew from NRNA since 2018. He says the apartment is well-furnished and he is happy with his living situation. He shares the rent and grocery expenses with his flat mates.

Language learning

When questioned about his knowledge on Portuguese language, he said,

“Until now, I have cleared A1 and A2 levels in the language. I took formal classes in (name of the school), which is government-provided program, for which I paid 25 euros. After studying there, I gave language test on (an institute) (for which he paid 75 euros) and passed both the tests. This is why I can speak basic Portuguese very well.”

He also shared his initial strategies of language learning before taking formal classes. He said, *“Since I worked in a Chinese restaurant before, I had to learn basic language very quickly. Within three months of working in the restaurant, I had learnt to speak very well. I had bought a language book that has Nepali to Portuguese translation in it, which made it easier to understand the meaning of words. I also used to watch videos in YouTube to learn new words and the way to use them in a sentence. I used to learn language every evening before going to bed.”*

When further asked about the challenges he faced (when he did not know the language), he said,

“In the beginning, while I worked in the restaurant, communication was difficult due to language barriers between me and the other workers and the owner. The owner and most of the workers were Chinese so they either understood Chinese or Portuguese. We used to use sign language (informal) to communicate. So, I used to have lot of confusion while communicating. Even though I knew English, it was not much of use because they did not understand. If the owner was not impressed by my work, he would have probably asked me to leave.”

Knowledge on immigration law

When interviewee was questioned about his knowledge on immigration laws and policies of Portugal, he said,

“I am aware. I keep myself updated. I am an active social media user. I read and watch Portuguese as well as International news. I also have many friends who are Nepali immigrants so we keep each other updated. When we meet for tea or coffee, we have discussion on these issues also. Also, because I am actively engaged in NRNA, I know most things related to immigrant laws”.

Networking and Support

The interviewee said that he is one of the active members of working committee in NRNA. According to him,

“I like being involved in social institutions. Even when I was in Nepal, I used to take part in different social activities in my college. In Portugal, there are many Nepalese. This kind of organization help to bring all together.”

He also has many Nepali friends due to his active involvement in NRNA Portugal. He further explained the support he has personally received,

“One time, when I had just started engaging in NRNA, I fell sick. I had bad leg cramp due to which I could not walk or stand. The friends I made through NRNA helped me a lot during this phase. They carried me and took me to the pharmacy. After consulting to the doctor there, I took medicine and got fine. This is one instance I always recall because if I did not have them, no one would help me because I do not have my family here.”

“Besides this, I also received support from my personal networking (friend) who helped me to settle in Portugal during my initial days.”

Feelings about family separation

He has been maintaining transnational relation with his family since 2014 and the longest time he has been away from his family without physical contact is almost two years i.e., from 2014 to 2016. He came to Portugal in 2015, after staying for a year in Denmark as a student. When he left Nepal (to go to Denmark), his son was six years old and his daughter was two years old. After obtaining his first temporary residence card in 2016, he got to visit them the first time. After leaving Nepal in 2014 to go to Denmark, he has visited his children and wife three times until now with minimum of 20 days stay each time. During that visit, he also travelled to his village to his brother and parents. When being questioned about his initial feelings of family separation, he said that it was the hardest time of his life.

“When I first went to Denmark, I went through a very rough patch in life. Things didn't work out as planned so I had to decide to move to Portugal. I was already devastated for being away from my family, especially my small children.”

He further added,

“Even after getting job in Portugal, I used to go to work with heavy heart every day. It aches to think how much I miss them. My wife on the other hand was dealing with everything alone. My family was not physically present to support her. I was constantly worried about her”.

When asked how he feels about it now, he said,

“Whenever I see a family with children walking by, it pinches a little. I just feel anxious thinking when I will be able to have that. I miss my children the most during festival time in Nepal. I have many friends but no one can fill my children's absence. I am actively engaged in social activities through NRNA. It is because of my interest and also because if I stay idle, I think too much and become sad missing my family.”

He also said that to cope up with challenges of family separation, he keeps himself busy. For this, he is not only concentrated in his regular work but also is actively engaged in social activities through NRNA out of his interest.

“I keep myself busy. I am actively engaged in NRNA so we do many social activities. Since most of the immigrants are away from family, we (NRNA) also organize gathering programs in festival time”.

Relationship with the partner and care arrangements

The interviewee said that the relationship with his wife is based on high level of trust and understanding.

“My wife and I trust each other a lot. She is the one who has constantly supported me. She constantly pushes me to do better for our family”.

He added,

“All relationships have ups and downs, so do we. It is difficult to express in words but distance sometimes create unnecessary arguments. And it is quite normal in spousal relation. But most important thing is we trust and try to understand each other. It is normal for her to sometimes get upset as she is handling two kids on her own in my absence. I commend her for that.”

When asked about how involved both are in care arrangements and decision about their child, he said

“Even though I have been away, we take any important decision together. My wife has full liberty to take decision but she always tries to take my point of view in most of the decisions we need to make. Like the school our children are going is the one I recommended because I know the Principal of that school”.

He was further asked about financial sharing in regards to supporting child’s education, he said

“We both earn so we do not have any particular division as such. We have a joint account where we put savings for our children. My wife also has taken the initiative to cover both of their education with insurance. We both contribute to our children’s education because whether it my wife’s or my money, it is ours and it is for our family”.

The interviewee also said that both his wife and he take care of the household expenses in Nepal, which include expense on children’s education.

“My wife earns around 500 euros per month, which is a good salary in Nepal. And on top of that, I also send some amount every month. We send our children to private school and life is also expensive in city than in village. Both of our earnings cover that”.

Perception on parenting and fatherhood

For him, being a parent means being responsible. It involves compromise and struggle.

“As a parent, our biggest and important responsibility is to secure our child’s future. If it wasn’t for our children, me and my wife would not be making these compromises. I am struggling here abroad and my wife is handling our children while also working.”

He also said that this thought is influenced by his childhood experience and also the support he received from his parents. Despite the hardships his parents bore while raising him and his other two siblings (one older brother and a younger sister), his parents always gave him opportunity to study and excel in his life.

“I grew up in a village with lot of difficulties. I was ambitious from my childhood because my parents especially my father used to tell me that we (me and my brother)

should be able to do a lot more for our children than what they were able to do for us. My parents have always been supportive of me and that is why I am here. Because of this motivation, I think that being a parent means providing our children with a better future than we have.”

When I asked him, what he perceives to be a father, he said,

“It is about laying a base for the children so that they can lay their foot and start paving their own way. This means giving them better educational opportunities so that they can build a secure life. And more than that, it is about providing them with opportunities to secure their life. This is the reason I chose to come to Europe – to give them a better place to live.”

When he asked what kind of father, he thinks he is in the eyes of his children, he said,

“My wife plays a big role in this. I am sure she has given them good impression of me. And also, I give them as much time I can. I make them feel comfortable with me. Even though my daughter does not have much memories with me before I left Nepal, she is the one who gets more excited to see me in video call. My son also talks with me and is happy but his excitement is lesser than my daughter. It may be because he is growing older. He is already a teen now.”

Fathering role before migration

When he was asked if he had any particular role as a father before leaving Nepal. He said,

“Although I did not help my wife that much in household chores, I always was involved in taking care of our children. I was mostly involved in taking care of our son since our daughter was little and needed more constant maternal care.”

He added,

“We were both working as well as raising our children so I did not want to burden my wife with all the work. I used to bathe my son, take him to bed. As I was a teacher, I was responsible in taking care of his home assignments. I also used to check with his teacher about his academic performance. I used to play with him during holidays. With my daughter, I used to feed her sometimes and comb her hair.”

Fathering role after migration

The interviewee said that communication is the most to maintain transnational fathering. He said,

“I talk with them every day mostly in the afternoon time, when it is evening time in Nepal. I usually call in the evening so that I can talk to my wife and children in home. My son is older so has phone of his own but my daughter doesn't have one so to talk to her I have to call my wife. However, I always call my wife and they come together to talk. I call my wife in Facebook or Viber, which are very handy applications.”

He mentioned that as a transnational father he makes sure to keep regular communication. He also encourages the children to talk more by asking questions about how their day went. He sometimes also helps his son and daughter with their assignments when their mother cannot help them or is busy with household chores. In fact, his educational qualification has helped him maintaining this relation.

“Sometimes my children call me and ask me random help for their assignments, I ask them to send picture of the question and try to solve for them. My son mostly asks help in science subjects whereas my daughter asks mathematics questions.”

Also, during the duration of transnational parenting, he also went to visit his family and got to be involve in close parenting for some time.

“Going to Nepal brought my children closer to me. I took lots of gifts for them. They were really happy. During my stay, I spent quality time with them. I helped my wife with household chores and also engaged with my children. I also used that time to teach them about good and bad behavior. I could actually express my love and make them feel that.”

When he was asked about major challenges he faced while parenting from distance, he said,

“As I said, I focus on teaching about teaching manners to my children. I do that a lot via video calls too but it is not as effective when said virtually. Also expressing feelings of love is difficult from distance”.

Family Reunification and Future Aspirations

He has not yet applied for family reunification but he plans to apply soon. Before he applies for family reunification, he plans to obtain Portuguese passport. He said,

“After obtaining passport, it will be a lot easier for my wife and children to start settling. I am saving money for this purpose”.

He further explained his future hope,

“I hope, if things go as planned, I will be able to invite them within two to three years, by that time my elder son will be done with his secondary school

However, he is a little concerned regarding child rearing in a foreign place.

“I am mostly concerned about our son. I think our daughter is more obedient but our son is a little stubborn. Teenage kids do not want to listen. As he is already 13 years old and he will be around 15-16 by the time he gets here. I just wish he doesn't get influenced and stop listening to us. Here in Portugal even if kids do not listen to us, we cannot do much. It is not Nepal.”

Recommendation

When asked about if he has anything to advice or say to Nepali people living in Portugal with similar experiences of transnational parenting, he said *“Nepalese should get together to feel the sense of our culture. We should not forget our culture and society. Here in Portugal, there are many Nepalese so if we all get together, we can create an environment for our children so that they can grow with Nepali feeling”.*

4.

Date of interview: June 24, 2021

Time of interview: 1 hour 53 minutes

Mode of interview: Online

Demographic Information:

Pseudonym: Prem

Gender: Male

Age: 39 years

Highest Education achieved: Secondary level from public school in Nepal (up to Grade 9)

Occupation in Portugal: Driver as well as company owner in Uber

Previous Occupation in Nepal: Security guard in a private office building

Current family situation: Transnational family situation (wife and two children in Nepal)

Introductory notes

The researcher got in touch with the interviewee through the key informant who is an active member of NRNA. The key informant had given most of the information about the research objectives on researcher's behalf so it was easy to approach him. The researcher found him to be a little shy at first but he slowly opened up about sharing his life experiences in the process. The interview took place on 24th of June, 2021 via online Facebook call. The mode of language used in the interview was Nepali as it was the language which both interviewer and the interviewee understood. The interview was long because the respondent started sharing many things in the second half of the interview process, which the researcher allowed to make him feel comfortable. There were also few interruptions because the interviewee got personal calls in between the interview. Total interview time was 1 hour 53 minutes.

Short information of the interviewee

The interviewee's pseudonym is Prem. He is 39 years old. He was born in a poor family and lived in an extremely under developed rural area of Nepal due to which he could not continue his study after completing grade 9. After getting married, he shifted to city area of Nepal with his wife for employment purpose.

Family information of the interviewee

He is married since 2008 and has a wife in Nepal. His wife is a housewife and has studied until primary level school. They have one daughter who is 12 years old and one son who is 1 and half years old now. The children live with his wife in city area of Nepal. His daughter studies in one of the private schools in Nepal. The wife stays home to take care of their son, and her sister also comes to help sometimes. His parents live in village and sustain life by doing small scale farming and animal husbandry.

Migration decision and previous experience of migration

The interviewee worked as a security guard in a private office in city area of Nepal for almost 4 years before going to Afghanistan as a labor migrant from Nepal in 2011. In Afghanistan, he also worked as a security guard in a hotel for 4 and half years until 2016.

He applied for a visit visa to Germany from Afghanistan with the help of his relative (cousin) who was living in Germany with her husband. He stayed in Germany for a week at her cousin's place. His nephew (son of cousin who lives in Germany) was studying in France, so he called

and shared about an opening in French Legion army. Then he decided to travel to France from Germany. He stayed at his nephew's apartment in France for more than 15 days, where he tried applying for French Legion Army but failed to qualify for not being able to meet criteria of education and language. He shared that he did not have adequate information about the application process and was applying on the basis of what he heard from his nephew.

"I had heard a lot of things about life in Europe from my relatives in Germany and France. My cousin in Germany offered me invitation letter to apply for visit visa from Afghanistan so I took my chance and went to Germany. When I was in Germany, I got a call from my nephew (cousin's son) who was studying in France. He told me that there was an opening in French legion army and I should try applying for it. My mistake was I got too excited about it and depended on half information I received from my nephew. After I reached France and applied for it, I got rejected in the first step of the test and realized that I was not qualified."

After being rejected by the French Legion Army, his nephew in France suggested that Portugal would be a better place for him to try settling down in Europe, which is why he flew to Portugal with doubts because of his previous experience in France.

"Then my nephew consoled me and said that many Nepalese go to Portugal and have been successful in getting residence. Although I was skeptical about it, I did not have much choice left as I did not feel confident to get settled in France after getting rejected for the French army."

He came to Portugal from Afghanistan in 2016 with a visit visa of 45 days. He stayed in Germany and France for almost a month altogether before moving to Portugal. He made a legal entry to Portugal as he had 15 days of his visa validity remaining.

When he was talking about the primary motivation to come to Portugal, he mentioned his desire to give his children and wife the best and secured life in developed part of the world.

"I have had a hard childhood. I lived in hardships and could not even pursue my studies further. Due to low educational qualification, I had to go through so many struggles in life. I do not want that to happen for my children. Since I do not have strong base (own house and property) in Nepal to offer to my children, all I can offer them is life in Europe so that they can have the future they deserve."

When asked about the family support in the decision, he said,

"My parents are uneducated but they understand the value of a good education. That's why, they are supportive of my wife staying in city away from them so that their grandchildren can get better education. Similarly, in regards to my decision about moving to Portugal, my parents and wife are certainly very happy because I am in the safer place than I was before (in Afghanistan). I also have shared with my wife that I will soon bring them (her and children) here in Portugal, so she has been very supportive of this decision."

Arrival and Settlement in Portugal

When the interviewee was asked to share his feelings right after arriving Portugal, he said, *"I was not so confident about my decision to come to Portugal because of what happened in France (rejection from French army). Because of lack of knowledge on my side, I was following the suggestion given by my nephew, so I was slightly nervous about it. But somewhere in my heart, I had faith that I will be able to do good and make my family happy. It was a mixed feeling"*.

After arriving in Portugal, he got in contact with a person who is an active member of NRNA and also *Magar Samaj*. The interviewee contacted him through his nephew in France who helped him to find a job in his initial time in Portugal. He also let the interviewee to stay at his apartment for about 15 days before he found a job.

“This person whom I didn’t even know before coming to Portugal was a friend of my nephew. It is so amazing that he helped me so much. He helped me find job and also let me stay at his place for free while I looked for jobs.”

The interviewee found a job in a Chinese restaurant where he first started working as a kitchen helper. He got promoted as a chef after 3 months. He worked there for 15 months and then joined another Chinese restaurant where he worked as a chef for 8 months. He then moved out of Lisbon and worked in another Chinese restaurant for a year. He worked for 3 years altogether in three different Chinese restaurants with contracts, where he was given a place to stay and could eat for free.

After leaving the job in third Chinese restaurant in 2019, he stayed jobless for about three months when he took driving class and obtained driving license. During that period, he applied to be a driver in Uber, for which, he took Uber training course (to learn driving etiquette and rules of Uber) in a private center. Upon its completion, he received a certificate, and then was required to submit psychological test report from a certified health center/hospital. After submitting both documents (certificate of Uber course and report of psychological test), he obtained a professional license to be assigned as a driver in Uber. He then worked in Uber as a driver for almost 11 months in 2020-21 before registering his own company in 2021.

Current life situation in Portugal

Work and Visa situation

The interviewee is currently working as a driver and has registered his own company in Uber since 2020. Before owning company in his name, he used to work under other company on a salary basis as an Uber driver, where he worked for about 11 months. He was paid 45% of the total income, which used to be about 800 to 1000 euros per month. At the present, he said that his salary is not fixed and it depends upon the number of hours he works. Nevertheless, he shared that he makes a minimum earning of around 1200 monthly. He also added that due to Corona, his income is affected due to low number of passengers even though he got to work throughout the lockdown period.

He got his first temporary card only after 20 months of arrival i.e., on 2018 despite having job and paying taxes shortly after arriving because of slow processing from the SEF’s side. He holds a temporary residence card at the present.

Housing situation

During the first 15 days of his arrival, he stayed at an apartment of the person who helped him find the job at the first Chinese restaurant in outskirts of Lisbon. He started living in a room provided by the restaurant. Similarly, he worked in other two Chinese restaurants in Lisbon that also offered him a room to stay. After leaving the job at the third restaurant, he moved to an apartment with three other Nepali friends he made after coming to Portugal. He has been living in the same shared apartment since 2019, where he shares bills with his flat mates.

Language learning

When questioned about language challenges in his work and daily life, he said

“I worked in restaurants where I did not need to speak with customers or others so much. In restaurants where I worked, there were staffs like me who did not speak Portuguese so we would communicate in whatever English we could. I had few Nepali friends so I would communicate with them in Nepali too. The work I am engaged now also doesn't require me to speak much. I have learnt to say the greetings I need to offer in Portuguese language to the customers while receiving and dropping them. If customers happen to ask me any question, I use broken English language.”

He said that he finds Portuguese language very challenging but has plan to learn the language in order to apply for passport in future. He added,

“I will take formal class in future because if I need passport, I will need basic language skill”.

Knowledge on Immigration law

The interviewee was also further questioned about his knowledge on immigration laws and policies of Portugal, he said that he knows that he has to pay tax and if he needs to get any information, he asks his friends in NRNA. He did not share anything particular about his knowledge but only his source of knowledge.

Networking and support

He said that he has recently joined as a member in NRNA. According to him, getting involved in such associations may help in future. He further explains,

“I have recently joined the NRNA as a member. I did not have much time before when I used to work in restaurants. But working in Uber allows me to have some spare time so I decided to be part of this association. Since I live in a foreign land, I believe keeping people of my nationality close would be beneficial to learn and grow. If I take part in helping Nepalese immigrants now, I may need help in future and I'll know who to ask help at that time.”

He further added that, he has also received support initially through a person who is an active member of NRNA to find the job. That is why, he believes in the association's ability to give help to each other in need.

Feelings about family separation

The interviewee has been maintaining transnational tie with his family since 2011. The interviewee came to Portugal in 2016 from Afghanistan where he worked for 4 and half years from 2011 to 2016. His daughter was only 2 years old when he left Nepal to go to Afghanistan whereas he has never been able to visit his son as he was born in 2019 (after he visited Nepal last time in 2018).

The longest time he has been away from his family without physical contact was six and half years i.e., from 2011 to 2018. He visited his family in Nepal on 2018 after receiving temporary residence card and stayed for about 35 days. He mentioned that living away from family is difficult and upsetting. He said,

“It was not an easy decision to leave home and come here (Portugal). In Afghanistan, it was even tough because of loneliness. Here, in Portugal, I have Nepali friends but still I feel lonely and miss my family all the time. It's even harder when you have little children. Sometimes it gets really hard and I cannot stop my tears.”

He said that being occupied on work helps him to cope up but sometimes when the workload is hectic, he misses his family more. He added,

“I miss my children a lot. But mostly when I’m working, I am diverted towards work and it’s easy. But sometimes, when I’m too tired from the work, I miss them even more, especially my wife and children.”

He said that he talks to his wife and daughter on a regular basis whereas his son is too little to understand the conversation.

Relationship with the partner and care arrangements

When asked about how his relationship with his wife is, he said

“We have a solid relationship. She understands my circumstances and supports me. Even though we are far, when I call her, it feels that we are sitting together. The conversation is so much fun. We share almost everything with one another.”

Furthermore, he also mentioned that she is not only a good partner but also an excellent mother. He said,

“Can you imagine a woman who is not with very less education staying alone with two children in city? Even though she lives near her sister’s house and her sister helps her when needed, she mostly takes care of two children by herself. She has been doing an amazing job on that. I like how she is handling things in my absence. She is taking good care of our children and most of all, she lets me be part of it even from far.”

He also said that care arrangements and any decision related to their children has been mutual and that his wife is supportive. He said,

“Our daughter studies in a private school, which was chosen by both of us. I asked one of my contacts (friends) in Nepal to get information about the school and shared it with my wife and then we both took the decision to admit her. Not only that, my wife shares anything relating to our children with me and wants to know what I have to say about it. She mostly takes any decision by letting me know or asking me (as per the situation). She also informs me about smallest activities like what our children said to a relative who came to visit, and so on”.

He was further asked about financial sharing in regards to supporting child’s education, he said

“Right now, only our daughter goes to school, for which I take care of the financial part. My wife does not earn so she depends on my earning. I usually send about 300-400 euros every month. The money also takes care of our children’s other needs.”

Perception on parenting and fatherhood

According to him, being a parent means,

“Being a parent means sacrifice. It means to provide the best possible care, education and good manners to help the child become a good and decent human being in future.”

When further asked about what he thinks his responsibilities are as a father, he said

“I try my best to be a friend to my daughter. My son is too young so I cannot teach him much from distance but I always teach my daughter to be honest and open with me. I am responsible to provide for them financially but I also want to engage with them emotionally as much as possible and that is what being a father to me means. I want to be present for my children as much as possible.”

I asked if there is any reason of why he thinks like that, he said

“I am getting old and now I realize what I needed from my parents when I was young which I could not get due to many circumstances. I hope to give to my children whatever I missed out in my childhood. Also, when I talk with my friends here in Portugal with

children in Nepal, they share similar thing to me. As a father, mostly we want to give them a secured life and love they deserve.”

I further asked him about what and how his children think of him as a father, he confidently replied

“My daughter understands why I am far from them. It is also because of my wife. She always says how hard I am working for their better future. I have seen that our daughter listens to her mother mostly and since her mother says positive things about me, she feels more connected to me. Also, even though our son is too young, I get the feeling that he likes me because whenever I’m on videocall and he laughs and becomes happy after seeing me.”

Fathering role before migration

He doesn’t have any memory with his son closely because he was born when he was in Portugal. But he has some memories with his daughter that mostly involves a lot a cuddling and chatting as she was very young when he left Nepal. But besides that, he used to teach her good manners, and look after her before and after office time whenever his wife was busy doing household chores.

He said,

“I haven’t been able to get involved with my children so closely due to long years of separation. But the times I have been able to share with my daughter during her young age until 2 years. I shared my intimate moments as a father by cuddling and talking with her. I also tried my best to help my wife in taking care of our daughter whenever I was at home. I used to teach her good manners and take care of her by being involved in activities such as: bathing, feeding and making her go to sleep.”

Fathering role after migration

The interviewee maintains regular communication with his daughter and also tries to communicate in baby language with his son through video calls. He said,

“I call them almost every day. It was a bit difficult to manage time when I was in Afghanistan because of long duty hours. It was not that easy to talk over phone while I was working in restaurants also but now since I have started working in Uber, I have had more free time to talk to them, which has made our communication regular. I talk to my wife and then talk to my daughter and ask her what she is doing and how her day was. I even try to communicate with my son through video calls by making faces and making him laugh. He recognizes me and comes near phone whenever he sees me.”

When he was asked about major challenges he faced while parenting from distance, he said,

“Being a parent from distance is challenging no matter what. I have some kind of communication with my daughter because she is old enough to understand the situation but I am worried that my son won’t feel much connected to me because he didn’t get any physical love and attention from me during his initial years.”

He also said after he left Nepal, his wife has been burdened with more responsibilities alone as he cannot get involved directly from far away. He added

“My wife is taking care of two children alone. Our son is too young and requires constant care during this age. Even though she calls her sister sometimes, she is mostly on her own for which I feel guilty.”

Family Reunification and Future Aspirations

He has recently applied for family reunification. He shared that he had plans to apply right after his visit to Nepal in 2018 but his wife unexpectedly got pregnant with their son so he had to wait for two more years. He shared that the application is already approved by SEF, and now they are waiting for decision from the Embassy. He said that he has only applied for his wife and his son and they plan to keep their daughter for 3 to 4 years in Nepal until she finishes her secondary level studies i.e., until Grade 10. They have discussed it with his sister-in-law (wife's sister) and she has agreed to look after their daughter during that period. His sister-in-law is married and lives with her daughter and husband in the same area where his wife and children are living in Nepal.

"We decided to keep our daughter in Nepal until she finishes her school because if she comes here (Portugal) now, it will be difficult for her to cope with her studies as she is already in her lower secondary level. We think it will be perfect time for her to come here (Portugal) and join high school."

He added,

"I have seen one of my friend's son struggling in school because he came to Portugal at around the same age as his daughter."

In regards to his son, he said that his son is very young and will come along with his mother as he requires constant care. He also said,

"As our son is very young, we cannot leave him with our sister-in-law. Also, because he will start his study from the beginning here in Portugal, he won't have much problem to adjust and learn."

While sharing his future aspirations, he said, he is optimistic about giving a better future for his children, however, is little worried about leaving their daughter behind for some years.

"I am sure they will get better opportunities than they could ever get in Nepal. Once I get to bring my daughter after few years, I will feel much more relaxed because even though it is mutual and wise decision for us (he and his wife), we are concerned about leaving an adolescent daughter under other's care."

Recommendation

When asked about if he has anything to advice or say to Nepali people living in Portugal with similar experiences of transnational parenting, he said

"It is not easy being an immigrant. Life is full of struggle when abroad. But what I suggest everyone who is living in similar situation like me is we must not forget the objective of being abroad so far away from family. I think most important thing is family and we should not forget this no matter where we go. After some years of struggle, we should also think of enhancing our skills and creating a stepping stone for our children once they come here so that they do not have to go through the same struggle we did here (in Portugal)."

5.

Date of interview: July 3, 2021

Time of interview: 2 hours and 17 minutes

Mode of interview: Online

Demographic Information:

Pseudonym: Aditya

Gender: Male

Age: 45 years

Highest Education achieved: Secondary level from public school in Nepal (up to Grade 8)

Current Occupation in Portugal: Employed as receptionist in a hotel

Previous Occupation in Nepal: Bus Conductor (ticket collector) of a public transportation

Current family situation: Transnational family situation (two children in Nepal from his first marriage, one daughter in Portugal from his second marriage)

Introductory notes

The researcher got in contact with the interviewee through the fourth interviewee (Prem). The interviewee lived in the same village as of the Prem so they knew each other. After the interview with Prem, the researcher had requested to help in finding any possible respondent. Prem told that he would talk to one of his friends (i.e. the interviewee) and inform. After the interviewee agreed, Prem shared contact details and helped to connect online. The researcher then approached him on June 28, 2021 via WhatsApp message. The interviewee gave his date and time of availability, according to which the researcher called him and hence the interview was held online on 3rd of July, 2021. Before proceeding ahead, the interviewee said that he has a long history of challenges and struggle which he is finally ready to share with others. His life story was complex than the other interviews taken so far, which is why, the interview time was long. There were slight network disturbances in between but the interview went smoothly overall and it lasted for about 2 hours and 17 minutes.

Short information of the interviewee

The interviewee's pseudonym is Aditya. He is 45 years old. He was born in an underdeveloped village in Nepal due to which he could only study up to secondary level. He has been married twice.

Family information of the interviewee

He was married with his former wife from 2008 to 2018, which ended in divorce. He got married to his present (second) wife in 2019.

He has two children from his former (first) wife, one daughter aged 12 years old and one son aged 6 years old. His former wife owns a small tailoring business near her home. She lives with her mother and their children in city area of Nepal. Both children study in a private school.

His present wife was a widow with one daughter aged 11 years old, and was living with her husband in Portugal, who died of cardiac arrest in 2017. At the present, she and her daughter live with the interviewee in Portugal. She works as a helper in an Indian grocery store in Portugal. Her daughter attends public school in Portugal.

Migration decision and previous experience of migration

In Nepal, he worked as a bus conductor in a public bus for almost 2 years. Then, he went to Malaysia as a labor migrant from Nepal in 2003. In Malaysia, he worked as a security guard in a private office for 4 and half years until 2008. He then went back to Nepal after his employment contract expired and tried to apply to Canada for working visa (in the hope of more income and stable life) through an agent who turned out to be a fraud, due to which he lost almost 10000 euros. He then again decided to go Dubai in 2010 from Nepal and worked as kitchen help in a restaurant until 2014. He came back to Nepal with some saving (money) and decided to go to Europe. During this time, he heard about a process by which Nepali people were going to Russia as a medium to enter desired destination in Europe through the help of brokers.

He applied for visit visa to Russia via a broker's help and received visit visa of 45 days. He paid around 9000 euros for this processing to reach Russia from his savings from previous jobs. He went to Russia in 2015 with a group of 4 other travelers who were also Nepali. They bought a car together in order to travel. They travelled for about 40 days and stayed in the car throughout the time. They finally reached Murmansk state in Russia (boarder near Finland) and stayed 18 more days while they waited to cross the border to enter Finland. After entering Finland, they were held by the immigration officials. So, to avoid deportation, they left behind their car and all their documents including passports and decided to go to Sweden. They hired a public taxi to go to Sweden, from where they went to Denmark via train and public cab. Then they travelled to Germany from Denmark. Again, they went to France from Germany, from where they reached Spain via bus. Then from Spain, they finally entered Portugal via train. He arrived Portugal in almost 5 months from the time he left Nepal. The total travel cost from Finland to Portugal was about 900 euros per person, which amounted to around 10000 euros total expenditure per person until he reached Portugal. He came to Portugal with the same group he travelled from Nepal as they all told him Portugal would be a safer place to settle.

He said that his primary reason to move to Portugal was his desire to settle in Europe. He said, *“After so many years of working in different counties like Malaysia and Dubai, I was tired of that life. I did not have hope of living a better life in Nepal, so Europe was last hope for me. This why I chose this do or die way entering Europe.”*

When he left Nepal to go to Portugal, he was in search of future settlement for his family. Unfortunately, his relation with (former) wife had problems due to lack of communication and understanding. He did not get support from her as expected at that time. He said that he has hope to bring his children in Portugal so as to give them a better future. But due to his lack of understanding with his former wife, he could not do that. He said,

“After so many hardships, I finally reached Portugal. And while I was trying to settle in here (in Portugal), my former wife said that she did not wish to be with me and will not let our children come to Europe. She stopped communicating and would not receive my calls.”

Arrival and Settlement in Portugal

He came to Russia with a visit visa of 45 days. He entered Portugal from Russia in 2016 via difficult route. The group with whom he entered Portugal got dispersed because no one could help each other at that time. After entering Portugal, he did not have anyone to help so he slept in metro station and public park for 15 days. He took help from a cyber to prepare necessary documents to apply for Nepali passport which was owned by a Nepali immigrant who guided

him for further processing. He paid 250 euros for this. He also met few other Nepali people during this documentation process with whom he requested to help him find a job and place to stay. During this time, he found a job in a Portuguese restaurant as a dishwasher for two months. He got out of work for a month and again started living under refuge in several Nepali people's apartment (whoever could offer to help).

"In this difficult time, I met some kind Nepali people who let me stay in their apartment for few days. Even though I didn't know them personally, they helped me a lot. I lived in many people's place to survive while I had temporary job with less earning"

After this irregular living situation, he found a job in Portuguese restaurant as a dishwasher where he got job contract and started paying tax. He then could afford to stay in a shared apartment with 6 other Nepali people. He worked in this restaurant for 8 months. After that, he applied for a security guard job in a hotel in Portugal and got the job. He worked as a security guard in the hotel with a contract for three years and recently got promoted as a receptionist.

When the interviewee was asked to share his feelings right after arriving Portugal, he said,

"First few months was very difficult for me as I did not have any place to stay or any job. The money I brought from Nepal was almost finished and I was feeling tensed and scared until I found a job."

Current life situation in Portugal

Work and Visa situation

The interviewee is currently working as a receptionist in a hotel, where he first started working as a security guard for three years since 2017. Currently, he earns about 700 euros monthly. Although he is earning more than before, he finds this job responsibility more challenging due to his limited computer skills.

"I started working with 650 euros as a security guard and now I am earning 700 euros in a month. Due to my limited computer skills, it is hard for me to do my job. I still am doing my job as required because I went through a very hard time to reach to this place and do not want to lose this job."

He got his first temporary card after more than two years of arrival i.e. on 2018. At the present, he has a temporary residence card.

Housing situation

During the first 15 days of his arrival, he slept in metro station and public parks. After that, he also stayed in different apartments of Nepali people who allowed him to stay temporarily for some days. They helped him just because he was a Nepali without any other prior relation. This situation lasted almost 3 months before he could afford to rent a shared apartment with 6 other Nepali people after finding a stable job in the restaurant in 2016.

After getting married in 2019 with his present wife, he shifted to their own apartment. He lives in Lisbon with his present wife and her daughter in the apartment. He and his wife share the rent and other expenses together.

Language learning

When questioned about language challenges in his work and daily life, he said

"I worked as a dishwasher initially so I was not required to have language skills. Even now, I work in a hotel where many foreigner guests come so I speak in English. I learnt

English while living in Malaysia and Dubai. I do not need Portuguese language for my job.”

He said that he finds Portuguese language very challenging because of his growing age and lack of education but has plan to learn the language in order to apply for passport in future. He added,

“Due to many struggles in my life, I feel older than I am. It is challenging for me to learn new languages. Still, I will take formal classes in future because I need the passport.”

Knowledge on Immigration law

The interviewee was also further questioned about his knowledge on immigration laws and policies of Portugal, he said that he is not much educated and do not bother about anything than doing his job. He further said that with help received and experiences gathered, he was able to get valid visa following all the requirements so that is more than enough for him to know.

Networking and support

He said that he is not involved in NRNA or any other association in Portugal directly but has received help from people who are involved in NRNA. He said that,

“During my initial time in Portugal, I got place to sleep and food to eat. Many kind Nepalese helped me for this. Even though I did not know anyone personally, they helped me out of humanity. One of them (whom I requested) helped me to find a job in the restaurant initially. He is actually an active member of NRNA.”

Feelings about family separation

The interviewee has been living in a complex family situation. His biological children from his former wife live in Nepal. He has been maintaining transnational ties with his children in Nepal since late 2015 (even though he reached Portugal in 2016, and spent 5 months in travel). His daughter was 7 years old and son was 6 months old when he left Nepal to come to Portugal. Even before coming to Portugal, he went to Dubai for 2 years and has lived in transnational situation previously with his former wife and daughter in Nepal (before his son was born).

The longest time he has been away from his family before visiting them in 2018 was 2 and half years i.e., from 2015 to 2018. He visited his family in Nepal in 2018 after receiving temporary residence card and stayed for about 40 days.

He mentioned that living away from his children is heartbreaking mostly because of the behavior he has received from his former wife. He said,

“It is difficult to live away from them. Because of their mother, I am having to stay away from them. I miss them more when I see my step daughter who is here (in Portugal).”

Relationship with the partner and Care arrangements

He shared that his relation with his former wife who is primary care giver and mother of his children in Nepal is not good. Whereas, he has a good relation with his present wife in Portugal.

“My relation with my former wife ended in bad terms because of lack of trust and understanding. She shared that she did not want to be part of my life and we divorced during my visit to Nepal on 2018.”

He added,

“The relationship with my present wife is nice and is based on understanding. We are raising her daughter together and I try to be a good father for her even though she is not my own child, I treat her like my own. I feel lucky to find my present wife after bad relationship in the past.”

Furthermore, he also mentioned that because of the bad relationship with his former wife, he is unable to maintain good communication with his children too. He also shared the impact of relationship with partner over relationship with children.

He said,

“My former wife doesn't allow me to engage with my children. She doesn't want me to get close to the children. As she lives with them, I cannot talk to them but I ask about them with my relatives who live nearby to know how they are doing. She doesn't allow to maintain communication with my children and tries to put bad impression about me to my children.”

He said there are very less moments he has been directly involved with his children in Nepal. He shared that when he visited Nepal on 2018, he hugged them and bought them lots of gifts for which their mother fought with him. He said that visit became frustrating because he could not spend much quality time with his children as he desired.

“When she fought with me because I hugged my children and bought them gifts. I could not spend much time with them because she would start arguments and fights seeing me get close to my children. She even said them to not get too close because I am not a good man and will leave them soon.”

He was further asked about how rearing and caring of children in Nepal is organized, he said

“I gave all my money (savings) and my property (home) to their mother after the divorce. I did it because whatever I give her will be for my children too. Even though their mother earns through tailoring business, the money I have given also is used in their education and rearing.”

Perception on parenting and fatherhood

For him, being a parent means,

“It is about giving a better life to children than we ever got to live. It means feeling responsible even when others tell me not to. My former wife says not to think of my children but I am still trying to convince her to allow the children to come here in Portugal so that they can create a better path of future.”

When I asked him, what he perceives to be a father, he said that it is not only about paying school fee but also about showing a better path. He also said that this thought is influenced by his childhood experience.

“I grew up in a village with very minimal facility. So, I want to give my children what I did not receive and what my parents could not offer me. My parents died when I was young so I did not get much support from my family and relatives. I don't want my children to feel so.”

Further, when he was asked what kind of father, he thinks he is, he said,

“I want to be a good father and I try to engage with them as much as possible. But I am sad that my children haven't been able to see that. My daughter who is in Portugal has seen and known a lot better than my own children in Nepal. I am afraid that they think less of me because of their mother's bad influence.”

Fathering role before migration

When he was asked if he had any particular role as a father before leaving Nepal. He said,

“My daughter was 7 years old and my son was only 6 months old at the time I left Nepal to go to Portugal. Still, I was not able to get close with them because I went to Dubai when my daughter was an infant because of which I got to be very less involved with my daughter. Even though I have spent very less time with my children, I remember few moments I played role as a father like: when my daughter was very young, I taught her how to tie her shoe lace, I used to buy toys and dolls for her. Before leaving Nepal for Portugal, I remember holding my infant son and kissing him, etc. When I remember these things, my chest feels heavy with the realization on how much I missed parenting in their growing years.”

Fathering role after migration

There are only few instances when he was able to talk over phone with his children in Nepal after coming to Portugal because their mother had stopped answering his calls. She also did not allow him to talk to the children due to which he has not been able to communicate with children.

He mentioned that his is unable to play the role as a father from distance because of lack of support from his children’s mother.

“She has a lot of say in their lives as they are young. Also, her mother and other relatives support her decision of not letting me get in touch with my children. They think I am incapable of being a good father because of my marriage to another woman with a child.”

Family Reunification and Future Aspirations

He wishes to bring his children in Portugal but is unable as his former wife doesn’t want that to happen. He lives with his present wife who has a daughter. He did not have to apply for them as they were already living in Portugal. He shared that he plans to apply for passport after 2 years as it will be over five years of obtaining temporary residence card. He said,

“My I will hopefully apply for passport after two years. Till then I’m hoping to be able to bring my children and apply for their passports too. If after applying they do not wish to stay in Portugal is also fine, because they will at least have option to choose whether to stay or not.”

Recommendation

When asked about if he has anything to advice or say to Nepali people living in Portugal with similar experiences of transnational parenting, he said *“I am myself living in a very difficult situation. So rather than giving advice to the immigrant, I want to give advice to the family back home to be more supportive and understanding of the struggles that immigrant fathers go through in a new place.”*

6.

Date of interview: July 12, 2021

Time of interview: 1 hours 19 minutes

Mode of interview: Online

Demographic Information:

Pseudonym: Ritesh

Gender: Male

Age: 35 years

Highest Education achieved: Higher Secondary Level in Arts from Nepal (Higher Secondary Education Board Nepal)

Occupation in Portugal: Employed as an administrative staff (attende) in a migration agency

Previous Occupation in Nepal: Care taker in a local organization (working for aged population in city area of Nepal)

Current family situation: Already reunited with family (Wife and one daughter in Portugal)

Introductory notes

The researcher got in contact with the interviewee with the help of one of the former MFAMILY students from Nepal. The researcher reached out to the alumni via her supervisor's help. After getting contact link of the interviewee (Facebook Id), the researcher approached and explained her research ideas. He was very keen to help as he has some experience working in the field of migration in Portugal. He then agreed to be interviewed, and the interview took place on 12th of July, 2021 as per the interviewee's availability. He also promised to help the researcher find other possible respondents. The interview was held online in Nepali language. The researcher found the interviewee to be very polite and interested to share his experiences. Total interview time was 1 hour 19 minutes.

Short information of the interviewee

The interviewee's pseudonym is Ritesh. He is 35 years old. He was born in a rural area of Nepal, where he studied until high school. After completion of his higher secondary education in 2009, he moved to city area of Nepal in order to study further. Due to financial difficulties, he could not pursue his studies so he started looking for job in the city and settled there.

Family information of the interviewee

The interviewer got married to his wife on 2012. His wife has a Master degree in Arts, and used to work as a teacher in a private school before giving birth to their daughter in 2013. They have a daughter together, who is now 8 years old. He lives with his wife and daughter in Portugal since 2018. His wife works in department store and their daughter studies in a public school in Portugal. Before moving to Portugal, he lived with his mother, wife and daughter in city area of Nepal. His mother is widowed and is currently living alone in their village home in Nepal.

Migration decision and previous experience of migration

After moving to the city area of Nepal in 2009, he first worked as a receptionist for about two years in a hotel owned by a neighbor from his village. After that, he got a job in a local organization providing care to the aged people (old population). He got this job through a

person who became his friend while living in the city, who recommended him for this job through her connection with manager of the organization.

The interviewee worked in the organization as a caretaker of the elderly for three years. During this time, he got married and had a daughter. His wife used to work as a teacher but left the job to take care of their daughter. While working in the organization, he realized that his income was not enough due to increasing responsibility and also because he was the sole earner in the family. So, after discussing this issue with his wife and his mother, he talked with his friends and relatives about future plans. During this period, he got into conversation with one of his relatives, who suggested him to go to Denmark with a student visa (as he has higher education degree) and enter Portugal like his son did. His other relatives also said that Portugal would be a better place for him to earn and settle. He said:

“My earning was not enough to fulfill my family’s needs. After having our daughter, we (me and my wife) were worried about our future expenses. I used to support my family with my earning alone. So, I started talking to my friends and relatives about this situation to figure out what to do. One of my relatives said that his son went to Portugal from Denmark. He further told me that going to Denmark with a student visa (since I had Higher education degree) would be feasible, and from there I could enter Portugal. Most of my relatives also said that it is a good idea.”

He went to Denmark on 2014 with a student visa, from where he moved to Portugal in the same year. He moved to Portugal within a week of his arrival in Denmark. He said that he applied for Bachelor in Hotel Management in one of the universities in Copenhagen, Denmark. This was as a part of the setup arranged by a consultancy in Nepal, for which he paid around 12000 euros total. He got in contact with this consultancy through his relative who sent his son to Portugal from Denmark through the same process. This consultancy also helped him get in contact with a Nepali person living in Copenhagen, who offered him to stay for few days.

“After listening to the suggestion made by my relative, going to Denmark with a student visa looked like a better plan. He (the relative) also helped me to get in conversation with the consultancy that sent his son to Portugal from Denmark. So, I took help of this consultancy and it arranged everything. I paid around 12000 euros for that. After going to Denmark, I moved to Portugal within a week. In Denmark, I stayed at a Nepali person’s apartment through the consultancy’s contact”.

When he was talking about the primary motivation to come to Portugal, he mentioned his desire to provide financially for his family and also to give a better future to his daughter.

“Like many other Nepalese (I mean, my Nepali friends in Portugal), my intention was to settle in Europe with my family. My daughter’s future was my first motivation to choose to come here (Portugal). I wanted to give her the best future I could”.

He also said that he took this decision by consulting his family.

“My mother and wife were supportive about my decision. I took this decision mutually with my family so they knew my intention of applying for student visa of Denmark. My daughter was too little (one year old) to understand but I’m sure she knows now why I took this decision”.

Arrival and Settlement in Portugal

When the interviewee was asked to share his feelings right after arriving Portugal, he said,

“It was a mixed feeling. I was hopeful for the future but at the same time I was worried and nervous about being in a completely new place”.

The interviewee had one cousin (the relative's son) in Portugal who helped him in his initial days in Portugal. After arriving in Portugal, he lived on his cousin's apartment, who helped him get connected with Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) in Portugal, where he was able to find a part time job. His job was to attend Nepali migrants who came to apply for new passports (mostly who didn't have passport while entering Portugal). He used to gather their information and fill online form for passport application process.

“My cousin gave me a place to stay and also introduced me to NRNA. I got lucky because they were looking for a person to assist in administrative tasks so I took the job. I used to help Nepali immigrants without passports to fill online form for passport application. I joined after a month of my arrival and worked for a year”.

During this time, he also was able to engage in a public migration agency as a volunteer. He said that his job at NRNA was not full time, which allowed him time to engage elsewhere. He got in contact with this migration agency through a colleague in NRNA. In this agency, he worked as a volunteer and his main job was to receive clients. Not only that, he also used to help the administrative staffs in communication (to translate in English) if any Nepali or Indian clients who couldn't speak English language would come to seek service. The main reason he joined this agency as an unpaid volunteer was because he was offered a job contract that would pay taxes for him since NRNA did not offer job contract.

“It was a part time job in NRNA so I also got time to engage in a migration agency as a volunteer. I was not paid money for this job but they gave me a job contract and paid my taxes. I found out about this office from my colleague in NRNA and found it interesting. There I used to help in receiving the clients and also assist the administrative staff in communicating with Non-English speakers Nepali and Indian clients. For this, I would help in translating Nepali/Hindi into English language”.

Current life situation in Portugal

Work and Visa situation

He works in the same migration agency where he started working as a volunteer in 2014. After working for about a year as a volunteer, he was offered a paid job as an attendee, so he left the job at NRNA. Currently, he works as an attendee with higher salary because of more working experience.

“I work in the same migration agency from 2014. I got paid job after a year as an attendee. At first, I was offered 800 euros per month and now I work in the same position with increased salary i.e., 1400 euros since 2020”.

When asked about his current visa situation, he said that he holds a temporary residence card since 2017.

Housing situation

Before inviting his family to Portugal in 2018, he used to live at his cousin's apartment in outskirts of Lisbon. He first started living with his cousin for free after his arrival. And later when he started earning from job he got in NRNA, they shared the rent along with two other Nepali roommates. At the present, he owns a rented apartment and lives with his wife and daughter. He said that both (he and his wife) earn due to which they can afford an apartment with all the necessary facilities.

Language learning

When questioned about language challenges in his work and daily life, he said

“I did not have to face any challenge as such. When I worked in NRNA, I mostly spoke only in Nepali. And in migration agency, my English language speaking skills was more useful. I did not need to speak in Portuguese because most of the clients that came to the agency did not speak Portuguese. Not only that, due to my Nepali and Hindi language skills, I became an asset to the organization as I could translate what they said in English to the Portuguese and foreigner staffs.”

At the present, he has basic reading and writing skills because he took classes in School Marquês de Pombal and passed A1 and A2 level test, for which he paid 25 euros in total. He said that it is inexpensive because it is the government offered program. He also said that he was keen to learn the language knowing that it would be helpful for him to settle in Portugal. Which is why, he mostly learnt the language from his Portuguese colleagues in migration agency and took the formal classes as a medium to clear the language tests.

“I took classes for A1 and A2 level and passed both the tests. I took the classes in School Marquês de Pombal and paid around 25 euros. Mostly, I learnt from my Portuguese colleagues with whom I’ve worked for more than 3 years already. I used to listen and try to learn because I always thought that learning Portuguese could be useful in future. I actually took the classes to learn more academic way of writing and speaking in order to pass the tests”.

Knowledge on Immigration law

The interviewee was also further questioned about his knowledge on immigration laws and policies of Portugal. He replied that he knows acts and policies that target immigrants. He specifically mentioned that working in migration agency made him aware about issues that immigrants deal in a foreign country, such as job, language and housing problems. He also added that, working in the migration agency helped him learn about reunification laws that made it easy for him to invite his family.

Networking and support

He said that he has registered himself as an official member of NRNA since last year. However, he has been of NRNA from the beginning of his arrival. He mentions that NRNA played a vital role in his settlement in Portugal.

“I recently got myself registered as a member in NRNA, but my link with NRNA goes back to 2014 when I had just arrived in Portugal. This association gave me job when I was new and jobless in the country. Not only that, due to NRNA I got involved in the agency I am working now. I owe a lot to this association, which is why I signed up to be an official member so that I can give back and also stay connected to the Nepali society in Portugal”.

According to him, he also has many non-Nepali friends whom he met through his work. He said that because of his multiple language skills, he is able to maintain communication with many friends from various parts of the world. Not only that, he claims that learning Portuguese language has made his work easier which is why he is also favored by his Portuguese boss in the workplace. According to him, learning the language helped him prove his dedication and sincerity towards his work.

Feelings about family separation

The interviewee had transnational relation with his family for about 4 years i.e., from 2014 to 2018. His daughter was one year old when he left Nepal. He got reunited with his wife and daughter and has been living together with them in Portugal since 2018. His daughter was 5 years old when they got reunited. He did not go to visit his family in Nepal from Portugal because he applied for the reunification after few months of receiving his first temporary card in 2017.

Since he has already been reunited with his family, he was asked about his past feelings and experiences related to family separation. He said,

“It was definitely the hardest time of my life. It was heart breaking to leave a one-year-old infant daughter. I missed my family so much I can’t even explain it in words. Being an immigrant is not a wish, it is an obligation for people like us. I just feel so bad I was not there in the initial growing years of my daughter. I missed 4 years of that time which I can never get back. If I had a better financial condition, I would never have to experience all this”.

He said that his family (when they were in Nepal) and cousin in Portugal supported him the most during the years he endured separation with his family.

“I used to get emotional but my family was always there for me. I talked with my wife in Nepal and my cousin in Portugal whenever I felt sad. They used to encourage me and support me which made separation bearable”.

Relationship with the partner and care arrangements

When asked about how his relationship with his wife is, he said

“Our relation is good. My wife is supportive and caring. That’s all I need. I am happy and I’m sure she is happy too because I try my best to be a good and caring husband.”

He also shared that his wife is a good mother and also makes him feel like a good father by encouraging and letting him be involved in childcare. He said,

“She (his wife) is extremely understanding and not only she takes care of our daughter, she also motivates me to be a good father. She is respectful and supportive because of which I can play my role as a caring father and also learn from her. She encourages me to be involved as much as possible”.

The interviewee also mentioned that both (he and his wife) are equally involved in taking care of their daughter. He also added that they are caring and responsible parent and take any decision or arrangements related to their child mutually decided. He said,

“Both of us (me and my wife) take care of our child equally. She (daughter) is big enough so she doesn’t require constant care but both me and my wife are present for her whenever she needs us. Any decision about our daughter is discussed and decided by both her mother and me”.

Perception on parenting and fatherhood

He perceives being a parent is about feeling responsible towards the children in taking care and guiding them for better future. He said,

“To be a parent is a big responsibility. It is about taking care of the children needs, and also showing them a correct path that will shape their future”.

According to him, his responsibilities as a father are:

“I feel responsible to provide for her and teach her a way to live a decent life. As a father, I want her to never forget what sacrifices and struggle me and my wife are doing for her so that she always makes good decisions in her life”.

When asked if there is any reason of why he thinks like that, he said,

“In my childhood, I did not get what we (he and his wife) are able to provide for our daughter. I don’t want her to struggle like us (he and his wife), which is why I brought her here. But still understanding what we do for her will encourage her to work hard and lead a good life”.

He also said that he learnt to be a good father from his childhood experiences and his relation with his mother and deceased father. According to him,

“Even though my parents could not afford to give me facilities like I am giving to my daughter, they always taught me value of hard work and discipline. My mother always makes me feel loved due to which I learnt to give love to my daughter. I also learnt a lot from my father (deceased), who always told me to never forget my roots no matter where I go”.

I further asked him about what and how his daughter thinks of him as a father, he replied

“My daughter certainly knows that I love her and I hope that she also sees me as a responsible parent. I know that she loves me. She is actually very attached to me (may be more than with her mother)”.

Fathering role before migration

According to the interviewee, he had very less responsibilities towards his daughter before migration. He said that he left the country when his daughter was only one year old due to which, he did not get to involve in many care taking roles. He also said that his mother was also living with them to take care of his daughter because of which he did not involve so much.

“She (daughter) was only one years old when I left. So, I could not engage much with her. I sometimes used to help my wife while bathing our daughter or while changing her clothes. Since my mother also lived with us, I did not do much”.

Fathering role after migration

After migrating to Portugal (before getting reunited), the only way to get connected to his family was through internet communication. Although it helped a lot to connect with his wife and mother, it was not as effective to connect with his daughter initially. This was because she was too little to participate in conversation. He said that he used to call his family on regular basis so that his daughter would not feel detached from him. When time went by, his daughter started to recognize him whenever she saw him on the video calls and also started talking to him. According him, this brought him closer to his daughter and he could also be involved emotionally with her.

“After coming to Portugal, I used to call my family on a regular basis. I would do that because I wanted to talk to my family and also make sure that my daughter sees me and recognizes my voice. By doing this, I would feel assured that she would not grow detached from me. Slowly, she started to engage in video calls, which helped a lot to build an involved relationship with my daughter.”

When he was asked about major challenges he faced while parenting from distance, he said,

“The biggest challenge is not being able to be present physically. I could not participate in many events such as my daughter’s birthday or our (me and my wife) marriage anniversary, no matter how regular the communication was. Due to this, I used to feel guilty about not being available for them”.

After being reunited with his family, he said that he is able to participate in parenting and feel more connected to his daughter. He also added that living together made his relation with his daughter and wife better.

“I always had good relation with my family but after my wife and daughter joined me here (Portugal), I feel that I am able to get closer to them and build a better relation. I am also able to participate more in my daughter’s life”.

Family Reunification and Future Aspirations

As he is already reunited with his family, I asked him his future expectations and plans regarding his child’s future and education, he said,

“Both me and my wife have plan to stay in Portugal. So, we want our daughter to continue her study here (Portugal). Both (me and my wife) hope to see our daughter get success in life in whatever profession she chooses in future. The only expectation I have is that she always feels closer to us and includes us in her life decisions”.

He further added,

“As a son, I plan to bring my mother here (Portugal) but she doesn’t want to come. She says that she likes her life there in Nepal. I totally understand her choice. She has lived all her life there. But no matter how far I am, I try my best to stay in touch with my mother. Even though she doesn’t understand lifestyle of Europe, I share almost everything about how we live and earn money here in Portugal. I also include her in any decision I am going to take. I do this out of respect towards my mother not because I need permission. This is what I hope from my daughter too.”

Recommendation

When asked about if he has any advice for Nepali immigrants in Portugal who are practicing transnational parenting, he said

“Being an immigrant is difficult. I am an immigrant and I have seen other immigrants and heard their stories too. It is a life of struggle, which requires a lot of compromise and hard work. One advice I can give for any immigrants not only Nepalese who have families and children back home is: be loyal and thoughtful of family, this will help you reach your goals”.

7.

Date of interview: July 12, 2021

Time of interview: 1 hour and 11 minutes

Mode of interview: Online

Demographic Information:

Pseudonym: Ashok

Gender: Male

Age: 44 years

Highest Education achieved: Diploma in Technical Education from private training center in Nepal

Current Occupation in Portugal: Business man (owner of a construction company and a sushi restaurant)

Previous Occupation in Nepal: Electrical Technician in a government office

Current family situation: Transnational family situation (Wife and one daughter in Nepal),
Reunited with son (in Portugal)

Introductory notes

The researcher came in contact with the interviewee through the sixth interviewee. While reaching out to the sixth interviewee (Ritesh), the researcher had requested to help her find possible respondents so he gave the contact link of the interviewee (Facebook Id). After contacting the interviewee, the researcher found him to be very responsive and eager to help. As he was Ritesh's friend, he was already informed about the research idea. The researcher further clarified few things and asked his date of availability. The interview took place on 12th of July, 2021 (same date as of sixth interview, in a different time), via Facebook call in Nepali language, and lasted for about 1 hour and 11 minutes.

Short information of the interviewee

The interviewee's pseudonym is Ashok. He is 44 years old. He has a diploma degree in technical education from Nepal. He got his diploma as an electrical technician in 2000 and has been working since then.

Family information of the interviewee

He got married with his wife in 2001. His wife has studied until grade 9 and is a housewife. They have two children: a son aged 18 years old and a daughter aged 16 years old. His wife and daughter live in city area of Nepal, while their son is living with him in Portugal since 2020. His daughter studies in private high school in Nepal and his son studies in a Portuguese university. His extended family (parents and younger brother) live in his childhood home which is situated in a different city.

Migration decision and previous experience of migration

The interviewee worked for around 5 years as an electrical technician in Nepal until 2005. While he was working in Nepal, his office was raided by Maoists, which made his working

condition difficult to an extent where he had to leave the job. After losing his job in Nepal, he decided to go abroad because he could not see his career flourishing in Nepal. According to him, the pay from his job was minimal which was not enough to raise two children due to which he decided to go to abroad.

“I was already frustrated with low pay in my work in Nepal. And on top of that, I lost my job due to Maoist’s interference in my office. This incident triggered something on me and I did not want to stay in Nepal any longer. I had to raise two children so I started looking for options in abroad”.

During this time, he got in contact with one consultancy in Nepal that suggested him to apply for culture visa to Spain by which he could enter Europe. The consultancy told him that a group of Nepalese were going to take part in a cultural program in Spain which could be a gateway for him. The consultancy further suggested him to go to Belgium and apply for refugee status as many Nepalese were applying for refugee status due to country’s situation at that time. The consultancy arranged a fake document of participation in the cultural program which was happening in Spain. The whole processing costed him around 9500 euros.

“I came to Spain with a culture visa through a set-up arranged by the consultancy. The consultancy in Nepal suggested me to go to Belgium from Spain and apply for refugee status by which I could be offered a place to stay. I agreed with the plan and paid around 9500 for the whole arrangement to the consultancy”.

With that visa, he went to Spain in 2006 and stayed for around 12 days and then travelled to Belgium in order to apply for refugee status. He stayed in a social house (one bedroom to stay) inside the refugee camp offered by the government of Belgium. He was also offered other facilities such as laundry and weekly allowance of 52 euros for food. He could not get his refugee status approved as the Maoist insurgency in Nepal came to an end in 2006, but could extend his stay in refugee camp until 2009. During his stay in refugee camp, he was able to move around the city with the travel card given by the government. While taking a stroll around the city, he had met few Nepali people and requested them to help him find the job. During that time, one of the Nepali people got him connected to an immigrant from Bangladesh who owned a construction company in Belgium. So, after leaving the refugee camp in 2009, he worked in that construction company for about a year as an electrician and used to earn around 800 to 1000 euros.

“After reaching Spain, I took a flight to Belgium. I did not show my passport or identification paper and told them about the situation back home (in Nepal). I started living in social house inside the refugee camp that offered me laundry facility and weekly allowance of 52 euros for food. I was also given travel card by which I could travel around the city. One evening during a stroll, I met few Nepali people and explained my situation and also my past working experiences. I requested them to help me find the job and shared contact number. One of them connected me with a Bengali person who owned a construction company and was in need of an electrician. During that time, I had to leave the camp as the situation in country improved and I was not eligible to get refugee status. I got the job there right after leaving the camp and earned about 800 to 1000 euros per month. I worked for about 1 year in that company without job contract.”

After working for a year in the construction company, he started working as a freelance electrical technician for three years by which he got engaged in many private housing projects

of Nepali and Indian families. He used to make around 3000-3500 euros per month but it was not a steady income and it depended upon the projects he got engaged.

“I earned better when I started working on my own as a freelance electrician. I used to make up to 3500 euros per month by working in a private housing projects of Nepali and Indian families. But this was not always the case as the income depended on the amount of work I used to get, I worked for three years until 2013”.

During this time, he had some savings from the earlier job so he wanted to invest in a restaurant but could not because of irregular visa condition. For this reason, he approached a Nepali family he knew closely during his stay in Belgium. He convinced them to invest together in the restaurant and become business partners. He invested in the restaurant and started the business with the Nepali family which continued until end of 2014. But due to some dispute with the business partner, he lost his investment and had to quit the business.

“After making decent saving, I was hopeful to start restaurant business on my own but was not eligible due to my visa situation. During my stay I had met a Nepali family with whom I had good relation. I approached them, shared my plan and requested them to become business partner. So, we started the restaurant together but due to some dispute with the business partner I lost all my investment”.

After living for 9 years without legal status and losing hard earned money in a business, he realized that settling in Belgium wasn't feasible for him. During this time, he got in contact with a friend from Nepal who was living in Portugal for three years who suggested him to come to Portugal.

“After living for 9 years in Belgium, I could not acquire legal status and also lost my business. So, I realized that Belgium was not a place for me to settle. Thus, I came in contact with one of my friends from Nepal who was living in Portugal for three years. He suggested me to come to Portugal.”

He said that his primary reason to move to Portugal was his quest for settlement and desire to give secure future to his children. He took the suggestion of his Nepali friend who was living in Portugal. This friend assured that he would help the interviewee to get job. The interviewee came to Portugal in 2015 via train including few transits and started living at his friend's apartment.

He said,

“Portugal was last hope for me to settle down and build a secure future for my children. My friend in Portugal also assured me that he would help me in finding job and offered his place to stay after I arrive”.

When asked about how his family supported in his migration decision, he replied

“My wife was stressed when I shared about what happened in Belgium. She was emotional and warned me to be careful in future about trusting anyone. It was difficult for her to understand but she told me that she trusts me. My parents and younger brother were also worried but they knew that I was doing my best for the family, which is why they supported me”.

Arrival and Settlement in Portugal

He came to Portugal in the end of 2015 and lived at his friend's apartment while looking for jobs. The interviewee was asked to share his initial feelings after arriving in Portugal, he said,

“I was stressed. After so much struggle in Belgium, I did not get what I hoped for so I was just praying that Portugal would not disappoint me. I was relieved about one thing that I had a friend who offered me his place to stay”.

During this time, his friend got him connected to a Nepali person who had recently bought a place to start a sushi restaurant. This person was looking for someone to renovate and repair the place. So, his friend introduced him to this person and shared about his past working experience in Nepal and Belgium. After that, he was hired for overall renovation and repair for a two weeks project. After this project, he got recognition for his good work among Nepalese in Portugal and slowly started getting called for commercial and private projects.

“I got lucky to get a job of my expertise. My friend introduced me to a Nepali person who was looking for someone with similar expertise of mine. After working there for two weeks, my work was recognized and I got more offers from other Nepali people in commercial as well as private housing projects. I mostly used to offer services that involved house wiring, electrical appliances and furniture installation, painting, and so on”.

After working as a freelance worker for the first three months of arrival, he was hired as an electrician in a construction company owned by a Nepali person. This company offered him a job contract by which he could pay taxes. He then was able to apply for temporary residence card in 2017. After obtaining temporary residence card in 2017, he opened his own small scale construction company in Lisbon that offered similar services (furniture and electrical installation).

“While working as an individual freelancer, I was offered a job in a construction company owned by a Nepali person. He hired me as an electrician with a job contract. This helped me pay my taxes legally, due to which I could apply for temporary residence. I got my card and I opened my own company in 2017.”

Current life situation in Portugal

Work and Visa situation

At the present, the interviewee owns a construction company and a sushi restaurant in Portugal. He is the sole owner of the construction company and has hired four other Nepali people to work under him. Whereas, he owns the sushi restaurant in partnership with the same friend who helped him in his initial days of arrival in Portugal. He said that his earning is not always the same but he saves around 1300-1400 euros monthly excluding all his expenses such as children’s education.

“I own two business i.e., construction company of my own and a sushi restaurant in partnership with my friend. My overall saving after spending for rent, food and sending money back home is around 1300-1400 euros every month. I pay for both my children’s education in Nepal and in Portugal”.

When asked about his current visa situation, he said that he holds a temporary residence card since 2017.

Housing situation

He lived at his friend’s apartment along with three other Nepalese men for three months in outskirts of Lisbon after his arrival. As his earning was not steady, his friend asked him to pay only the rent. After getting a job contract in the construction company, he shifted to a different apartment and shared it with two other Nepali people. At the present, he owns an apartment in Lisbon and lives with his son.

Language learning

When he was questioned about challenges related to language in his work and daily life, he said,

“I haven’t felt this challenge as much. My work and life are highly associated with Nepali people living in Portugal. The main thing is now my work is more independent and I hire people whom I know and can trust. They are all Nepalese with whom I speak in Nepali”.

At the present, he has basic Portuguese language skill and have passed A1 and A2 level, for which he paid around 25 euros. He said that he took these tests with the hope of settling down in Portugal.

“I took basic A1 and A2 classes and gave tests from (name of the school). I paid 25 euros. I took these tests to get certificate, which will be useful to apply for passport in future.”

Knowledge on immigration law

The interviewee was also further questioned about his knowledge on immigration laws and policies of Portugal, he replied,

“I am not sure what particularly to say but the thing is I have lived most of my life illegally in Europe. Only after getting my temporary residence card in 2017, I felt that I am able to live by law”.

Networking and Support

He said that he has been more involved in Magar Sangh, formerly known as Magar Samaj. The interviewee is an active member of Magar Sangh.

“I am actively involved in Magar Sangh since 2017. I have made many friends from this association and also have been engaged in programs of NRNA through this association.”

According to him, besides the support he received from his friend in Portugal, one biggest support was Magar Sangh for him. He further explained,

“Working in these associations, broadened my public relation with Nepalese society in Portugal. Through this, I have also hired trustworthy people in my business.”

Feelings about family separation

The interviewee has been maintaining transnational ties with his family (wife, daughter, son and extended family) since 2006 i.e., for 15 years. He had transnational relation with his son for about 14 years i.e., from 2006 to 2020. His son was three and half years old and daughter was one and half year old when he left Nepal. He got reunited with his son when he was 17 years old and has been living together in Portugal for more than one year.

The longest time he has been away from his family without physical contact was almost 13 years i.e., from the time he left Nepal in 2006 to 2019. He went to Nepal once in 2018 after getting his temporary residence card in 2017 for the first time after leaving Nepal. He could not visit his family before that because of his irregular visa situation in Belgium and Portugal. He stayed for 40 days during this visit to Nepal.

He shared about his initial feelings of family separation as extremely saddening. He explained it as the one of the toughest times of his life.

“When I first went to Belgium, it was so difficult for me. I was very upset and missed my family too much. This was indeed the most difficult time for me”

When asked how he feels about it now, he said,

“My son was three and half years old and my daughter was one and half year old. It was so heartbreaking to leave my children at such young age. The more time I stayed away from them is the more time I missed from their lives. I will never get that time back again. If I think about it now, I get emotional.”

He has hope that his children can understand the decision of family separation as they are older.

“I hope that they will understand why their father had to do this. They are grownups so I think they know why I made these compromises”.

Coping up with challenges of family separation became easier with time when he obtained temporary residence card. According to him, gaining temporary residence card made him feel excited about getting to live with his family and also visit Nepal whenever he wanted.

“I earnt money in Belgium too, so for me biggest concern was getting a legal status. After obtaining residence card in Portugal, I felt so relieved. It gave me a feeling that now I could bring my family here (in Portugal) and also could visit them in Nepal when I wanted. This feeling gave me strength”.

Relationship with the partner and care arrangements

The interviewee complimented his wife about handling these many long years of separation. He said it because of the solid base of their relationship that they could endure separation and still maintain good family life.

“My wife deserves a lot of praise. We have been living away for more than a decade now and she still makes me feel loved and cared for. It is because we have a very good understanding among us. This has helped us to maintain such good relation.”

He also gave shared the difficulty in relationship he faced due to distance and failure to get legal status in Belgium.

“It is quite normal to have some misunderstandings in a relationship especially if it is long distance. In our case, we had some rough time when I lost the business and also could not obtain legal status in Belgium after 9 years. This made her feel a little anxious. However, we passed through that phase with time”.

The interviewee expressed that because of his healthy relationship with his wife, he is able to maintain good relationship with his children too despite the distance.

“My children are more attached with their mother and it is understandable because they spent more time with her than me. Since, I have good relation with my wife, my children feel connected to me even when I have been able to spent so less time with them.”.

When asked about how involved both are in care arrangements and decision about their child, he said

“I am responsible for the entire financial aspect of our household management. I also support my children’s education. Besides financial aspect, my wife involves me in every big decision related to our children’s education, health and so on. Other minor issues

and decisions are mostly taken care by my wife but she surely informs me. Now our children are big enough to take most of the decision by themselves like what they want to study and so on. As parents, we support and/or give advice to them”.

As the interviewee have spent more than a decade away from his family, he said that he missed most of the time of their (children) growing period. However, he shared a memorable time with his children in 2019 when he visited Nepal.

“It is sad that I missed most of my children’s important periods of life. I could not be with them while they were growing up. But when I went to Nepal in 2019 for 40 days, I had the best time with my children. We went out for a family dinner. When corona lockdown started after few days of my arrival in Nepal, I stayed whole day at home with my wife and children. I spent most of my time talking, watching Tv, playing games with my children. We even made our ethnic food together. We shared a quality time together”.

Perception on parenting and fatherhood

For him, being a parent means being a role model for children.

“I always want my children to take good habits and lessons from me and my wife. I want them to understand that life involves struggle and hard work. But the main thing is never to forget family values”.

He also said that this thought is influenced by his relation with his parents and his wife.

“My parents always taught me good values and encouraged me to work hard with patience. My wife always supported me through thick and thin (good and bad times). All these made me overcome the struggles and hard times I went through while I was trying to settle in Europe. I failed several times but I never gave up. So, I want my children to understand these things”.

When I asked him, what he perceives to be a father, he said that it is more than being only financial supporter. According to him, as a father, he should be able to teach his children good values and encourage them to work and study hard to make their future bright.

“I am the father so I provide financially for my children but I don’t think my job is limited to that. Even though I am far, I always have tried my best to make my children understand the value of education, hard work and good morals to succeed in life”.

Further, when he asked what his children think about him, he said,

“Both of my children are very mature. They are well-behaved and respectful towards me. They are also friendly with me. These all behaviors from them makes me think I have been a good father for them. Even though they are more attached to their mother, they show me love and care as I hope to receive from them”.

Fathering role before migration

When he was asked if he had any particular role as a father before leaving Nepal, he said that even though he did not get to spend more years with them, he tried to be involved as much as possible.

“I got involved as I could during that time. I used to help my wife in every way possible to look after our children. I used to hold them and put them to sleep. They were small activities but meant a lot to me because I spent few years with them before I left Nepal”.

Fathering role after migration

Fathering from distance has been supported by the use of technology by which he was able to maintain communication with his children. He said that he has maintained regular communication with them and still calls his wife and daughter on a daily basis.

“Talking over audio and video calls made it easier to participate in children’s life even from far. I talked with them regularly after leaving Nepal and even now I talk with my wife and daughter almost every day”.

He mentioned that his role as a father from distance is calling and sharing his daily life and ask what and how his daughter is doing. He said when his son was in Nepal, he called both of them (son and daughter) in group video call and encouraged them to share happenings in their lives. He also said that after his son has arrived in Portugal, his daughter is more open to sharing over phone with him and his son.

“I used to call my children (before my son came here in Portugal) every day on group video calls and encouraged them to share their daily routine and happening. I still continue that with my daughter. Nowadays, she talks more over phone as her brother is here with me.”

When he was asked about major challenges he faced while parenting from distance, he said,

“Talking over phone is never the same as being together. Like I can feel so much more attached with my son after he arrived here. I am close with my daughter but it’s not the same”.

Family Reunification and Future Aspirations

The interviewee is already reunited with his son since 2020. According to him, he applied for his son first because he had already finished his high school and was about to start university. After that, he applied for his wife and daughter’s family reunification in the end of 2020. He said that pandemic situation (Covid-19) delayed this second application process. It took him around 4 months to apply in SEF in Portugal and get its approval. The documents have recently been registered in Embassy of Portugal in India for further process. He said,

“My wife and I have planned this mutually. Since our son is two years older than our daughter, we planned to invite him first as he was about to start his university. Then I applied for my wife and daughter too after 6 months of my son’s arrival. The processing took a longer time than expected because of Covid-19 situation. The application got approved by SEF in Portugal after 4 months and has now reached Embassy of Portugal in India. We are waiting to hear more from the embassy right now.”

He further explained his future hope,

“I hope to have my wife and daughter this year so that I can apply for passport after a year. If things go as planned, I will be happy”

According to him, his expectation regarding his children’s future is that he wants them to study further and settle in Portugal.

“I want my children to continue their studies in Portugal and look for settlement here.”

Recommendation

When asked about if he has anything to advice for Nepali people living in Portugal with similar experiences of transnational parenting, he said “*Just maintain good relation with family back at home and continue the hard work*”.

8.

Date of interview: July 21, 2021 and August 4, 2021

Time of interview: 2 hours and 7 minutes

Mode of interview: Online

Demographic Information:

Pseudonym: Krishav

Gender: Male

Age: 40 years

Highest Education achieved: Master in Education from Tribhuvan University in Nepal

Current Occupation in Portugal: Business owner (mini market and Nepali restaurant business)

Previous Occupation in Nepal: Administrative staff in secondary school (private)

Current family situation: Already reunited with family (wife, one daughter and son in Portugal)

Introductory notes

The researcher got in contact with the interviewee through the key informant, who is also an active member of NRNA. She shared his contact details (Facebook link) with the researcher and hence the researcher contacted the interviewee via Facebook. The researcher approached him several times via Facebook in the month of April but did not get any response. After a month i.e., on the 17th July, 2021, he responded back about being interested to participate but wasn't able to respond before because of his busy schedule. The researcher had preliminary conversation on the same day and explained him all the objectives and research aims. Hence, the interviewee gave his date and time of availability, according to which, the interview took place on the 21st of July. Due to the time difference between Portugal and Nepal, the interview took place at almost midnight in Nepal. Overall, the interview went smooth but there was some missing information as the researcher missed out few important questions. Because of this, she requested another date to discuss the remaining information. The second interview was conducted on the 4th of August. Despite few network disturbances, the interview was good and the interviewee was extremely cooperative. The whole interview (combining both interviews) lasted for 2 hours and 7 minutes.

Short information of the interviewee

The interviewee's pseudonym is Krishav. He is 40 years old. He was born and raised in a village (rural) area of Nepal where he completed his secondary school. Later, he moved to a city area of Nepal in order to achieve higher education. He has a Master degree in Education from Tribhuvan University in Nepal.

Family information of the interviewee

He has been married since 2006. He and his wife have one daughter aged 14 years old and a son aged 5 years old. His wife has a Bachelor degree in Nursing and currently supports the family business in Lisbon, Portugal. The daughter and son study in a public school in Portugal in seventh and kindergarten level respectively. His mother lives in city area of Nepal with his two elder brothers and their wives. His younger sister lives in Portugal with her husband and two children.

Migration decision and previous experience of migration

In Nepal, Krishav worked as an administrative staff in one private school for almost nine years until 2013. Before coming to Portugal, he did not have any previous experience of migration. While he was working in Nepal, he got invited by his sister to Portugal who was already settled with her husband and children. He then decided to leave his job in Nepal and applied for visit visa of 15 days to Portugal. He came at end of 2013 seeking for future settlement with the hope of providing better future to his children and wife. According to him, his earning in Nepal was not enough to support the increasing expenses of the family. His wife did not work in order to take care of their daughter at that time. Even though his brothers have a joint hotel business who are always open to help him financially, he did not want to depend upon their earning.

“I have good relationship with my sister who was already in Portugal. She offered me an invitation letter to come to Portugal, as she was already settled here (in Portugal) with her family, which made me think it was a good idea. My earning in Nepal was not enough to support my family. My wife was not able to work as she had to take care of our daughter”.

When asked about how his family and children reacted to this decision. He said,

“My wife was positive about it. She was hopeful that Europe would be a better place for us to settle. My daughter was already 7 years old so she understood where I was going. She was not so happy about it but later me and my wife convinced her. My mother was also supportive with my decision even though she was sad about me leaving”.

Arrival and settlement in Portugal

He came to Portugal at the end of 2013 with the visit visa of 15 days. After arrival, he contacted one of his Nepali friends who was in Portugal (whom he knew from Nepal). This friend and his sister helped him to look for jobs. During this time, his friend helped him to get in contact with a Chinese restaurant owner in Lisbon. After almost two months, he found a job in a Chinese restaurant and started working. When asked about his initial feelings after arriving to Portugal, he said,

“It was my first time abroad so I was obviously a little confused and worried. But thankfully, I had a Nepali friend and my sister who helped me to look for jobs. Through my friend’s contact, I got a job in Chinese restaurant after two months of arrival. Only after getting a job, I felt more hopeful”.

The interviewee travelled alone from Nepal to Portugal. In his initial period of arrival, he stayed at his Nepali friend’s apartment for more than two months. According to him, his sister in Portugal could not offer him accommodation (her apartment) because it was occupied by other tenants.

“This friend helped me a lot. Although I had my own sister on Portugal, I could not get place to stay at her apartment because she had rented it to others. So, I stayed at my friend’s place for more than two months where I did not have to pay rent. Not only that, this friend was the one who helped me get the job”.

He left his friend’s apartment when he started working in the Chinese restaurant where he was offered a work contract along with a place to stay. He worked in this restaurant for two years. He said,

“I was offered a place to stay by my boss in the Chinese restaurant, so I started living there and left my friend’s place. I worked there for two years under work contract which allowed me to pay my taxes. I started as a helper and I became a chef after a year”.

After working for two years, he started his own business with his savings. He opened a minimarket (small convenience store) in Lisbon and also applied for a temporary residence card in 2015.

“I was able to save most of my income because I stayed at a place offered by the restaurant and also ate most of my meals in the restaurant. I used to send some part of my savings to Nepal but kept most of it aside to open my own business. I started my business by opening a mini market in Lisbon after I received my first temporary residence card in 2015”.

Current life situation in Portugal

Work and Visa situation

The interviewee currently owns a mini market and a Nepali restaurant in Lisbon. He opened his minimarket business in 2015 and a restaurant in 2017. He said that the earning depends on the sales in both the restaurant and the minimarket, and there is no fixed monthly earning. He mentioned that he would save up to 3000-4000 euros monthly but his savings are lower after the spread of pandemic from 2020 i.e., around 1500 euros per month.

“I have my own minimarket and Nepali restaurant business. I used to save good amount of money i.e., around 3000 to 4000 before Covid. But after Covid in 2020, my saving decreased and now I save about 1500 euros per month”.

He also said that his wife helps him in his business and also takes care of the household chores. The earning from his business is enough to look after his family in Portugal.

“My wife helps me in my business. She also has recruited few Nepali workers in our restaurant. Not only that, she mostly takes care of the household chores as I give more time on the business than her. The earning from our business is enough to live a good life in Portugal”.

Housing situation

Initially, he lived in his friend’s apartment who offered him to stay free of cost. After 2 months, he was offered a place to stay by the Chinese restaurant where he worked for two years. In the present, he lives with wife and two children in their own rented apartment in Lisbon.

Language learning

When questioned about his knowledge on Portuguese language, he said that he has passed A1 and A2 level in 2017.

“I have cleared A1 and A2 level in the language. I took formal classes in Escola de Nuno and gave my tests. It was a government-provided program”.

He also shared his initial strategies of language learning before taking formal classes. He said, *“I also used my own strategy to learn language. I bought a language book that has Nepali to Portuguese translation in it, which made it easier to understand the meaning of words. I also used to practice the language with my colleagues in Chinese restaurant who were also learning the language”*

When further asked about the challenges he faced before learning the language, he said,

“It was not much difficult as expected because my boss spoke and understood English. And also, my colleagues were non-Portuguese speakers so I talked in English with them. Me and my colleagues helped each other practice the language”.

Knowledge on immigration law

When interviewee was questioned about his knowledge on immigration laws and policies of Portugal, he said,

“I am actively involved in NRNA so I have many friends with whom I share status of Nepali immigrants in Portugal. This helps me understand and be updated with any changes occurring in immigration laws in Portugal”.

Networking and Support

He said that he is actively involved in NRNA. He is one of the active members on the working committee. According to him,

“I am proud to be involved in this institution. It is a popular organization and all Nepalese know about it. It helps me connect with Nepalese society in Portugal. And not only that, I also am involved in various social services activities and cultural events that NRNA organizes”.

According to him, because of the existence of such organizations in Portugal, many Nepalese are able to survive in the initial struggling days.

“NRNA had helped many Nepali immigrants to find jobs, residence and food while being undocumented or while under economic crisis in initial days. This has helped hundreds of Nepalese to settle here”.

Feelings about family separation

The interviewee came to Portugal in 2013 and has an experience of being a transnational father from 2013 to 2016 before reunification. When he came to Portugal, his daughter was seven years old. He still maintains transnational ties with his family (mother and brothers) since 2013.

After obtaining his first temporary residence card in 2015, he went to visit his family for the first time. He visited Nepal three times in 8 years (i.e., from 2013 to 2021) after coming to Portugal, with each visit of minimum 35 days. During his first visit to Nepal in 2015, he went to India with his daughter and wife to apply for their visas (for family reunification).

When being questioned about his initial feelings of family separation, he said that the first few months were extremely challenging.

“The first few months were the hardest because I had never experienced family separation until that time. It was mostly difficult because I missed my daughter a lot. My son was not born yet that time. After I started getting used to new life and job here (Portugal), I was able to cope up better”.

He was asked how he dealt with this feeling and what he thinks about it in the present. He said, *“Whenever I remember those days and compare it to my life now, I can say even though those times were challenging, it was certainly rewarding. Now I feel blessed to be able to live together with my wife and children. But I surely miss my mother and brothers in Nepal”.*

Relationship with the partner and care arrangements

The interviewee said that the relationship between him and his wife is peaceful and based on feeling of partnership.

“She is not only my wife but also my partner. She takes care of my business and I can totally rely on her. We have a peaceful relation with each other”.

He added,

“As I spend most of my time in taking care of our business, my wife takes most of the responsibility on the household chores. In regards to our business, we take any decision mutually but I am more invested when it comes to look after the financial part of it”.

When asked about how involved both are in care arrangements and decision making about their children, he said

“We are both equally responsible. But my wife gives a little more time to our children than me because of I am more involved in our business. However, we are both equally caring and loving towards our children. Any decision about our children is mutually taken and we make sure our children’s needs are taken care of”.

He was further asked about financial sharing in regards to supporting child’s education, he said

“While my daughter was in Nepal, I used to take care of the expenses of her studies since my wife did not earn. In the present, the earning from our business goes into taking care of our children’s needs. But in terms of school fees, we do need not pay as education is free in Portugal.”

Perception on parenting and fatherhood

For him, being a parent means being available for the children and teaching them good morals. It means being able to give time, take care of their needs and give them the best life possible.

“Me and my wife (both) are working day and night for our children. We expanded our business so that they will not have to struggle like us. For me, being a parent is not only providing financially but also giving them time and good moral values.”.

He also said that this thought is influenced by his wife’s support and positive relationship her. He also says his friends also motivate his thinking.

“My wife always tells me we have to do this and that for our children. She is very organized and a good planner. She says even though we are away from our home country, we should teach our children our culture and morals. Also, my friends in Portugal who are working hard to offer the best life to their children and wife motivate me to think about my family’s future”.

When I asked him, what he perceives to be a father, he said,

“Being a father is about being a role model for the children. Even though my children are mostly attached to their mother, they also learn a lot from me. I always make sure I am giving good lessons from how I behave and speak with my children so that it helps them in their future. As a father, I think I am responsible to give them good education and make them feel more responsible as they grow up. Along with that, I also want to make them feel connected to us (me and my wife). So as a father I also make them feel loved and protected”.

When he asked what kind of father, he thinks he is in the eyes of his children, he said,

“I am certain that I am a loved father. I have a positive relationship with my children. They are friendly with me and at the same time they give me respect. My daughter

especially says that I am her hero which is a big compliment for me because I feel content to make her feel protected.”

Fathering role before migration

When he was asked if he had any particular role as a father before leaving Nepal. He said,

“My son was not born at that time (he was born in Portugal after reunification) but we had our daughter. Since I worked in a school for nine years, I knew how to be around children even before my daughter was born. This skill helped me to get to be a good and responsible father. I made sure she felt loved.”

He added,

“About my responsibilities, I did almost everything I could to help my wife. Not only that, I took that opportunity to enjoy my fatherhood. I used to help our daughter get ready to go to school, cook for her and also used to help her in school assignments. As my daughter was already 7 years old when I left Nepal, she was equally dependent on me as on her mother”.

Fathering role after migration

The interviewee said that communication was essential to maintain transnational fathering before reunification. He said,

“There wasn’t a single day that went without talking with my daughter and wife. Talking with them every day helped me to cope in a better way with new life and struggle here (in Portugal). I called my wife on her messenger application and we used to do video calls. My daughter used to also engage in the conversation”.

When he was asked about major challenges he faced while parenting from distance, he said,

“Distance is itself challenging. No amount of video calls could actually fulfill the physical presence. My daughter always listens to me so I did not really face other parental challenges but surely the distance affected our relationship to some extent. I think that my daughter felt a little distant with passing years away from me”.

Family reunification and future aspirations

He is already reunited with his daughter and wife in Portugal via family reunification process. His son was born in Portugal after his wife’s arrival in 2016. According to him, it took around 9 months for him to invite his family in Portugal after applying for family reunification.

“I applied for family reunification in 2015 right after receiving my first temporary residence card. It took 9 months for my family to arrive here (Portugal)”.

He further explained his future hope regarding his children’s future,

“I just wish we are able to make our children realize our struggle so that they respect it and do better in future. I also hope that they feel connected and do not grow detached from us”.

Recommendation

When asked about if he has anything to advice or say to Nepali people living in Portugal who has had or is having similar experiences of transnational parenting, he said *“All I can say is to value your family and don’t get negatively influenced by newfound freedom in a foreign place. And as a Nepali, always be united and create welcoming environment for new comer Nepalese”.*

