

# WORKING PAPERS

## Nepali immigrants in Canada: Complex pathways and experiences

Richa Shivakoti & Deepa Nagari

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## Working Paper

No. 2025/17

### Nepali immigrants in Canada: Complex pathways and experiences

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The Complex Migration Flows and Multiple Drivers in Comparative Perspective (MEMO) projects a six-year (2022–2028) research project that examines internal, interregional, and intercontinental migration flows and their drivers across three main regions: South/Southeast Asia (Bangladesh, Nepal, and Malaysia), West Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Côte d'Ivoire), and the Americas (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Canada). Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's (SSHRC) Partnership Grant, MEMO brings together a diverse, multi-institutional, and multidisciplinary team of 38 academics and 32 partner organizations across three continents, and is led by CERC Migration at Toronto Metropolitan University.

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## **Abstract**

Nepali Canadians are a relatively new addition to Canada's immigrant population but have grown steadily over the years, becoming one of the top ten source countries of first-generation South Asian immigrants and non-permanent residents born outside of Canada. Despite their growing presence in Canada, the migration journeys of this immigrant group are often overshadowed by other much larger South Asian populations here, such as Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. It remains an under-researched community despite being an essential, distinct group within the South Asian population.

This paper provides an overview of the Nepali Canadian population in Canada and explores the migration experiences of Nepali immigrants living in Ontario. It is based on demographic information from the Canadian Census as well as on 25 semi-structured interviews of Nepali Canadian immigrants who entered via diverse migration streams (i.e., skilled/non-skilled, economic/express entry, refugees/asylum, and undocumented) and came to Canada after January 2019. The paper aims to explore the migration drivers, pathways, and post-migration experiences and lived perspectives of Nepali Canadians. Our findings show that some influencing factors for migration are based on their own experiences in Nepal; their future aspirations in terms of seeking better opportunities; their frustrations with the political and economic environment in Nepal; and their imagination of Canada as a "dream country." However, after their arrival, many had to adjust their imaginaries with the reality of struggling as new immigrants in Canada.

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## **Introduction**

Nepali Canadians are a part of the larger South Asian-Canadian population, which is the largest visible minority group that has nearly quadrupled from 1996 to 2021. Even though migration processes and decision-making are diverse within ethnic communities and visible minority groups, they are often homogenized as one large group. For example, the census data in Canada commonly categorize South Asians as a single group, homogenizing the diversity within the ethnic group (Ashutosh, 2014; Tran, Kaddatz, & Allard, 2005; Ghosh, 2013; 2014). Studies have shown that there is inner diversity in the experiences, trajectory, motivations, and experiences of different groups of South Asian migrants (Ghosh, 2014). Therefore, this project aims to address this gap by focusing on the experiences of Nepali immigrants within the South Asian diaspora population.

Nepal and Canada established diplomatic relations on January 18, 1965. Since then, a steady stream of migrants from Nepal have arrived in Canada (Embassy of Nepal, n.d.). According to the 2019 Nepali Canadian Longitudinal Survey of Nepalese in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), most Nepali migrants started arriving after 1995, and over half in 2012 or onwards. This 2012 increase reflected Nepal's social and political situation, especially the Maoist insurgency from 1996-2006 and its effects related to peace and security (O'Neil et al., 2019). Most Nepali Canadians were admitted as economic migrants, followed by those who came in as refugees and through family reunification (2021 Census). Our interviews with five Nepali stakeholders also confirmed that the numbers of Nepalis in Canada have increased dramatically over the years and that there is also a shift in the demographics from highly skilled migrants towards more families, people with diverse skills and sectors and students coming in more recently. One stakeholder who worked with the Nepali Ottawa community for over 20 years also shared that compared other South Asian migrants such as the Indians, who have established roots in Canada since the 60s or 70s, Nepali immigrants are still building their networks but he expects to see a similar process in the Nepali Canadian community eventually.

The increase of Nepalis in Canada is due to various changes in Nepal's political, economic and socio-cultural realities. Over the past 60 years, the number of international migrants from Nepal has increased significantly from just under 200,000 in the 1950s to approximately 2.1 million by 2021 (Bhattarai et al. 2023). The 2021 Census reports that there are more than 2.1 million Nepali citizens living outside the country, representing around 7.4 percent of the national population (Central Bureau of Statistics 2021).

Political changes and Nepal's adoption of liberal policies on foreign employment and foreign travel in the 1990s as well as the Maoist insurgency from 1996 to 2006, dramatically changed these historical trends with Nepalis now found across the world. These periods also reflected rapid changes within the government and civil unrest within the country, evoking dissatisfaction among the Nepalese people. The political instability, lack of jobs, and weak financial economy ultimately led to outward migration in pursuit of better opportunities (Williams & Pradhan, 2008; Adhikari et al., 2023).

Historically, migration used to take place within Nepal or to neighboring countries in the Indian subcontinent or Tibet. Cross border migration between Nepal and India continues to be a major phenomenon due to the open border between the two countries allowing citizens from both countries to work without visas or other restrictions. This policy has also resulted in no official data

on the number of Nepalis in India and vice versa. India has also been an accessible and affordable destination for poorer Nepali migrants (Adhikari et al., 2023). For Nepalese going to any other country besides India for work, they have to get a labour permit from the labour department. Similar to other South Asian diasporas (Rajan, 2023), in the early 1990s, Nepalese migrants started branching off to other countries such as the Gulf Cooperation Countries and Malaysia, which have become popular destinations due to greater work opportunities and higher incomes and new migration agreements (Adhikari et al., 2023; Valenta & Garvik, 2023).

### **Demographics of Nepali Canadians**

There has been a steady rise in the number of labour permits issued since records were maintained in 1993/94, with some dips seen during financial downturns and during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 (Withers et al. 2021). However, after the pandemic, the labour migration sector slowly resumed and the numbers of permits issued has risen to peak at 771,327 in 2022/23 (Bhattarai et al. 2023). The Government of Nepal has identified 111 international destinations open for foreign employment via private recruitment agencies. Between 1993/94 and 2022/23, the most popular destinations for Nepali migrant workers were Qatar, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. With a large number of international migrants from Nepal, there has been a growing reliance on remittances as Nepal ranks among the highest in the world. For the fiscal year of 2024, the remittance inflows in Nepal accounted for more than one-fourth of the GDP, making it the fifth-most remittance-dependent economy in the world. (World Bank Group, 2024)

Even though much of the research and policy focus has been on the temporary migrant workers and the remittances they send back, there is a growing number of longer-term expatriates living in various developed countries, in North America, Europe, and Australia. Adhikari et al. state that Nepali migrants who migrate to countries in the Global North typically have higher incomes and higher levels of education, are from upper-middle-class or upper-class backgrounds, and usually do not intend to return, instead seeking to migrate permanently (Adhikari et al., 2023). So this research will add to our understanding of Nepali immigrants in Canada and their migration decisions and future aspirations.

The 2011 Canada Census reported that around 9,780 people of Nepali ancestry lived in Canada (O'Neil et al., 2019). In the 2016 Census, 14,390 people specified Nepal as their place of birth, which increased to 19,655 by the 2021 Census. Tables 1 and 2 below provide a summary of the data based on the Census. However, there are a few caveats to consider as we look at the number of people reporting Nepal as the place of birth, reporting their ethnic origin as Nepalese and reporting Nepali as their mother tongue or language spoken at home. The Nepali ethnic population and people who speak Nepali are larger than people born in Nepal, as it encompasses Nepali people from India (Nepal had to cede large territories to the British East India Company after the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-1816), Nepalese people from Bhutan and Burma (earlier migrations) and elsewhere. So while using language data (e.g., "Mother Tongue" and "Language spoken at home"), we need to be mindful that it could represent Nepalis emigrating from various countries beyond just Nepal. Another caveat is that the numbers might be underreported in general based on who responded to the census, if the 2nd and 3rd generations are still reporting Nepali as their mother tongue or language spoken at home, the numbers of temporary residents, students, and so on, so the numbers of actual Nepalese in Canada is estimated to be much higher.

Table 1: Census Data Summary

Nepalese in Canada	
2016 Census	14,390 place of birth was specified as Nepal
Ethnic Origin, both sexes, age (total), Canada, 2016 Census (Nepal): (25% Sample data)	17,135
Place of birth for the population in private households (Nepal): (25% sample data)	15,215
Canadian Citizens whose Place of birth was reported as Nepal	15,220
2021 Census	19,655 place of birth was specified as Nepal
Mother tongue for the total population excluding institutional residents (Nepali)	23,425
Language spoken most often at home for the total population excluding institutional residents (Nepali): (25% sample data)	16,385
Place of birth for the recent immigrant population in private households (Nepal): (25% sample data)	4,890
Knowledge of languages for the population in private households (Nepali): (25% sample data)	30,660
Ethnic or cultural origin for the population in private households (Nepal):	21,975

(Data from Statistics Canada)

Table 2: Census Data Summary (Cont.)

Permanent Residents by Country of Citizenship (Nepal)			
2015: 1,525	2019: 1,410	2023: 1,760	Total (2015-2025 (Q1): 13,350
2016: 765	2020: 565	2024: 2,005	
2017: 1,110	2021: 1,020	2025 (Q1): 360	
2018: 1,400	2022: 1,440		
Migration Streams (2021 Census)			
Economic Migration	Worker Programs (Skilled workers, skilled trade workers, Canadian experience class, caregivers, Atlantic Immigration program)	11,165 people whose place of birth was Nepal	
	Business Programs (entrepreneurs, investors, self-employed)	115 people whose place of birth was Nepal	
	Provincial Nominee Program	1,720 people whose place of birth was Nepal	
Immigrants Sponsored by Family	2545 people whose place of birth was Nepal		
Refugees (Protected persons in Canada or	5,460 people whose place of birth was Nepal		

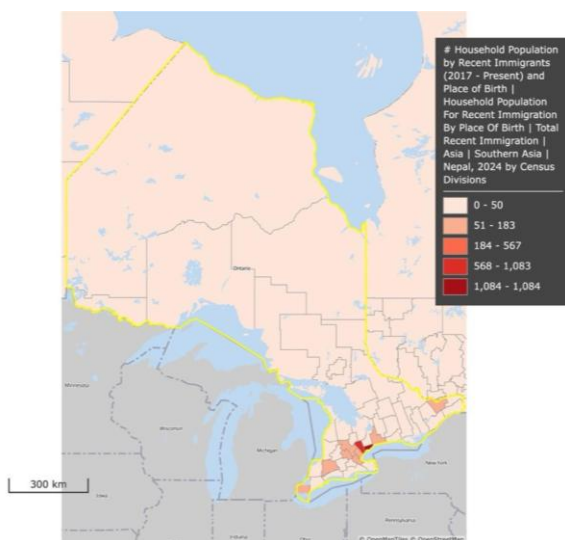
dependants abroad; Resettled refugees)		
Place of Residence in Canada (2021 Census)		
Ontario (10,895)	Toronto (7,550)	Ottawa (800)
	London (620)	Kitchener-Waterloo (430)
Alberta (4,965)	Calgary (2,190)	Edmonton (1,900)
British Columbia (1,525)	Vancouver (1,105)	Victoria (165)

(Data from Census 2021)

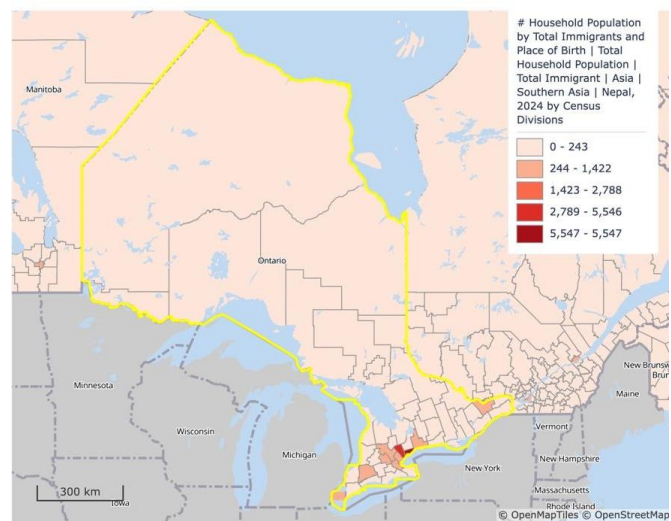
As reported in tables 1 and 2, in the 2021 Census, 19,655 people reported Nepal as their place of birth & 30,660 people reported knowledge of the Nepali language in private households. However, between 2021 and 2025 (April), an additional 6,585 Nepalese were granted Permanent Residency; there were 34,890 study permit holders and 19,370 work permit holders (international mobility program and temporary foreign workers program). In terms of immigrant class, most Nepali immigrants (61.6%) who arrived in Canada were admitted as economic migrants, followed by those who came in as refugees and through family reunification (2021 Census).

As evidenced by the maps below [Figures 1 and 2], the majority of people who, as of the 2021 Census, reported their place of birth as Nepal, reside in Ontario. Within Ontario, the top five regions are Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area (which has the densest population of people whose birthplace is Nepal), followed by Ottawa, London, Kitchener-Waterloo, and Windsor. After Ontario, the majority of people born in Nepal reside in Alberta and British Columbia.

Figure 1. Settlement locations of Total and Recent Immigrants by Place of Birth, Nepal in Ontario



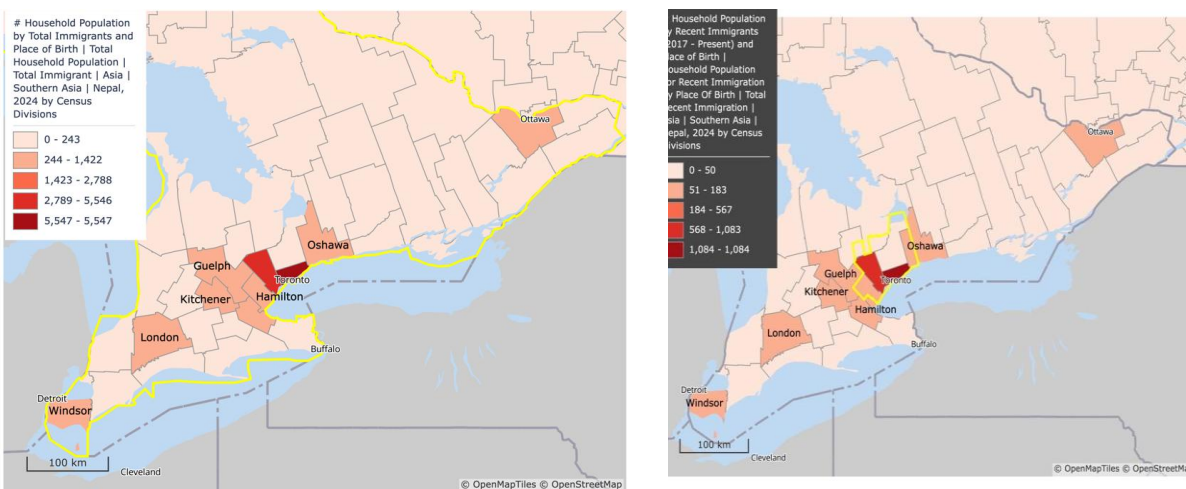
Map of Ontario showing Household Population by



Map of Ontario showing Total Immigrants by Place of Birth, Nepal, 2024



Figure 2. Settlement locations of Total and Recent Immigrants by Place of Birth, Nepal in the Southern Ontario



Map of Southern Ontario showing the Total Household Population by Immigrants by Place of Birth, Nepal, 2024 Census Divisions

Map of Southern Ontario showing Total Household Population by Recent Immigration Place of Birth, Nepal, 2024 Census Division

## Methodology

In addition to the Census data above, the research team based in Toronto conducted twenty-five semi-structured interviews with Nepalese migrants in Ontario who (1) migrated to Canada after January 2019, (2) currently live in Ontario and used diverse forms of migration streams (such as skilled & non-skilled, economic/express entry, refugees/asylum, undocumented, spouses/partners of international students). International students were excluded from this study as their migration pathways and rationale are quite distinct. We chose Ontario due to the large South Asian presence in the province, specifically their presence in the Greater Toronto Area (Ghosh, 2014; Ojo & Shizha, 2018; Statistics Canada, 2022). According to Statistics Canada, slightly over one-half of South Asians in Canada live in Toronto (Ghosh, 2014; Statistics Canada, 2025).

Recruitment for participants was done through referrals and using snowball sampling, as well as through outreach to Nepalese and immigrant community organizations, temples, Nepalese restaurants, and Ontario universities/colleges. The interviews were conducted in English, via Zoom or by phone, between October 2024 and February 2025. Each interview was 45-60 minutes long, audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis purposes. Prior to any interview and audio-recording, each interviewee was provided with an explanation of the research and asked for informed consent. The interviews consisted of a demographic questionnaire, questions regarding migrant's experiences in Nepal, factors influencing their decision to migrate, the migration process, and their experiences of settlement in Ontario. In addition to the migrant interviews, five stakeholder interviews were also conducted via Zoom and phone. Stakeholders included people

who have been a part of and worked with Nepalese community organizations in Ottawa and Toronto. The interviews were coded via NVivo. The research team met and generated the initial coding themes based on the interview guide. After all the interviews were conducted, the research team then coded and re-coded the data across various levels to identify recurring themes and support the claims.

Table 3 summarizes the profiles of the migrant respondents. We interviewed 13 men and 12 women for this study; the majority are between the ages of 25 and 34. The majority are married, and of the ones married, around 50% have children. The respondents either migrated to Canada on their own, as a family, or had family members already living in Canada with whom they reunited. All respondents were born in Nepal, and the majority had lived in Nepal the longest as adults. Half of the respondents lived in Ottawa or Carleton Place (which is 53 kilometres from Ottawa), and half lived in the Greater Toronto Area (which includes 25 urban, suburban, and rural municipalities, but for this study, our respondents lived in the City of Toronto, Scarborough, and Mississauga. Over 90% of the respondents have either a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree. 60% of the respondents currently have a work permit, and almost all are working full-time (two not working and one working part-time).

Table 3. General Demographics of Migrant Respondents

Age		Gender		Marital Status	
18-24	2	Male	13	Single	3
25-34	13	Female	12	Married/Common Law	21
35-54	9			Widowed	1
65+	1				
Residential History					
Place of Birth		Nepal		25	
Place lived longest as adult		Nepal		22	
		Nepal and India		2	
		Nepal and Norway		1	
Current Neighborhood		Ottawa		8	
		Carleton Place		4	
		GTA (Toronto, Scarborough, Mississauga, and Brampton)		11	
		North York		2	
Highest Level of Education					
High School Diploma		3			
University Bachelor's Degree		10			
University Graduate Degree		12			
Migration Status in Canada					
Permanent Resident		9			
Work Permit		14			
Citizen		2			

Current Employment Status	
Full-time	16
Part-time	3
Casual	2
Not Currently Employed	3
Retired	1

## **Preliminary Findings**

### ***Migration Drivers and Decisions***

The migration drivers for this group of Nepalese migrants were diverse. Although the participants mentioned economic and financial opportunities, a desire for a better life, and unstable political conditions, these factors intersected in their decision-making process when choosing to migrate to Canada. Given that most of our participants were from middle or upper-middle-class urban families, they did not experience significant difficulties in Nepal as such. So, they were not forced to migrate, but they decided to migrate by choice for various reasons. Their decisions were also influenced by the migration trends of others and their social networks, such as seeing their friends and family members migrate, or witnessing their migration journeys through social media. Finally, participants mentioned being influenced by the migration regime in general; these include institutions, networks, actors, and policies that structure international mobility from Nepal and at their destination countries. People used their knowledge and agency in making these migration journeys, discussing it with their families, making plans for the longer term and in selecting Canada over other countries.

### ***General experience in Nepal***

Participants' general experiences in Nepal played a factor in their eventual decisions to migrate, even if they did not face any major difficulties there. All participants in this study stated that they never faced any significant difficulties in Nepal regarding access to public and private resources as they came from middle-class to upper-middle-class families, mostly from Kathmandu. Their family members were working as educators, doctors, politicians, or businessmen/women. Many of them stated that their families owned their houses or land in Nepal, and they all had access to public services such as water, electricity, housing, and other essential amenities. Almost all participants said their families supported them throughout their time in Nepal. Due to this, the participants mentioned that they could attend relatively reputable schools and universities. Even those who moved to Kathmandu for work, school, or marriage and lived away from their families mentioned that they did not face any difficulties in the city as they were working.

All participants had at least finished high school, with the majority going to Graduate School either in Nepal or abroad. Half of the participants worked in Nepal for several years before leaving the country. The other half stated that they only attended school in Nepal and completed their secondary education or bachelor's degree before leaving the country.

Despite their relatively positive experiences, participants were aware of how class differences played a role in access to education, health and other social services. Even though many of them did not face specific issues themselves, they did highlight that those living in poverty usually did

not have access to good education, healthcare, electricity, water, and other public services. One participant mentioned that

“Education is part of rich people; they get higher, nice, good education. Poor people can’t afford nice schools and colleges” (ID020, Male).

Social services were also better in big cities such as Kathmandu, and access was limited in smaller villages or towns. As one participant reflected:

“The place where I grew up, there is no hospital at all. The bigger hospital, big facilities, are in the city area where there are rich people, but like poor people [have to use government hospitals]. People don’t get the treatments in time and it’s expensive.” (ID020, Female).

Another participant who worked for a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Nepal also mentioned that she saw a clear division between class, caste, and ethnicity. She shared that she comes from an upper-middle class and understands that people like her “predominantly occupy a lot of power” (ID019, Female). She was the only interviewee who mentioned seeing issues related to various forms of gender discrimination in the country. Due to the background of our interview participants, coming from a certain education level and class from mostly urban areas, they did not mention much gender disparities in their experiences in Nepal.

Some people made the decision to move in search of better opportunities but they also reflected on their choice, stating that if things were better in Nepal (i.e., better pay, job stability, scope of their profession, etc.), they would not have had to leave the country. They would have stayed with their family and friends in Nepal. For instance, one participant stated that if they could earn enough money, have savings, and have an emergency fund, they would have never decided to leave their family and migrate.

### ***Migration trend and history***

Migration has been seen as a trend in Nepal, especially for the younger generation, who are also quite connected via social media and see their friends and family members’ migration journeys. However, socio-economic status also often dictates what kind of migration people can aspire to and to which country. Those coming to Canada, have usually done so through education or economic pathways, which is only open for people with a certain level of education and money. For many others, a dominant pathway has been to go for temporary labour migration to India, Malaysia and the Gulf countries. In recent years, we are also seeing a rise in stepwise migration, where people engage in multiple international migration journeys progressing up a hierarchy of destinations, while using that time to invest in their education, experience or savings.

For example, nine participants had previous migration histories. Six of these participants came to Canada directly from another destination; three from the Middle East (the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar) and three from Europe and the US. The other three participants (who went to India, China, and Europe) returned to Nepal for a couple of years before migrating to Canada. While those who came through the Middle East did so for employment in the hospitality sector, to earn and save money for their eventual journey to Canada, those coming through Europe and the US did so for educational purposes for graduate studies. For such multinational migrants, Canada is still an attractive destination due to the possibility of getting a permanent residency and citizenship. All participants with previous migration histories stated that their experiences

positively helped them migrate to Canada. For some, experiences of studying and working in other countries gave them employable skills that they utilized in Canada. Some participants stated that it helped them find jobs in Canada. For instance, one participant who had worked in the hospitality industry for several years before moving to Canada noted that the cross-exposure she experienced in her previous job helped her immensely. When she arrived in Canada and started her job search,

“They [employers] looked at my CV and said you worked in many sectors, and it helped me find a job here.” (ID008, Female).

Prior migration histories also benefited people as one participant mentioned that they “understood” several things because they had moved previously; this included immigration policies, visa application processes, job seeking, networking, etc. Additionally, past migration experience gave participants the “courage” to move abroad. As one participant stated:

“Me and my husband, we have been moving a lot... Moving doesn't scare me, like I have had so many times where all my whole life was in two suitcases.” (ID002, Female).

From our interviewees, only eleven had family members who had migrated abroad; the rest were the first in their families to leave Nepal. Those who had family abroad cited the United States, India, Canada, the United Arab Emirates, Australia, and the United Kingdom as popular destinations. For some, migration was a familiar part of their family's trajectory and history. For instance, one of the participants shared that her family has a history of migration:

“Yes, actually, it's funny that everybody has always migrated, like my in-laws. They were born in Myanmar, Burma. After the First World War they fled, and then so there was this big Burmese community that's still in my hometown. My maternal grandmother, she was born in Dhaka, before partition. So they fled from Bangladesh.” (ID019, Female).

Another participant mentioned that migration was part of her family's trajectory and that migration was seen as a sign of “success” in her family.

“The trend was, you finish your 10th grade, you go to India, you finish your 11th and 12th there, and then you gotta go out. You cannot stay home. If you do, you have been unsuccessful. Most of my cousins are in America. A few of my cousins are in Canada, in London or Kitchener.” (ID002, Female).

Most participants also mentioned migration as a “trend” in Nepal for several years. Most of the younger generation migrate after finishing school for education purposes and better opportunities. For some participants, their initial migration journey seemed like a laid-out path for them. For instance, one participant stated that her family has a migration history, and all her siblings and cousins have migrated abroad for education. Therefore, she did too. Another participant mentioned that she had always wanted to leave Nepal, so nothing could have stopped her. She states:

“I was so much into it [migration], nothing could stop me. Even if I went back to the future and I told myself don't go, I wouldn't believe myself.” (ID019, Female).

### ***Frustrations with the political and economic environment***

Our interview participants shared the frustrations of the recent Gen Z protestors in Nepal, who protested against the large-scale corrupt practices in the country that led to a change in the government. Even though, our participants stated that they personally did not face any severe problem in Nepal, they did mention broader issues within Nepal, encompassing economic, political, environmental, and social issues. Participants noted the poor economic situation in Nepal, which has led to inflation, a higher cost of living, and fewer job opportunities. Almost all participants directly correlated this to the unstable political situation in Nepal. Although the country is democratic, they believed that corrupted leaders and constantly changing governments made it difficult for the economy to stabilize, leading people towards migration.

“Corruption is institutionalized in society. That is the only problem. And leaders, they cannot change that mentality. That was a problem.” (ID004, Male).

“The political situation in Nepal, it's getting worse. It is such a beautiful country, but the corrupted leaders make our country worse. All the power is on the government and they are misusing their power. Therefore, people are struggling too much in Nepal these days, and struggling in terms of jobs.” (ID022, Female)

As the majority of the respondents are between the ages of 25-34 and had a relatively “safe” childhood, they did not have direct memory of the time during the Maoist insurgency between 1996 and 2006 but tended to remember the rapid changes in government and the effects of it on the economy. Only one respondent, over the age of 65, stated that this period was difficult because they were Maoists, and she and her husband were actively involved in politics. This made the overall situation unsafe.

Many respondents stated that this overall dissatisfaction was part of the reason for the trend to migrate among Nepalese people as the cyclical nature of the unstable political system and the weak economic and financial situation causes people to want to leave Nepal.

“Politically it is very unstable there [Nepal], there has been rapid change in political scenario, multiple parties, some rebel parties coming into many streams, the monarchy getting thrown out, it is the whole system. Whole parliamentary system is new. And as expected it is very, very unstable, lot of government changes, which results in weaker or erratic financial situation. It doesn't look good, even right now it doesn't look good, the whole demography is outside the country. (ID015, Male).

“Because I'm a very aware person so politically, also, I'm very frustrated. And you can see it's really disheartening. Like every person we're voting for...it's like a competition to see who will come with the biggest scandal?” (ID019, Female).

One participant mentioned this was the case for the younger generation in Nepal, who grew up with the unstable and changing government systems. Many participants mentioned being “frustrated” by the government and its inability to stabilize the economic situation.

## **Future Aspirations**

More than half of the interviewees shared that they migrated because they “wanted more” in terms of different aspects of life. This included better opportunities in their field of study, better pay, and job stability. They also shared that they felt they were not doing their best financially and economically in Nepal. Notably, compared to their education level and experience in the field, they felt they could not be as successful as they wanted to be in Nepal. This could be due to the participant's demographics, as the majority had a Bachelor's or a Graduate degree. Therefore, this group of migrants were more likely to migrate for career and professional development. For instance, one participant mentions:

“I also tried a bunch of jobs [in Nepal] and at one moment, it sort of clicked in my mind, which I was like, I need to go abroad. This is not working for me. What was I doing? Because I had good, competitively, good scores and good educational background.” (ID002, Female).

Another participant mentioned something similar, stating that she realized (after working in Nepal for a bit) that economically, she would never have a more comfortable life, and she wanted more for herself and her family and therefore decided that moving abroad was the right option. Another participant echoes this, saying that his reasons for moving were not necessarily financial, as he was doing fine in Nepal, but he says:

“I wanted to excel in my career, to take that professional leap. My wife, she wanted to study more, she wanted to try new things.” (ID015, Male).

Some participants, particularly those in the health sector, also spoke about the lack of respect and status of their fields in Nepal compared to abroad. International migration of nurses from the Global South to the Global North is an increasing phenomenon due to low salaries, unemployment, personal ambition, and lack of job advancement (Adhikari, 2012; Thapa & Shrestha, 2017). One participant mentioned:

“In Nepal, we don't get that respect for nurses like we get here, because here I'm working as a nurse as well, so we get a lot of respect here, but when I compare from back home, there's a huge difference.” (ID001, Female).

Other participants stated that they decided to leave because they were thinking about their future, their kids and families, and what sort of life they wanted. This led them to think about earnings, savings, education, and stability for their families. For instance, one participant who had migrated to multiple places before arriving in Canada stated that it was not one factor that drove him to leave Nepal but rather multiple intersecting factors:

“I'm from middle class family, so the education was okay. Everything was okay. You know that it's like when you are growing up, started your university and stuff, you want to be in a country where you can settle, you know? So it's not, I'm not saying that Nepal is bad, but all the youngsters who want to turn around their future, into a bright spot, they always find a way. So that's how all these [migrating] started. (ID016, Male).

## **Migration Pathways**

The migration industry in Nepal is quite substantial with enough economic and political power (Shivakoti, 2022). There are various private recruitment agencies (PRA) (called manpower agencies in Nepal) targeting various streams and countries and are used to facilitate migration by connecting job seekers with employers abroad and helping migrants navigate the migration process's bureaucratic hurdles (Lindquist, 2015; Shivakoti, 2022). Many agencies cater specifically for temporary labour migration schemes to various countries such as Malaysia and the Gulf states. Currently, 855 private recruitment agencies, 122 orientation centers and 222 medical centers are listed on the government website (MoLESS, 2022). In recent years, there are also an increasing amount of education consultancies that facilitate student migration to destinations such as Australia, US, Canada and Europe.

Among our interviewees, ten used a consulting agency, manpower, or lawyers to assist with their application process. Some of them experienced some difficulties as many of the consulting agencies in Nepal do not have experience applying for Canadian visas because it is a less popular destination than Australia or the US. One participant shared that when she first applied, her visa was rejected. She stated that she “hated” manpower and agencies in Nepal:

“So in Nepal, there's a lot of education consultancies nowadays. It's in every big city, you have IELTS centers and education consultancies everywhere. So much so that after grade 12, they actually go to the universities, and they'll give commissions like around \$300 per student to the teachers who will refer them. So it's like a rampant business. And I did go to one of them, and Canada people are now, they're maybe confident. But then they were not very confident about Canada, because everybody that I heard was applying for Canada would get their visas rejected.” (ID019, Female).

Similarly, another participant mentioned that he was rejected twice due to issues with his application by the consulting agency. Thus, his travel to Canada took longer than expected, putting a strain on his spouse, who was already in Canada. One participant stated that they “agent shopped” and went to a couple of places before choosing the one that eventually got them a visa. This participant echoed some of the issues highlighted by other participants:

“Logically, some of the advice the other agents gave did not make sense, and I later found out that they are used to Japan and Australia, and they were new to taking students to Canada and were kind of using us as a guinea pig. So, after I found the proper Canada based agent, most of the things were processed more fluently, and the advice they gave also made more sense than the other ones.” (ID011, Male).

Other participants stated that they did the entire process themselves and did not face many problems doing so. Three participants with prior migration histories (to Dubai, Malta, Qatar, and Kuwait) shared that they had previously used a private recruitment agency to apply for these places; however, when it came time to apply to Canada, they did the process themselves. For instance, one of these participants stated:

“I just connected with some lawyers when I was in Malta, when I was moving to Canada, but I did it online myself. I found a job online. That's how I got recruited here [Canada]. So I didn't have those [agents, lawyers, recruiters] things.” (ID016, Male)



Participants also mentioned that they joined Facebook and WhatsApp groups for those looking to migrate to Canada and received a lot of advice on applying for different visa types. They also mentioned using their personal networks to assist them with the application process and move to Canada. For instance, several participants had friends and family in Canada who they contacted before moving to the country. These social networks assisted them in learning more about Canada in general, the application and the migration process.

In terms of financing their journeys to Canada, a few participants took out loans from a bank in Nepal and several other participants sought help from their families. Some participants, especially those working for several years (either in Nepal or abroad) stated that they used their savings to finance their migration to Canada.

### **Canada: A “dream-country”**

Longevity, permanency, and stability were common reasons for participants choosing Canada as their destination country. At least 80% of the participants mentioned that getting a work visa for Canada was relatively more straightforward than in other countries such as the US, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, or even the GCC Countries. The pathways to work permit, permanent residency, and citizenship were also attractive factors. For example, one participant who worked in the Middle East stated:

“For the Middle East...I don't think they're offering so many things. They just offer you the work for certain time. And then, if you're like, qualified, you can go there. You can do your work, that's all. I don't think they're offering more like if you work 13 years, you'll get a PR, nothing like that. Just finish your work permit, and you can go back to your home. Or you can take a new work permit. Or if your company wants to keep you, then they will extend your work permit. In Canada it is different, if you are eligible, if you have your qualification, you are eligible to apply for PR, and after that, you can go for the citizenship.” (ID009, Male).

From the people we interviewed, some had come through a one-step immigration process, by directly applying for a permanent residency, while some came through a two-step immigration process, where they came in one visa category then transitioned to a PR. At least three participants transitioned from a student visa to a work permit to PR within a few years of being in Canada, and two transitioned from permanent residents to citizens. The other participants also said they would like to stay in Canada to get PR eventually. Gaining a PR for the participants was a sign of stability; with a PR, they could bring their families over, and get social and economic benefits that they would not get in Nepal. One participant mentioned that his friends in Canada told him,

“If you go to Canada, at least, you can bring your wife. You can take your family. If you settle down, as I said, I can, I used to call it the Canadian dream.” (ID009, Male).

Quality of life was also a significant factor; participants stated that they believed Canada had a better quality of life than Nepal. As one participant mentioned, she chose Canada because it was a “dream country” for her because of the quality of life and other benefits that could be attained here. Another participant mentions something similar. However, he states that the so-called “Canadian dream” has changed over the last couple of years:

“The quality of life used to be guaranteed here. You stay here, you do hard work, you study, you be someone, then you have a good life here. Still there is a potential to have a stable, guaranteed, good life, that was like the major attracting point of this country.” (ID015, Male).

Social security also complemented the stability of a Canadian PR or citizen, improved quality of life, language, free health care, and quality of education in Canada. Several participants stated that they believed Canada had better social security than Nepal, including social welfare and benefits such as free healthcare and free education, which they appreciated. For instance, one participant stated that they were able to get benefits she would not have gotten back in Nepal:

“Yes, job opportunities and environment also I like. Health system, education system, and many more attracted me.” (ID003, Female).

Healthcare was a significant factor for some participants. They stated that they liked the fact that healthcare is free. However, some mentioned that despite the costs associated with healthcare in Nepal, the quality was better as they could access private clinics. In Canada, the long wait time and the quality of care were not as they had envisioned when they used to hear about Canada’s “free healthcare policy.”

For some, Canada was their only choice as their primary destination, while for others, they weighed the options between several settlement countries, specifically Australia, the US, and Europe. Participants considered factors such as immigration policies, further opportunities, language, culture, and social aspects while making decisions about which country to settle in. For instance, some wanted to move to a country where English was the primary language, and therefore, many European countries were eliminated.

While considering the US, they stated that the immigration and visa policies were not stable. In particular, one participant who studied and worked in the US before coming to Canada stated that the Trump presidency and the lack of stability in the visas for the US encouraged her to look to Canada. Specifically, she stated that there was a lottery system in the US, and she and her family could not stay in the country hoping they would get a green card. She states this was a big issue for them: “You know, you cannot play lottery with life.” In Canada, she could apply for the Express Entry program, which took qualifications and experiences into consideration, so it was based on merit, and she liked that aspect. Other participants stated that it was “tricky moving to the US,” and they had a lot of restrictions (i.e., dependents could not work) that made it difficult to move there. Some participants did apply to the US but failed to get a visa, so they moved to Canada instead. Canada’s proximity to the US was also a plus point for these participants. For instance, they stated that once they received the PR or citizenship for Canada, they could visit or even work in the US if they chose to.

Several participants stated that Australia was a popular country for Nepalese migrants. However, they also shared that Australia (similar to the US) was a difficult country to get a visa for and that they applied but were unsuccessful. While for others, they did not want to follow the Nepalese trend of going to Australia, stating they wanted to go “somewhere else.” For example, one participant, when asked whether she was interested in moving to Australia, said:

“I was, but then I could name 30 relatives in Australia. So now, when I think it's a good thing, I should have gone. My brothers were there, and the climate is really good. But then also you'd see a lot of things about Nepalese in Australia, when there's too much of them,

and things like that. So you wouldn't like it, we would prefer to be in a little bit isolated place, like Ottawa is perfect for us.” (ID019, Female).

Some participants mentioned Canada's “multicultural” aspect as a plus point compared to other countries. They stated they wanted to move to a country where they could experience different cultures, ethnicities, and communities. For instance, one participant mentioned:

“You can also be engaged in various communities of people. In Nepal we are only engaged with Nepali people and single culture, but in Canada you get a wide culture factors. And you can communicate with many people, you can also get to know world wide what is happening. And different types of culture and that is a very interesting fact.” (ID018, Male).

Lastly, some participants chose Canada as opposed to other countries specifically due to their personal social networks. For instance, at least five participants said they applied to Canada because they had friends and family here. For three participants, family reunification was the primary reason for migrating to Canada. One participant stated (when asked whether she applied to any other countries) that she did not because she did not have friends in other countries, only in Canada, and thus she only applied to Canada.

### ***The Canadian Experience: “You start from zero level”***

Settlement experiences of Nepali immigrants after arriving in Canada were directly interrelated with their migration journeys. This occurs at the macro-level, such as labour and housing market conditions and political and social circumstances (Ghosh, 2007). In addition to the micro-individual level, including personal, familial, and social networks, where they decide to live, and how and with what recourses they decide to migrate with (i.e. step migration, financial resources) (Ghosh, 2007). In terms of settlement experiences, Nepali immigrants faced similar difficulties as other immigrant groups, including finding a job, dealing with de-skilling, affordability and finding community. New immigrants, especially skilled immigrants coming in via the points system or through a work permit, who move to the Global North face difficulties finding jobs that match their experience and qualifications (Guo, 2009; Bailey & Mulder 2017; Subedi & Rosenberg, 2017; Wilson-Forsberg, 2015). The COVID-19 pandemic added to their problems for some because of the additional restrictions and lockdowns.

Some studies have pointed out that Nepalese nationals who move to Canada had to take up jobs below their qualifications as their credentials and experiences were not recognized in Canada (Giri, 2025; O'Neil et al., 2019). Several participants shared this kind of experience while searching for jobs. For example, someone who had completed an engineering degree stated that when they first moved to Canada, they had to take lower-skilled jobs that were sometimes adjacent to the field (i.e. working at a call center or as an IT tech). Other participants mentioned that during their initial years in Canada, they took any job, even if it was not in their field, as they had families to support. For instance, one participant who started his own school in Nepal and worked as its principal for several years before moving to Canada mentioned that his current job had nothing to do with the education sector. He states,

“You start from the zero level. Again, you have to struggle, there. No compromise to the work. Whatever comes. You have to accept it. It doesn't matter. What is the minimum wage? It doesn't matter. Minimum wage. Welcome. I'm ready to do. This sort of situation,

wherever you go there in the beginning, you have to do it. No compromise with any work, no compromise with any cultures, no compromise with any language, no compromise with the climate, and no compromise with the environment. We have to accept it. Otherwise, we have to leave it.” (ID010, Male)

One of the stakeholders from the Ottawa Nepalese community also shared that he has seen people struggle to find jobs because their credentials and education are not recognized here in Canada. He states that it can be challenging to find jobs that directly correlate with their field unless they come in and are doing something marketable or lucrative. He suggested that if Nepalese people want to come to Canada, they at least need to complete their undergraduate degree in Nepal. Additionally, newcomers should have stable financial situations; otherwise, surviving the job market and the cost-of-living situation in Canada will be difficult.

Almost all participants stated that they knew finding a job in Canada would initially be difficult. Several participants also mentioned how they spoke to friends who were already in Canada, who gave them a “reality check” of how tough it was in Canada, so they stated they were prepared to “struggle” for a couple of months. Another participant also shared that before he and his family moved to Canada, he was prepared that it would take at least six months to find stability. However, some participants mentioned that it was particularly difficult due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent increase in the cost of living, rent, groceries, and constantly changing immigration policies. Some participants also mentioned that they migrated to Canada at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, so everything was difficult: searching for jobs, finding housing, and making connections. One participant states:

“After I came to Canada, it was not fun because of COVID, and we could not get job for like six months and living in an apartment, even though the rent was not that high, but eating and rent and getting winter clothes, all the things kind of added up fast.” (ID011, Male).

One participant mentioned that perhaps prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation in Canada was more favourable for new migrants; however, after the pandemic, the cost of living increased. He shared,

“I don’t know how people are surviving here...Canada is not the Canada what I used to think” (ID004, Male).

Some participants also mentioned that they noticed an increase in the intake of new immigrants, especially students, and believed this was why it was so difficult to find jobs in Canada. One participant who is working part-time mentions:

“It is very hard to find a job. Students and other people are not getting jobs. They said before, that people used to get jobs easily, but after 2023 many people came here, and many students also came here, and due to the high flow of people it is very hard to get job.” (ID006, Male)

Participants mentioned that the job-hunting process itself was time-consuming and sometimes disheartening. On average, it took participants 2-3 months to get their jobs, and they either did it on their own (i.e. by using Indeed, LinkedIn, and other job-seeking websites) or went to job search agencies for assistance. One participant mentions how without networks, it is almost impossible to find jobs in Canada:

“No, it's really difficult. You need to have friends otherwise you will get nothing. And the thing is even after having connections, I have been applying for so many jobs and I'm not still unable to succeed.” (ID005, Female)

Several participants had loans or savings to hold them over until they found jobs in Canada, and they stated that this was necessary if they wanted to “survive” the initial couple of months. These participants mentioned that they eventually got jobs, some in their field and some not.

“After I came here, I worked in a factory at first. I was working as a nurse in Nepal, it is like a degrade, you know, a degrade in my position, that's why it was hard.” (ID001, Female)

Regardless, almost all stated that they were grateful to at least have a job, as it gave them stability in Canada and the “Canadian experience” that employers in Canada seek from job seekers.

“I finally got a job, like a security guard at call center, and that was kind of a stepping stone, but I was glad I got to do it, and definitely a new experience, because it was way out of my field. It kind of helped us get a better foothold in Canada.” (ID011, Male).

In general, the sentiments expressed by the participants towards the job market in Canada were negative. Although more than half of the participants in this study were working full-time at the time of the interview, they all mentioned that the job market in Canada was not what they expected. Some participants also mentioned noticing people in their communities (friends, coworkers, etc.) struggling. Specifically, some participants noted that international students were the ones who were struggling the most. This was echoed by some participants who initially came to Canada as students. For instance, when asked about his experiences with the job market recently, one participant mentioned that although he is doing well, he has noticed issues with other people in his community. Additionally, his wife was a student, and therefore, he states he understands the problems she has faced:

“Right now I have seen a lot of depressed people here. If they get a part-time job it would have been great, but people here are not getting part-time jobs either. Even my friend here, he's like a brother to me, he was working as a part-timer, as a student in a factory. But right now he is not getting EI [as he was laid off and was a part-time worker], and he hasn't gotten any job.” (ID007, Male).

One theme that emerged amongst the interviews was the variation between expectations of moving to Canada and the reality of being here. As with other studies on immigrant populations, migrants come into a country with high expectations, which usually change after a couple of months in the country of destination (Giri, 2025). Participants stated that through social media, their social networks, and general information they got, they had a vision of Canada: a country with an excellent quality of life, free healthcare, good education, high-paying jobs, and stability. However, once they got here, several participants stated that the reality in Canada is much different. For instance, one participant who said that he was not very satisfied in Canada due to the lack of social networks and community stated that growing up, he would hear and see things about Canada that he believed to be true:

“So when we grew up at the time, when you heard about Canada, is CANADA. The lifestyle we used to think, when I was in Nepal that maybe Canada had a better lifestyle. You can earn more. The living standard is good, the education system is good. The health

you know, was good at the time, what used to think, so that's what was all in my mind.” (ID016, Male)

Other participants also mentioned something similar: before coming to Canada, they “believed” it was one of the “best countries” for immigrants and upward mobility. Some participants stated that this resulted from social media, as they used to follow people who had moved to Canada and saw that they would post pictures with “iPhones, cars, their children with good clothes, a better life”. Other participants echoed this and stated that moving to Canada would not be advisable unless you had a certain level of higher education and experience. One participant mentioned that he would not advise other Nepali people to move to Canada unless they have a job and a good amount of money or savings. He states,

“It’s also confusing when your relatives call from Nepal and say “ah how is Canada, so how is life, help my son, help my daughter also move here” but how can we do that? It is very difficult here.” (ID009, Male)

The lack of a strong community and social networks was also felt by some people, especially as compared to the community and relations they had in Nepal. One stakeholder from the Nepalese Heritage Center in Ottawa, stated that some immigrants do not realize that the “dimensions of community in Nepal, and the dimension of community here in Canada is completely different.” When new immigrants come here, they find that they have to do everything themselves, that there is no community, or that they must go out looking for community.

Participants living in Ottawa felt that the Nepali community in Ottawa are quite interconnected, which is something they saw as lacking in the GTA area. Some of them used to live in the GTA or in other places, where they did not have much interaction with the community; however, after moving to Ottawa, they found a vibrant community there. Stakeholders based in Ottawa shared that the city used to have a small population of Nepalese up until the mid-2010s, but an increase of arrivals was seen since 2017. People initially came to work in the government sector or in engineering, healthcare, and the food business but now there is increased diversity among the Nepalese community there as seen in community events, religious ceremonies, and festivals. This was in contrast to other participants living elsewhere, who stated that apart from their Nepalese friends, they did not engage with the Nepalese community. For instance, one participant, who moved to Canada for healthcare and has a daughter in Toronto, mentions that in Nepal and the US (where she also lives with her son), she was very active; however, in Toronto, things are much more isolated, so it is difficult for her especially as she is retired and wants social interactions.

Many people also found that “social integration” in Canada is lacking compared to Nepal. For instance, one participant, who had previously studied in Spain, the UK, and Portugal and is currently living in Ottawa, stated that he is very used to making connections and talking to people from different places. However, he felt making connections in Canada was far more difficult than in Europe as people “hesitate to talk to each other.” He states:

“When I came here, we call [this country] multicultural, but Canada is not multicultural. People are separate. Integration is very limited.” (ID004, Male).

Another participant said:

“Here, people don’t have a social life. I even don’t see my neighbours near me. It was almost eight months since I saw a neighbour nearby me.” (ID016, Male).

This lack of integration could be a “big problem” according to a stakeholder. He states that if new immigrants come into Canada without a stable visa or are not working, cannot find jobs, are stuck at home with their kids, and have a language barrier, it affects their mental health. Adjusting to a new environment is challenging in itself, and if they do not have solid support from their community, it becomes even harder. Hence, some participants and stakeholders see people struggling personally and professionally. The stakeholder mentions how he wants to bring “Nepalese culture to Canada,” which could assist in increasing the sense of belonging and community for new immigrants. As the Nepalese community in Canada is newer and smaller than that of other South Asian or Asian migrant groups, the need for cultural resources, programmes, and experts is evident for this community (Giri, 2025).

***Future plans: “I will always have Canada as a back-up”***

The majority of the participants stated that they are planning on staying in Canada for at least the next couple of years. Those with their PR said they would try and apply for Canadian citizenship, and those with work permits stated that they would either like to extend their work permits or apply for the PR. Some participants who had work permits stated that they would stay in Canada until their work permits finished and then decide whether they wanted to stay or move on. For instance, one participant mentioned that he would leave if he got a better opportunity elsewhere and could not say for sure if Canada was his “final destination.” Another participant mentioned something similar: he stated that he had been to multiple countries before Canada, so he would not mind going elsewhere if he could not extend his work permit. A few participants mentioned Canada’s proximity to the US, and perhaps that they would move there after their Canadian work permit expired. Those planning to stay long-term mentioned that they would try changing their jobs to get higher salaries or go back to school for higher education or licensing requirements. Some participants also discussed perhaps starting a business in Canada and seeing how that goes. However, the majority have no concrete plans; they stated they would stay in Canada and find some stability. The participants with young children stated they wanted their children to get a good education and become stable in Canada before making any decisions about their future.

A few other participants who wanted to get a PR or citizenship also stated that returning to Nepal at some point in their future was definitely an option. For instance, one participant mentioned that if Nepal’s social situation improves and they can afford it, she would like to move back to Nepal in the long run. She states this is because her parents are getting older, and she wants to be there for them. Another participant was more solid in his decision to move back to Nepal; he stated that he wants to get the Canadian PR for stability, save some money, and then return to Nepal to open up a business. He states:

“I will always have Canada as a back-up, so if the business isn’t doing good and if I don’t feel like this is the thing I want to do there, then I am going to come back to Canada again. And I want to start my life here again.” (ID007, Male).

Some other participants said returning to Nepal hinged on their job prospects in Canada. For example, one participant mentions that if he is unemployed tomorrow and if he cannot find another job, there is no way he can stay in Canada because it is so expensive here. He says “that kind of scenario will force me to go back.” Another participant mentioned something similar, saying she and her husband have not decided whether to stay in Canada or move back. Once her husband finishes his medical fellowship program, they will stay if the situation is economically favourable.

However, she states that she would like to stay because Canada is good for her kids, and ultimately, they can earn much more here compared to Nepal.

A few participants stated that they did not know whether they would stay in Canada for the long term because of their past migration experiences. These participants have already lived in other countries and stated that once they got a PR or citizenship in Canada, they wanted to move somewhere else for a bit. This was particularly true for younger participants who did not have children. As one participant states:

“I don't want to settle, and I tend to convince my husband to leave and go with me. So, you know, between 2021 and 2022 I had been to three countries and maybe around 50 cities. So I think in life, I would want to keep moving, but maybe I'll have children and things will change.” (ID019, Female).

This sentiment was echoed by another participant who thought that moving and migrating are innately human nature. So, even if things are stable, people still wish to move and experience new places. For instance, another participant mentioned that she might move after getting her Canadian citizenship, as there was this “bug” in her (of moving). Ultimately, the participants expressed that they did not know what their future held for them, and currently, they were trying to find stability in Canada and would figure out what they wanted to do when the time came. But the Canadian citizenship and passport was something that provided them with a sense of security allowing them to pursue other migration journeys if needed or desired, knowing that they could always come back.

## **Conclusion**

This is an exploratory study that explores the complex migration drivers, trajectories, and experiences of the Nepalese community in Canada. The findings support the notion that the migration drivers for immigrants are diverse, complex, and interconnected with various socio-economic and political factors at the micro, meso, and macro levels. Immigrants are constantly using their knowledge and agency while making decisions for the future, such as choosing which destination they want to go to and why it makes the most sense. They make their personal cost-benefit analysis among the options available to them and spend a considerable amount of time, effort and money in pursuing these decisions.

For the Nepali immigrants in Canada that we interviewed, their decision to migrate here was because of several intersecting reasons, including wanting more from life after seeing the stale political and economic situation in the country for years. They wanted better opportunities in their career trajectories and education, better pay, and better family lives. They expressed complex decisions while weighing the economic, educational, and career opportunities in Nepal versus another country. They were also influenced by seeing their friends and family members migrate, or witnessing other migration journeys through social media. Many were also making plans for the longer term, considering future stability, how they want to raise their kids, and what sort of life they wanted to have in general. Finally, participants also mentioned being influenced by the various migration regimes that structure international mobility from Nepal and in destination countries.

Longevity, permanency, and stability were common reasons for participants choosing Canada as their country of destination. The study showed that considerations for choosing their settlement countries included ease of pathways to work permits, permanent residency, and citizenship. The



stability of a Canadian PR or citizen was also complemented by social security, improved quality of life, language, free health care, and quality of education in Canada. Furthermore, when determining which country to settle down in, participants considered several factors, including immigration policies, further opportunities, language, culture, and social factors. For instance, participants wanted to move to a country where English was the primary language, where the immigration and visa policies were stable, or where they had personal networks (i.e. friends and family). Some participants mentioned Canada's "multicultural" aspect as a plus point compared to other countries; they wanted to move to a country where they could experience different cultures, ethnicities, and communities.

Lastly, the study showed that Nepalese migrants had diverse and complex experiences within Canada. Though people had migrated to Canada thinking it to be a dreamland that provided many great opportunities, almost all had to struggle initially. They dealt with problems similar to other immigrant groups in Canada, including difficulties finding jobs, deskilling, recognition of foreign credentials and work experiences, the high cost of living and a loss of community. Participants and key stakeholders mentioned that newcomers usually have a vision of what they expect "Canada" to be like, which is upended once they are here; the promise of high earnings, stable jobs, and a comfortable life is not attainable within the first couple of years. However, after the initial years of struggle, some immigrants do find stability (as evidenced by the study). Despite the gap between expectations and reality, the study showed that many new immigrants are well aware of the struggles they would face in a new country, and many came knowing about this struggle through friends and family based here. For the interviewees, many are considering staying in Canada and applying for PR or citizenship to gain even more stability, while some are thinking about moving elsewhere again, showing that migration is not a linear path to a settlement country but can be ongoing as well. Regardless, all the participants will remain in Canada for the foreseeable future and are looking to build their careers and family in the meantime.

Although the Nepalese community in Canada is a relatively new addition to the immigrant population, the study shows their rich perspective and outlooks on their migration decisions and journeys, which is a valuable addition to the research on the South Asian or Asian immigrant group experiences in Canada.

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