

The Pandemic's effect on the Migration Industry in Nepal

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Abstract

The international labour migration industry in Asia is often facilitated by various private intermediaries including recruitment agencies, agents and sub-agents, orientation and training providers, medical centers, certification authorities, travel agencies, insurance companies and remittance agencies among others. The commercialization of international migration has resulted in it becoming a big business as the volume and direction of migrant workers have increased.

The COVID-19 pandemic, however, resulted in a complete stop in this business for some time and raised new challenges for the migration industry in general. This article takes a look at the effect of the pandemic on the otherwise lucrative migration industry in Nepal. The migration industry in Nepal facilitates circular temporary labour migrants of workers to various countries, and is especially active in sending workers to the Gulf. They form powerful networks through different associations and are known to be influential in the policy level as well. The findings of this research is based on in-depth analysis of 20 interviews with people in the migration industry (recruitment agencies, orientation agencies, medical screening centers, insurance agencies) as well as from civil society organizations and Government officials.

Biography

Richa Shivakoti is the Research Lead, Migration Governance at CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University. Her research focus is on the governance of labour migration within Asia, particularly between the labour-sending states of South Asia and South East Asia and the labour receiving states in the Middle East. Richa completed her PhD in Public Policy from the National University of Singapore in 2018. During her PhD, Richa was a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for the Study of International Migration (ISIM) at Georgetown University. Richa also holds a dual Masters in Public Affairs and Political Science from Indiana University. From 2019 to 2020, Richa serves as a research officer at Carleton University working on a joint initiative with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) addressing forced migration in the global South. She has also worked as a migration policy consultant for the preparation of the Migration Governance Indicators report for the International Organization for Migration (IOM).