

Inquiry on the Effect of Federalism in Patterns of Internal Migration in Nepal: Study from Province 1

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ABSTRACT

Nepal became federal state in 2008 with the aspiration of inclusive-development and reduction of economic disparity between rural and urban parts of the country. However using qualitative approach, paper finds that after federalism, especially with the contentious choice of provincial capital and subsequent tax increase, there has been an overall decline in business in rural towns of the province, leading to the increased displacement of the youth populace from rural town to the provincial capital. By performing in-depth interviews of 22 respondents from province 1 and carrying out thematic analysis the paper further finds that unplanned dozer development, increased corruption, and lack of improvement in the education and health sector has further contributed in internal migration. Overall the broad theme of unmet expectation emerged as the main factor that led general populace to be displaced from their roots

Key words: Internal Migration, Federalism, Thematic & Network analysis

Introduction

Migration along with fertility and mortality is considered as one of the major demographic processes that shape the general populace (Rees, 2001). Nevertheless, unlike fertility and mortality, the precise definition of migration is lacking. According to the United Nation's Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, international migrant is defined as "a person who changes his or her country of residence"¹.

Though scientific research is rife with a study on international migration, internal migration, however, does not get much attention (Elmhirst, 2016). Internal migration is considered as internal movement or displacement of people within the national boundary for the want of better opportunity or education, for fleeing from

¹ UN DESA, Recommendations on Statistics on International Migration Revision 1. Statistical Papers Series M, No. 58/Rev.1, Statistics Division (New York 1998)

war or conflict, or safety from a natural disaster or climate change. According to Kaya (2015), movement of population from underdeveloped regions of the country to more developed regions is called internal migration. Internal migration in general covers various aspects that include rural to urban, rural to rural, and movement that is forced as well as circular movement (Elmhirst, 2016). Hence, as a result of the efficient allocation of labor resources, internal migration helps in the economic development of both labor-sending areas and labor receiving areas (Lewis, 1954). In addition, it facilitates improved governance (Tiebout, 1956). Meanwhile, on the other end, internal migration can reduce the quality of life, raise the cost of living, and can destabilize the local politics (Wallace, 2013). However, migration within a country does not affect its total size of the population and growth rate but it affects regional and sub-regional population and growth rate within the country.

International experience shows that several factors influence internal migration. For instance, in a study done in India, Ethiopia, Peru, and Vietnam has shown that significant internal migrants are of age 15 to 19, who migrates because of the choices made during their transition to adulthood, such as socio-economic aspirations, education, opportunities, etc. (Franco Gavonel and Jooren, 2017). Meanwhile, a study in Brazil by Egger (2018) showed that labor's expectation of real wage gain actually drives people towards internal migration.

Initially, Internal Migration was viewed favorably as it supposedly moved surplus human resources from the rural areas to urban areas where marginal productivity is high thus fueling the growth (Kuznets, 1970). However later Todaro (1980) has shown that rates of internal migration from rural to urban in developing countries is greater than the rate of urban job creation thus reducing the benefit of internal migration.

Nepal internal migration situation

Migration has been an important component of population redistribution in Nepal. People have been migrating from rural-to-rural and rural-to-urban areas in search of employment and educational opportunities. According to a "Report on the Nepal Labor Force Survey 2017/18" currently 63% (18.3 million) of the population of Nepal reside in urban areas while the remaining 37% (10.7 million) live in rural areas. Further studies have shown at least 15 percent of the population resides outside of the district of birth (Clewett, 2015). One of the major causes behind internal migration has been attributed to the geographical landscape of the country. Nepal is divided into three ecological belts with high Himalayan Mountains in the north, followed by mid-hills and fertile Terai plain in the south. Life in the mountains and hills is difficult especially during the winter. As a result, transhumance migration where farmer moved their livestock seasonally for a want of green pasture has been practiced since time immemorial (Aryal, Maraseni, and Cockfield, 2014). In the past, internal migration in Nepal was confined within the

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midlands and hills above 4000 feet where there was no malarial prevalence. After the eradication of malaria in the sixties, internal migration occurred in droves after the resettlement of Terai and Inner Terai from people migrating from hills (Kansakar, 1974).. According to (Pathak and Lamichhane, 2014) internal migration of Nepal thus includes both horizontal (Hill to Hill) as well as vertical (Mountain and Hill to Terai) migration. The main cause behind the internal migration both rural to rural, rural to urban, and urban to rural has been employment and educational opportunities. Besides that health issues and environmental factors such as floods and landslide has also impacted the internal migration in a certain degree. Kumar (2004) posits that the cause of internal migration in Nepal can be attributed to poverty, income inequality, and lack of employment, food insecurity, and hard life.

Another factor that greatly impacted the internal migration pattern of Nepal was a decade long Maoist insurgency between 1996 and 2006 that resulted in the internal displacement of 100,000 to 200,000 people (IOM, 2019). In 2011, some 2.6 million Nepal is reported to be lifetime migrants, and about 1.5 million of those had moved to the Terai. Internal migration in Nepal, like international migration, has increasingly become a livelihood strategy with the majority of internal migrants originating from the hills and mountain regions and moving to the Terai, with some districts seeing an exodus of more than 50 percent of their population(IOM, 2019).

Besides these gender factors also is found to play a crucial role in internal migration. According to IOM (2019), females were more likely to internally migrate than males. The stats show that around 47 per cent of females migrated from their current location, compared to 23.4 per cent of males. The major cause behind this difference is attributed to marriage. Over 90 percent of, women migrants currently residing in rural areas described marriage as the main reason for settling in a new place while 69.9 percent women described it as the main cause for their movement.

Recently natural disaster such as flooding, the impact of climate change has also affected the internal migration pattern in the country (K. C., Wang, and Gentle, 2017). Especially, 2015Gorkha earthquake has also resulted in the mass displacement of the population from affected areas to safer zones (Wilson, 2016).

Overall according to Government of Nepal(2015), one of the biggest challenge of internal migration is to manage land in an adequate manner. Further because of the displacement of people from rural and impoverished to urban areas have resulted in massive unplanned growth and population rise in cities and at the same time depopulation in rural towns and villages (KC, 2020)

Federalism in Nepal

Federalism is the mixed or compound mode of government, combining a general government (the central or "federal" government) with regional governments (provincial, state, cantonal, territorial or other sub-unit governments) in a single political system. Its distinctive feature, exemplified in the founding example of modern federalism by the United States under the Constitution of 1787, is a relationship of parity between the two levels of government established. It can thus be defined as a form of government in which there is a division of powers between two levels of government of equal status. There are roughly 25 federal countries in the world today, which together represent 40 percent of the world's population. They include some of the largest and most complex democracies - India, the US, Brazil, Germany, and Mexico. Meanwhile, Nepal is the world's youngest federal country.

Modern-day Nepal was established two and half-century years after the Gorkha conquest of the Kathmandu Valley in 1768-1769. Till 1951 the country was a unitary feudalistic government under a monarch and hereditary oligarch (Ranas). Later under both multiparty democracy (1951 to 1960; 1990-2008) and the Panchayat system (1960-1990), the unitary system of government was practiced. But it was felt that one of the major causes behind under-development was the feudalistic unitary structure of government which neither had practical reach to the entire country and nor catered to indigenous people (Breen, 2017). After the 13 years of Maoist insurgency that began in 1996 and the people's movement of 2006 that overthrew the Monarchy, Nepal became the youngest federal state in the world in 2008. Breen (2017) suggests that Nepal exhibits typical holding-together federalism in response to moderate secession risk where power is devolved from the center to the periphery in order to prevent the breakup of a country. The purpose of such federalism is to ensure inclusive development, poverty alleviation, economic upliftment of women and marginalized group, and protecting cultural identity of indigenous group along with building infrastructural capacity across the country. In Nepal, the federalism process has thus been guided by the same principle ending of discrimination, inclusive development, and political integration (Ghimire, 2019). Further, the call for federalism has been attributed to the removal of ills of the previous unitary system which was mainly a concentration of development only in the center (Kathmandu). Besides according to Wagle (2018), except for Bagmati province (which includes the capital of Nepal Kathmandu) all six other states are restructured on the basis of 'politics' of ethnic orientation. The new federal map of Nepal is shown in the figure below

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Figure 1 States, districts, and ecological regions of Nepal. (Source: Survey Department, Nepal, Mapping by Hari Dhonju)

Under the Federalism now there are three tiers of Governments in Nepal when previously there was just one. The diagram below shows the new federal structure of the country

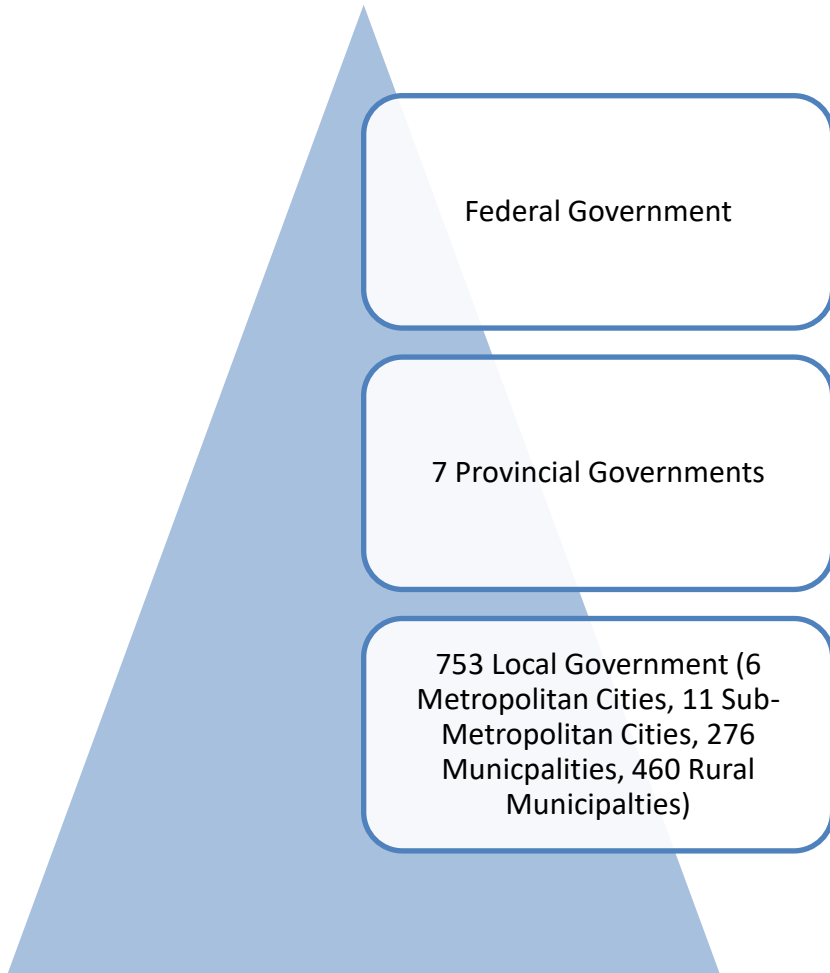


Figure 2 Federal Structure of Nepal

Federalism and internal immigration

There is a dearth in the literature linking Federalism and Internal Migration. For instance, Cashin and Sahay (1996) found a very weak connection between migrations from poor to rich states in India based on income differentials. Similarly, a study in Ethiopia shows that the promulgation of federalism based on ethnic and linguistic composition resulted in massive return migration in 1990s (Mberu, 2006). Beyond these studies, there has been no other research carried out in this area thus providing a visible research gap on the impact of federalism on the internal migration of country.

In the context of Nepal, it has been long felt that internal migration from rural to urban areas like Kathmandu, has been the destabilizing force resulting in

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unequal development across the country leaving the rural areas far behind in terms of development. The exodus of people to urban areas has resulted in the depopulation of urban areas with various social ramifications. Especially because of the lack of abled youth, the land has been abandoned and created a labor gap resulting in a decline in economic activity (KC,2020). The necessity to reverse this trend was felt even during Panchayat time when King Mahendra's Back to Village National Campaign was launched that encouraged youth to go back to the rural sector for the development (Gurung, 2011). In fact, one of the major impetuses behind the Federalism was decentralization, which is believed to stem the rural to urban migration in Nepal (KC, 2020). In this regard, it is essential to assess whether after the introduction of federalism the level of rural to urban migration declined or not.

Research question

The studies on internal migration so far have analyzed the phenomenon in Nepal from the point of conflict, malarial eradication, marriage, etc. However, the impact of the provincial setup on internal migration hasn't been hitherto inquired. In this context, the main research question that the study aims to answer qualitatively is; "What is the impact of provincial setup in internal migration in Nepal"

Methodology

Setting

The research was carried out in Province 1. It covers the area of 25,905 square kilometers, comprising of 14 districts and has the largest altitudinal and geographic variability that ranges from 70 meters from sea level (Kechana Kawal) to the world's highest 8848 meters (Mt Everest) (Rai and Misra,2010). According to the Census of Nepal 2011, total 4.5 million people reside in province 1 comprising 15% of Chettri, 12% Brahmin, 11% Rai and rest 29% comprise of other indigenous groups (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The province has a unicameral legislature with 93 members in its provincial assembly and has 137 local administrative bodies that include 1 metropolitan city, 2 sub-metropolitan cities, 46 municipalities, and 88 rural municipalities.²

² Electoral Constituency Delimitation Act 2017 (www.lawcommission.gov.np)



Figure 3 Local towns in province 1

The province 1 was chosen because the past study has shown that the highest labor migration was from Province 1 with 25.51 % migrant emanating from this province (Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2018).

Participants

For the collection of the data, a purposive sampling was used to determine the respondents (Lavrakas, 2008). In qualitative research, the purposive sampling is considered as the best option to obtain information rich cases (Patton, 2001) hence it was chosen. An in-depth interview of total 22 people from various walks of life that includes housewives, politicians, local journalists, local entrepreneurs were taken. Respondents were selected randomly from eleven towns of five districts from Province 1 as shown below.

Table 1
Respondent's distribution across towns

Towns	Districts	No. Of Respondent
Biratnagar	Morang	2
Itahari	Morang	3
Dharan	Morang	1
Dhankuta	Dhankuta	2

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Hile	Dhankuta	3
Pakhirbas	Dhankuta	2
Basantapur	Terhathum	1
Bhedetar	Dhankuta	2
Myanglung	Terhathum	2
Fuling	Taplejung	2
Phidim	Paanchthar	2

Out of the total respondent, seven were female and fifteen were male. The occupation of the respondents across gender is shown in the table below

**Table 2
Gender and Occupation of the Respondent**

Gen der	Hou se- wife	Far mer	Entre pre- neur	Govern ment Officer	Politic ian	Teac her	Journa list	Stud ent	Tot al
Male		2	4	1	3	2	2	1	15
Fem ale	2	1	2	1				1	7
Tota l	2	3	6	2	3	2	2	2	22

of the 23 respondents, only one respondent was illiterate while three respondents had education up to tenth grade (SLC). Meanwhile respondents with high school level diploma and college-level education were equally represented with both category having seven respondents. On the other hand, four respondents had acquired the highest education up to graduate level.

Instrument and procedure

The interview schedule was first developed by doing a preliminary phone interview of three people hailing from province 3. The interviews were then carried out during the first week of January 2020. Prior to the interview a consent was taken and the name of the interviewee was kept anonymous. All the interviewees were asked general open-ended questions regarding their experience and life in general. The main purpose was to build the rapport. After that, the questions regarding their perception towards the provincial system and overall migration pattern as gleaned using the standard five whys questions. (Serrat,2017). The interviews were all taken in vernacular Nepali language and

were recorded with the consent of the interviewee. The interviews were transcribed and then translated into English.

Analysis

Analysis of all interviews was done by applying Thematic Network Analysis using the principles of interpretative phenomenological analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The thematic analysis helped to glean the underlying themes using the induction method. Meanwhile, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used as it is considered as the best way to identify theme by determining how people ascribe meaning to their experiences during their interactions with the environment (Smith, Jarman and Osborn, 1999). Analyses were undertaken using the Atlas.ti version 7. and involved two major stages. At first, all the individual interviews were translated, transcribed, and coded. This was done with the view of generating unique and original perspectives on internal migration so as to generate an emergent theme by applying an ideographic case study approach (Conner et al, 2009). In the second stage, the individual themes were then clustered and generalized into higher superordinate categories using a nomothetic approach. The themes were revised until further generalization couldn't be made.

In order to ensure that coding and theme generated was done properly and reliably, an inter-rater-reliability test was carried out. For this 10% of the data, a chunk was analyzed by another reviewer and the positive or negative connotation in the assigned code was analyzed. The outcome of the rating is listed in the crosstab below.

Table 3
Positive and Negative Connotation among raters

		Rater2		
		Positive Connotation	Negative Connotation	Total
Rater 1	Positive Connotation	4	2	6
	Negative Connotation	0	9	9
Total		4	11	15

The Cohane Kappa was measured using the formula

$$\text{Cohane Kappa} = \frac{P_A - P_E}{1 - P_E}$$

Where P_A : Probability of Agreement

P_E : Probability of Error

The Cohane Kappa Computed in 0.7058 which shows that there is a degree of agreement.

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**Table 4
Cohane Kappa Calculation**

No. of Agreement	13
Probability of Agreement	0.866666667
Probability of Positive Connotation	0.106666667
Probability of Negative Connotation	0.44
Probability of error	0.546666667
Cohane Kappa	0.705882353

Results

Data were analyzed by identifying various codes and extracting the main themes out of it. The major themes that were generated were inter-migration pattern was influenced by poor governance following federalism, inconvenience due to choice of the provincial capital, and subsequent decline in business.

Majority of the respondent (n=17) believes that internal migration has increased a lot after the institution of provinces. For instance, according to one student in Ilam said

“Before we travelled to Kathmandu for the higher education but now we have to travel to Biratnagar instead “

While according to one entrepreneur in Dhankuta- “

“More youth are travelling abroad or going to Biratnagar for the better opportunity”

Generally, respondents believe that after the provincial setup inflation (n=8) and taxation(n=5) have both risen. As one entrepreneur for Hile noted that *“After the federalism both price and taxes have risen highly”*

Another broad theme that was identified is a large number of the respondents find Biratnagar being designated as the province 1 capital as highly inconvenient (n=14) especially those hailing from the hilly districts. According to one respondent

“Biratnagar is too far for people from Taplejung and Solukhumbu and impractical”.

Also many respondent feel that the choice of provincial capital leads to less development in infrastructure (n=4) and less movement of people (n=10) in hilly regions. Further respondents were venting frustration as the people mobility decline, so does the hotel industries and subsequently, decline in agricultural demand making farmers suffer. As one farmer in Myanglung posits succinctly *“Less People means less business, less business means less consumption of agricultural product”*

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As a result decline in business (n=18) and the need for higher education (n=11) as the main driver of internal migration. Meanwhile, few respondents (n=3) also attributed health concern as the cause of migration to the new provincial capital. As one teacher from Basantapur stated that

“Rural community has to travel to the cities either Dharan or Biratnagar even for treating snake bite.”

Besides a decline in business, the most respondent from hilly town (n=18) reported a fall in real estate business as people are reluctant in buying lands in the region of the other major themes that emerged is that people (n=17) in general, had high expectation regarding the federalism which however didn't live up to its promise. As a housewife in Itahari mentioned that she had an expectation of development of new infrastructure for education and health but only tax and price has risen. Meanwhile, according to one entrepreneur from Fuling:

“Before they said Singadurbar (Main administrative block in Nepal) in every locality, but now after federalism, things have declined in business, education and everything.”

Also, they had an expectation that decision makers and planners would focus on the grass root problems. However, planners only visited the provincial capital or district headquarters and are out of touch from local problems in small towns and villages.

Besides these, respondents also reported a few interesting insights. For instance, one farmer in Dhankuta said that in rural areas because of federalism, local politicians are resorting to unplanned development such as using a dozer to open new trails, just to gain public support. Because of such poor planning without consultation of an engineer as using dozer to open new trails, the topsoil is being removed. And this contributed to the drying up of natural spring and decline in fertility of land and frequent landslide. Because of poor produce, farmers were having a difficult time. Similarly, a female college student in Taplejung expressed a concern that it is not that safe for girls to stay in a hostel in Biratnagar for higher education as it is closer to the border. While a politician from Pakhirbas also questioned the logic of having a provincial capital near the border.

Discussion Findings

The major findings can be represented by interconnectedness of theme that emerged during the study which is illustrated using the network diagram below³

³ The network analysis is carried out using Atlas.ti version 7

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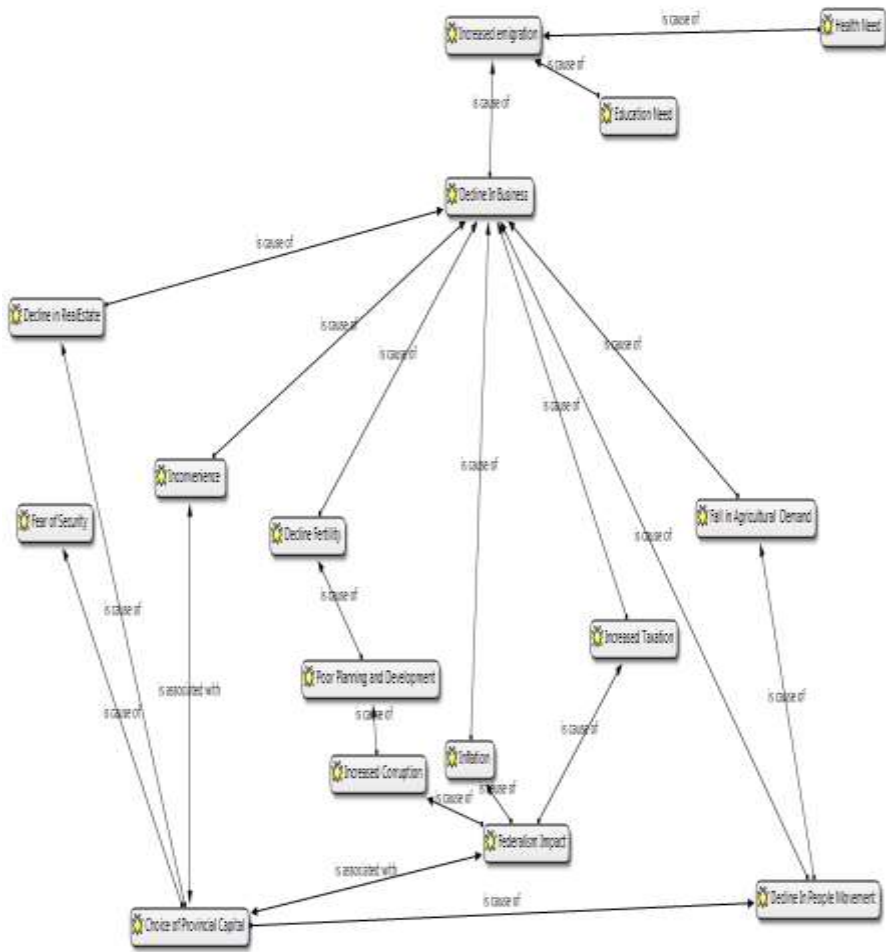


Figure 4 Network analysis of the Emerging Themes

From the diagram, it can be gleaned that the impact of Federalism on internal migration principally stems from the decline in Business in rural towns. Before Nepal was declared the federal state, the entire economic, administrative, and political activities were highly concentrated in Kathmandu and district headquarters. As a result, there was mass internal immigration from rural areas of Nepal to Kathmandu, District Headquarters, and Terai regions. Thus the entire onus of restructuring into federal provinces was to make development more inclusive and also influence the general populace, especially youth, to return back to their roots and involve in the agrarian revolution and rural development. However, contrary to expectation, the study shows that there has been a considerable decline in the local business in rural towns following the federal

restructuring. The main cause behind it can be explained through following three broad causes

- a) Choice of Provincial Capital
- b) Dismal economic situation
- c) Unplanned Development

Choice of provincial capital

In Nepal, after the declaration of the provinces, there was increased debate across the country regarding designation of the possible provincial capitals. In the same breath, in Province 1 also there was a debate on whether to continue Dhankuta, the previous zonal administrative headquarter, as capital, or select the Biratnagar, the second largest city, in Nepal as its capital (Tiwari, 2018). Finally, Biratnagar was declared the capital of province 1 on 17 January 2018. Following this decision, the study shows that the local businesses from rural towns such as Myanglung, Phuling, Dhankuta, Hile, etc have shifted to the provincial capital. This phenomenon of clustering of business entities especially in the capitals is very well known (Lerch, 2016). One of the major reason can be attributed to the rise in real estate price in the provincial capital, while the real estate price decline in the other local towns (Pradhan, 2018).

Further, the main livelihood among most of the businesses in the rural towns was based on people coming to those places for official or other business purposes. Since Biratnagar which lies in the Terai belt and is easily accessible from the East-West highway, the need for travelling to these rural towns fell drastically. As a result of less mobility from outsiders, the internal tourism declined and so does the business of local hotels and stores, thus compelling them to relocate. In addition, the decline in local consumption reduced the demand for local farm produce, aggravating the situation further. This process of decline of rural towns is very much aligned with the Dying Town Syndrome, which suggests the growth of capital cities and dominance of large urban centers leads to the decline (Keneley, 2004).

Dismal economic situation

The second broad theme that impacted the internal immigration is found to be the overall macroeconomic impact following the federalism. The main issue that emerged is the rise in the cost of living because of increased taxation, especially in the hill towns, as a result of which people migrated back to their home in villages or the capital city. This phenomenon of the rising living costs influencing the migration decision is again aligned with the internal migration transmission mechanism explained by Todaro (1980).

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Unplanned development

One interesting finding in the study is the linkage of unplanned development activities and the decline in the fertility of arable lands in hills. Especially the elected local government officials were clueless regarding the sustainable development and seem to consider building the rural roads is the only way towards the development. Hence, their first action is to buy bulldozers and construct unplanned roads without proper engineering. This caused a wide array of environmental damage such as landslide as well as the destruction of removal of topsoil thus declining the fertility of the land. According to Carlson (2019) this problem is very much prevalent across the country. This so-called Dozer Development causing serious sustainability issues is well known, especially in the Himalayan roads of Nepal and India (Hearn and Shakya, 2017). As a result of the decline in fertility in the land as well as the landslide, farmers got displaced from their work and migrated to Biratnagar or other towns in border areas.

Besides the decline in local business, another two causes behind the apparent change in immigration pattern can be attributed to *Educational Needs and Health Care Needs*. According to Census 2011, the literacy rate of province 1 is 71.22% with male literacy of 79.27% and Female literacy of 63.94% (moe, 2018). Before the federalism, many students from rural areas in Province 1 traveled to Kathmandu for higher education. However with more number of higher education institute opening up in Biratnagar, the city has emerged as an educational hub and hence more students move to Biratnagar for their higher studies (Subedi, 2019). This finding is also aligned with the other studies in India that shows education is one of the drivers of internal immigration (Chandrasekhar and Sharma, 2014). The study thus shows that with the federalism in place, the direction of migration changed to provincial capital instead of federal capital however, the number of higher institutions didn't grow at local towns. Also, the study shows that in rural towns the health care facility didn't grow as expected by the locals. As described by the some of the respondents the local health care facilities didn't improve even after federalism and hence locals had to rely on the health care facilities in the provincial capital for even common treatment. This need to travel to an urban center even for simple health services can influence people to leave their roots and settle in larger areas. These findings are also aligned with studies conducted in Russia and Bhutan (Vakulenko, 2016; Gosai and Sulewski, 2014).

Overall theme

The overall theme that has emerged is there has been brewing resentment among the general populace of province 1, especially those residing in rural towns, that the early expectation of inclusive development, rapid economic growth, improvement of health care, and increased education level as promised before federal restructuring is hitherto not fulfilled. Especially people had expected that

after federal restructuring every village and every town will see pervasive growth. But the expectation fell after the discordant political decision on the choice of provincial capital but what they have experienced is growth and development has clustered around the regional power centers like provincial capital causing displacement of business and people towards these centers. This can be summarized from the following diagram

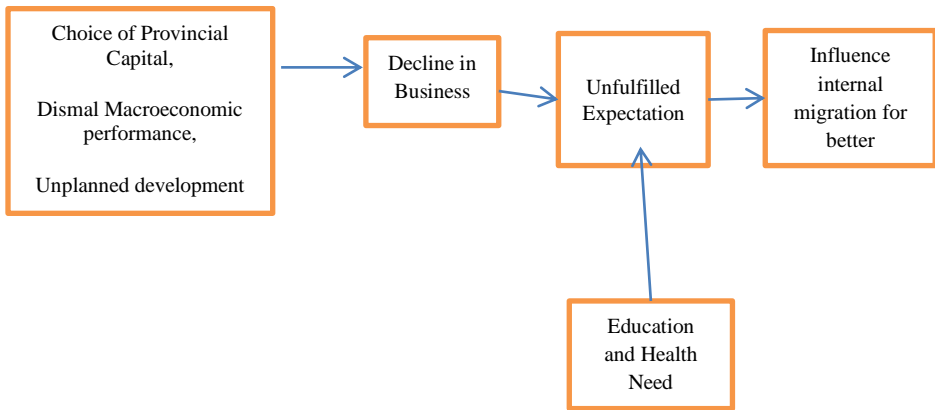


Figure 5 overall themes

Contribution to existing knowledge

This paper contributes to an understanding of the changing landscape in the internal migration of Nepal following the federal restructuring of the country which hasn't been hitherto analyzed. The use of qualitative methodology allowed the respondent in province 1 to explain the change they experienced after the country went to federalism and how the internal migration pattern changed. The study has shown that the political decision of federal restructuring and expectation in its wake was not fulfilled as apparent by the decline in business thus leading to internal migration decisions among the locals. The paper contributes to the knowledge of internal migration by showcasing that if grass root level sustainable development expectation is not met then decentralization aspiration brought by federalism will not be enough to induce people to remain in their roots. The paper further opens a new discussion regarding the political modality in shaping internal migration, especially in developing countries.

Limitation of the study

The findings of the present study have limitations pertaining to its design. First, despite the attention paid to building rapport, some participants may have been bit

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inhibited in sharing the information. Further, the findings were all limited to verbal response and hence did not include visual constructions. Further sample size as well as representative sector is limited and may not represent the people from all walks of life.. While the current study is one of the first of its kind within the Nepalese context, future studies must be carried out in other regions of Nepal for better understanding the influence of government's restructuring in internal migration pattern of the country. It is recommended that a broader study using the larger data set and employing the mixed method be used for further enhancing the knowledge of the consequences of political decisions on internal migration patterns.

Conclusion

Internal migration is a demographic process that shapes the general population structure within a country. Since time immemorial people have shifted from rural to urban areas for socio-economic aspirations, higher education, better opportunities, and overall good quality life. Internal migration especially is very much prevalent in countries with a unitary form of government where both development and power are centralized in a capital city or certain urban cities. It has been observed that because of this concentration of people only in main cities the overall development of the country is uneven. As a result, these country faces under-development, inequitable growth, and economic disparity thus increased poverty and inequality especially in rural areas. In case of Nepal also it is believed that its long feudalistic past is the major reason behind its under-development. Thus after a decade long civil war and popular people's movement, Nepal finally adopted federalism in 2008 with the aspiration of equitable growth and development. However, after almost 12 years of practice, it has been found that the development, which was concentrated only in the capital city, has now simply shifted to provincial capitals, all the while the rural towns are turning into a ghost town. The study using an in-depth interview of 22 individuals from various walk of life across the towns of province 1 shows that this can be attributed mainly to the decline in business caused by the improper choice of the capital city, unplanned development, rise in tax, increase in corruption and lack of quality education and health service. This phenomenon has increased resentment among the general public and a rise in cynicism leading to intra-province internal migration decisions among the people. Thus, the paper contributes to the existing body of knowledge of internal migration by analyzing the influence of federalism on the same. It is envisaged that the paper will be a useful reference for future exercise of political and a development decisions. Especially it shows that if people's expectation is not met then good intention is not enough for uplifting the people.

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