

Building national security through human security: Seasonal migration from Upper Mustang

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Abstract

Migration is one of the essential social-cultural phenomena of human being around the world. Seasonal migration is one of the human security dimensions directly related to the national security of a country. This paper explores the human security dimension closely related to seasonal migration and national security which has reasons, processes, and destinations of the Lobas of Upper Mustang, Nepal. The survey, interview, and field observation (Upper Mustang, Western Hills of Nepal and Vanarashi, India) were the principal methods of data collection. The findings of the research are that both married males and females having agriculture and livestock occupations of the large family go for seasonal migration from Upper Mustang, Nepal. The dominant age group of migrants is 20-50 years. The level of literacy, language efficiency, and social network plays a determining role in choosing the destination and period of stay out. They usually migrate to a group and use multiple modes of transportation for their travel. For business, they use the social network. They rent a room to live in. For business investment, they use mostly their own money and some they borrow from moneylenders. They not only work themselves also employ Nepali speaking youths in Vanarashi. Their property in Upper Mustang is taken care of mostly by their family members. They bring cash and kind as their earning while returning home.

Keywords: the Loba, Upper Mustang, migration, seasonal migration, food security

Introduction

The primary objective of this paper is to explore the causes, processes, and destinations of seasonal migration adopted by the Loba of Upper Mustang, Nepal. Upper Mustang covers a vast area of 2071 sq km. The restructuring of the local unit has divided into two rural municipalities (Lomanthang and Dalame rural Municipality). 3322 is the total population of these two rural Municipalities (<http://lomanthangmun.gov.np/> & <http://dalomemun.gov.np/>) Upper Mustang belongs to Alpine climate (3000-4500 masl) and Tundra climate (4500 masl and above). This area covers by snow during the winter (DDC Mustang, 2068 BS). The Upper-Mustang is among the sparsest populated regions of Nepal having a density of 1.49 persons per km². The population and household of Lobas have decreased by a decadal ratio of 1.40% and 1.14%, respectively (CBS, 2012). This sort of negative population dynamics can be associated with out-migration. Suwal (2014) presented that the rate of migration from the mountain region of Nepal is 19 percent.

Lobas of Upper-Mustang are of Tibetan origin, and their identities are observed regarding their socio-economic, cultural, linguistic, historical, and geographical

context. The *Lobas* are the inhabitant of *Lo tsho-dhun*. In Loba etymology, ‘Lo tsho-dhun’ refers to seven local councils or municipalities of Mustang district, namely: Lo-manthang, Chhoser, Chonhup, Tsharang, Ghami, Surkhang, and part of Chhuksang, which is also called the gate of Upper Mustang. Upper Mustang is also known as “Mustangbhot” in Nepal (Jackson, 1978, p. 196). The Lobas are well-known people of “salt and grain trade” in the Kaligandaki river basin, which passes from China-Tibet to India. The Lobas heavily engaged in seasonal migration and trade until salt and grain trade closed. During the winter, they traded in the low land area and during the summer season, they traded to Tibet. Now their past trading heritage is followed to winter trade and only occasional summer trade in Tibet as they participate in the trade fare organized in boarding areas of Lo-manthang rural Municipality. This research is about present-day winter season migration. Loba term *Ghungha* means winter and the Loba use conch shell as the symbolic metaphor for the color of the surrounding. The climate becomes cold at that season. The minimum temperature during winter goes up to -20° C., and the maximum temperature during summer goes up to 26° C. After they harvest the most valued singled seasonal crops in autumn and the Loba commence their seasonal migration for trade in Nepali Hills and Indian cities particularly Varanasi. This paper mainly focuses on the reasons, processes, and destinations of seasonal migration of Lobas of Upper Mustang.

Methods and data

This paper is based on qualitative and quantitative data from primary and secondary sources. For primary data sampling, interview and observation methods were used. An accidental sampling was adopted

for the survey. The sample size was 78 households from those who migrate out for winter seasons and 67 households who stay in Upper Mustang during winter. A checklist for the semi-structured interview was used to facilitate the interviews and the key informant interviews to collect in-depth information on the topic. Field observation in Upper Mustang, Western Hills of Nepal, and in Varanashi, Utter Pradesh India was conducted. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 20. Searching patterns in data was the main tool of qualitative data analysis. The reviews of the literature on the themes was another strategy to collect secondary information and that was applied in to formulate a research question data analysis and interpretation.

Migration

Food is a fundamental need for people living in any corner of the world. As data provided by the government of Nepal, 38 districts of Nepal are most vulnerable for food security and 24 percent of the people are under the poverty line. The mountain region of Nepal is the most food-insecure region (Bhandari, 2018). Gurung (2001) has mentioned employment, marriage, trade, agriculture, educations as the significant causes of migration. The lacking food sufficiency as the cause of migration was highlighted by Tulachan (2001). Gurung (1988) pointed out, the regional imbalance as the cause and consequences of migration as the tendency of migration or pull factors are usually sparse resources region to abundant resources region and employment opportunities. Pandey (2016) has clearly stated that food security in Upper Mustang from the perspective of self-production is the poorest one. Chhetri (1986) studied changes of the Thakali migrant of Pokhara, have found the adoption of a new form of culture

as no eating yak meat, adopting *Kanyadan* instead capture marriage and modification mourning days of death which were practiced in Mustang. Seasonal migration was described and documented concerning resource use by the pastoralist among the Sherpa of Nepal by Furer-Haimendorf (1975) and among the Tarangapurian of Dolpa by James Fisher (1987). Fisher (1987) has focused on seasonal migration to Tibet and the mid-western region of Nepal in which Tarangapurian are interconnected with their identity, language, trade, social and economic relations. Tulachan (2001) has actually documented seasonal migration in relation to trade of Loba as a strategy for survival merely economic perspective. This study lacks current development such as road access to Upper Mustang and food availability and changes in the mode of transportation. Similarly have no attention to the socio-cultural systems like *reme ghaypkin* (rotational or turn of sharing of power, privilege and responsibilities among the members (individual/household/community) and *nechang or ista*, fictive kin relation especially with outside their community relation. *Nechang* is used for the rest, selling goods and trust-building. No attention is paid to religious, educational and health and maintains social networks among friends and relatives.

The Lobas of Upper Mustang also migrates as migrant workers in foreign countries. Young Loba started international labor migration since the 1990s. Foreign employment or remittance has become one of the primary income sources of the Loba. Many have been to the United States of America, Japan, Korea, Canada, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and some Middle Eastern countries in which they are

working in different capacities. Almost every household, there are people who have been to a foreign country. They started to go to Japan, the USA, and other high earning countries. This also supported migration in a different part of the country especially to Pokhara, Kathmandu. There are many Lobas have settled in different parts of India, USA. In some households have sent two to three members of the family in order to work in foreign countries. To imagine the volume of international migration of Loba, Craig (2011) estimated that more than 1,000 people from Tibetan-speaking areas of Upper Mustang live in New York. Similarly, this estimated population constitutes 25 % of able-bodied of 20–40-year-old out of their villages are currently in New York (Craig, 2011, p. 197).

The focus of the paper is the human security dimension from the perspective of food security which is fundamental rights of Nepali citizens. If the food security is not guaranteed, it might result in the national security threat in Nepal. It is worth to mention that the Upper Mustang is the most sensitive area for a national security point of view.

Social status of winter migrants

In this sense, migration is not only economical; it contains multiple aspects of people's socio-cultural, environmental, health, education, trade, and religious. The study has reflected multiple reasons for migration, such as escaping from winter, temporary employment, pilgrimage, meeting family and relatives.

The main target of the winter migration is trade in India and the mid-hill region of the western development region of Nepal. But these days Lobas have extended their spheres of trade up to Butwal and Narayanghad,

Chitwan districts. The places of seasonal migration and their activities and pattern of return and connectivity to Upper Mustang is clearly said in the interview:

All Loba who go to Varanasi return their home, but many Lobas who have been doing business in other towns of India such as Simla, Dibrigarh of Asham, Kashmir, Jaypur usually staying more permanently, but they have close contact with their family and share their profits and loss.

Pema Chiring Loba (36) from Lo-manthang,

Age, sex and marital status of seasonal migrants

The age and sex of an individual are vital for roles and responsibilities to cope with the socio-economic of any social setting. Age has much significant role in migration, which is presented in table 5.1. Similarly, which sex and their marital status have much significance in migration in general and winter trade migration in particular.

Table 1: Age of respondent

SN	Age group (years)	No. of respondents	%
1	21-30	25	32.1
2	31-40	28	35.9
3	41-50	12	15.4
4	51-60	8	10.3
5	61 and above	5	6.4
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 1 presents that 21-40 years old age group represents 68%. Economically active energetic youth and some old people of high experience participate. The old one paly role of guide to the young in trade.

Table 2: Sex and marital status of the respondents

S N	Sex	Marital status				Total	%
		Marr- ied	%	Unm- arried	%		
1	Male	41	87.2	6	12.7	47	60.2
2	Female	16	51.6	15	48.3	31	39.7
Total		57	73.8	21	26.9	78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Male and female participation in seasonal migration is very significant; however, dominants are married male and married females usually join with their husbands if not their relatives. Married women's participation is meaningful among female respondents, 51.61 % were married. In the case of male respondents, 87.23% were married. During the observation, mainly females were the ones who actually sell goods usually clothes in Varanasi.

Family size, education, and occupation

Family size allows or creates the opportunity to migrate and restrict people's movement. Similarly, educational status and main occupation have some restrictions and privileges on people's movement. Table 3 presents the number of the family.

Table 3: The family size of respondents

SN	No. of family member	No. of respondents	%
1	Two members	9	11.5
2	Three to five members	26	33.3
3	Six to seven members	26	33.3
4	Eight and above	17	21.8
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015



Table 3 The majority of the migrant respondent were from 3-7 members. It can be concluded that neither the small family size nor the big family is adopting seasonal migration. Family size and the nature of family are the obstacles and opportunities. The large family was usually supporting to look after property at their place of origin.

Table 4: Educational background of the respondents

S N	Educational background	No. of respon-dents	%
1	No formal education	14	17.9
2	Studied up to class 5	47	60.3
3	Class 6 to SLC & above	17	21.8
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

The literacy level of seasonal migrants is essential for economic, social and business points of view. Over 60 % of respondents have educational backgrounds up to class 5. It means they have limited formal school, but they are able to handle business. Only 21.8% of respondents were who have been school from 6 grade up to SLC and above. The low level of educational attainment is also supportive in Nepal and India due to langue and group assistant.

Table 5: The main occupation of the respondents

SN	Occupation	Respondents	Percent
1	Agriculture and livestock	67	85.9
2	Trade	4	5.1
3	Tourism	4	5.1
4	Services	3	3.8
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Over 85.9% of migrants had agriculture as their primary occupation. Even the minimum number of people of the occupational background of service also migrate. These service holders usually travel for other purposes such as pilgrimage and visiting relatives.

Table 6: Monthly income of the respondents

S N	Monthly income (NPR)	No. of respondents	%
1	Up to 5000	27	34.6
2	6000-10000	32	41.0
3	11000-15000	17	21.8
4	16,000 and above	2	2.6
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

75.6% of the respondents were average middle-class people who earn less than 10,000 per month migrate out for winter seasonal trade. The rich people are the investors and the poor ones are dependent workers.

Process and destination of migration

The Lobas of Upper Mustang migrate because they need to migrate in order to avoid cold, they would like to manage their economic life with some source of income, visiting their relatives who have been outside of their homeland, and some go for Buddhist pilgrimage sites like Pokara, Shoyambhunath, Bhoudha Nath, Lumbini, Sarnath Gaya. For this reason, they need to travel for some days and they follow the traders. These days they travel a few days because of road construction to Upper Mustang and road linking to the neighboring district such as Myagdi, Baglung, Parbat and Kaski district. The transportation



facility also hindered their business. The cost of travel has increased. These days they use a different mode of transportation such as jeep, bus, plane etc.

They usually travel in the group and in several waves after harvesting their valuable single seasonal crops. They plan to return back in the spring season at the time of the beginning of agriculture activity in Upper Mustang.

Tamtin Chhiring was interviewed when he was traveling to India with several Ladies and a few men. Everyone looked happy and they were laughing. First, he hesitated to tell something about his journey but he shared information very openly as:

I have been to India for winter trade for 28 years. At first, I started to work as a vendor, and later I went to Ludhiana, Panjab, India to give the order for a sweater at the factory to bring and sell in Varanasi. Nowadays, I spend about six months in total to order a sweater, bring to Varanasi and sell in 3 months and return home. The reason why I do this winter migration and trade there is no job during the winter in Lo-manthang. I must leave behind my wife and other family members at home and spend the cold winter in India. I have to earn to my family members for summer. The margin of the selling goods is about 25-30%. We sell a sweater with a maximum price which costs 7-800 IC, and the cheapest one cost 100-150 IC. There is no harassment from Indian security and other people, but we must be clever that there are some people who prefer to steal our things. We hire government land for shopkeeping and pay collectively about 1500,000 IC for three months. The co-operation among

the traders is very important, in which Loba do *reme gyapken* that is taking a turn as responsibility.

Tamtin Chhiring (44) from Lo-manthang,

This interview is providing ideas about the experience of trading, co-operation in trade, expenditure, possible profits and pain and hope of being seasonal migrants in Upper Mustang.

Time and cost

Economic and environmental reasons are the most prominent causes of migration during winter the Lobas of Upper Mustang. Many respondents have responded that they have multiple reasons to migrate during winter from Upper Mustang, such reasons include cold, religious, health treatment, meeting with family and friends, arrangements of goods and services for trade during summer.

Table 7: Reasons for migration

S N	Reasons for migration	No. of respondents	Per-cent
1	Very cold in Upper Mustang	7	9.0
2	In search of additional income	19	24.4
3	To visit relatives and family members	1	1.3
4	Multiple reasons including pilgrimage and medical treatment	51	65.4
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 7 shown that multiple reasons for migration. The winter season is the opportunity for many activities outside their homeland. They usually travel up to 8 days to reach their destination.

Table 8: Days to reach the destination place

S N	No. of days used to travel	No. of respondents	%
1	Three days	10	12.8
2	Four days	30	38.5
3	Five days	25	32.1
4	Six days	5	6.4
5	Seven days	8	10.3
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 8 shows that 38.5% of respondents have responded that they reach in 4 days. 32.1% has replied for 5 days. I can conclude that 4-5 days needed to reach the destination. The required days to travel differs by destination and means of transportation used. In the past, before road access to Upper Mustang to Pokhara, they needed to walk at least 15 days to reach only to Pokhara. People from Chhoser and Chhonhup would need more days than Ghami and Surkhang, but these days due to jeep and bus service from upper Mustang only difference would be the number of hours. In the past, people stayed at the house of *Nychang* in Loba language or *ista* in Nepali or fictive kin relatives, but these people stay usually at the hotel, but their preferences are to those hotels run by their relatives or people from their regions.

Travel usually takes place in the group, married and unmarried, relative, and neighborhood for their own security while traveling to India. It is safer for ladies to travel in a group. Table 8 has shown that 41% of respondents travel with multiple relations that constitute family members as well as with friends.

Table 9: Accompany during travel

SN	Accompany during travel	No. of respondents	%
1	Alone	6	7.7
2	Along with family members	18	23.1
3	Neighbors	1	1.3
4	Relatives	9	11.5
5	Friends	12	15.4
6	Multiple	32	41.0
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

They mainly use multiple means of transportation such as jeep, bus, airplane, train, taxi for travel. Some people also travel with a helicopter but it is not the ordinary means of travel. Travel cost also depend upon the means of travel food and drink and the types of the hotel they stay in. They mostly travel in a group and mixture of their own family, relatives, neighbors, and friends.

While traveling to India and returning back from India most people from Lo-manthang, Charang, Ghami, Chhonhup, Surkhang usually stay in Kaji Pokhari, and Nagin tole in Amarsigh Chhock in Pokhara. The Lobas, especially from Chhoser lives in Dule Gauda of Tanahun district, where people displaced by GLOF from Chhoser have been living.

Another group of people who do not travel India, but travel with horse lives in and around Pame, nearby lakeside Pokhara. The living arrangement is usually taking place on the basis of relationship and familiarity with the people, which are mainly concentrated around the religious heritage centers. This happens while traveling to India and hill regions and their return. Some stay in nearby Pema Tshal monastery, Amchi School in Yamdi, Pokhara. These people do small



trade like *Jimbu, hing, birenun* in and around Pokhara. They advertise their *jimbhu* as such that *Chhimekiko nak mitho, aafno bhanca mitho*; it means when you cook it tasty smells even outside of the house or neighbors know by smell and taste good when you eat. Similarly, winter season schools are dispersed according to their stay such as Deep Jyoti High School from Chhoser is located nearby Kaji Pokhari. Chhodea monastery is built for the winter season in Bouddha. Many people live in and around Bouddha and Shoyambhu in Kathmandu.

Table 10: Financial cost of travel

SN	Financial cost of travel	No. of respondents	%
1	Up to 10,000	7	9.0
2	11000-15000	31	39.7
3	16000 and above	40	51.3
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

The cost of travel reaches above NRs. 16000 responded by 51.3 % of respondents as shown in table 9. The destination of seasonal migrants as interviewed to:

People from Chhoser and Chonhup prefer mostly go to the hill region of mid-hills such as Baglung, Myagdi, Parbat, Syangja, Kaski, Lamjung, Tanahun, Gorkha, Dhading. They speak fluent Nepali Language. They have built relationships with the local people. People from Lo-manthang, Charang, Ghami they usually go to India. People from Samar, Ghiling, and Muktinath usually go and stay in Assam. Their business follows networking with the local people, their own neighborhood. Nepali, Hindi, and English speakers go to India. They love Hindi film songs. Young

go for wage working, and adult people are real traders. They usually go two or three times to visit Ludhiyana to get their trading goods when they have good sell. Those who trade and tourism business during the summer in Lo-manthang they usually like to take holidays, having fun, meeting with family and relatives. Hindi and they need to calculate their business. Local money lenders give money with interest, 12%, 18%, up to 24% depending upon the time they borrow money. Risk is those who sell sheep and goat; they earn in a large amount and loss in the large number as well. Those who go for wages, the first time they manage travel cost themselves. The new ones are paid less than those of experience. Those who are more matured the rate is about 15000 per month including food and shelter. Usually, they are paid in a lump sum for three months. Those who have better experience get more money to bring home around 50,000 NRs.

Sankha Lal Gurung (60) Chhoser

Property and caring in Upper Mustang

Ownership of property is closely related with the security dimension of the Lobas. The types of property, safeguarding property and security of resources have genuine issues when people migrate from place to another. Moreover, some pertinent concerns include how they get information about their houses, the wages or gifts given to those people who take care of the property, types of work undertaken who live in the Upper Mustang. The other relevant social and cultural categories are: 96.2% of respondents own property in Upper Mustang. Among those property owners, 70% of respondents own land, house, livestock (see table 11).

Table 11: Types of property

S N	Types of property	No. of respondents	Percent
1	House	3	3.8
2	Land	1	1.3
3	Hotel	1	1.3
4	Land, house and livestock	70	93.3
5	Missing (Who do not own Property)	3	3.8
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 11 shows that 76.9% of respondent's property is taking care of their own family members. Similarly, 21.8% of respondents have responded that their property is looked after by their relatives and neighbors. Those people who have migrated seasonally get information mainly by mobile phone.

Table 12: Taking care of the property

S N	Taking care of the property	No. of respondents	%
1	Own family members	60	76.9
2	Neighbors	9	11.5
3	Relatives	9	11.5
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 13: Wages for the person or family who takes care of the property

S N	Wages for taking care of the property	No. of respondents	%
1	Turn by turn (<i>reme ghyarkin</i>)	18	23.1
2	Cash	3	3.8
3	Goods	8	10.3
4	Gift	43	55.1
5	Multiple	6	7.7
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Some people who asked to do work during their absence are paid wages. They are paid in a Lump sum, Sankha Lal Gurung one of the Key informants says:

Those who stay in Upper Mustang and take care of property especially house they get a lump sum from 5-10,000 (for 5 months), if the work to be done more than expected then the property owner offers extra money. In a rich family almost every household, one person in a family stays back.

Sankha Lal Gurung (60), social worker, and former teacher from Chhoser VDC.

Those people who stay and take care of the property in Upper Mustang do perform feed livestock clear snow when it falls, occasionally lightening light at home. Those who take care of the property are paid in cash and kind.

Economic activities at the destination

Where Loba go and live; what arrangement is done for the living where they trade, why usually they go there, how they manage their investment, if they work for others, how much they save or not, goods sold from wholesalers, or retailers, amount of investment, loss and profit, benefits, and challenges are most important questions. What others activities such as pilgrimage, health treatment, recreation, education, and others are carried out while being at the place. The situation who has been to mid-Hill regions of Nepal is quite different from those who have been to India. This trade-in Nepali Hills is called *rigu* and the traders are called *rigura*. One interview was taken with *rigura* for his experience.

I buy goods in Kathmandu and Pokhara. I went to sell items such as *jimbu*,



(Himalayan herbal spices) *nirmasi, pakhanbed, jethimadhu, yarsa gumba* (medicine), *bire nun, phitkiri*, necklace, for Gurung dress, *kantha mala, moti mala*, lockets, women’s cosmetic goods. I went together with my nephew (sister’s son) around Gorkha, Lamjung. I also brought to sell socks, trousers, and a cap. I invested only around 45, 000 NRs. and I earned more than 50,000 NRs. I just roamed different villages for a month. I was able to buy some foodstuffs, such as rice, lentil/pulse, beaten rice, sugar, tea, LPG, clothes to children, wife, and sister. They are happy.

Funjok Gurung (40) - Chhoser-5

The interview of Funjok gives the idea of roaming trade in Nepal which is quite different than in India. With a short time, and small investment people can earn good amount of money and arrange household consumption. They go with relatives not in a big group because their customers are few. Sell varieties of items. They have fewer risks.

Maximum people stay in a rental house which constitutes 62.8%. 7.7% of respondents have said that they stayed at their own house. The reasons are given as familiarity of the place, people, environmentally comfortable and secure.

Table 14: Living arrangement of respondents

S N	Living arrangement	No. of respondents	Percent
1	Own house	6	7.7
2	Rent	49	62.8
3	Friend’s house	6	7.7
4	Relative’s house	3	3.8
5	Others	8	10.3
6	Missing	6	7.7
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

In trade, investment is one of the essential components, whether someone has their own resource or arranged using different social-cultural mechanisms. 35.9% of respondents have said that they use their own resources. Similarly, 30 % borrowed from local money lenders. The interest depends on 12-24% per year. Some of them work for wages.

I visited Vanarashi for the business around mid of Asoj, 2072 BS. First, I went to Ludhiyana by train from Gorakhpur. I ordered sweaters at the Factory, it needs around two weeks for clearing demanded goods. I invested in the 700,000 IC. I got goods for 1,000,000 IC and I will pay before I go back to Nepal. They need to pay sales tax, around 12-13,000 IC. This time many goods will be remaining which worth about 4-500,000 IC, which will be sold next year. The rate of profit is up to 50%. I have two stalls. I pay wages 40-50,000 for each worker. My husband did not come with me, he has to look after the hotel in Kagbeni and he is not educated for winter trade. I have two children (one daughter 8 years old and one son of 7 years). I come with my daughter. I feel secure. In the past, people steal clothes and we needed a big effort to convince customers but these days we have a fixed price and we do not need to bargain. If anyone interested to buy they buy otherwise, it is OK. We have to pay rent for a room for a year. We need room for next year as well as to store remaining sweaters and our other belongings. So, we need to pay rent in advance. We usually travel in a group in order to avoid trouble in Indian cities. In Biyanyak Park, we need to pay rent in a group. We have a committee to look after.

Lhohacho Gurung (35) Chhoser but currently in Kagbeni

This is an ample example of the independent status of the women among the Loba. Women have decision making power even in the economic sectors and mobility outside without any barrier. Another interview gives the situation of the handing of business in Vanarasi, especially in Binayak Park. There are other places as well where Loba trade, such place includes just in front of the railway station and

There are 28 stalls in Binayak park. These stalls are used mostly by traders from Chhoser, Lo-manthang, Ghami (Dhakmar), Tcharang, Ghiling, Chhuksang. They need to pay the toilet separately 5 and 3 Indian Currency (IC) for long and short toilets respectively each time. I am paying 3500 IC for a room separate in Maidakini. I need to pay 20 IC for travel to the room each way. This year's chairperson of the management committee is Kunga Sangbu; this change for next year. There is a rotation of leadership Tcharang-Ghami one year and Lo-manthang, Chhoser, Chhonhup another year. They followed this *reme ghyapkin* strictly. They sell a jacket, sweater, Maflar, cap all are winter goods. People steal during the pick period of the season. These days local people respect us. Women are highly respected. To bring a sweater from Ludhiyana and buy from local whole sellers differs by 100-150 IC per item, and the quality is also better if bought in Ludhiyana. We use Parcel Carrier Van (PCV) train to deliver our goods, which is arranged mostly through middle persons. A maximum 30-40% margin is made to sell each item.

Interview with Chhewang Norbu Gurung (28)

In order to understand the problems, strategy, and trust which is expressed in the interview of Tamange Bista that is in detail as below:

I come from Lo-manthang bit earlier than others because I need to go to Ludhiyana to order goods. In Ludhiyana, the Panjabi factory owner speaks Tibetan or Loba language fluently. Mostly they are Panjabi. There are few Muslims as well. They have kept banner of Tibetan exiled Dalai Lama under their factory hoarding board. We face difficulties to carry money from Nepal. Nepali police trouble us to carry money with us even 50,000 IC which is not enough; it is enough for traveling to India. These days everything is expensive, but the factory owner in Panjab gives us goods in credits. Even a new person who is not familiar with factory owners if introduced by a familiar one trusted and given goods. One sack cost around 300,000 IC if I bought 4 sacks it cost around 1,200,000 IC. I do not have that much money; maybe I give 100000 IC so they give us others on credit, and we should give back after selling. The factory owner sends a person to collect money in Vanarashi. If they are unable to sell and payback in such conditions they agree to pay next year after selling.

Tamange Bista (54), Lo-manthang

The migrants not only traders themselves but also work for wages and learn for the future. Table 15 shows the details.

Table 15: Nature of work

S N	Nature of work	No. of respondents	%
1	Own investment	53	67.9
2	Work for lords	15	19.2
	Missing	10	12.82
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 15 shows that most of the winter migrants (67.9%) respondents are investing their own money and among them, 19.2% are working for others. 41% of respondents directly buy from leading whole sellers or producers or carried mostly from Ludhiyana, but 33.3% of respondents buy with local whole sellers. The Loba trader even hires people from India who speak Nepali and Hindi fluent and trusted. They also have an ancestral relation to Nepal. The following two interviews are significant in this regard.

I come from Aasham as a wage worker for selling a sweater. I have a mother, three sisters, one big brother (all siblings are married to Nepali speaking Indians in Aasham). My mother is a widow and single. My family member speaks Nepali at home. We have Nepali speaking community in Aasham. I come every year in November for 4 months to Vanarashi. I come to contact because my master's daughter is living in Aasham, and she arranges my travel and job. I stay with my master. They provide me food and shelter. They give me 6000 IC per month.

Interview with Reshma Sunar (18)

I am a student for BBA final year in Himachal Pradesh. I came here in October and I stay until February. I am working since last year. My mother had a

business for 25 years. My mother comes from Chhetri caste from Kathmandu, but my father is Lamichane Gurung. I have no difficulties in selling because there is a fixed rate. I speak Nepali, Hindi and English very well. I enjoyed being with Nepali. Himachal is very cold. I can travel to Himachal in a day by train. I earn 7,000 IC each month. I get food and shelter from, my master.

Abhilasha Gurung (21)

People from Upper Mustang also do business in co-operation with Tibetan refugees. In the Tibetan refugee managed area, there were at least six Loba stalls (stall no. 2, 10, 17, 19, 21, and 22).

Table 16: Management of capital resources

S N	Management of capital	No. of respondents	%
1	Own saving	28	35.9
2	borrow	24	30.8
3	Loan from financial institution	1	1.28
4	Multiple	10	12.82
5	Missing (workers)	15	19.23
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

The trade is somehow the individual capacity to bargain and influence the customers. One of the most important factors would be the elasticity of the price of goods. The informants said about fixed price controls anarchy in the pricing and bad relationship among the traders. The rate of profit and price is determined by the committee. The committee is led in turn system which called *Reme Ghyapkin*. They have a fixed price which is stamped by the



committee. The profit might take 50-100%, it is not sure it can range up to 30% as the most common margin. The rate of profit and loss are not accurate since many did not respond appropriately. The loss was difficult to document. The trade was one thing when they are in the hill and different parts of India, and there are a number of other activities such as pilgrimage, education, entertainment. When they return almost everyone, they bring goods which are useful, such as clothes, grain, medicine, solar equipment. These things are bought either in Pokhara or in Kathmandu. Such goods are brought to sell by 41% of respondents, but 52.6% of respondents use for self-consumption.

In order to evaluate the explicit and implicit costs and benefits of winter migration, it is a complicated thing to do, but many people think that it provides employment, income, saving grain at home, health treatment, comfortable living, and others.

Those people who visit the mid-hill region of Nepal usually take herbal spices as part of their trading. 41% of respondents reported that they carry items from Upper Mustang to sell; however, 52.6% do not bring anything for selling except their own consumption. They carry back home usually readymade clothes, food, medicine, drink many other essential materials, mostly for home consumption.

Lobas enjoy multiple immediate benefits of winter migration, such as temporary employment, limited source of income, saving grain, and fuel, health accessibility, comfortable living in a warmer climatic condition. It is also represented that 67.9% of respondents have responded that they enjoy multiple benefits due to winter out-migration. These benefits support the livelihood of the Lobas, which is the most fundamental humanitarian security dimension.

Table 17: Benefits of winter migration

S N	Benefits	No. of respondents	%
1	Employment	1	1.28
2	Income	5	6.41
3	Saving grain	6	7.69
4	Comfortable living	2	2.6
5	Health treatment	1	1.28
5	Multiple benefits	55	70.51
6	Missing	8	10.3
Total		78	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Very few numbers of youth stay in Upper Mustang. They need to take care of their property, and some take care of others too. They get paid when they look after other's houses, feeding livestock and clearing snow on the rooftop. Those who have a large number of livestock such as cows, sheep, and goats. Those who do not speak other languages than Loba language stay in Upper Mustang.

When people come to know that someone not going out from Upper Mustang, those people who have planned to go out ask to look after the property. Those people who look after property get money as wage it can be fixed, such as 5000 NRs., but others pay on the basis of how much work is carried out during winter, the nature and frequency of snowfall are one of the main phenomena which determine the rate and amount of wages. The winter seasonal migration with trade has become very popular even Drokpa has started winter seasonal migration and trade. They ask help from their neighbor to look after their livestock.

It is also essential to shed light on educational migration too. It was good to meet Chhimi Gurung and Chulgen Tenzin Gurung, both associate professors of Bon religion at Central University for Tibetan Studies (CUTS), Sarnath, UP, India. Both professors come from the Mustang district. According to them, there are at least 30 university students from Mustang and 15 comes from Upper Mustang. The students who have been studying at CUTS organized as “Mustang Student’s Union”, and who also hosted Loshar at Sarnath, India for the Lobas of Mustang year 2016. The participants were those who have been there for either business or study or pilgrimage purposes.

Conclusion

The constitution of Nepal in part III, under the title of fundamental rights, has clearly mentioned that citizens will have the fundamental rights to live with dignity; they have rights to food, rights to justice, and rights to equality. The rights which are guaranteed by their constitution should be realized by the citizens. If people realize that they do not have these rights guaranteed, Nepal shall ultimately face adverse consequences, including conflicts and upheavals.

The Lobas have adapted to high altitude harsh environments of Upper Mustang during winter taking up their traditional occupation based upon salt and grain trade. The winter trade in India and *jimbu* and other cosmetic goods supported their livelihood by mobilizing various resources. The most important thing is that they follow strictly *remeghyapkin* and *nechang* the traditional institution to manage the conflict in fulfilling roles, duties, and sharing benefits. Their one of the strategies of adaptation is ecological as well as cultural resources exchanging goods

and services with Tibetan as well as people from the hill region of the western part of Nepal. The trade is their past occupation, and the legacy is found in different forms. There are some changes in the amount of trade material, modes of transportation and medium of exchange. In the past barter system and local livestock, transportation-based trade was practiced in a limited geographical area and circle of the people.

Out Migration has occurred in Lo-manthang at the same time economic diversification and various opportunities created at the local level by GOs and NGOs. It has happened that changes occurred in trade, tourism, transportation, and communication. NOGs and (I) NGOs enter Upper Mustang, GOs expanded their services such as health post, school, police post, VDC, veterinary. These are the external agencies that are co-operating in most of the cases to adopt in the local environment.

The Lobas in Upper Mustang, in their constant efforts to sustain their daily lives, have been working hard to ensure their food security. These indigenous ethnic people in Nepal have been successful in adaptation while securing their valuable resources during their seasonal migration. Precisely, the Lobas make significant contribution to make community safe and comfortable in terms of food security of individuals in particular and the entire Nepal in general.

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