

Social and cultural anthropology
Higher level
Paper 1

Wednesday 1 November 2017 (afternoon)

1 hour

Instructions to candidates

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Read the passage carefully and then answer all the questions.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[20 marks]**.

Texts in this examination paper have been edited: word additions or explanations are shown in square brackets []; substantive deletions of text are indicated by ellipses in square brackets [...]; minor changes are not indicated.

Extract adapted from Valentin, K. (2012), “The Role of Education in Mobile Livelihoods: Social and Geographical Routes of Young Nepalese Migrants in India”, *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 43 (4): 429–442.

5 Migration from Nepal (a country bordering India) to India has been a common practice for young Nepalese men for generations, not just to seek employment but also as a rite of passage to adulthood. Recently, limited schooling opportunities, lack of employment and fears concerning political violence have motivated large numbers of young Nepalese men to go to India for a better education. Once there, some continue their studies, whereas others give up formal education to engage in paid employment. The education and skills acquired during the migration process are necessary for a livelihood and also become instrumental in young migrants’ plans and imaginings of further mobility beyond India.

10 This mobility involves two processes: a physical movement from one geographical location to another and a change in social status. Nepalese migrants believe that this movement in geographical space will lead to upward social mobility, although it may not.

15 For example, Kumar and Dinesh grew up in Nepal and got their master’s degrees in information technology (IT) in India. Kumar came to India at the age of 17 because his father was in the Indian army; a well-established route for Nepalese families to settle in India. Dinesh wanted to study accountancy but this was too expensive in Nepal. Instead he studied IT in India. Having finished their master’s degrees they went to Delhi, India, and worked in call centres, where they did not make use of their advanced IT skills.

20 Asked about the reasons for leaving Nepal, they all agreed: poverty, unemployment and lack of educational opportunities. In addition, there is a Nepalese saying that: “A son who has not gone abroad and a daughter who has not gone to a husband’s house are considered abnormal”.

“We are not here only to earn money, we are here to learn something, learn new technology, that’s why we are here. If we want we can earn the same money in Nepal, but we cannot develop ourselves personally like in India.”

25 However, most had to give up their education and only a few continued their studies in India. Going to India was considered a necessity both in the present, in order to secure a livelihood for the extended family in Nepal by sending money home, and in the long term, as a means to skills acquisition and personal development. Such migration practices are embedded within a cultural framework, where the mobility of young men is encouraged as part of their transition to adulthood.

30 When I inquired further, the armed conflict was also mentioned, but only some noted that it was a motivating factor for leaving. “That was one reason, but not the core reason. The situation was not good at the time, violence was going on. Families were scared of what would happen if they sent children to Kathmandu or other places in Nepal.”

35 All the migrants described themselves as “*pravasi Nepali*”, a term referring to a “traveller, one who stays abroad; pilgrim”. When asked to explain the term, definitions included Nepalese people who migrate in search of work in order to sustain a livelihood but who maintain close links to Nepal, their home and family.

- 40 Many men noted how they had progressed in their career since leaving Nepal in terms of acquiring more technical skills, but they were also keen to venture further abroad, especially to the Middle East or South East Asia. These represented locations where they would be able to use these skills. In their imaginations of social mobility these places ranked higher than India. In interviews Kumar and Dinesh spoke passionately about Nepal and their emotional commitments to doing something for the country, but also talked about their desire to migrate to other countries. In fact, Dinesh had already applied for a visa to the United States.
- 45 Even those who were not looking for higher education had aspirations to migrate. For example, a man named Gopal had worked as a farmer in Nepal, but had migrated to India and trained as a chef in a top restaurant. Unable to find work back in Nepal, he returned to India and was looking for a job somewhere “outside”, referring to Japan, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia as potential destinations.
- 50 Considered together, these young men’s stories illustrate a perceived link between geographical movement in a wider transnational space, a progressive learning curve, and a shift in social positioning. That is, there was an expectation that migration to countries beyond India, itself an indication of social status, can be furthered by actively acquiring new skills.

1. Describe the reasons why young Nepalese men migrate to India. [6]
 2. Using theoretical perspectives, explain how young Nepalese men understand the connection between geographical mobility and social mobility. [6]
 3. Compare and contrast the experiences of young Nepalese men in India with rites of passage in **one** society you have studied. [8]
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