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VIII. RESEARCH REVIEWS

*MIGRATION AND URBANIZATION IN NEPAL: RESEARCH ISSUES & CHALLENGES

by Shyam Thapa, Brown University

ABSTRACT Focusing on the population redistribution issues in Nepal, this paper discusses why it is important to study the different forms of population mobility, what such patterns might be, and how they affect the processes of modernization. Concomitantly, it also discusses the various factors that stimulate migration. The state of the art as evidenced by research in population redistribution in Nepal shows that a more complete understanding of the dynamics of migration is in an embryonic state. A review in this paper strongly suggests the need for rethinking and reorientation in research as well as policy formulation. The paper concludes with suggestions for better and more effective ways to strengthen research activities with policy development objectives.

Among the issues facing governments and policy-makers in recent years, population redistribution is seen to be one of critical importance. Indeed, inquiries made in the late 1970s by the United Nations revealed that "more of a consensus existed at (the) world level with respect to spatial distribution and internal migration than on any other demographic topic" (United Nations, 1980:40). Almost 60 percent of the 116 less developed countries considered their population distribution to be entirely unacceptable, and 36 percent found it only partially acceptable. In Middle South Asia, the focal area of this paper, all countries considered the current population redistribution entirely unacceptable or only partially acceptable (United Nations, 1980:49). In Nepal, considerable concern regarding population redistribution is also evidenced by a majority of the policies aimed at population management dealing directly with the issue of population redistribution (NPCS, 1975:41-2). The Nepal government has promulgated such policies for purposes of correcting regional imbalances, of better utilizing agricultural resources and also with a view of controlling haphazard population movement.

Despite the concern and needs, very little is known about the facets of population redistribution in Nepal. Attention must therefore be focused on more research activities in this area. Concomitantly, research issues and priorities must be identified.

This paper discusses migration and urbanization research issues and the challenges offered to researchers and policy-makers in Nepal. I begin with an overview of the patterns of redistribution now taking place in the country. I then address migration and urbanization issues that are of pertinent interest in view of their role in the process of Nepal's efforts towards modernization. I conclude the paper with suggestions for better and more effective coordination of research activities with policy development objectives than what has hitherto existed.

*All communications to the author should be sent to: The Population Studies and Training Center, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912 USA.

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Pattern and Trends

Detailed analyses of urbanization and migration trends based on the census data from the early 1950s to 1971, as well as of probable causes behind the emergence of such patterns and trends, have been reported elsewhere (cf. Banister and Thapa, 1981: 67–86; Rana and Thapa, 1975:43–96; CEDA, 1973;6–49). In the following section I recapitulate some major findings of these studies.

With regard to urbanization and urban growth, the data reveal: (1) urbanization is at low levels, since only about 5 percent of the total population lives in nationally-defined urban areas; (2) growth of the urban population is slightly greater than the rural population; however, this is largely accounted for by the higher rate of natural increase in the urban areas; the share of rural-to-urban migration is negligible except for some urban centers located in the Terai (plains) region (Thapa, 1981a:12–19); (3) although urban areas with 10,000 or more population grew at a faster rate than other cities, this expansion of more highly populated cities has not resulted in a more prominent primacy of Kathmandu and its satellite cities; and (4) urban areas located in the Terai have generally experienced faster proportional increases than urban areas in the hills.

The following generalizations relating to internal migration can be discerned from the census data: (1) rural-to-rural migration is the most predominant form of population mobility in Nepal; (2) regardless of the de jure and de facto systems of defining migrants in the different censuses, the volume of lifetime internal migration has remained at 5 percent during the 1950s to 1971; (3) internal migration began to play a major role in the 1960s, with most of the migration being from mountains and hills to the Terai; and (4) while during the 1970s migration streams from the eastern mountains and hills to the eastern Terai were largest in comparison to other regions, recent data suggest that there has been a major shift in the predominance of migration streams to the Far Western region.

Turning now to the trends and patterns of international migration, the available data reveal: (1) although the destination of most of the migrants from the hills and mountains during the 1950s was predominantly to India, this pattern has shifted and been redirected to the Terai over the last two decades; (2) the lifetime international in-and-out migration was about the same, below 4 percent; and (3) besides the capital city in Kathmandu Valley, almost all the Indian migrants settled in the Terai (Gaige, 1975); the major areas of destination for Nepalese migrants to India have been the relatively rural areas of Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, and Bihar (Tuladhar et al, 1978:41–42).

The census data have thus served as an important source of information for recording long-term population movements. Such data, however, conceal other dimensions of mobility as will be discussed in the following section.

Sources of Migration Data

It has been increasingly recognized that migration and urbanization processes are much more complex than initially realized, varying over time and space in pattern, scale, causes and consequences (Chapman, 1978; Hugo, 1978: Connell et al, 1976; Abu-Lughod, 1975). The monolithic term "migration" encompasses different forms of population
mobility such as circulation, commuting, return, and repeat migration. These various forms of mobility have strong linkages with different facets of modernization—demographic, economic, social and cultural. These will be discussed in detail later in the paper.

Unlike births and deaths, there does not exist any standard measure for mobility events; the definitions employed in measuring different forms of mobility events provide different types of information for different purposes. It is for this reason that information relating to one particular type of mobility event is not adequate for the development of a comprehensive population redistribution policy. Central to understanding the variation in population mobility events is recognition that each bears a different impact on the migrants themselves, their families, and communities of destination and origin. Since Nepal's censuses only record lifetime migration, no information is available on multiple, short and long term moves within and between districts. Failure to record such dimensions of mobility directly affects the recorded volume and rate of migration. For example, a recent national survey in Nepal showed that although only 3 percent of the total population was reported to be out of the country at the time of the survey, 63 percent of such migrants had been away for a period of only 1-5 years; another 19 percent had been away for 6-11 years. Similarly, for people away from home but within the country (i.e., internal migrants), as much as three-fourths were away for only 1-5 years, and another 17 percent for 6-11 years. The survey, however, failed to collect information on either multiple or circular migration, or moves within the same district. Nevertheless, the data suggest that there is significant short-term mobility (both within and outside the country) among the population.

Yet another limitation with the census data for migration and urbanization research is that they cannot shed light on those items that require time consuming questioning, such as individual or household level decision-making processes. Policy-makers and researchers who wish to know more about the dynamics of mobility are inevitably restricted by the nature of data sources available from censuses or other conventional sources (Goldstein and Sly, 1975). To overcome the restrictions imposed upon migration and urbanization research by conventional census data and to supplement census information, the survey approach has been increasingly advocated. Given appropriate considerations of technical and statistical issues, survey research can be a "superior instrument" for conducting migration and urbanization research. Such an approach can provide information on several important aspects ranging from mobility histories to establishing linkages with demographic, social, and economic changes (Goldstein and Goldstein, 1981a:7-9). Such information, together with census data, will permit more meaningful analyses and policy recommendations.

Research Issues

Understanding pertinent issues in population distribution with a view to policy development offers new challenges to researchers and policy-makers alike. In the following section, I will discuss some of the major issues in the context of Nepal that deserve attention.
Migration and Demographic Changes

Concern over high population growth has attracted worldwide interest to studying the impact of migration and urbanization on fertility. Lower fertility among migrants compared to urban natives and rural non-migrants is observed in several empirical studies (Goldstein and Goldstein, 1981b; Browning and Feindt, 1971; Macisco et al., 1970). Whether the lower fertility observed among migrants is due to the disruption resulting from the move itself or because migrants are "innovative" in fertility behavior is subject to empirical assessment. It has been argued that lower fertility among migrants may have been induced by "achievement motivation" of the new migrants (Macisco et al., 1970). At the same time, however, it is also pointed out that there might be a "catch up" effect operating in the process; that is, migrants may try to make up the lost time by ending up with the same level of fertility as others. Although there have been a number of studies in migration (I will refer to these later) in Nepal, none have specifically investigated the effect of migration and urbanization on fertility changes. The general lack of such studies is conspicuous, especially in view of the fact that reducing population growth continues to be a high priority for the government.

One recent study by the Nepal Family Planning/Maternal and Child Health (FP/MCH) Project analyzed data from two Terai districts. The report found that although the past cumulative fertility of migrants from other districts in Nepal was high, their current fertility was much lower than that of natives and Indian migrants, and that the proportion of contraceptive usage was highest among this particular group of migrants (Nepal, FP/MCH Project, 1981:319-48). At issue is whether the migrants are truly "innovators" or whether the high proportion of family planning usage and current low fertility is largely influenced by the initial phase of the migration itself. Whether or not migrants from the hills and mountains aim at maintaining a lower fertility than the natives and Indian migrants and what their characteristics might be may constitute what Macisco et al. (1970:65-6) referred to as a "strategic group to study in as much as they were marginal to the rural, more traditional system and may therefore become innovators in the (Terai) complex" (parenthesis added). The same argument can be applied regarding urban migrants as well.

Another clearly linked component is the effect of migration on fertility through changes in nuptiality patterns, particularly age of marriage. Available nuptiality data in Nepal suggest that age at marriage among the Terai women is lower than in the mountains and hills. Consequently, the tempo as well as the level of fertility in the Terai is higher than in the other two regions (Banister and Thapa, 1981:45-48). Analysis of the nuptiality pattern by migration status in the Terai has indicated, however, that migrants from other districts in Nepal married at older ages than the natives and Indian migrants (Nepal, FP/MCH Project, 1981:320-22, 344-45). Although not specifically focused on migration research, the limited amount of data collected and analyzed by the Nepal FP/MCH Project are beginning to reveal that migration has much to offer by way of explaining the fertility and nuptiality patterns in Nepal Terai.

The impact of migration on mortality is the least understood aspect. Research on this relationship is scant even at the global context. Yet this is an area where the relationship between fertility and mortality can be better understood. At issue is whether in-migrants observe longer birth spacing than others, thus experiencing lower infant–child mortality. Analysis of the data from the 1976 Nepal Fertility Survey, for instance, has shown that higher birth intervals lead to a significantly lower incidence of infant mortality. Birth intervals of 34-60 months have almost three times less
subsequent infant mortality than intervals of only 8-23 months. An interval of 24-33 months has slightly less than half the infant mortality rate of an interval of 34-60 months (Thapa and Retherford, 1982:Table 8). A study carried out by the Nepal-University of California FP/MCH Project investigated the fertility-mortality patterns of those return migrants who served for relatively long durations in the foreign army service. The study found that pregnancy spacing patterns observed among such people had significant impact on reducing child mortality (Nepal-University of California FP/MCH Project, n.d.).

Aside from the sheer effect of durations of physical separation between spouses on fertility and mortality, an important but neglected aspect is to understand where the migrants work, whom they interact with, and how these factors, in turn, affect changes in fertility and mortality. Such issues also bear implications for rising age of marriage. Further studies on the effect of migration on fertility, mortality and nuptiality can be instrumental for policy development in reducing population growth in the country.

Migration and Social Change

Migration process can be instrumental in bringing about social change. The impact is felt at the individual and community level, as well as in the overall context of the society.

Return migrants can be key instruments of social change in the villages. Such migrants, especially those who have been away for a relatively long period of time, can bring skills and education with them when they return (Simmons and Cardona, 1970). The conventional argument that the return migrants are necessarily failures does not coincide with experiences elsewhere (Choi, 1981).

Having been exposed to modernizing influences, the migrants upon return can serve as agents of social change. In Nepal, this realization has recently prompted the Population Commission and the FP/MCH Project to recruit some of the veteran return soldiers in order to bring about awareness and motivation among the people to be receptive to family planning services at the grass-roots level. It is worth pointing out that there are almost one million (about 7 percent of the total population) return soldiers in Nepal. Such a step can be expected to contribute to changes in the institutional structure of a village. Equally important is the fact that most of the long-term service holders were accompanied by their spouses at later stages in their service. Anthropological studies have, for instance, frequently noted that one of the most appreciated fringe benefits of an army service for wives is an opportunity to travel to foreign countries and stay with husbands (Hitchcock, 1966:18). While such relatively long-term migration is an important characteristic of many villages throughout eastern, central and western Nepal, it is important to note that a majority of such people do return to their villages (Mafarlane, 1976; Caplan, 1970; Hitchcock, 1966). Such in-depth studies and others (Caplan, 1972) have also documented that, in many instances, the return migrants have improved their social status upon return. The consequences of such migration on social mobility, and hence the likely social structural changes brought about, remain to be fully understood.

Besides long-term migration, the implications of circular or impermanent migration are least known. Yet circular migration is the most prevalent form of population mobility in the hills and mountains of Nepal. As has been pointed out, circular migration may
serve as a modernization device (Goldstein, 1978; Bedford, 1980). It is well known, for instance, that the residents of the mountain region in Nepal have been given special privileges by the government to engage in foreign (other than the neighboring countries) trade and commerce. The people in the region have accordingly responded to such policies by engaging themselves in trade and commerce. In Bajhang, a district in the far western mountain region, as much as 34 percent of total households surveyed reported to have at least one member of their families temporarily absent in search of work to Terai or outside the country (New ERA, 1976:18-9). Circular migration is prevalent in the hills as well. In the districts of Rolpa, Sallayn, Piuthan and Jumla in the western hills of Nepal, as much as 25 percent of household members out-migrate annually for at least one month, usually during agricultural slack season (APROSC, 1980:35-44). These studies indicate the magnitude of the mobility of the people in the hills and mountains in the country. Yet what is most surprising is the failure of such studies to evaluate such mobility patterns in a wider context of socio-economic changes rather than presenting these events simply as characteristics of villages under study. What are the impacts of such migration patterns on the household? How do different forms of migration affect household economic resources? How do migrants differ from others in terms of their family formation? What has been the impact of the government's policy aimed at the mountain region? Does impermanent migration necessarily exacerbate existing inequalities or help reduce it? (Hugo, 1982). How has migration induced changes in women's social roles within the household? How do their roles in the household in which some of its members "participate" in migration differ from those of women in non-migrant households? These are some of the fundamental questions that are crucial to understanding structural transformation of the society and its community. It is also important to know whether migration has brought about changes in traditional paternal authority in the household. Understanding this might prove to be an important mechanism for fertility reductions (Caldwell, 1976).

Yet another dimension of social change resulting from long-term moves is at the place of destination. How the social structure, occupational mobility and stratification have evolved in the Terai complex as a result of recent migration from the hills and mountains is least known. A study by Gaige (1975) has made a first attempt to look at the political implications of some of these issues. Other ethnographic studies have repeatedly revealed that the majority of the migrants from the hills and mountain regions represent low social and economic strata (Mafarlane, 1976:291; McDougal, 1968:17-25). How such migrants have brought about changes in themselves and their families while interacting with new social groups in relatively more cosmopolitan Terai areas remains a largely overlooked aspect. The call for more research in this area is directly related to the need for understanding the process of modernization in Nepal.

Migration and Economic Change

Economic benefits and costs related to population mobility continue to be the most discussed topic in the field. This line of research orientation is based on the behavioral assumption of economic rationality. Typically such an approach looks at the individual or family level gains or losses associated with the decision to move or stay, although it has been found that non-monetary factors such as homeownership and proximity to family all take on added significance (Speare, 1971). Several pieces of migration research in Nepal have addressed the economic gains or losses resulting from migration. A more common target group for this type of inquiry has been the planned settlements in the Terai. Elder at al. (1976) analyzed, among other things, the effect on agricultural productivity; Kansakar (1979) attempted to investigate the issue in greater detail.
These studies largely failed to consider one central theme that is instrumental in bringing about changes in agricultural productivity or other spheres of economic improvement. At issue here is the change within the family structure. How have the household members responded to the market-oriented productive system of the Terai? Where and in what forms have such responses taken place? These questions assume important implications for changing household economic structure (Stark, 1978). To the extent that a shift in the mode of production serves as an underlying mechanism of fertility reductions (Caldwell, 1976), it is imperative to study how such changes take place within the family. Also, a much neglected aspect in this context is how women's economic positions have changed in response to the new mode of production and their labor supply utilization. These issues which underly important linkages for economic transformation of the society are among those yet to be understood in the context of Nepal's process of development.

Earlier it was indicated how circular migration has evolved as a significant characteristic of several villages in Nepal. As in the context of social change, the contribution of circular migration to economic change remains yet to be fully evaluated. Such population mobility patterns, for instance, can contribute to monetizing the village economy. This type of change may also have implications for the allocation not only of men's but also of women's and children's labor supply. One study based on four districts in the far western region in Nepal reported that temporary out-migration represented the main source of inter-regional trade (CEDA, 1977:70). McDougal (1968) found that villagers were engaged in temporary out-migration not necessarily because of food shortages but, more importantly, due to lack of cash. These studies indicate the need to fully exploit and understand the role of circular migration in village economy.

Judged from the receiving areas, on the other hand, very little is known as to the consequences of such undertakings. It could be argued that temporary excess labor supply in the form of migration may have a tendency to bring the wage-level down in the receiving areas, thus the process may exacerbate the situation there. If, however, the migrants create their own jobs, then the consequences of such a phenomenon would be quite different. It is well known, for instance, that a significant proportion of mountain and hill people who temporarily migrate during the winter do usually create their own jobs by engaging in trade or by managing self-owned temporary bhatti shops. To what extent these mechanisms help improve not only the welfare at the individual or family level but also at the village level (both at origin and destination) remains a challenge before the researchers.

Economic changes resulting from return migrants is yet another dimension of the issue. Aside from potential contribution to bringing about social change as was alluded to earlier, one important component of return migration is obviously financial, i.e., remittances. Although not unique to any particular category of return migrants, ethnographic studies have shown that for many villages in Nepal remittances from army service are not only the most important source of non-local cash income, but they have also ameliorated their economic situation (Caplan, 1972; McDougal, 1968; Hitchcock, 1961). Items of such economic improvements range from paying off mortgage land, building homes, and schooling children to buying new lands. How has equality or inequality operated through these mechanisms? Can such a mechanism be a child as well as the father of inequality in such a system? (Connell et al., 1976). Do return migrants increase the propensity to out-migrate for members within the household and for others in the village? How effective are their contributions to the local economy? (Stark,
Do remittances from outside the village necessarily increase dependency, and hence less productivity in the village economy? Such questions remain to be fully investigated.

Political Aspects of Migration

Migration is yet another phenomenon which has strong political implications both at the national and international levels. The experience of Nepal is no exception to this.

At issue are two major types of movements largely between Nepal and India. One type of movement relates to permanent migration and the other is temporary or circular movement. Relentless migration from across the border in the south has substantially increased in the recent years. Based on his study of 99 villages in the Terai, Gaige (1975) found that about one-third of the migrant families in the region were from India. Besides the ethnic and political conflicts at the local and regional level which Gaige's study (see also Weiner, 1973) attempts to analyze, the policy-makers in Nepal fear severe implications of such unabated movement for the government's effort to distribute lands and provide employment to its own people (Thapa, 1981b). In the two Terai districts studied by the Nepal FP/MCH Project, it was found that fertility of Indian migrants was not only the highest but that they were the least receptive to family planning programs (Nepal, FP/MCH Project, 1981:311-48). The issue is, of course, a thorny one; it has no easy solutions. But at the same time, it must be pointed out that only wishful thinking would not attempt to resolve the problem. As has been rightly recognized by the Nepalese policy-makers (Thapa, 1981b), the issue is not only of migration from India to Nepal but vice-versa; although it could be argued that, given its land and population size, the relative impact of migration falls more on Nepal than on India. The situation calls for, among other things, migration experimentation research projects in the Nepal Terai. Conflicts between the natives and migrants resulting from landownership, ethnic and employment issues as evidenced from the experiences of neighboring countries (Weiner, 1978; 1975) suggest the gravity of the problem.

The temporary and circular movement of the people between Nepal's Terai and, largely, the Bihar region of India is yet another phenomenon which has serious implications for policy development. There is no doubt that the temporary migration of people from India to the Terai is partly in response to the demand for the vocational type of work in the Terai economy. This warrants fuller understanding of the system before effective policies can be formulated. What are desirable was well as practical changes in this sphere? How can a comprehensive program be improvised in order to control the potential problem? How are the Terai people affected by the phenomenon and how do they perceive it? These are some of the fundamental inquiries that would help understand the problem in a sound way. Gaige's study focused on the political aspect of the migration into the Terai. It did now, however, investigate the impact of such movements on the local economy. We need to know not only how the interlocking economic system of the Terai has operated within this milieu, but equally important is its effect on the areas of origin of the migrants.

Migration and Migrants

As evidenced from the preceding sections, the migration process itself has impact on individual migrants and their families.
Adjustment, assimilation and integration are facets of the migration process that affect migrants' social, psychological and cultural aspects. Migrants' future success or failure may very well depend on these factors. Migration research in Nepal has rarely looked at these issues. One study that comes closest to this is by Elder et al. (1976). The study inquired about such aspects by asking "When you first moved here, what kinds of difficulties did you experience?," "Did you receive any help from your neighbors?"

Although such information is important in its own right, it should be pointed out that these questions were not specifically addressed to investigate adjustment and assimilation problems of the migrants; rather the information was collected to evaluate the effectiveness of the planned settlement programs.

In recent years Nepal has witnessed several thousand (yet to be fully documented) refugees from Tibet. The refugees have settled in different regions in Nepal, including Pokhara and Kathmandu valleys. Still today, this component of migration remains largely a neglected aspect not only in policy-making but also among researchers. Attention must also be focused on yet another large group of people who were recently displaced from Burma and have returned to Nepal since then. These migrants, especially the younger members of families, may have faced serious problems of adjustment and assimilation because they grew up mostly in an environment different from that of Nepal. The same problem can be discerned in regard to the Tibetan refugees. What are the problems that these migrants are facing? How can the government facilitate their transition process? How can they be better integrated in the country's process of development? These question loom largely unanswered.

Migration as a Response and an Alternative

In the preceding sections, migration was considered as a determinant in bringing about social, economic and demographic changes. There is a further crucial dimension. That is, migration can itself be stimulated by social, economic, demographic, as well as ecological and political factors. The migration process, in this sense, would not be viewed as a determinant but rather as a consequence. The often talked about "push" and "pull" factors refer to this dimension.

Much of migration and urbanization research in Nepal that relates to "why" regards migration as a consequence. Some studies have also investigated this question in the context of types of migration patterns. Studies focusing on the Far Western region in Nepal carried out by CEDA (1977) and McDougal (1968) looked at various types of mobility such as seasonal, temporary and permanent migration. Another survey by Thapa and Tiwari (1977) tested a set of hypotheses relating to the characteristics and volume of migration to the Kathmandu urban area. Studies by Elder et al. (1976) and Kansakar (1979) also included information on the reasons for migration to the Terai. Further studies carried out by APROSC (1981) found that the size of land-holding and ethnic characteristics were some of the main reasons for out-migration. Similarly, ethnographic studies by Caplan (1972), Macfarlane (1976), and Hitchcock (1966) have provided further insights regarding the social and cultural context in which migration might be stimulated. Large family size was found to be another important factor behind the move. Common to most of the studies indicated above is the finding that most of the migrants represent the lowest end of the economic and social spectrum. Migration was acted upon as an alternative to indebtedness and landlessness in several villages. Caplan's (1972) study, for instance, reported that cloggers migrated for longer duration.
than high strata people in a village in western Nepal. The former group out-migrated because of indebtedness while the latter group temporarily out-migrated "to see new things" as well as for the purpose of strengthening economic position at the time of their family formation (Caplan, 1972:40-8). Focusing on several communities throughout the mountain region in Nepal, Furer-Haimendorf (1975) observed that the duration of stay, as well as patterns of settlement, was largely determined by the size of the livestock and amount of land that each group owned. Furer-Haimendorf has documented how the mobility pattern as well as other social, cultural and political aspects changed in response to the breakdown of external economic and social support systems of the region. Effects of landslides and other ecological factors contributing to out-migration are documented in other ethnographic studies (Toffin, 1976; Rai et al., 1976). Although typically focused on small communities, anthropological investigations have provided useful insights for conducting more comprehensive studies.

Included in the recent population policies of Nepal are: regulating the resettlement from hills and mountains to the Terai, from rural to urban areas, and the establishment of more urban areas (NPCS, 1975:41-2). Yet there is a lack of any comprehensive research orientation addressing these issues. It must be recognized that implicit in developmental strategies is the increasing role of rural-to-rural and rural-to-urban migration. As a facet of development programs, rural areas are linked with urban as well as other rural areas. However, there is little knowledge about the extent to which development of more infrastructure such as road-building would affect migration processes. Often planning efforts in developing countries are based on mistaken assumptions. The most basic assumption as Pryor (1979:328) points out is that "the provision of roads, schools and other social welfare infrastructure bring "development" to an area and hence discourage migration. On the contrary, the evidence is that such provisions accelerate dissatisfaction, heighten aspirations, and accentuate out-migration." Further evidence from other developing countries corroborate the observation (IDRC, 1973). The experience of Pokhara Valley in Nepal suggests that the impact of road construction on urban as well as rural development is not uniform. A survey taken in 1970 concluded that the construction of the highway linking Pokhara with the Indian border in the south had positive effects on income and agricultural productivity (Schroeder and Sisler, 1970). A decade later, another survey investigating the impact of roads on the areas along the highways, as well as on Pokhara, found that the roads had led to more agricultural imports than exports; the adaptation of new agricultural technique had been limited and the roads had not promoted any investment in the region (Blakie et al., 1976). The roads may be necessary but not sufficient to contribute to rural development. How such facets of developmental programs affect people's propensity to move or stay remains to be fully evaluated.

The recent regional development strategy in Nepal aims at developing livestock farming in the mountain region, horticulture in the hill region, and cereal and cash cropping in the Terai (NPCS, 1980; 1975). This kind of strategy necessarily implies the increasing role of migration between the regions, particularly due to the regional specialization of agricultural productivity. The extent to which such programs affect migration is left open. Furthermore, the growth of new localities as urban centers would affect the urbanization in the country. The so-called development poles have been part of the regional development in Nepal during the 1970s. A total of 19 new growth centers are envisaged to be established within the immediate years in the country. Such growth centers constitute a potential source of migration and urbanization. Thus, while the government policies aim at controlling migration, the development programs themselves may prove such policies to be self-defeating. This calls for innovative research with policy development objectives.
Rural development projects can further induce migration from within and adjoining villages. Even when only a particular village is considered, several important issues emerge at the individual and household levels. Why do certain households within a village release members as migrants, either temporarily or for long term? Why are some households disproportionately comprised of migrants? What are the demographic and social characteristics of migrants? These questions are key to understanding the context in which migration takes place. This information will, in turn, help to assess, among other things, how changes in labor force utilization of the household members brought about by migration affect changes in demographic behavior. This suggests the need to design and implement longitudinal studies with the objectives of evaluating the consequences of development projects-induced migration in Nepal.

Another characteristic of rapidly modernizing urban centers is the increasing role of commuting. Commuting patterns now evident in the experiences of Kathmandu and Pokhara valleys are cases in point. How has the commuting pattern served to complement or substitute for long-term and temporary migration, and what are the possible impacts on the commuters, or the communities at both origin and destination, also beg clarification through research.

The Need for a Support System

The objective of this paper has been to address population redistribution issues in the context of Nepal. I have attempted to point out some of the major issues that have suffered from long neglect or those that may have been wishfully overlooked. The challenges posed by the need to study such issues range from prioritization of research topics and design of appropriate research instruments to application of appropriate analytical schemes. It was beyond the scope of this paper to address the conceptual, technical and statistical problems associated with the research issues. Failure to understand such problems in the proper context would be detrimental to such undertakings; these will be discussed elsewhere (Thapa, n.d.).

Putting aside the conceptual, technical and statistical considerations, this paper has discussed why it is important to study the different forms of population mobility, what such mobility patterns might be, and how they bear strong linkages with different facets of modernization. Concomitantly, it also pointed out to the social, ecological, economic, demographic, and political factors that stimulate migration.

Migration as an event and a process affects almost every member of a society. Yet the irony is that few have realized the magnitude of its causes, consequences and implications, not only at an individual level, but perhaps more importantly, as the family and societal level. The force of migration, as subtle as it may seem, cuts across as well as within ethnic, religious, economic and social strata. The need to know more about these issues can hardly be overemphasized. The state of the art as evidenced by research in Nepal shows that a more complete understanding of the dynamics of this force is in an embryonic state. A review in this paper strongly suggests the need for rethinking and reorientation in research as well as policy formulation. The obvious question, then, is how a support system might be established for this purpose.

This question offers a new challenge to the recently established Nepal National Population Commission which may provide an effective role in this regard. Given the importance of population redistribution issues, it seems appropriate here to suggest that
a Population Redistribution Research and Policy Group be established within the Commission. The Group can be charged to identify and prioritize research topics, design and implement such research activities for purposes of policy development. Such a system can serve as the catalyst in facilitating research activities for the researchers interested in the area. It can also monitor the implementation and evaluation of experimental projects that might be carried out. More importantly, the Group can be instrumental in developing appropriate policy recommendations. Such a Group does not necessarily have to be comprised of members from within the Commission. Indeed, for several practical reasons it might be preferable to have its members drawn from selected government, private as well as academic agencies. The establishment of such a support system would be an important but long overdue step toward the formulation and implementation of sound redistribution policies as an integral part of overall population policies for Nepal.
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FOOTNOTES

1The latter observation is based on estimates of 1971-81 intercensal growth rates by region. The Western region showed a 6.2 percent annual growth rate as opposed to 4.0 and 3.4 percent for the Eastern and Central regions respectively. The 1971-81 national annual growth rate was over 2.6 percent. (Source: Nepal, CBS, 1982).

2These data are based on the 1976 national sample survey (Nepal, CBS, 1979:Table 5 and 7). In calculating the percentages, "duration unknown" migrants were proportionately distributed.

3Another potential source for migration data—population registers—is not considered here because it is not applicable to Nepal at present.

4For a discussion on this topic, see Goldstein and Goldstein (1981a:15-50).

5See for instance a bibliography compiled by Myers and Macisco (1975).

6In the discussion, I have considered seasonal migration as a category of circular migration.

7An exception might be an anthropological study, Hill Migration in Nepal: The Effects of Out Migration on a Hill Village in Nepal, by Manzardo, Rai, and Dahal carried out through the Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies of Tribhuvan University. This report was not yet available at the time of this writing.

8For a discussion on children's role in migration and its implication for household economy, see Stark (1981).