

A Concept Paper for a Seminar on "Nepalese Migrant Workers in Korea"

Background:

The numbers of Nepalese migrant workers are increasing every year as the demand keeps on rising from the Korean Small and Medium Sized Industries. The present Employment Permit System (EPS in short form) was introduced in 2004 with consultation of the sending countries for hiring migrant workers in the Republic of Korea after brief experiments of Technical Training System (TTS) in 1994 and Industrial Trainee System (ITS) in 1998, which is effectively working with utmost satisfaction of receiving and sending countries. Nepalese workers started finding Korea as one of their favored destinations for their employment since 1994, however in a small number, but continued its inflow attracting not only the workers but also from different section of people including students and business persons. As yet the number has reached 26,790 of which 22,748 unskilled (under E9 visa category), and 424 semiskilled or skilled (under E7 visa category), are working in many Small and Medium sized industries. The numbers of Nepalese women are 3,045 among which 981 are living under marriage visa. 1841 man and 490 women are reported as undocumented.

Since the presence of Nepalese in Korea is increasing, they have not only proving themselves as a disciplined and hard working person but also contributing to promoting cultural exchanges and understanding between Nepal and Korea. The Government of Nepal recognizes their contribution not only in building cordial relationship at the people's level but also their economic contribution back in Nepal.

Since Korea is a development partner of Nepal and has been supporting with technical and financial assistance in the development of Nepal, the importance of existing cooperative partnership has been deepened and widened not only at the bilateral and multilateral arena but also at the cultural, scientific, technical, economic and commercial sectors as well. The Nepalese migrant workers number increasing in Korean companies have made Nepal-Korea relations multi-dimensional.

The Nepalese workers who have come in Korea under the Employment Permit System are well educated youths those posses the ability to grasp quickly the techniques and working environment of Korea with ease. However, due to cultural difference, it may take little time for them to get adjusted with it. It may be their easily assimilating character that they are preferred by the Korean employer. As the Nepalese employed in Korean manufacturing and agriculture and livestock sectors value the Employment Permit System they are also able to draw the attention of Korean employer for further recruitment in the workplace. In view of Nepalese workers demand in Korean companies, the number is estimated to be increased considerably in the days ahead.

Since Nepal holds the pool of semi skilled, skilled and professional manpower, some of them possessing higher professional skills, are untapped and have the chances to be recruited in the Korean

High-tech industries. Some academics' involvement in Korean Universities and professionals' engagement in research and high-tech industries have opened up the possibilities for other professionals to try in the Korean high-tech companies as well. There have been other sectors, where Nepalese workers could be hired. Presently, the authorities are mulling over sending Nepalese workers in the construction sectors and the government of Nepal is waiting a positive response from the Korean side.

The spectacular development of Korea within a short span of time has become a source of inspiration for many developing countries. By providing employment opportunities to Nepalese workers, we have the reasons to feel good towards Korea not only for being a source country for remittance but also for learning skills and technologies used in Korea in the manufacturing and agricultural sectors. The returnees can venture out their own business with their savings in the field of their experience either or jointly invest in any enterprises in Nepal. Some of the successful projects undertaken by the returnees have exhibited the possibilities for other to follow their feat.

The EPS has successfully completed its ten years without any glitches and hitches but scattered cases of complaints, which is as normal as the system is driven by itself for creating perfection with timely corrections and modification during execution. During the execution of the system, stakeholders have come across and encountered some obstacles which were successfully tackled and resolved. Learning from the past experience and being resolved to work further to make the system more pragmatic and result oriented, periodic interactions and discussion with the stakeholders would provides space to understand, learn and share the perspectives and creative ideas in order to make the system work in favour of all the stakeholders. In this background, in partnership with the Human Resource Development Service (HRD) of the Government of the Republic of Korea, Federation of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (Kbiz), Korea Immigration Service (KIS) of the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Embassy of Nepal in Seoul is planning to hold a one-day Seminar in July 2015 with the following objectives.

Objectives:

1. Creating a platform to all the stakeholders engaged under the Employment Permit System and bringing in to it the cases for discussion.
2. To create harmonious and cooperative relations between employer, employee and government agencies as well as try to create an atmosphere conducive to understanding each other.
3. Find out remedial procedures for existing unresolved cases of problems,
4. Discuss on pre-arrival and post-departure management of the workers in view of their safety and future career.
5. Exploring the possibilities of skill enhancement of the workers and sharing technology scheme that enables the sending countries in their industrial as well as agricultural development
6. Delve in to demand and supply side of the sending and receiving countries. To pursue employer to hire more Nepalese worker at their companies

7. Listening the grievances of the labour's as well as expert advice in order to make the EPS system pragmatic and comprehensive
8. Devising methods to minimize the cases of undocumented workers and discourage to stay illegally

Modus Operandi:

A **one-day** seminar would be divided into morning and afternoon sessions. The invited speakers, who are basically involved in the EPS system, would be asked to present their papers based on their experience and shared knowledge which could be instrumental to enhance the existing system. The participants will be asked to actively share their experience and comment over the papers.

All the stakeholders including Embassy of Nepal in Seoul, Human Resources Development of Korea, Immigration Service of Korea, Federation of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises will present papers with their experience and future perception during the seminar. The representative of the Nepalese workers will also be asked to speak out at the seminar about the workers grievances and present his views on remedial means.

A Rapporteur will take note of all the discussions, comments and questions from the participants and answers, which will be compiled in a book form along with the presentations, presented during the seminar, and publish for comprehension. The outcome of the seminar along with the recommendation will be presented to the authorities concerned to give serious consideration over the recommendation made on it.

Proposed Joint Partners of the event:

- Department of Foreign Employment, Government of Nepal
- Embassy of Nepal in Seoul
- Human Resource Development Service, Government of the Republic of Korea
- Korea Immigration Service, Government of the Republic of Korea
- Federation of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

Estimated expenditure:

The Embassy will encourage the co-organizers to share the financial burden willingly according to their capability. Despite the organizers, the interested organizations and individuals can also sponsor either the whole or part of the programme by sharing expenditure. In a rough estimate, the expenditure will come about Korean Won 15 million.

Embassy of Nepal in Seoul

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