



Migrants Workers Welfare Committee

Background:

Foreign employment is not any new jargon among the Nepalese at home and abroad today. Officially, the history of foreign employment reflects that opting for foreign employment began with the establishment of First Gorkha Regiment by the British East India Company after the end of Anglo-Nepal war on 24 April 1815. Even before this particular date, Nepalese youths used to go to India, Bhutan, Burma (Myanmar) and Pakistan to for their livelihood. Together with globalization and gradual liberalization of the political system in the country, larger number of Nepalese youths and families started to leave the country in search of better opportunities to support their families and the loved ones. Similarly, climax of post industrialization period in America and Europe and Petro-dollar's excessive reserves in the Middle East region has opened up opportunities to the Nepalese low income youths for foreign employment.

The number of such Nepalese has increased massively and reached more than 5 million and the Government has recognized those Nepalese as Non-Resident Nepalese. The Non-Resident Nepalese Association (NRNA); established with major the double objectives of safeguarding the interest of the Nepalese Diasporas and contributing in the socio-economic transformation of the country with the motto of "For Nepali, by Nepali" has always included the issues related to the migrant worker as priority in its agendas and is utilizing its means and resources under its disposal to make foreign employment safe, dignified and organized. NRNA has formed Foreign Employment and Migrant Workers Welfare Committee under the Foreign Employment and welfare of NRNs department headed by Vice President Dr. Badri K.C. to lead and give direction to these activities.

Definition:

Literally speaking, NRN refers to the Nepalese staying abroad in pursuit of employment, business, and study and so on. But the Non-Resident Nepalese Act 2064 and Non-Resident Nepalese Regulation 2066 have defined NRN. According to the Act, those Nepalese, who are staying outside the country excluding the SAARC regions for more than two years or those people of Nepali origin who have obtained the citizenship of other countries and are known as Persons of Nepalese Origin (PNO) fall under the definition.

Similarly, an employment opportunity with certain wage under certain terms and conditions undertaken by an individual beyond ones national, political or geographical boundary is called foreign employment. The Foreign Employment Act 2064 has defined it as "Worker's employed in a foreign country". Therefore, foreign employment has remained and should always remain a major area of activity of NRNA and it is also one of the goals of NRNA.

Importance of Foreign Employment:

Foreign Employment has remained as backbone of national economy since long. Currently, the remittance of the NRNs occupies a significant chunk of Nepal's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It accounts for around 33 percent of the GDP. In fact, foreign employment has increased the foreign currency reserve in the central bank contributing to the adequate availability of liquidity. It has also helped to maintain the balance of payment. Thus, Nepal has now turned to be a remittance dependent economy.

NRNs are the major contributors of the remittance, which has been the backbone of the country's economy. On the other hand, it has increased the living standard of the respective families and the loved ones of each NRN and energized the economy of Nepal. More importantly, foreign employment has helped to create a pool of technologically skilled and experienced workforce who can contribute a great deal after they return to Nepal for the socio-economic transformation of the motherland. Thus, knowledge, skill, capital, technological know-how of NRNs achieved during the course of foreign employment may be of great importance in the shaping of new Nepal and there are many such examples.

Role of NRNA in Relation to Foreign Employment

NRNs are the major source of authority and foundation of NRNA's activities. Therefore, safeguarding the common interest of all the NRNs residing in the foreign land is of great concern to NRNA. In this light, NRNA can play a very significant role to mitigate the problems faced by fellow compatriots.

Major challenges faced in foreign employment:

- Unnecessary exploitation of poor and ignorant people in the name of service charge
- Use of fake documents (visa, employment contract etc.) to cheat and make aspirants easy prey.
- Use of forged passports (change of picture in the passport where a person flies to his destination on another individual's passport only with his photograph).
- Provision of middlemen without proper monitoring and evaluation of the pros and cons of such provision.
- Human trafficking (people are promised job in one country but taken to another country with false documents and illegally)
- Alteration of promised job and salary and other facilities after reaching destination countries.

- Lack of orientation; though there is the provision of proper pre-departure orientation to all the workers but this has been grossly violated by all sides (manpower agencies and the workers also).
- The Government of Nepal has formulated labor-friendly rules and regulations. But the implementation and monitoring part is laid-back.
- Amending and changing the rules and regulations associated with foreign employment without consulting with the stakeholder and also implementing it immediately without making the target audience aware or giving them time to adjust accordingly.
- Lack of social security for the migrant workers.
- Lack of skill and information about the job and information about the destination countries.

The committee will endeavor in achieve the following goals:

- ❖ Mobilize NRNA network and linkage to improve the foreign employment situations.
- ❖ Organizing awareness campaign at the national level and in the respective destination countries on the importance of orientation, language proficiency and other job-related training and information while perusing for foreign employment.
- ❖ Providing advice and suggestions to the government to formulate foreign employment friendly laws and regulations.
- ❖ Prepare a white paper encompassing various problems faced and recommend remedial measures.
- ❖ Request Government of Nepal to for a committee on Foreign Employment; including interrelated government officials and NRNA representative.
- ❖ Prepare a skill bank of returnee migrant workers.
- ❖ Work to develop and implement social security package for migrant workers.
- ❖ Encourage vocational & technical education and engage returnee migrant workers to better educate people about the jobs and destination countries.
- ❖ Work together with the Government and other similar organizations to control human trafficking.
- ❖ Arrangement of contingency fund to support the migrant workers in distress.

- ❖ Organizing awareness campaigns through NCCs in respective countries regarding socio-cultural behavior, respect of rules and regulations of the hosting country, causes of death and life-threatening diseases, traffic rules and regulations etc.
- ❖ Work in close coordination with related government official and labor desk of the Nepalese missions abroad.
- ❖ The tenure of this committee will be till October 2021.

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