

## **NRN and Foreign Employment & 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 make arrangement to make their both ends. Together with the fall of globalization and gradual liberalization of the political system in the country, larger number of Nepalese youths and families started to exit from 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 petrodollar's excessive reserves in the Middle East region has opened up the vistas of opportunities to the Nepalese low income youths for foreign Employment. The number of such Nepalese has increased massively to reach more than 3.5 million except the SAARC region, which accounts for around 5 million Nepalese. Now, the Government has recognized those Nepalese as Non-Resident Nepalese and Non-Resident Nepalese Association (NRNA) is established with major twin objectives of safeguarding the interest of the Nepalese Diasporas abroad and contributing in the socio-economic transformation of the country with a strong motto of "For Nepali, by Nepali". Therefore, the history and story of NRN and foreign employment is inalienable and complementary to each other.

### **Definition:**

Literally speaking, NRN refers to the Nepalese staying abroad in pursuit of employment, business, and study and so on. But now, Non-Resident Nepalese Act 2007 and Non-Resident Nepalese Regulation 2009 have defined NRN. According to the Act, those Nepalese, who are staying outside the country for more than two years or those, who have already abandoned the citizenship of Nepal called persons of Nepalese origin (PNO) both fall under the purview of the definition of NRN.

Similarly, an employment opportunity with certain wage under certain terms and conditions grabbed beyond ones national political or geographical boundary is called foreign employment. The Foreign Employment Act 2007 has defined it as "Worker's employment in a foreign country". Therefore, foreign employment has remained and should always remain a major area of activity 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 26 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 in a tentatively standard level. Thus, Nepal has now turned to be a remittance dependant 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. More importantly, foreign employment has helped to create a pool of technologically and skillwise talented people who can contribute to a great deal even after they return to Nepal for the socio-economic transformation of the country. Thus, knowledge, skill, capital, technological know-how of NRNs achieved during the course of foreign employment may be of great importance in the making of new Nepal.

## **Role of NRNA in Relation to Foreign Employment**

NRNs are major source of authority and foundation of NRNA's activities. Therefore, all the NRNs residing in the foreign land and safeguarding their common interest is the concern of NRNA. In this light, NRNA can play a very significant role to mitigate the problems faced by fellow compatriots. NRNA can play both the preventive and curative role. In fact preventive role has a long term impact whereas the curative role has a short term but effective impact among the expatriate Nepalese.

### **Preventive Role:**

NRNA has its national coordination Councils in 68 countries. It can mobilize its strong network in the improvement of foreign employment. Preventive role of NRNA regarding foreign employment may be:

- Hammering the government to formulate sunset laws regarding foreign employment
- Organizing awareness campaign by the ICC at the national level in various parts of Nepal and in the respective countries in the lead of NCCs.
- Use the strong network of friendship among the members to persuade the family members, kins and relatives to try to better understand about foreign employment prior to their departure.
- Disseminating through the media in Nepal about the importance of orientation, language proficiency and other job related information while going for foreign employment.
- Education is the base of knowledge. Therefore, the Government should spend much in vocational & technical education and include technical education as a compulsory subject in the syllabus from the secondary level. NRNA can carry out joint projects to better educate people in remote areas of Nepal, particularly in technical education.
- To work together with the Government to control human trafficking.

### **Curative Role:**

NRNA has been playing a curative role in foreign employment since long. Providing air tickets to the stranded workers, helping other needy people, raising their concern to the ministers and high level delegations, organizing awareness programs in the respective countries at various levels have been the rituals of NRNA and most of these do have only a short term impact. NRNA has to be aware of the fact that **prevention is better than cure**. Therefore, it should focus on the curative measure with louder voice. However, NRNA can do the following under the curative measures on foreign employment related problems:

- Arrangement of contingency fund for sudden use to support the stranded workers
- Organizing awareness campaigns by the 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 accidents etc.
- Providing support materials to victims of human trafficking
- To work together with the Human Right and Migrant NGO of the host countries to prevent and control human trafficking
- To play proactive role to rescue the stranded female workers in conjunction with the NGOs relevant Government agencies of Nepal.
- To work in close coordination with the labor desk of the Nepalese missions abroad.
- Awareness must be start necessarily just before they receive the passport from concern Passport Office than who have plan for foreign employment.

### **Existing Practice in Foreign Employment:**

The Government of Nepal has formulated labor-friendly rules and regulations. But the implementation and monitoring part is laid-back. The strong rules and regulations have been weakened due to pervasive

corruption existing in foreign employment business. Many people of well-up family background have fallen victim of human traffickers in a sweet dream of having better life and opportunities in the developed countries of the West. Likewise, people of low income and poor family background full of ignorance are badly fall victim of treacherous middlemen and brokers at home and abroad in the Middle East and Malaysia. Africa Thus, human trafficking has been established as a cancer of foreign employment business for both the businessmen and the candidates. News of stranded workers in Qatar, Saudi Arabia Malaysia and Africa keep on dominating the headlines of daily newspaper in Kathmandu. But again the problem is persistent. Therefore, the government should take proper initiative to control the situation by taking strong action against the violators of prevailing rules and regulations so that all the stuff could be controlled as per the principle of responsive government. Some major malpractices of foreign today:

- Unnecessary exploitation of poor and ignorant people in the name of service charge
- Use of fake documents (visa, employment contract etc.) to cheat and take the people in 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 and left out in another country with false documents)
- Alteration of promised job and salary and other facilities after the landing of the workers.
- Lack of orientation--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). Thanks

Committee List is attached.