



GOVERNANCE

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Need for Accurate Skill Assessment in Foreign Labor Migration

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Photo by Ukaalo

The data from the Department of Foreign Employment shows that nearly 70% of the foreign labor migrants who have received a labor permit are skilled, 8% are semi-skilled and 20% are unskilled. While these numbers are encouraging indicating a higher potential for remittances and safer working conditions, underlying issues still need further examination.

Firstly, it is important to understand how skill levels are categorized in Nepal. Currently, the categorization is based on the skill level mentioned in the foreign labor migrant's demand letter issued by the employer company at the destination, not the actual skills of the aspiring labor migrant. Inflating the level of skills increases the chances of swift approval from the embassies of destination countries. Likewise, higher levels of skill is also associated with higher levels of income making it lucrative for both private recruitment agencies and foreign labor migrant aspirants in Nepal. The Department of Foreign Employment also uses the same categorization while issuing labor permits. If a worker applies for a labor permit and indicates that his/her job is a 'solar panel installation worker', he/she will be categorized as a skilled worker. It could well be the case that the person may not be skilled.

Moreover, the Labor Migration Report 2022 also deemed the government's data on the skills of labor migrants going abroad as "unrealistic." The 61st Annual Report of the Office of Auditor General, 2081 (2024) also mentioned a similar scenario, revealing that 54.58% of foreign labor migrants who left between fiscal year 2017 and 2023 were unskilled. However, the Foreign Employment Act, 2064, has mandated the creation of a Foreign Employment Welfare Fund to offer skill-based training to prospective labor migrants.

It is crucial for the government to reassess its skill categorization standards. Instead of relying on inflated skill levels reported by various stakeholders, the government should develop an independent mechanism to accurately categorize labor skills. This approach will provide a clearer picture of skill levels and sets, enabling more effective measures to improve conditions for foreign labor migrants.

Read more: [Ukaalo](#)

Governance Issues of the Week

1. The Ministry of Education suggests that the current education budget needs to be doubled to enforce the constitutionally guaranteed mandatory and free education system. The recent draft plan of the ministry estimates a required budget of NRs. 230 billion, with education being mandatory up to grade 8 and free up to grade 12. It also calls for creating 50,000 new teacher positions. Currently, Ministry of Education receives approximately 11% of the national budget, but full implementation would require around 20%.

Read more: [Kantipur](#)

2. The Vice-Chancellor, Rector, and Registrar of Tribhuvan University have taken extended leave, halting university operations due to security threats following student union protests against the Dean's recommendation for the Head of the Sociology Department. Although the police have assured that the situation is under control, the officials insist on enhanced protection before resuming their duties.

Read more: [Naya Patrika](#)

3. The Nepal government has lifted the nine-month ban on TikTok effective August 23, 2024. However, TikTok must meet certain conditions within three months. These requirements include the company being registered in Nepal as per the Social Media Directive, promoting Nepal's tourism, investing in digital literacy, supporting the country's public education system, and being mindful of the language used on its platform.

Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

4. The Karnali Provincial Assembly held 49 meetings in the last fiscal year. However, of the 40 Province Assembly Members, only Chief Minister Yamal Kandel attended all the sessions. Despite receiving full benefits, the majority of members, including the Finance Minister, had poor attendance. This low attendance has hindered the legislative process in the province, resulting in only two laws being passed during the fiscal year.

Read more: [Ratopati](#)

5. In the fiscal year 2023-24, the number of cybercrime cases surged to 19,730 from 9,013 the previous year. Among these cases, 20 percent involve online fraud cases. The use of AI for creating misleading or harmful content is also increasing. Despite the increasing threats, the Nepal Cyber Bureau is understaffed and struggles to manage the situation, prompting calls for updated laws, skilled human resources and advanced tools to combat these threats.

Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

6. The cases of a new variant of Mpox named 'Clade 1 B' have increased globally. The virus which originated in Africa has recently been confirmed in Pakistan, raising concerns about potential transmission to Nepal. In response, the Ministry of Health and Population has set up a call center at 1115 for information on the disease and sent alerts to the help desks at the air and land entry points.

Read more: [Kantipur](#)

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