



Tropentag, September 14-16, 2010, Zurich

“World Food System —
A Contribution from Europe”

Migration and Household Food Security Interlinkage: A Case Study in the Mid Hills of Nepal

AMINA MAHARJAN¹, SIEGFRIED BAUER¹, BEATRICE KNERR²

¹*Justus-Liebig University of Giessen, Institute of Farm and Agribusiness Management, Germany*

²*University of Kassel, Department of Development Economics, Migration and Agricultural Policy, Germany*

Abstract

For decades achieving household level food security has been a major goal for the Government and the people of Nepal alike. The farming sector has been projected as the sector responsible for achieving this objective. However, meeting household food requirements from own production is becoming difficult due to the subsistence nature of farm production and the declining farm sizes. Therefore, in the last decade households are increasingly seeking options outside the farm sector to meet their food requirements. The weak industrial sector does not provide many opportunities to the rural farm households to make a living locally. Hence, migration is increasingly being used as an important livelihood strategy by the rural farm families. Thus, food insecurity is one of the main causes of migration and in turn, migration impacts the household food security situation.

This study focuses on exploring the interlinkage between international migration and household food security using household data from 509 farm households in two districts in the mid hill regions of Nepal. The data comprising of the migrant and non migrant households was analysed using the two stage least square regression with instrumental variables to solve the problem of reverse causality.

The findings of the study indicate that overall migration helps in improving the food security situation of the households. However, the extent of impact depends on the amount of remittances the household receives. In the richer district Syangja, with households receiving bigger remittances, migration showed significant positive impact in lowering the number of food insecure months. But in the poorer district Baitadi, with lower remittances, the impact was positive but not statistically significant.

The result of the study draws the attention of the policy makers towards the importance of migration on the farm households in fulfilling their basic food requirements. The old notion of attaining household food security through own production needs revision and consideration of other household resources such as the human resources in achieving food security seeks immediate attention. On the other hand, the results also points out to the danger of the poor falling into the poverty trap with increase in migration.

Keywords: Food security, migration, Nepal, remittances