



## Work Satisfaction among Indian Cross-Border Workers in Nepal: A Comparative Study with Domestic Mobile Workers

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### Abstract

Many nations have experienced a rise in international migration over the last few decades, and as a result, their population are now culturally diverse. Nepal is also not far behind; as Indian residents of the Indo-Nepal border region are migrating there in search of potential employment. This study has utilized primary data collected in Raxaul block, which is the key exit point between India and Nepal. The sample size estimation has been done using coefficient of variation technique. The estimated sample is 400, including 200 cross-border mobile workers employed in Nepal and 200 Indian mobile workers (Domestic mobile workers). Principal component analysis (PCA) method has been applied to estimate the work environment and work satisfaction. Moreover, Fairlie decomposition technique has been utilized to estimate the percent contribution of work satisfaction by different factors. The results from this study found substantial differences in household conditions among Cross-border and domestic mobile workers. For instance, compared to domestic mobile workers (13%), the households of cross-border mobile workers (22%), had "good" housing condition. Moreover, 76 percent of the families of cross-border workers use improved toilets facility than the 24 percent of families of domestic mobile workers. Thus, the monthly per capita expenditure (MPCE) of cross-border workers' families is higher (2460 Rs) than that of cross-border workers' families (2001 Rs). Also, study found cross-border workers have a more labor-conducive environment, greater per capita earning, and work satisfaction than domestic mobile workers. Age, living arrangement, and occupation positively contribute to work satisfaction in terms of differences among both type of workers. The India-Nepal border stands as a dynamic crossroads where transnational mobility coverages. Within this context, this study explores the unique economic opportunities available to residents of the Indo-Nepal border region, located within the cross-border enclave. In conclusion, this comprehensive study offers valuable insights into the complex dynamics of cross-border mobility along the India-Nepal border.

### Keywords

household conditions, Population mobility, work environment work satisfaction

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## Introduction

Population mobility is a fundamental feature of society in a world where connectivity is developing. It encompasses the transnational movement of people, individuals, families, and communities which are driven by a range of factors like economic opportunity, political stability, and social influences. To flourish in this shifting environment, policymakers, businesses, and communities need to understand the dynamics of population movement. (Skeldon, 1990). Economic opportunity is one of the primary drivers influencing population movement. Individuals frequently move in search of better employment prospects, greater incomes, or business endeavours. This movement can take many different forms, ranging from cross-border international migration to migration from rural to urban areas inside nations. Economic differences between nations and regions can provide strong incentives for people to relocate in quest of a higher quality of living (Hughes, 1995; Brunori, Ferreira, and Peragine, 2013; Derenoncourt, 2022).

Social network and family ties play a major role in determining patterns of migration and settlement decisions, which in turn affect population mobility. In destination places, people frequently follow family members or integrate into well-established communities, which promotes the sharing of knowledge, resources, and support systems. These social links can help with integration and lessen the difficulties of moving, which strengthens the cohesiveness and resilience of varied communities (Toole et al., 2015).

Population movements from India to Nepal is a significant aspect of population mobility in the South Asian region. In addition, geographical, historical, cultural, and

economic links between the two nations influence movement and settlement patterns, which in turn define this migrant flow. Population mobility from India to Nepal is primarily driven by economic concerns (Yao and Liu, 2022). Since ancient times, Nepal and India have been involved in cross-border labor movement. In the rural parts of the regions of Sudurpaschim and Karnali, it is a significant source of income (Bhatt, 2023). A large number of Indians move to Nepal in quest of work in industries including trade, tourism, hospitality, and construction. People cross the border in search of better opportunities for a living because of the close proximity of the Indian border states to Nepal and the economic differences between the two regions. Furthermore, chances for business owners and entrepreneurs to expand their operations into Nepal are created via cross-border trade and investment (Pattanaik, 1998; Murthy, 2000; Nepal, 2007; and Das, 2008).

The relationship between population mobility and work satisfaction among laborers is a complex and multifaceted one, influenced by various factors ranging from job opportunities and economic conditions to social support networks and personal aspirations. Laborers' mobility includes both domestic and international migration; people migrate in order to find better work opportunities, higher pay, and higher living standards. This mobility can take many different forms, such as long-distance migration to distant regions or countries, cross-border migration between neighbouring countries, and migration from rural to urban areas within countries. A mix of push and pull considerations, including the possibility of upward mobility, job availability, and economic necessity, frequently influence the decision to move.

Work satisfaction among laborers refers to the degree of contentment, fulfilment, and well-being derived from their employment experiences. It includes a number of factors, such as wages, perks, working conditions, chances for advancement in the workplace, and overall work-life balance. Increased productivity, retention of workers, and overall work performance are linked to high work satisfaction levels, which promote both individual well-being and organizational success (Green, 2010; MADEYSKI, 1997; Kristensen and Westergård-Nielsen, 2004).

Comprehending cross-border mobility holds significant significance for several compelling reasons. While lucrative wages attract migration, assessing whether these individuals experience job satisfaction and fulfilment within new work environments is imperative. Scrutinizing their job-related encounters can unveil potential obstacles like discrimination, language barriers, and labour exploitation that could impede overall well-being and integration. Moreover, cross-border mobility's broader societal ramifications remain insufficiently explored. Nepal's work environment, work satisfaction, and living standards for both cross-border and domestic mobile workers' households, a realm where research is scarce.

Based on the aforementioned evidence, we have formulated this study to explore the factors influencing difference in work satisfaction between domestic and cross-border mobile workers in Nepal. Specifically, we aim to find out which factors contribute to the higher levels of work satisfaction of the Indian cross-border workers compared to domestic mobile workers, and how these aspects differ between the two groups. The interested question arises that the people from Nepal

migrated to India for work and at the same time Indian people are also migrating to Nepal for work. In this condition, it is important to distinguish the causes of cross-border labour migration to each other countries. Many scholars have studied the causes and consequences of labour migration from Nepal to India but there are limited studies regarding labour migration from India to Nepal (Bhatt, 2023).

### Material and Methods

This study has utilized primary data. East Champaran, a district in Bihar on the Nepal-India border, has been chosen study area for this research. Only **Raxaul** has been chosen for this study. In fact, Raxaul constitutes the key entry point between India and Nepal. It is a town situated close to the Indo-Nepal border in the Indian state of Bihar's East Champaran district. The sample size estimation has been done using coefficient of variation technique. The estimated sample is 400, including 200 cross-border mobile workers employed in Nepal and 200 Indian mobile workers (Domestic mobile workers). Following formula has been used to calculate the sample size;

$$\text{Sample size } (n) = \frac{1}{a^2} * \frac{q}{p} * df * f$$

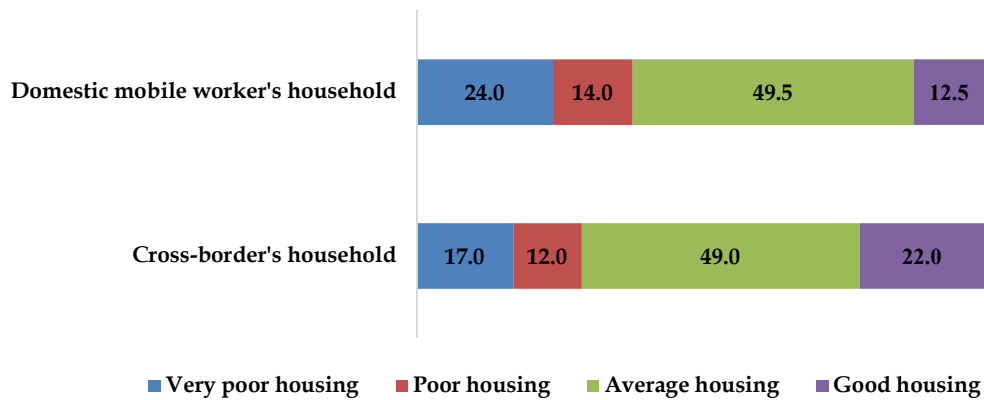
Where  $p$  value is 40 percent as 0.40 (Census of India, 2011),  $q$  is 0.60,  $a$  is the coefficient of variation in  $p$  or the maximum possible error in the estimate which is assumed 10 percent as 0.10.  $df$  if the design effect which is assumed 10 percent as 1.25. Furthermore,  $f$  is the non-response which is assumed 10 percent as 1.1.

Moreover, the ethical approval has been received from student ethical research board (SERC), IIPS, Mumbai. To have a deeper awareness of the vulnerability that the mobile population faces, it is critical to

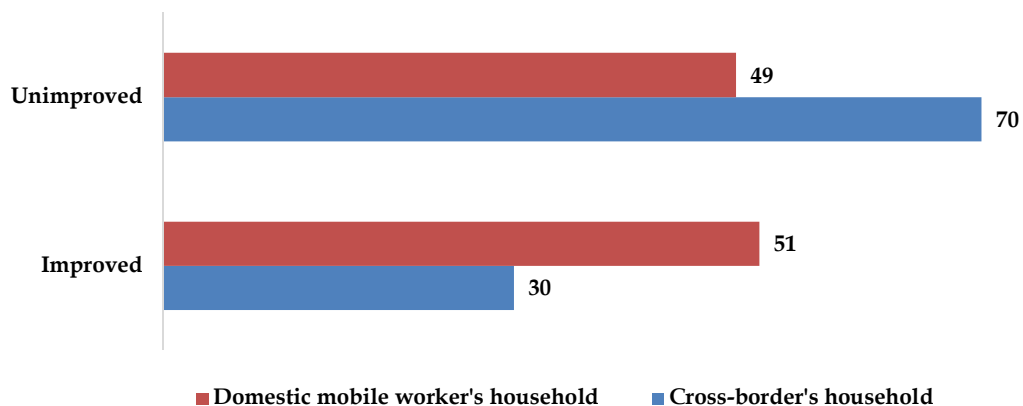
understand the environment in which they reside and work. Individual, societal, political, and economic variables all contribute to vulnerability. Additionally, univariate and bi-variate technique have been used for the analysis. Principal component analysis (PCA) method has been applied to estimate the mean daily earning, work environment, and work satisfaction. In addition, to estimate the percent contribution of work satisfaction by different predictors among both type of workers, Fairlie decomposition technique has been utilized. All the analysis has been done using the STATA 17 version.

**Findings**

Cross-border and domestic mobile worker’s housing conditions are depicted in figure 1. Comparing cross-border worker’s households to domestic mobile worker’s household (13%), it was discovered that 22 percent had “good” housing conditions. For both types’ households, the source of cooking fuel was shown in figure 2. When compared to domestic mobile workers (30%), households of cross-border mobile workers use improved cooking fuel around 51 percent.



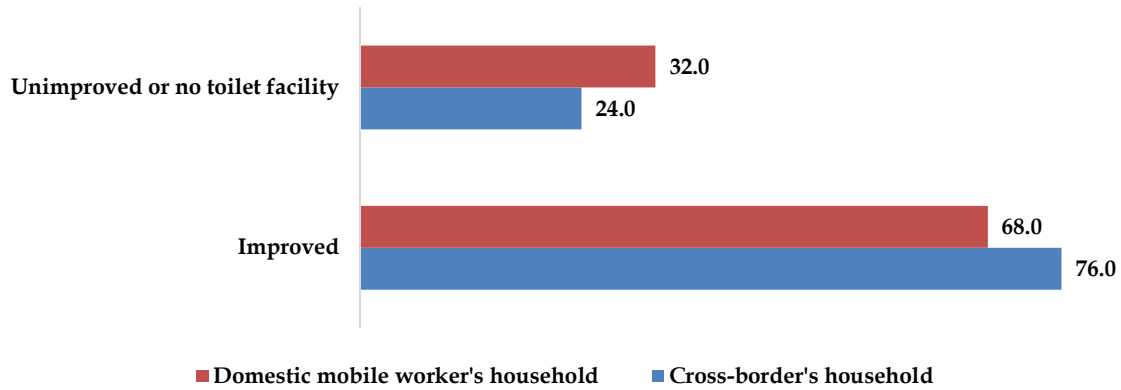
**Figure 1** Quality of housing in both type of mobile workers



**Figure 2** Household with improved or polluted cooking fuel

The cross-border worker’s household and domestic mobile worker’s household are the two distinct types of households where the availability of toilets is summarized in Figure 3. Around 76 percent of cross-border

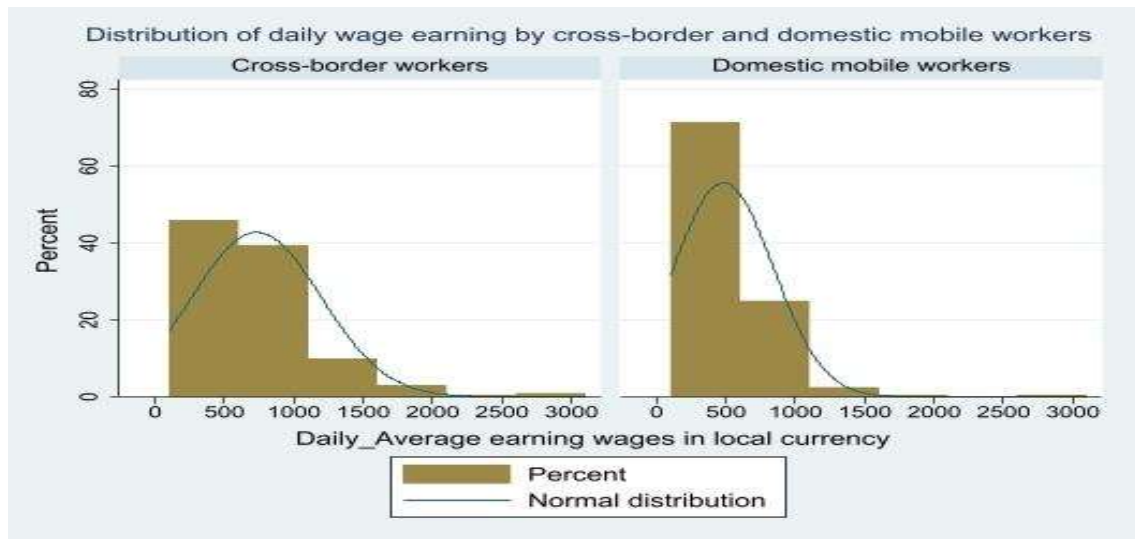
worker’s houses have improved toilet facilities. In addition, the number of domestic workers is on the move: around 68 percent of households have improved toilet facilities.



**Figure 3** Distribution of household with toilet facility among both type of worker's family

Furthermore, Figure 4 depicted the average daily earning among cross-border and domestic mobile workers. Average daily earnings among cross-border workers are

higher than domestic mobile workers. For instance, domestic mobile workers earn 782 Rs on average, compared to 731 Rs for cross-border workers.



**Figure 4:** Distribution of daily wage earning among cross-border and domestic mobile workers

Table 1 shows the mean and median per capita expenditure (MPCE) on food and non-food items for domestic and cross-border mobile workers households. The table shows the cross-border mobile worker household had greater mean and median per capita

expenditure on food and non-food goods. In comparison to domestic mobile worker’s families (2001 INR), cross-border mobile worker’s families spend a total of 2460 INR per capita per month. As for per capita spending on food and non-food, cross-

border worker’s families spent an average of 1458 per person in comparison to domestic mobile workers (1100 INR). The average per capita expenditure for families of cross-border workers was 855 INR, compared for families of domestic mobile workers.

Figure 5 portrays the percent distribution of mobile workers with respect to their workplace environment. The data showed that, in comparison to domestic mobile workers (30%), cross-border workers have a labour conducive environment in about 49 percent of cases. Additionally, compared to cross-border workers (26%), domestic

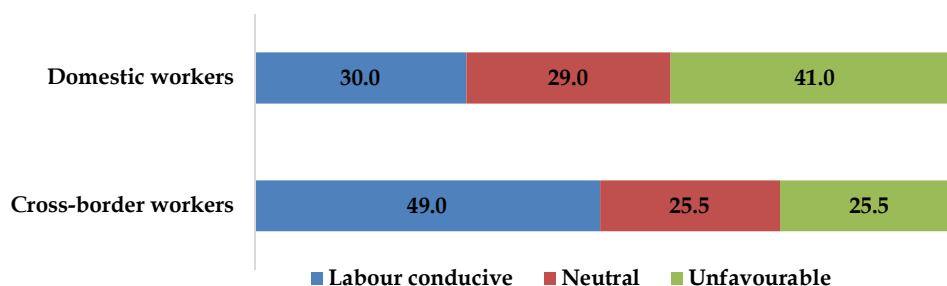
mobile workers felt that their workplace was unfavourable in 41 percent of cases.

Figure 6 portrays the percent distribution of mobile workers with respect to the satisfaction of work. The results show that around 59 percent cross-border mobile workers are satisfied with their work compared with domestic mobile workers (42%).

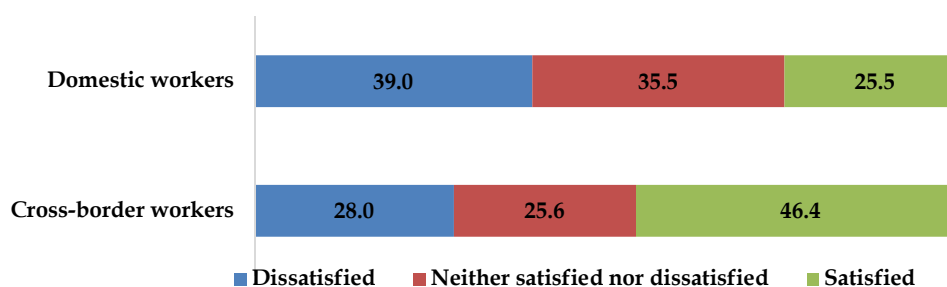
The results from Fairlie decomposition found that, the positive effects of age on satisfaction with work suggest that age differences between workers account for around 7 percent of the overall variation in satisfaction with work.

**Table 1** Mean and median per capita expenditure (MPCE) on food and non-food items among cross-border and domestic worker's household

Type of household	Total MPCE (Rs.)		MPCE food (Rs.)		MPCE Non-food (Rs.)	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Cross-border mobile worker’s household	2460	2131	1458	1304	855	1002
Domestic mobile worker’s household	2001	1733	1100	1217	627	784



**Figure 5** Workplace environment among cross-border and domestic mobile workers



**Figure 6:** Work satisfaction among cross-border and domestic mobile workers

**Table 2** Fairlie decomposition of work satisfaction among cross-border and domestic mobile workers according to their background characteristics

Predictors	Coefficients	Standard error	95% lower limit CI	95% upper limit CI	Percent contribution
Age	0.0040	0.0037	-0.0033	0.0112	6.5
Marital Status	0.0108	0.0050	0.0009	0.0207	17.8
Family Size	0.0015	0.0030	-0.0043	0.0073	2.5
Living arrangements	0.0176	0.0084	0.0012	0.0339	28.8
Education	0.0005	0.0016	-0.0027	0.0037	0.8
Religion	0.0096	0.0060	-0.0022	0.0213	15.7
Caste	-0.0014	0.0017	-0.0048	0.0019	-2.4
Occupation	0.0185	0.0176	-0.0161	0.0530	30.3

Living arrangements play a substantial role in work satisfaction, accounting for about 29 percent of the total. This suggests that living arrangements, such as whether a person lives alone or with people, have a big impact on how happy they are at work. The greatest significant contribution is made by the type of occupation, at about 30 percent. Variations in work satisfaction are mostly caused by differences in the types of work that people do. This shows that a person's job's nature has a big impact on how happy they are at work (Table 2).

### Discussion and Conclusion

The study, which is depicted in Figures 1 through 6 and tables, highlights the key distinctions between cross-border and domestic mobility workers' living conditions and levels of satisfaction with their work. These results stimulate debates on the different socioeconomic elements affecting housing conditions, the environment at work, and overall satisfaction with work.

Figure 1 illustrates how living conditions for domestic and cross-border mobility workers differed significantly. It demonstrates that, in comparison to domestic mobile workers (13%), a larger percentage of cross-border worker households (22%) have good living conditions. A similar finding found in previous studies as well (Dohmen, 2005;

Tomaney and Bradley, 2007; Bajracharya, 2022). Furthermore, as shown in Figure 2, households with cross-border workers use improved cooking fuel significantly more frequently (51%) than do households with domestic mobile workers (30%). As shown in Figure 3, access to improved toilets is also more common among households with cross-border workers (76%) than among households with domestic mobile workers (68%), supported these finding from previous studies (Revathy, Thilagavathi, and Surendran, 2020; Ahmed, Atiqul Haq, and Hyder, 2023). Furthermore, Figure 4 shows that compared to domestic mobile workers, cross-border workers earn higher wages on average per day (Rajan, Prakash, and Suresh, 2015; Thapaliya, 2021).

Table 1 further illustrates this economic disparity, showing that compared to domestic mobile worker households, cross-border migrant households spend more on both food and non-food products, both in terms of mean and median per capita expenditure (MPCE). Comparing cross-border workers to domestic mobile workers, Figure 5 shows that the cross-border workers have more labour-conducive environments. Furthermore, Figure 6 shows that compared to domestic mobile workers (42%), a larger proportion of cross-border workers (59%) express satisfaction with their work.

The Fairlie decomposition results, which is shown in Table 2, shows percent contribution of difference among two types of workers in terms of work satisfaction. The types of occupation, age, and living situation all show up as important variables influencing work satisfaction levels. The impact of age dynamics is highlighted by the 7% variability in work satisfaction that results from changes in workers' ages. Living arrangements are important; they account for about 29% of the variation in the total, highlighting the significance of social support systems and housing circumstances. Interestingly, the type of occupation has the biggest significant impact (30%), highlighting how important the nature of the work is in affecting satisfaction at work.

In conclusion, this study offers evidence-based insights for policymakers, contributing to the continuing conversations on worker welfare and labour mobility. Targeted interventions can be developed to improve the livelihoods and job satisfaction of domestic and cross-border mobile workers by leveraging the factors influencing work satisfaction and addressing the identified disparities. This will ultimately foster inclusive and sustainable economic development.

### **Policy Recommendation**

In order to effectively address the demands and issues faced by these mobile workers, it is necessary that both local and central governments monitor and collect data on the mobile population that crosses from India to Nepal. With the increasing cross-border mobility between India and Nepal, thorough gathering of information strategies are necessary for well-informed resource allocation, policymaking, and service delivery. Governments may identify emerging trends, evaluate the effects of

migration on sending and receiving communities, and design interventions to support migrant workers and their families by methodically monitoring the movement patterns, living conditions, and employment status of mobile populations.

The formal endorsement of mobile workers is vital in order to acknowledge their invaluable contributions to economies and societies. In today's globalized world, workers who are always on the move are essential for stimulating economic growth, meeting labour shortages, and promoting cross-cultural interactions. However, because their employment is informal, mobile workers frequently experience marginalization, exploitation, and a lack of legal protection despite their crucial role. It is imperative to address these vulnerabilities and assure that mobile workers receive fair treatment, acceptable working conditions, and access to critical services via formal endorsement through legal recognition, labour rights guarantee, and social security protections. For mobile workers to be protected from particular challenges and to guarantee that their rights and welfare are maintained, labour laws and regulations must be strengthened. As labor markets become more globalized and cross-border mobility increases, regulatory frameworks must be modified to effectively safeguard mobile workers against discrimination, exploitation, and hazardous working conditions.

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