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# **SOCIAL ECONOMICS, POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT**

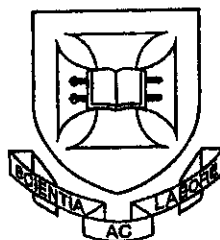
**Working Paper No. 15**

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Optimising Migratory Behaviour: A Review and  
Nepalese Evidence**

by

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND**

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## **Abstract**

### **PUSH-AND-PULL MIGRATION AND SATISFICING VERSUS OPTIMISING MIGRATORY BEHAVIOUR: A REVIEW AND NEPALESE EVIDENCE**

*Clem Tisdell and Gopal Regmi*

Reviews major economic theories of migration concentrating on their behavioral assumptions. Most of these theories assume homogenous optimising behaviour by economic agents. By contrast Lipton assumes heterogeneity of group behaviour – rich persons optimise whereas poor persons are more reactive than proactive. Hence, the rural poor are more likely to be influenced in their migratory decisions by push factors are rather than by pull with the position reversed for the rural rich. The former factors associated in this article with thresholds or satisficing and the latter with optimising. To some extent, Nepalese data supports Lipton's hypothesis. Similarly, Lipton's hypothesis about difference in remitting behaviour of migrants from poor families and from rich families is supported.

# **Push-and-Pull Migration and Satisficing versus Optimising Migratory Behaviour: A Review and Nepalese Evidence**

## **1. Introduction**

Push-and-pull conceptions of migration have tended to fall into disfavour. There are elements of both in the theory of migration of Ravenstein. Lee (1966) developed push-pull-theory further. But his theory tends to be relatively imprecise and lacking in high predictive value. This article suggests that in the theory of migration it is useful to distinguish between migratory behaviour based on optimising by individuals or families and those based on satisficing or threshold concepts of such behaviour. Most, but not all, economists appear to have favoured optimising models but it can be argued that Lipton, and to some extent Stark (1991), are exceptions. Lipton's (1980) theory is very interesting because it assumes a mixture of behaviours by migrants their actual behaviour depending on their socio-economic status. In this article, we outline briefly pure optimising models of migratory behaviour, then consider the 'mixed' models of Lipton and Stark and examine evidence from internal migration in Nepal to see if mixed models are supported

## **2. Migration Behaviour as Optimising Behaviour**

Neo-classical economists view migratory behaviour to be a result of optimising behaviour of economic agents and suggest that migration is the response to the income possibilities associated with the place of origin as well as the place of destination. According to them, migration is induced by differences in net economic advantages such as the difference in wages between origin and destination. A well-known early model of this type is the surplus labour model of Lewis, Fei and Ranis (Lewis, 1954; Fei and

Ranis, 1961). According to this model, migration of labourers from labour abundant rural sector to labour scarce urban sector occurs in response to difference in wages and employment opportunities.

Explaining the paradoxical situation of increasing migration from rural areas in the face of high urban unemployment in the Third World countries, Harris and Todaro (1970), HT henceforth, put forward a different model which also explains migration behaviour in terms of optimising behaviour of economic agents. They argued that the difference in 'expected income' between rural and urban sector stimulates rural to urban migration. For them, a rational economic agent facing a large difference in urban and rural incomes tries to maximise the expected return to its labour by migrating towards the urban sector where expected incomes are higher than in rural areas. Urban 'expected income' is defined as the income in urban sector adjusted for the probability of obtaining job in urban sector and the probability of obtaining a job in urban modern sector measured by one minus the unemployment rate in that sector. Thus according to this model, the higher is the expected income differential between areas the greater will be the propensity to migrate.

For HT, migration rates in excess to the growth rates of job opportunities in modern sector are probable and rational as long as the rate of unemployment is not sufficiently large to lower the 'expected income' in modern sector to or below its level in the rural sector. As the 'expected' income is the product of probability of getting a job times actual real income, a rise in unemployment if compensated by the increase in wages due to institutional and other factors, will not result in lower expected income (Todaro, 1976:

35-6). Although the HT model provides useful insights helping to explain migratory behaviour, the model also has weaknesses.

First, the model is based on unrealistic assumptions of perfect competition, perfect knowledge and perfect mobility of labour force. This implies that all potential migrants have perfect information, they behave rationally and make migratory decisions out of free choices. However, the rationality of an economic agent is limited in 'bounded rationality' (Tisdell, 1996). The potential migrant may not have complete ability to gather, store and process the information required in arriving at the migratory decision as suggested by the model. As discussed later, it is also possible that some migrants engage in satisficing (Simon, 1955, 1957) rather than optimising behaviour.

Second, migration patterns may not solely depend on privately appropriated expected income. Central locations such as cities may provide external benefits to the migrants. For example, urban centres in many of the developing countries may have some values in terms of external benefit such as better health and education facilities, transportation and information networks which may benefit the migrant but are not accounted for in calculating expected income using the HT approach. In such conditions, migration may occur even when urban expected wages are lower than the rural incomes (cf. Tisdell, 1993, Ch. 5). This can be illustrated by Figure 1.

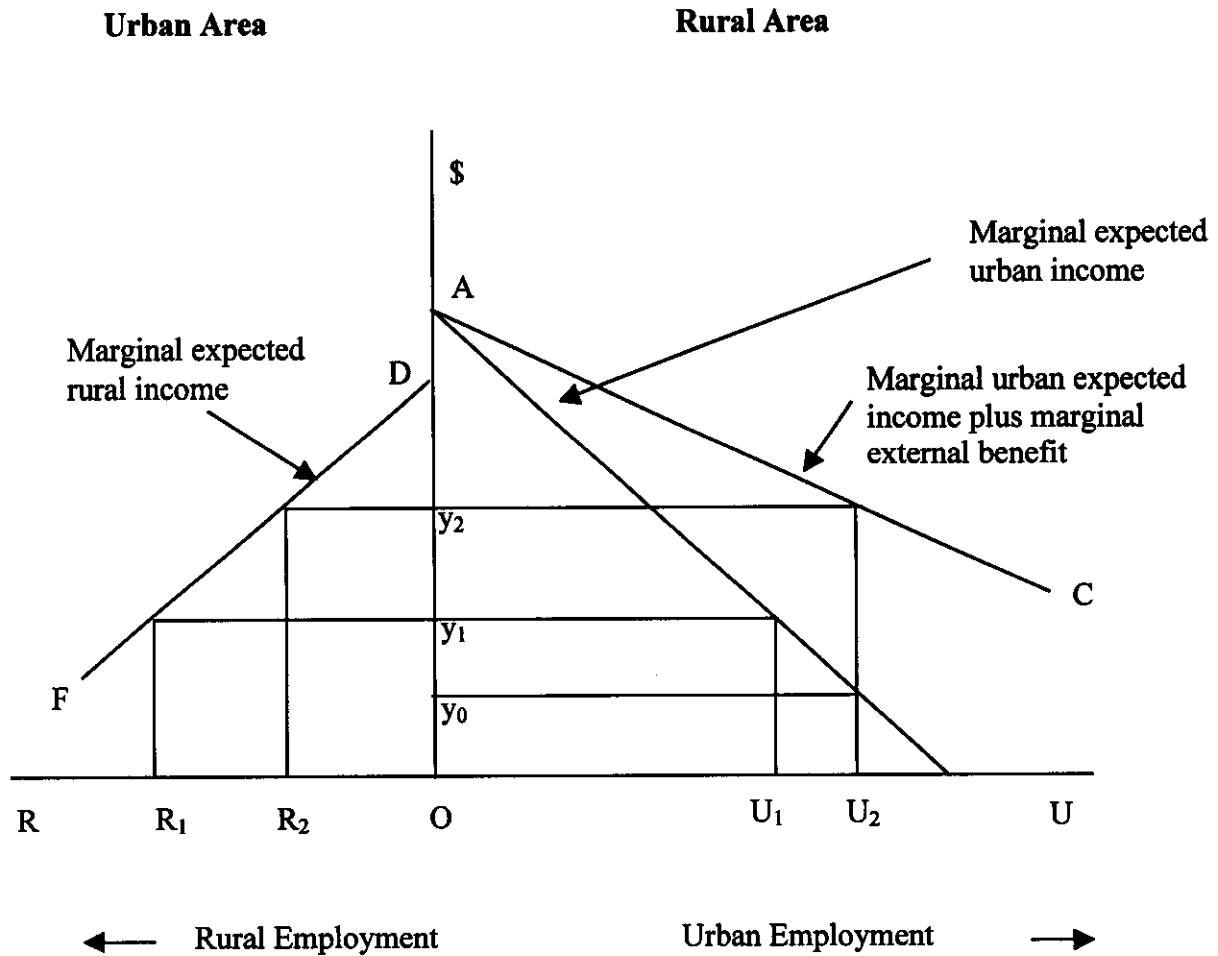


Figure 1.

According to the HT model, there should occur no migration if marginal expected income in rural areas equals to that of urban areas. For example, at marginal income level of  $y_1$  in Figure 1 there should be no labour migration. However, since there may be some external benefits in urban centres, migration from rural areas may continue up to the urban employment level of  $U_2$  where marginal urban expected income plus external benefit equals the marginal rural benefit. Therefore it is not merely the difference in expected income, which triggers migratory move, but the external benefits are also important.

Even the 'bright lights' pull of the city can be considered to be like an externality. This phenomenon has been commented on in Nepal and in Japan. For example, Impoco (1992) reports that Japanese youth are increasingly migrating to cities leaving their villages in search for 'economic and social freedom' despite the efforts of rural authorities to control the flow. Gurung (1999) reports that in Nepalese context increased transportation and improved communication networks and rapid cultural change have created frustration with education and village life and enhanced the attraction of bright-light life in the city. Both contribute to migration of children to the city (Gurung 1999: 43).

Third, the HT model also fails to acknowledge the role of socioeconomic structural factors such as institutional and technological factors that often compel or push rural labourers to move (Shrestha, 1987; Lipton, 1980). Various state policies may play significant roles via their 'arrangements and rearrangements of the economy' in peoples decisions to migrate (Shrestha, 1987). For example, lopsided and urban-biased development strategies involving neglect of rural areas in many of the Third World countries have widened inter sectoral inequalities. At the same time, the gap between poor and well off families has increased further due to marginalization of poor with the technological change in agricultural sector (Lipton, 1977; Clark and Roy, 1997). Such inequalities have further stimulated the migration of poor and landless labourers from rural areas (Lipton, 1980). The HT model's maximising proposition fails to explain such migration fully.

Fourth, families in remote rural areas often can not sell their products in cash due to non-existence of the market for such products in their locality and high transportation costs involved in accessing the market for such products. However, they need cash in their daily life for example to buy medicine, clothes, salt, kerosene and for social ceremonies like marriage. In such circumstances earning cash may be the strong motivating factor for migration regardless of the difference in expected income in rural and urban sector. Empirical support have been found to this proposition in some studies (Banerjee, 1981).

Fifth, the HT model views migration as an individual phenomenon. However, as evidence suggests (Lucas and Stark, 1985; Hoddinott, 1992; Banerjee, 1981), migration seems to be family linked. Migration involves a large amount of risk in terms of risk of not finding job in urban sector, risk of being sick and unable to work and so on. As insurance markets in Third World countries are very imperfect, migrants can not cope with these risks without the support of their family. Furthermore, there are costs to a family of preparing and sending a migrant to urban destination. If a family supports a migrant it naturally expects some payback in terms of remittances.

Sixth, when the family is taken to be a decision-making unit, optimising behaviour of the individual migrant is no longer relevant. As Tisdell and T. I. Fairbairn (1984) suggest, in a traditional sharing society remittance from migrants to their families in the villages help keep rest of their family members in village. Because the members of the family in rural areas do not migrate if their per head income after receiving the remittance from the migrants is equal to the per head income of the migrants after sending remittances. Thus

the flow of rural to urban migration has negative association with the flow of urban to rural remittances from initial migrants.

Similarly, Tisdell (1990) suggests that if it is assumed that the leader of the household (head) of an extended family has a power of allocating the household's labour resources, the labourforce will be allocated such that their marginal contribution to the income of the household is equal in all areas. That means rural to urban migration of family member is continued until the point where the marginal amount of remittances from the migrating family member is equals to the marginal contribution of the family members in rural household after their consumption. So according to this model, all members of the family will migrate as long as there is a chance of increasing family income by having the family members migrated.

Lastly, as Tisdell (1993) points out, this model fails to explain the labour migration in societies where people participate in some benefits on an average or common basis rather on a private marginal basis. This possibility has similarities to the situation illustrated in Figure 1.

### **3. Stark's Portfolio Theory**

Stark (1991) argues that migration is not just a function of expected income differential. There are other 'new' variables which have to be taken into account in explaining the propensity to migrate from rural to urban areas such as 'relative deprivation and 'income uncertainty and attitude towards the risk'. His theory, a 'portfolio theory of migration',

assumes migration to be a family linked phenomenon. He suggests that rural to urban migration takes place as a result of a group decision by the family. The group or the family shares the costs and benefit of migration.

In a nutshell, Stark's theory views migration phenomenon as a result of relative deprivation and a risk-reducing attitude on the part of rural peasants which takes advantage of mutual interdependence between the family members. The peasant has a utility function, which is maximised if the gain in the peasant's relative income position (in the community) and absolute income both are maximised. With the limited resources (land, livestock, etc) in hand, increasing size ('as additional children are brought in to the world') and changing age structure (increase in age of children which stimulates more demand for food) the family faces resource constraints even to survive. In such situation, if crops fail due to stochastic variability in rainfall and weather conditions, the survival of family members can be at risk. Moreover, if the family wants to achieve self-sufficiency, it needs to adopt new technology which further demands an investment and involves high risks. In such cases, one of the options open to a peasant family is to reduce the risk in rural agriculture by diverting some of its family's human capital to the urban sector, where the incomes do not move in tandem with the rural incomes. The family, as a group, makes the decision to have one of its best suited member migrate in a process involving of sharing of cost and income stemming from the migration process.

On the other hand, the migrant also faces a high risk and is in need of family support until he/she establishes him/herself in urban centre. As there is the absence of perfect

insurance market in the Third World countries, mutual interdependence between family members can be utilised for insurance purposes. The income earned by the family in the village and earned by the migrant in urban centre provides a stored pool of funds. As the family and the migrants have different time patterns of high risk, the family provides insurance to the migrant in his risk taking endeavour of migration until the migrant establishes him/herself in urban job market. The migrant, after getting established, provides insurance to the family and investable funds for its income-increasing endeavour such as adoption of new technology. Thus the migrant and his/her family enter into what Stark (1991: 217) calls ' a voluntary mutually beneficial co-operative contractual arrangement'. Such contractual arrangement is mutually beneficial because it enables both the parties to share their risk and enhance their income both in urban sector and in the rural sector.

Stark's model , on the whole, is also based on optimising proposition but the unit of decision making is not an individual but a group of family members. However, the model also relies on element of satisficing or use of a threshold concept. While the migration process is triggered by the feelings of relative social deprivation (a threshold or a satisficing concept), the actual process once triggered involves optimisation.

A shortcoming of Stark's approach is that it does not allow for heterogeneous or diversity of migration behaviour dependent, for example, on the socio-economic conditions of the rural households. In this respect Lipton's theory seems to be superior.

#### **4. Lipton's Mixture of Behavioural Approaches - Satisficing and Optimising**

Lipton's (1980) theory encompasses both satisficing- and optimising-like behaviours to explain rural to urban migration. It allows for heterogeneity of behaviour. He suggests that there are two types of out migration streams from rural areas in the Third World countries: a) the migration stream of deficit farmers and landless labourers who are poor and b) migration streams of sons of the 'big' (well off) farmers. According to Lipton, the migrants of first type are pushed out due to widening of inequality in income and wealth. Thus, they may display satisficing rather than optimising motivation in their migration. They migrate when their income falls below a tolerable threshold. In contrast to that, the migrants of second type, who are supported by their family for their urban education and cost of urban job search, are pulled out by better income opportunities in the urban centre and the family may be consciously optimising. The migration of the former group is essentially reactive whereas of the latter group is proactive. According to Lipton the 'pushed' migrants from poor families have individual rather than family linked motivation for migration. As these migrants are mostly illiterate, they are unable to generate extra income and skill from which they could support the family back in the village, rather the whole household tends to follow the migrant eventually and quit the village. Since the outflow of landless labourers and deficit farmers from rural areas to urban areas is much higher in the Third World countries, rural to urban migration can be largely explained by inequality and differences created by the urban-biased development policies according to Lipton.

According to Lipton, the drain of skilled, strong and innovative young men from the villages results in losses to village in terms of productivity losses. It puts pressure on women and children to work more and harder. As agricultural labourers migrate, there is scarcity of labour in village. Furthermore the 'big' farmers, whose sons also migrate and send higher amount of remittances, tend to use such extra income (from remittances) to buy labour saving technology in the agriculture, which in the longer term might worsen the economic conditions of the poor.

Lipton (1980) denies any positive impacts from remittances in improving the village economy and hence equalising rural-urban inequalities as well as intra-village inequalities. According to him, the total net remittances are insignificant. Hence such remittances can contribute little to a village economy. Regmi and Tisdell (2000) find from empirical evidence that this is definitely the case in Nepal. Moreover, such remittances disproportionately go to 'big' farmers, which further worsens the inequality in the village. The sons and the daughters of the 'big' landlords remit significantly larger sums of the money than the migrants from the poor strata of the village because they are supported by their rural surpluses to get better training and have higher incomes. Thus he argues that (1980:13) "remittances, then are unlikely to do much to reduce rural poverty, either by financing productive and labour intensive investments or by being sent direct to the rural poor". Thus he concludes that while migrants on average gain from migration, the villages they leave behind lose. This however, is not the hypothesis that interests us here. Rather we are interested to consider whether or not there is any evidence from Nepalese data to support Lipton's theory of heterogeneity of migratory behaviour, in

particular whether poor rural migrants are likely to be pushed (engage in reactive, passive or threshold-type behaviour) and whether richer migrants may be involved in pull, optimising or proactive behaviour.

However, it should be made clear that a variety of theories of heterogeneous or mixed behaviours involving decisions to migrate are possible of which Lipton's theory is one. For example, push-type migratory behaviours and pull-type behaviours can be conceptualized in different ways, and different theories can be developed about the composition of these behaviours in a population. But it is not our purpose here to construct such models mathematically. Our aim is, in the light of Lipton's theory, to search for evidence of reactive and of proactive behaviour. In doing so, we associate the former with push-factors and the latter with pull-factors. Also we search for evidence of heterogeneous behaviours.

It is not easy to differentiate between push-and-pull factors using the Nepalese migration data available to us. However, in the absence of superior data, we believe that the available data supports the heterogeneity hypothesis of Lipton, as explained in the next section.

It occurs to us that a questionnaire to migrants involving the following questions would be useful in helping to differentiate between push-and-pull migratory behaviours:

- 1) Which of the following best describes your decision to migrate (indicate only one alternative)

- a) I decided to migrate mainly because I was forced (compelled) to do so by lack of economic opportunities at my place of origin.
  - b) I decided to migrate, even though circumstances did not compel me to do so, because I knew or believed I could obtain better economic opportunities, such as higher income, at a place other than my place of origin.
  - c) Neither of the above. Please give other reason(s) .....
- .....
- Answer (a, b or c) .....**

- 2) Did you only decide to migrate only **after** either
- a) your income or economic opportunities in your place of origin declined or
  - b) only **after** it became clear to you that you could no longer obtain employment or obtain satisfactory economic opportunities in your place of origin?      Yes/No
- 3) If No, did you decide primarily to migrate because you had, or believed you would have higher income or better economic opportunities elsewhere?      Yes/No
- 4) If none of the above, what was the main factor that led to your decision to migrate?
- .....
- .....

However, we were not in a position to conduct such a survey asking these questions, and had to rely on available Nepalese data.

## **5. Evidence from Nepal**

Data from the National Migration Survey, 1996 conducted by Central Department of Population Studies, Tribhuvan University is used to examine the evidence. The heads of the migrant households whose reasons for (internal) migration was at least one of education, service, business, agriculture, or job seeking were administered a detailed individual questionnaire. The individual questionnaire yielded socio-economic and demographic information on migrant, including mother's residence, respondent's age, education, years of schooling, language, caste/ethnicity, first move associated with his age, education, marital status, occupation, reasons for moving, land holding, household ownership, parent's land holding, decision-making for the first move, whether the migrant made any remittances, expected type of work when moving, persons accompanying and whether the migrant was helping others to move.

A total of 1064 urban migrants who migrated from rural areas of the country were successfully interviewed and entered in the database (only these migrants are considered for the purpose of our analysis) For the purpose of our analysis, migrants have been divided into two groups a) those from well of families (those whose parents owned land and had income of more than NRS 1000 per month at the place of origin when they migrated) and b) those from poor families (those whose parents did not own land and/or had income of less than NRs 1000 per month at the place of origin when they migrated). The numbers of cases falling in former and latter category are 134 and 930 respectively.

***a) Migrant's stated reasons for migration as push and pull factors***

The reasons are grouped in three categories: a) reasons related to place of origin b) reasons related to the place of destination and c) others. The former may be seen as the push factors and latter may be envisaged as pull factors triggering migratory move.

However, it should be noted that there is some arbitrariness in this division. For example, there could be a difference of opinion about whether “lack of educational facilities” and “lack of business opportunities” at place of origin constitute push or pull factors. This is why it might be preferable to ask the type of questions mentioned at the end of the last section and design a survey specifically for testing the theory under consideration. Unfortunately, Nepal’s National Migration Survey 1996 was not designed to test particular theories. Therefore, in this context, inferences drawn from it should be regarded as indicative rather than conclusive.

Table 1 presents the rural to urban migrant's reasons for migration associated with place of destination (pull factors) and place of origin (push factors). As can be seen from the Table 1, pull factors are more important for the migrants who are from relatively well-off families. 68.66 percent of the migrants from well-off families reported that their reasons of migration involved pull factors at the place of destination whereas only 26.87 percent of these migrants reported their reasons involved push factors at the place of origin. Although pull factors seem to be slightly more important than push factors for the migrants from poor families, the relative importance of push factors is much higher and the relative importance of pull factors is much lower for these migrants in comparison to the migrants from well-off families. 41.61 percent of migrants from poor families

reported push factors at the place of origin as reasons for migration. The percentage of reporting pull factors as their reasons for migration is 47.85 percent.

**Table 1. Rural to Urban Migrants' Stated Reasons for Migration, Nepal 1996**

Reasons for migration	Migrants from well-off families		Migrants from poor families	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<b>A Reasons related to the Place of Origin (push factors)</b>				
Lack of job	29	21.64	255	27.42
Landless	2	1.49	50	5.38
Sale of land	2	1.49	31	3.33
Migration of family	3	2.24	42	4.52
Social and family conflict	0	0.00	8	0.86
Absence of relatives at origin	0	0.00	1	0.11
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>26.87</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>41.61</b>
<b>B. Reasons related to the Place of Destination (pull factors)</b>				
Lack of Educational Facilities	18	13.43	151	16.24
Lack of Business Opportunities	15	11.19	96	10.32
Better Job Opportunities	14	10.45	107	11.51
Service (job) Transfer	42	31.34	80	8.60
Owned Land already	3	2.24	11	1.18
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>68.66</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>47.85</b>
<b>C. Other/no Reasons</b>				
No Specific Reasons	6	4.48	24	2.58
Don't Know/missing	0	0.00	74	7.96
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4.48</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>10.54</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Migration Survey 1996.

Note: \*Migrants whose parents own land and had income of more than NRs1000 per month at the place of origin when they were migrated.

\*\*Migrants whose parents did not own land and/or had income of less than NRs1000 per month at the place of origin when they were migrated.

**b) Migrants' expected type of work while moving the first time.**

Table 2 presents the frequency of migrants for the type of job they expected when moving out from their place of origin. Expectations are classified according to whether the migrants are poor or well-off. Expected work could be indicative of prevalence of push or pull, or satisficing versus optimising elements in migratory decisions. For example, those who were expecting to engage in business/service, gain in education, and obtained permanent jobs are more likely to be pulled whereas those expecting any kind of work, agriculture, and daily wages/labourers are more likely to be pushed.

**Table 2. Rural to Urban Migrants' Expected Type of Work while Moving First time, Nepal 1996**

Expected work	Migrants from well-off families*		Migrants from poor families**	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<b>A Expecting not so Attractive Activities (Pushed)</b>				
Any type of work	8	5.97	127	13.66
Agriculture	11	8.21	94	10.11
Daily wages/ labourer	2	1.49	57	6.13
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15.67</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>29.90</b>
<b>B Expecting Attractive Activities (Pulled)</b>				
Business/Service	93	69.40	461	49.57
Education	13	9.70	131	14.09
Permanent job	3	2.24	13	1.40
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>81.34</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>65.06</b>
<b>C. Missing and Others</b>				
Others	4	2.99	30	3.23
Dependent	0	0	9	0.97
Missing	0	0.00	6	0.65
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.99</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>4.85</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Migration Survey 1996.

Note: \*Migrants whose parents own land and had income of more than NRs1000 per month at the place of origin when they were migrated.

\*\*Migrants whose parents did not own land and/or had income of less than NRs1000 per month at the place of origin when they were migrated.

As Table 2 shows, a relatively higher proportion of migrants from well-off families were pulled out with the expectation of attractive activities such as business/service, education and permanent jobs compared to the migrants from poor families. In contrast to that, a relatively higher proportion of migrants from poor families were expecting not so attractive activities such as work of any kind, agricultural work, and employment for daily wages/labourers in urban destinations.

Although the above suggested associations are not precise, it seems likely that those who stated they were expecting work of any kind are likely to be 'pushed' and those who were expecting to engage in business and service or fixed jobs are likely to be pulled. Even limiting the comparisons to these expected activities, it is evident from the Table 3 that migrants from poor families are mostly pushed and those from rich families are mostly pulled. Proportion of those migrants from poor families expecting any kind of work (13.66 percent) is more than double than that for migrants from rich families (5.97 percent). Furthermore, proportions of those expecting to engage in business/service and permanent jobs were relatively higher for migrants from rich families (69.4 and 2.24 percent respectively) than these proportions for migrants from poor families (49.57 and 1.4 percent respectively). In addition, those expecting to engage in day labour can reasonably be considered to be pushed.

**Table 3. Remitting Status of Migrants: Rural to Urban Migrants, Nepal, 1996**

Remitting Status	Migrants from well-off families*		Migrants from poor families**	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Remitting	49	36.57	256	27.53
Non-remitting	84	62.69	672	72.26
Missing	1	0.75	2	0.22
Total	134	100	930	100

Source: Based on Migration Survey, 1996.

### *c. Remitting status*

Lastly, the differences in remitting behaviour of between migrants from well-off families and those from poor ones are considered. Table 3 presents the remitting status of migrants. As Table 3 shows, proportion of the migrants who were remitting some of their income according to whether they came from poor or well-off families. This proportion is higher for those migrants from well-off families than for migrants from poor families. 36.57 percent of migrants from well-off families were found to be remitting to their family members whereas only 27.53 percent of migrants from poor families were doing so.

This provides some support for Lipton's hypothesis that migrants from well-off families more likely to remit than those from poor families. However, the differences are not possibly as great as one might expect from Lipton's hypothesis. What is evident is that the majority of Nepalese rural to urban migrants do not remit.

Note that the above results relate to Nepalese rural to urban migrants, not rural to rural migrants. Interestingly, the pattern of internal migration in Nepal is rather unique in the

sense that the majority of the rural out-migrants make their destination other rural villages. The Survey report shows that 72.5 percent of rural out-migrants went to rural areas and only 27.5 percent went to urban areas (K.C. et al. 1997). The major stream of migration is one from the north to the south of the country. The northern geographical regions of Mountain and Hills, which are resource-scarce and face the problems of excessive pressure of population on scarce natural resources, are net losers of population whereas the Terai or lowland region, which is relatively rich in natural resources and contains fertile land (K.C. et al. 1997), experiences net inward migration.

However, Nepal shares some common causes of rural to urban migration with other Third World countries. As in other less developed countries, there is a large gap in income and income opportunities between the poor and rich and the majority of the poor reside in villages. As Lipton (1980) noted in case of Indian villages, unequal distribution of assets and great inequality of social and economic status persists among different rural groups and nationally, and such inequalities are further widened by urban-biased developments of the recent past (Panday 1999). The socioeconomic pattern in Nepal is similar to that in India. It may be for this reason that we have been able to observe in Nepal some support for Lipton's hypothesis since his empirical observations are based mainly on migration studies in India.

## **6. Concluding comments**

While push-pull factors cannot always be precisely delineated, and this is a limitation of Tables 1 and 2, the results in Tables 1 and 2 appear on the face of it to support Lipton's hypothesis that reactive or passive migratory behaviour, broadly identified with push

factors, is more prevalent amongst poor rural families than rich ones. It also suggests that more account should be taken of heterogeneity of behaviour in studying reasons for migration. It is likely that a combination of optimising and threshold or satisficing behaviours within rural groups (the type of theory suggested by Lipton) can be more helpful in explaining decisions to migrate than the neo-classical economics approach which assumes uniform optimising behaviour within groups.

Note that our preconception is that push factors are likely to be associated with reactive (threshold or satisficing) behaviours whereas pull factors are more likely to be related to proactive optimising considerations. However, our data does not enable us to test for this hypothesis explicitly.

Further research into the behavioural underpinnings of migratory behaviour therefore seems warranted. We also provided some evidence to support Lipton's view that migrants from poor families at place of origin are less likely to remit than those with well-off families at their place of origin.

In conclusion, although we find evidence for heterogeneity of migratory behaviours in Nepal, it should be noted that such behaviours are liable to vary with cultures and so too consequently will their observed relative frequencies in a population. It may, for instance, be that decisions to migrate in higher income Western countries are relatively more frequently based on optimising or proactive behaviour than is the case in most less-developed countries. Remittance behaviours in a population are also liable to be mixed

and to be culturally influenced, and to vary as well with the stage of a nation's economic development. Finally, observe that the fact that behaviours are heterogeneous does not imply that they are unpredictable. Furthermore, mixed behaviours can be used for predictive purposes if the relative frequencies of behaviours are known and are relatively stable.

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