**Bagbhati 19 Aug 2017**

(Preliminaries)

I was born at Bharatpur in Chitwan and lived with dad, mom, brother and a sister. My brother is also in Qatar, but in another company.

I married Yubraj at the age of 16. It was a love marriage. Another specialty of our marriage was that he belonged to Chaudhary or Tharu ethnic caste group while I to Chhetri (so-called ‘upper Caste’), so it was also an inter-caste marriage. Now, my son is 15 years old and studying in grade VIII.

My father-in-law had married a second wife and has been living separately. The eldest brother-in-law, who also has been migrated to work in the Gulf, had moved to live with his in-laws. My husband happened to be the second elder amongst the four brothers. The younger brother-in-law was working in Malaysia. Mother-in-law lives in the old home with the youngest brother-in-law. All were separated and we have been living in the house of the brother working in Malaysia.

My family’s financial condition is very weak. My husband is merely literate and was migrating to India for work, earlier. We do not have farmland. We needed money to raise and educate our children, take care of the household and build a house. There was no option to earn in Nepal for us, so he had no choice other than go for foreign employment.

He had been to Saudi to work, but the company and job of waiter was not satisfactory. He left it and worked as illegal in other companies for three years until Saudi government pardoned the irregular migrant workers. He returned and again joined and worked with Tycer Company. He came on leave after two years. He worked as a Temporary Police during the Constituent Assembly elections and then returned to Qatar as a private security contractor about a month ago. She had participated in the decision making processes of his all foreign employment attempts.

He was looking for good job abroad and visited many manpower companies recruiting for foreign employment. An acquaintance recommended Bhanu Manpower at Bharatpur and his brother also had suggested to go there, which was close to our home too. Positions matching his qualifications were available. We decided to select the job of a security contractor.

We were motivated in selecting the private security than other professions because it is easy and comfortable in compared to other physical labor works, salary is better than others, job is less difficult and accommodation facilities are better. Another point worthy of consideration was that he had served as a temporary police during the Constituent Assembly elections of Nepal and that experience and certificate were enough to get the job of security personnel.

He was selected based on the certificates he had and his fitness, health, height and weight. We had to pay NRs. 100,000 including the airfare to Qatar but excluding travel and other costs within Nepal prior to departure. His salary at present is 1,500 Qatari Riyal. He sends all the money to me. It exhausts in covering children’s education, household chores and repayment of loan. The overhead expenses come around NRs. 15,000. The money he earns is adequate enough to run the house, but not to save. However, I put aside some money from household expenses at the rate of a maximum of NRs. 100/month in some women’s groups for using in emergencies.

I do not see much difference between a migrant security contractor’s wife and other civilian wives. Most families have someone working abroad for employment.

I have not heard gossips in community about me or any woman squandering hard earned money of husbands working abroad, but it could be behind my back. If there are such rumors or gossips then I think because people perceive things differently. It is difficult to raise children, carry out household duties and accomplish social responsibilities in the physical absence of husband. My husband had not seen the girl child physically; he saw her after she grew up only during the recent vacations. I know he is working hard and in difficult circumstances and his income is not very much. Therefore, I do not spend unnecessarily, but make every penny count. I do not worry about what people say; they commented negatively when we got married.

Our small daughter did not hesitate, but went to sit on his lap when my husband came on leave and handed chocolates and candies to her. She was a bit awkward with him for a couple of days but enjoyed his company later on. He also was excited to meet her. Both the children were sad when he left to work after his leave ended. His eyes were filled with tears. She saw it and teased him saying, “You are crying!”

My husband was abroad for six years. I used the strategy to know and love their dad by telling them that their father was working abroad and will bring chocolates, candies and clothes for us when he comes. I also let them talk with him over the phone whenever we were conversing. Therefore, they easily recognized him as if it was innate. The little girl does not have any idea of what her father does, since she is very young.

(Her son, who is old enough to understand different types of work and foreign employment, said that he knows what work he does abroad and is proud of it too. He told that his father usually asked over the phone if he was studying seriously and doing homework, and further instructed to help his mother, not to wander far away from home and not to play a lot. He used to accept whatever his dad said.)

We often have conversations with my husband over the phone concerning mostly about children’s education, domestic issues, health, building a house, future and in between about their feelings.

I am satisfied with what my husband is doing; this happiness is because we are earning and surviving in a better way than before. It would have been excellent if he was here in the country, at home, doing similar job with such a good salary. In that sense I sometimes feel unfortunate that he has to work in a foreign country amidst dangers. I regard it as his sacrifice for our better lives and future.

My husband does not express grudges normally, but utters resentments of his difficulties and frustrations if he is verbally abused and/or annoyed by his supervisor. I console him saying, ‘we have to educate our children, build a home and save something for future. That job was found by luck. It is more difficult to find a good job and the recruiting agencies will charge a lot of money again. We have to repay the loan and its interest we paid to get this job. That might not be better than this one if by chance we get another job.’

I expect my husband to be healthy and happy, work well and take good rest, safe and secure, and not to worry about us at home. We will also be happy here if he is happy there.

My expectations for myself are to be a good wife to my husband and a good mother to my children, maintain good relations with neighbors and relatives, and manage domestic affairs properly.

I decide the daily expenses for children and home, including payment of fees, etc., which are of regular nature, but I inform him about those. We share and make mutual decisions for large and special expenditures.

I think that mutual trust and understanding, sharing each-other’s happiness and sorrows, and maintaining the ties of love with one-another including not running after gossips and rumors are key to keep marriage strong, when one of the couple is away.

I read and/or hear news of incidents of increase in divorce and/or break-down of families, especially of migrant workers. I believe that the underpinning causes are lack of trust and understanding on the part of any partner, extra-marital or illicit relationships, enticements or alluring by opportunists and misleading by rumor-mongers or unethical elements through electronic social media like facebook. A major factor could be the disintegration of traditional oriental norms and values, which are being displaced by western liberal standards and culture.

My husband is never angry, he cools down immediately and easily starts talking even if he becomes irritated or unhappy; he is very frank and straightforward. These are the traits I love most of my husband.

He says to me that he loves my attribute of sharing happiness and worries in every moment.

I am frustrated with his behavior of going out around loitering with his friends when he is at home on vacations. I want his time to be spent with us most of the time.

It is insecure, fearful and risky to walk after evening. Incidences of rape, sexual abuse, harassment and other forms of violence not only against women but also small girls have grown. Crime rate has increased. Trust and decency of people have vanished. I feel safe and secure when my husband is at home.

The best thing of being a migrant’s wife is monthly remittance, but it might not be true to all.

The biggest fear of husband working overseas is the blockade issues; many have died while in the middle-east. I also dread about accidents, health hazards and security there.

I wish him to be working unless we do not make proper arrangements for building a home, children’s education and our future security.

I have not thought of entering foreign employment an/or local job because I have neither education nor skills to work outside the home and to add more, there are children to take care of. Therefore, I decided to be a full-time house-wife. On being employed I could earn money but I will loose the future of my children.

I do not want any more children. I was not even prepared for the second baby, but was blessed with a daughter. We need to make the future of these two children bright, not just create a horde of piglets.

I aspire my children to be decent human beings by engaging them in apt job, although not an engineer or a doctor, after completing their studies. We have suffered a lot because of low level of academic qualifications. I see many children ruining their lives loafing around and/or addicted to drugs; I want to keep my children safe from those evils.

The Tycer Company and the Qatar Foundation are satisfactory. These companies are better for some and they are doing well. We are working hard and honestly performing our duties. I anticipate that we would be able to build a comfortable house if the salary of my husband reaches at least 2,200/month.

My husband was living with all other security personnel in a labor camp at the Revelation, close to the sea at Qattara, which is a cultural site. He has to work at both, outdoors and indoors.

Thank You!