**Sameer and family 15 Aug**

Preliminaries

Amanda: What made you to decide not to work in Qatar anymore Sameer?

Mother: My Daughter-in-law was complaining a lot.

Amanda: Is she going overseas again?

Daughter-in-law: He is also planning to go.

Amanda: So, are you both planning to go to Portugal?

Daughter-in-law: Yes.

Amanda: Have you gone through that process yet? Is it through a recruiter or manpower provider?

Son: Yes, we have consulted with an agent at Dulegaunda, on the way to Pokhara. The processing is going on. It might take three months.

Amanda: What will you be doing there?

Son: No idea, may be in a restaurant.

Amanda: It does not matter as long as you are with your Daughter-in-law.

Both: Yes.

Amanda: How much do you have to pay this time now?

Son: May be NRs. 1.2 to 1.5 million.

Amanda: What will be the salary? Do you know that?

Son: Less than NRs. 50,000.

Amanda: How do you feel about going overseas again? And having to put that money over costs for visa and so on. Are you excited or how you generally feel?

Son: I am happy and excited to go again.

Amanda: What are your fears for the first time? What are your apprehensions that your son is going overseas?

Mother: I am happy; my Daughter-in-law will also be going with him. Obviously, he must be happy to go with his wife.

Amanda: As a Mother, do you want your son close to you?

Mother: Yes.

Son: As long as I keep sending money including repayment of debt.

Amanda: How did you feel about going to Doha first place? Do you remember the things when you went to Qatar?

Son: September 2014.

Amanda: How did you find about that work?

Son: Al Moon, a manpower company at Basundhara, Kathmandu.

Amanda: How much did you have to pay to get that work?

Son: NRs. 200,000; I paid half of that to the manpower company and the rest for clothes, shopping and other personal expenses.

Amanda: Did you have to pay for the broker, too? Or did you just pay directly to the man power?

Son: I paid directly to the manpower agency.

Amanda: Do they make you sign that you did not pay anything?

Son: No, they did not.

Amanda: Did you guys consult with each other or did he make personal decision to go to Doha?

mother: He did not consult, be took the decision on his own to go.

Amanda: How did you get the NRs. 200,000 to pay and cover other costs?

Mother: I sent him money when he got the visa.

Amanda: Were you happy when he told you that he wanted to go to Doha? Migration is a part of Nepali Story/Family Story. Were you happy with him or would you rather have him stay at home? How did you feel about that when he first told you?

Mother: I was happy, because he must stand on his own feet. My heart was heavy to send him off, but the main thing is livelihood, to earn to live. It is a matter to be proud of, for independence.

Amanda: Did you know about security industry? Were you aware of the sort of work that you were going to be doing?

Mother: Yes, I fully understood the work he was going to do. He was a captain in the Indian Army. So it was not difficult to know the worked he would do as an armed security in Iraq.

Amanda: Was the work that you were doing in Doha similar to that in Iraq?

Son: We had to work as fully armed security with the British and Indian Army in Iraq; that was quite tough. But the work in Doha was unarmed security, which was safer, easier and convenient.

Amanda: Were you worrying about Doha? Because national media was reporting constantly about stories of migrants loosing their lives or being seriously injured. Do that worry for you?

Mother: Yes, I was scared on listening or viewing the news, but he always made calls through viber and told how he was and how his work was like. Sometimes, he was working inside and sometimes outside. I used to be worried when he was working outside. The situation was very bad at that time.

Amanda: Did you tell him when you were afraid? or Did you bottled it up inside?

Mother: No, I did not tell him about it, Otherwise he would have again quitted that job and returned home. I did not want to let him know I was scared.

Amanda: How about you? Did you have any fear or you were excited about your brother? How did you feel your brother working overseas?

Daughter: It was fine although I missed them since I was lonely here.

Amanda: Do you want to work overseas? Is that you wish?

Daughter: Yes, I would. I wish I could go abroad to work.

Amanda: What do you two think of her to go overseas?

Mother: I will allow her to go if she wishes and tells me.

Amanda: You have so many migrants from Nepal in Doha – building Doha, making Doha beautiful and making Doha safe. If you look at Nepal, there are so much building that could be done. how do you feel about that? Is migrant work necessary evil? Just because of local economy or do you feel it something to be celebrated for families that have tofu migrate to work abroad?

Son: It is mostly because of local economy. Pay will be less, compared to abroad, if we do the same work in Nepal. Nepali migrants are motivated mainly by the fact to earn a little bit more money. I would only get NRs. 10 to 15 thousand if I work as a private security in Pokhara, but it would be at least double that amount in the overseas. That is why people are migrating for foreign employment.

Amanda: How do you cope with your absence of your loved wives? You worked through for 2.5 years and come on vacation, and then did not go back. How do you feel about you will not physically see your son for 2.5 years? What sort of strategies like, I guess, mental preparations did you do to cope with that? I am sure, 2.5 years is a very long time to meet anyone you love. How did you think about and cope with that?

Mother: We talked and saw each other through Skype and viber. We communicated everyday. So our mind were set when he said he would return home after 2.5 years. We began count down of his arrival. Later, when he said he would not go back for work did not surprise me. But, he surprised me by his intention to go to another country.

Daughter: I am pleased now that they will be together.

Amanda: What is the running cost of this house? or the cost to keep this house going each month?

Mother: It costs around 70 to 80 thousand per month. This includes repayment of loan and college fee. We do not have to repay expensive loan, but just the ‘Dhukuti’, which is a deposit scheme and you pay a little interest at the small rate if you take loan on a rotation basis ad per the number off members. It is not that much.

Daughter: My elder Daughter is in Australia, she is now undergoing training to get a job.

Amanda: Does your pension cover them?

Father: Just covers those headings.

Amanda: How long do you and your Daughter-in-law have planned to work overseas? 10 years or continue to work until you have enough money for a house? What is your future plan?

Son: My plan is to buy a house and for that we will have to work for 10 years. Land is not cheap. I am Hopeful that I could take mother and Daughter abroad with me; not as workers but as a family living together.

Amanda: Are you trying to get citizenship or permanent residence in Portugal?

Both: Yes, PR.

Amanda: So, that is the plan? It is interesting.

Son: It is to take care of our children. My Daughter-in-law and I will be working there. I hope to take my father and mother, too. That’s my plan.

Amanda: So, that is the reason you guys want to go to Portugal. Because it will be difficult for you to bring in your family.

Son: Yes, I do not know about the process for Doha. I don’t think they have any regulations. Maybe we need to have much higher income. More than 100,000 per month.

Amanda: So that features into your decision to go to Portugal? You decided because it is easier in Portugal or your Daughter-in-law was there?

Son: Both, the first thing was my Daughter-in-law was there. I can’t get a permanent residence in Portugal unless ... (inaudible). After that I can take my family there. I can’t do that in Doha, <So, that feature into the decision –Amanda.>

Amanda: When did you first arrive home after 2.5 years?

Son: In June.

Amanda: What do you guys were doing when he arrived? Did you have a big party?

Mother: He came on a night bus from Kathmandu; arrived early in the morning.

Son: I arrived home at 5 am, exhausted and after taking a bath I went to sleep.

Amanda: Then, did you cook him his favorite meal when he woke up? Was that something special?

Mother: Yes, chicken and pork.

Son: There was no pork in Doha.

Amanda: So where did you guys get money for visa and other expenses?

Mother: We collected little amounts from neighbors and relatives as loan in addition to our saving.

Amanda: If you could have any sort of wish for your children, would you wish them to be migrant workers or what aspirations do you have other than foreign migrant worker, e.g. bankers or engineers or what?

Mother: I have many wishes, but we can’t afford because my Son has small amount of pension. They must earn themselves and live. My daughter has completed higher education, but the son has not.

Amanda: Why you decided not to continue your higher education, but go to overseas?

Son: I failed twice in the exams and stopped to continue education. I tried to join the British Gurkhas, but it did not work out. So there was no option than becoming a migrant worker.

Amanda: Success rate in the British Army is so low, right?

Son: Yes, then I decided to go to unarmed security.

Amanda: Why did you select unarmed security and not hospitality like cooking, etc.?

Son: I thought it was safe job with good salary.

Amanda: For the most part, did you like working in the Qatar Foundation?

Son: Yes, it was a good experience. I met new people from around the world.

Amanda: Is there anything you miss now?

Son: I miss my colleagues; we keep chatting on-line, we have regular contact and communication.

Amanda: How long were you working in Iraq after military?

Dad: For three years; in Barsha and Ompasar.

Amanda: When was it?

Dad: I had joined in 2011.

Amanda: That was quite dangerous .

Dad: Yes, it was very dangerous in Iraq then.

Amanda: How did you feel when he was there?

Son: We were worried and always checked news of Iraq.

Mother: I always, at least everyday, contacted him over the phone.

Amanda: What were your motivations to work in Iraq after retiring from Army?

Dad: Due to family problems, particularly financial. Children were small and studying.

Amanda: Did you have to pay for going to Iraq?

Mother: No, it was free. He served in the Indian Army for 28 years.

Son: My father was also a Captain in the Indian Army and my grandfather had served the British Gurkhas. My brother-in-law and Daughter were in the British Gurkhas and now are living in the UK. My uncle in now in Hong Kong.

Amanda: Your family has heredity of Gurkhas and some sort of global family. Your motivation comes from that, right? Did you just used to be a migrant family?

Mother: And a joint family.

Son: My father-in-law also was a captain, he and his Daughter-in-law passed away six months ago.

Amanda: So, Gurkhas on both sides. Very military family.

Son: The generation before me was all Gurkhas. I broke the cycle.

Amanda: Maybe, your son cam become a Gurkha. Anyway, you opened up different possibilities. You can be a Gurkha if the British open up recruitment of girls. I hear a rumor the British are opening for Gurkha girls. About 2-3 years ago many girls were undergoing training but the British closed it. There is pressure in UK for equal opportunity . That would be interesting if that happens. I can’t wait to see the first Gurkha woman!

Amanda: There are many reasons on how people are motivated to become Gurkha? Unarmed security does not seem to be mirrorize that it seems to be for decent paying job. When you were considering the security job, then did you ask your parents for advice? Or made that decision on your own and then ask them to help financially?

Son: I took the decision myself. I did know the job of unarmed security since I had completed a training of one month in Pokhara and that qualified me for the job.

Amanda: Was it difficult to have communication with your Mother?

Son: No, she was quite happy that I was going abroad for work.

Amanda: Was your dad involved in that conversation, too? Or, did you just talk with your Mother?

Son: At first I talked with Mother.

Amanda: And then your Mother warmed up dad.

Son: Yes.

Amanda: If you go overseas, you want to go for education or work? What is your plan?

Daughter: I want to go to work abroad.

Amanda: In sociology or social work or what? What job would you like to do?

Daughter: As a researcher.

Amanda: Do you know how to navigate the manpower companies to access work overseas? You know some charge a lot of money and give you a fake visa or fake plane ticket> Do you know how to navigate that system at all?

Daughter: Yes.

Son: We trust the guide there. He is the one who sent my wife to Portugal and we plan to go through him.

Amanda: Is he located at Pokhara or Kathmandu?

Son: His office is in Pokhara, too.

Amanda: Does he represent a manpower company or is he a broker?

Son: He is a consultant, he runs a consultancy. He operates and teaches TOEFL, IELTS, computer and language classes. His focus is the migrants or aspiring migrants. He processes visa for migration, too.

Amanda: Do you think the payment for the guide is okay or too much? How do you feel when you pay that much money, though you trust the guide?

Son: The price is obviously very high but there is no other way than to pay him. Every person who has gone to Europe or USA have paid between NRs. 1 and 3 million. We are willing to pay even if it is too high.

Amanda: How long have you worked out in the math? How long will it take to pay if back, given your expected salaries?

Son: We expect to repay the loan by 2 to 3 years.

Amanda: And then, the idea is to eventually go for permanent residence for your family. I believe the idea why Europe is more expensive because of the PR.

Son: Yes, that is the main cause, to get the PR for Europe and hopefully get better paying job after that.

Amanda: And you guys have taken a bold decision. Then, what is going to happen with your house here, if you all are in Portugal?

Mother: Stay for six months here and six months there. Then we will have a nice life. I expect it will materialize after five years, when our son goes there.

Amanda: Nepal has a huge migration rate and a lot of them stay overseas. Do you worry as ageing parents about who is going to take care of you? Money matters, but as you grow older, you need physical care. Do you worry about that without your family?

Mother: Yes, I apprehend much thinking about that.

Dad: Most youths are migrating. We will go to old people’s home, which will take care for us.

Mother: I am confident that my son will take us to Poland.

Son: She is afraid thinking they will be lonely in their old age. But I consoled them that I will take both of them with us after we adjust there. She is happy to go with me. I will take her to Poland.

Mother: We will not be separated, but live together.

Amanda: That would be quite fortunate. A lot of people/families are staying overseas. That might be possibility. That makes it easier. Do you have the idea when you go to Portugal, you might not be able to see your family for another couple of years before they come over? Are you guys mentally prepared?

Mother: Yes, we are.

Amanda: What sort of mental strategies are you thinking about? Are you just focusing on the idea that it might take roughly two years to take them to Portugal? Allowing the fact that you won’t be able to see each other for a couple of years again.

Son: Yes, I think that is the idea they have in their mind. They have made their mind for the possibility that they might not be able to see me even after two years. But, pray that everything will turn out to be fine in the end.

Amanda: Were you able to save from the money that you were making in Doha? Or spent in paying off debt? Where did the money go?

Son: That money has already been finished. Paid off a little bit of debt and all money is gone.

Amanda: Your wife also was making money. Where did that go?

Son: She spent some for my expenses. She paid for house rent, food, tax and other living costs. She does not have much remaining now.

Amanda: That is interesting. When you went to Iraq, did you have an idea that you will work for three years and come home? Why was that three years and not longer?

Mother: He came after each year on vacations.

Dad: The company was closed in Iraq and a new one opened in Afghanistan. I did not feel like going there.

Amanda: Why not Afghanistan? Was it worse than Iraq?

Son: He said he became old and it was my turn to go.

Amanda: Yes, to Pass it on to new generation. A lot of Gurkha families have that idea when they retire they plan to send their sons going overseas and sending money home. When is the time to you and your wife to have a family them?

Son: We are planning for family after I reach there and get a permanent job.

Amanda: How old are you now?

Son: 30 years old.

Amanda: What are your biggest fear and wish in going to Portugal now?

Son: I have worry about paying debt. I will not be able to send money if I do not get a decent job. The interest will grow.

Amanda: That is financial fear; no fear relating to physical safety or becoming skinny?

Mother: The major is financial fear and then health.

Amanda: It is tough even as a guard, working for 12 hours shifts. When you get home it is often 14 hours. Standing on your feet for long hours is physically tiring, too. I think the migrant workers for the most part put their butt off. So, health and finance then.

Son: Yes, both.

Amanda: Will you all go there when you have a family?

Son: Yes, that is our plan.

Amanda: I think that drives migration – that dream. Is this what you plan for your son?

Mother: I expect my son to earn a lot of money standing on his own feet. That’s all. I aspire to go with him and have plenty of beer there.

Dad: My pension is enough for the two of us. We aspire for children’s independence. We will be satisfied with that.

Amanda: The idea of being a part of the family where you are a global family sounds interesting. How do you guys manage that family across different borders? Are Skype and viber are the means for daily conversations?

Mother: Yes, every day.

Amanda: What do you talk about? Do you have arguments?

Mother: No arguments.

Son: My wife is always asking what I was eating and eating well or not. She insisted to drink plenty of water.

Mother: I asked him to drink a lot of water because it was very hot there and lack of water could cause dehydration. I told him not to think of money, but take care of health. He used to send me pictures of what he ate. He is very fond of eating.

Amanda: What conversations did you have with your brother? Ask for something or joke with him?

Son: She jokes with me.

Amanda: What conversations you had with your son?

Mother: I always reminded him to take care of his health.

Amanda: Lots of people are asking about health. What about your wife? Does she show pictures of her eating?

Son: Yes, she did.

Amanda: So, you were the one offering emotional support? Did you ask her what she was eating?

Son: Yes, I was the first one to ask and she also asked me.

Amanda: That emotional support of migrant experience, we don’t talk of that much. The emotional support the family offers to the migrant worker. It is nice to know people are concerned about you, right?

Mother: He always sent photos while working. The pose he sent were always sitting, but never standing.

Amanda: Did you send your parents photos of you sitting around?

Son: Yes, I did. I used to send them photos of my workplace and me eating foods. I send them those photos to give idea of how I was working and eating so that they do not worry.

Amanda: A plot of Nepali go to Doha. Have you visited different places of Doha? The city center? Was that exciting? What are the migrant stories for you guys?

Son: I made video calls and showed videos to my families when I went to the city center and other places.

Mother: He also showed the video of him shopping in the city center mall.

Amanda: What other parts of Doha did you show them?

Son: Al Qatar, where one of our relative was working. Qattara, when I worked there. The North-West University is pretty cool.

Amanda: What did you think when you saw those photos?

Mother: The most interesting place I found was Qatar Foundation. The NW University looked nice and safe, too.

Amanda: In Qattara, you would be outdoors most of the times.

Son: I had duties outside and sometimes inside too. Luckily, I had a good spot there. I was working in a theater, where opera and drama were performed. I saw many of them, but I was not much interested in them. Because it was my workplace. People used to buy tickets worth 150 to 200 Riyals. to see the Opera shows there. Doha is really expensive and it has became more expensive because of the crisis now.

Amanda: Are you happy that he is back before the crisis?

Mother: Yes, of course we are happy. He arrived and the crisis broke out there.

Amanda: Very Lucky.

End of Transciption