



TV

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UN IN ACTION

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NEPAL: WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS

VIDEO

WOMEN IN TEMPLE RING BELLS
AND PRAY

BIJAYA WALKS IN TEMPLE

BIJAYA ON CAMERA

BIJAYA WITH SCHOOL CHILDREN
IN SCHOOL CORRIDOR

AUDIO

NATS OF RINGING BELLS

NARRATION

Pindeswar Temple in south-eastern Nepal. Women pray to the Hindu god, Shiva, to protect those who provide for their families. Traditionally, this has always been the husbands – many of whom work abroad sending money for their wives back home. But that is changing. (18")

Bijaya Rai Shreshta's once *also* worked abroad and now it is she who provides for the family. (6")

BIJAYA: (English) **F**

"I don't think I would have been the main breadwinner if I had not gone for foreign employment." (4")

NARRATION

Bijaya, once a school teacher in Nepal, spent two years as a migrant worker in Japan. Her

earnings there helped fulfil her lifelong wish.
(10")

PHOTOS OF BIJAYA'S TWO SONS

BIJAYA: (English) **F**

"I think I have fulfilled my dream because I could educate my sons in an English-medium school." (4")

NEPALI WOMEN AT AIRPORT

NARRATION

Like an estimated 420,000 Nepali women currently working abroad, Bijaya sent money home making a large contribution to the family finances. (10")

HANDS TAKE MONEY

BIJAYA WITH HER MOTHER-IN-LAW
AND SON EATING LUNCH

And for Bijaya there was another benefit – new status with her in-laws. Once confined to the kitchen, now she's as an honoured guest. (9")

BIJAYA ON CAMERA

BIJAYA: (English) **F**

"My mother-in-law always says that she's proud of me, and she even says that you are my best daughter-in-law!" (5")

JEEP CROSSES RIVER-BED
ALONGSIDE BRIDGE

NARRATION

Bijaya was one of the lucky ones. Her education helped her avoid the exploitation that too many Nepali women migrant workers fall prey to. (9")

SHARU JOSH ON CAMERA

SHARU JOSH: (English) **F**

"Almost 58 percent of women are illiterate and they do not have a proper and reliable

source of information.” (5.5”)

NARRATION

SHARU JOSH WORKING IN HER
OFFICE AT UNIFEM

Sharu Josh works with the United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNIFEM, in Nepal. With UNIFEM’s support, Bijaya and other returned migrants formed Pourakhi, an organization promoting safe and fair migration for *all* women. (17”)

USHA RAI WEAVES IN HER HOUSE,
WITH HER SON AND DAUGHTER

Women like Usha Rai. (3”)

A poor illiterate woman from a village, 42-year-old Usha lived in one room with her two teenage children, waiting for money to arrive from her husband abroad in Kuwait. (1”)

USHA RAI ON CAMERA

USHA RAI: (Nepali) **F**
“He has never sent a cent.” (2”)

NARRATION

HELICOPTER SHOT SKYLINE IN
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Desperate and lured by promises of financial rewards, in 2008 she sought work in the Gulf. But to finance her travel, Usha had to borrow the colossal sum of almost \$1,000 – more than three times the average annual income. She had to put up her only possession – her land – as collateral. Then once in the Gulf, the promised wages as a cleaner were barely enough to live on. (30”)

USHA WEEDS HER LAND

USHA RAI ON CAM

USHA RAI: (Nepali) **F**

"I didn't know whether I should eat with that money or educate my children with it or pay off my debts. I was panic stricken." (7")

USHA COOKS, LEAVES HOUSE

NARRATION

After 11 months, the company Usha worked for closed down and she had to return to

RAJEV SITS ON THE FLOOR WITH HIS SCHOOLBOOKS

Nepal. Now unemployed, she's overwhelmed by debt, unable to buy back her land. Her son, Rajev, questions whether she will be able to pay for his schooling. (17")

USHA WEAVES WHILE HER SON STUDIES

USHA RAI: (Nepali) **F**

"I don't know what to say – I have to say that I can to provide a ray of hope. But I don't know how I will educate him." (7.5")

SHARU JOSH AND BIJAYA RAI SHRESHTA IN A MEETING

NARRATION

To protect women migrant workers like Usha from exploitation, Pourakhi, UNIFEM and other like-minded organizations, lobbied the government for years. Finally, in 2007, their efforts paid off. The government of Nepal introduced the innovative new Foreign Employment Act which specifically protects both the economic and social rights of women who go abroad to work. (26")

WOMEN IN STREETS

SHARU JOSH ON CAMERA

SHARU JOSH: (English) **F**

"These women proved themselves, they are contributors; they have strengthened household economy as well as national

economy. So legal protection, and implementation of this Act is our priority.”
(13”)

WOMEN IN PUBLIC

NARRATION

USHA PUTS ON BLUE SCARF

The Act stipulates that women who lost their jobs abroad can now be compensated with up to 40 percent of their initial costs of travel. And Usha is now trying to claim *her* compensation. (11.5”)

SHARU JOSH ON CAMERA
BIJAYA VISITS USHA AT HER
HOUSE

SHARU JOSH: (English) **F**

“There are so many challenges. If we can address these challenges, women can be better benefited.” (4”)

UN LOGO

NARRATION

This report was produced by Gill Fickling for the United Nations.