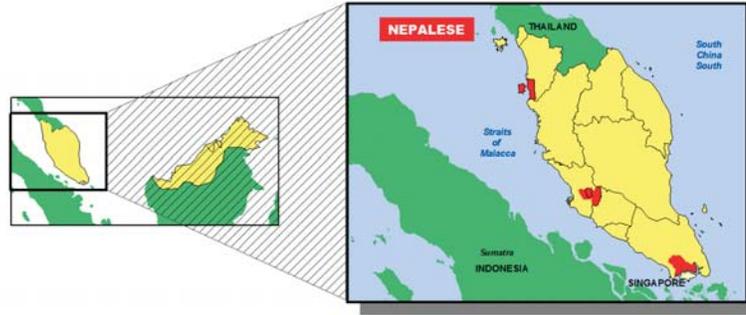


NEPALESE



Population	Major Religion	Language
200,000	Hinduism	Nepali

Who are the Nepalese?

Nepal, which is located between two giant nations, China and India, is a small land-locked country. Economically, Nepal is considered as one of the least developed countries. Therefore, quite a considerable number of Nepalese work abroad due to the absence of employment within the country.

The Nepalese migrant workers are people from Nepal who have come to Peninsular Malaysia, especially urban areas, to earn more income. There are about a hundred thousand legally employed Nepalese workers in Malaysia. However, an estimate of another hundred thousand Nepalese work as illegal immigrants in the country for reasons such as closure of factories or when manpower or placement agencies take advantage of them by retaining large portions of their salaries that is why they prefer to find a job on their own.

Nepali is the major language spoken. They also speak different dialects since they all come from different places in Nepal.

What are their lives like?

Majority of the Nepalese who come to Malaysia work in plantations and factories such as electronics, cosmetics, steel, and furniture. Others work in restaurants as cooks, shopping malls, printing press, and as security guards. Most of the Nepalese who go abroad are educated male from middle class families. They go abroad with a hope of earning much within a short period of time.

Generally, the work contract that most of the Nepalese get is about two to three years. Once the second year is over, the employers or business owners will provide an airfare for them to go back to their country if they want to. If the business owners pay and treat them well, they tend to stay another year to work.

The Nepalese are warm and friendly people. They value their relationship with each other and would help other fellow Nepalese when they are able to.

Many of the Nepalese migrant workers go through a lot of challenges in coming to Malaysia. The loan sharks at manpower agencies prey on the vulnerable and the desperate. Usually, the family of the worker has to sell land or take on a huge loan to be able to send abroad the relative who wants to work abroad. They have a big responsibility to pay back whatever they owe to their relatives that's why they need to work hard.

What do they believe?

The Nepalese adhere to Hinduism. Despite being far from their country, they still celebrate festivals such as the *Dashain* (celebration of great victory of the gods over the wicked demons which falls either in October or November) and *Deepavali* (festival of lights). For these festivals, they can ask the employers for at least one day holiday.

What are their needs?

Many Nepalese are cheated and exploited by manpower agencies who take away a large amount of the workers' earnings in illegal deposits or commissions, often up to three times the actual cost of a job. Some are not treated very well by business owners and are forced to work hard with very low salary.

Language is also one of the challenges that the Nepalese face since most of them cannot speak English or Bahasa Malaysia, Malaysia's official language. As a result, some factory owners are sending them back to Nepal and are getting workers from China into Malaysia to work in their factories. Pray that God will raise up local believers in Malaysia to help with the legal issues concerning the welfare of the Nepalese migrant workers.