

Occupational Shift in Semi-urban areas of Nepal: A Socio-cultural Dynamics

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Abstract

Occupational shift, people shifting from the traditional sector to the modern economic sector, is a global phenomenon. People in Nepal are also shifting away from agriculture to other economic sector. But in Nepal, the socio cultural dynamics is considered more vital in this shift. This paper analyzes peoples' perception regarding their experiences of occupational shift from sociocultural perspective. This study adopts a qualitative research design with narrative inquiry approach. For this, the experience of four research participants from Kathmandu valley were purposefully selected. In addition to listening and reflecting to their life stories about engagement to abandon agriculture occupation, their activities, emotions, and lifestyle were also narrated, observed and analyzed. The findings of this research indicate that several socio cultural aspects such as modernization, urbanization, industrialization had greater influence in this process. People in the name of being modern, were gradually shifting from traditional sector (agriculture) to modern economic sectors. The research hence concludes that potentiality of agricultural sector is still high for the country to generate employment and thus it is important to redefine the agricultural policy to attract youth towards it.

Keywords: *occupational shift, agricultural sector, non-farm sector, socio-cultural dynamics, urbanization, modernization,*

Introduction

Nepal has always been defined as an agrarian society since its origin. Agriculture is also the backbone of Nepalese economy along with the prime source of employment and livelihood. In the decade of 1980s, agriculture contributed 70-80% share in national GDP in Nepal employing around 76.1% of its total population (Central Bureau of Statistics

[CBS], 1999). With time, the dominance of agriculture contributing in GDP as well as providing employment opportunity has been gradually declined. Today, the primary economic sector of the country contributes only 27% to GDP employing 66% of total population (International Labor Organization (ILO), 2019, Ministry of

Finance [MOF], 2020). The third national living standard survey reports around 20% (from 53% to 35%) decline in wage earners from the agricultural sector during 1995/96 to 2010/11, whereas the same percentage (47% to 65%) of wage earners has increased in non-farm sectors (CBS, 2011). Once able to be positioned as a paddy exporter in the 1970s, Nepal, at present, imports every basic food items such as rice, wheat and many crops to feed its people (Chaudhary, 2018). In this paper, this declining status of agricultural sector has been viewed from the lens of occupational shift.

Anywhere around the world, the occupational shift from the agricultural. ILO (2006) says that the occupational shift from farm to the non-farm sector is considered as a normal trend in the development process of a country. The phenomenon of shifting from the traditional sector to modern employment is generally considered as a consequence of economic progress (Ghimire, 2016). The process of transition from farm to non-farm employment as a consequence of industrialization (ILO, 2006) and this process have occurred in society since the human evolution (Volti, 2012). The history of present developed countries shows that from agriculture to industry and then to the service sector, i.e., agricultural society to an industrial one and then the modern society. In those countries, industrialization acts as a drawing element of farm labor to other diversified productive sectors (Murata, 2008). As Lewis theory states (Todaro, 1977) the rationale behind this is

the high productivity of non-farm sector in comparison to the traditional agriculture sector. So the labor force gradually shifts from the low productive sector to high productive sector. Meanwhile, in the United States of America, advancement in technology and information employed farm employees to non-farm employment. Likewise, in countries like Bhutan, Pakistan, Thailand, India, education seemed to be the driving force of non-farm employment (Rahut et al., 2017; Venkatesh et al., 2015). In sum, the occupational shift occurs primarily because of the economic development resulting from several associated events like technological advancement, industrialization, agricultural mechanization and so on. In many cases, fostering agricultural productivity inevitably led to industrial growth and the two distinct economies (farm and non-farm sector) naturally sustain each other during the process of economic development (Ghimire, 2016). Production of raw materials to run agro-based industries, income source to invest in industrial development through the export of agricultural products, surplus food to feed urban workers and through many other ways, agriculture can support industrial growth (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2017). This shows that, despite agriculture sector being a foundation for the development of other non-farm sectors, people engaged in agriculture sector gradually shift to other sectors in the course of expansion of other economic sectors.

Apart from this fundamental dynamics of the occupational shift in global development

history, Nepal experiences a different dynamics acting dominantly in Nepal's occupational shift from agriculture to non-farm sectors. Neither the agriculture productivity of Nepal has fostered well enough to support industrial growth via raw materials and surplus labor supply, nor has it sufficiently developed its industrial sector to attract labor. Achieving an average agricultural GDP growth rate of 2.9% in ten years of period (MOF, 2015) is not worth the efforts invested. Likewise, commercialization and agricultural mechanization is a new topic in Nepal. Nepalese agriculture possesses only 4% of commercialized farmers with big land holdings (2 hectares or more) and only 52% of farmers throughout the nation possess the most basic equipment (CBS, 2011). Despite functioning as a primary economic sector of the nation, agricultural productivity is declining with time. On the other hand, the increasing flow of people to non-farm sector is not drawing any significant improvement due to high economic growth. The economic growth of Nepal records only 5% over the last decade (MOF, 2020). In fact, industrialization is occurring sluggishly contributing only 14.3% to national GDP (MOF, 2019). This does not reflect to have followed world economic history of shifting agriculture labor to industry sector. Thus, the prime cause of the occupational shift from the agricultural sector seems to be vague in the Nepalese context.

Some literatures highlight the socio-cultural causes as prime force for the labor shift.

Seddon et al. (1998) argues, Nepal is moving towards urbanization and monetization as reinforced by economic globalization and market enforcement (as cited in Paudel et al., 2014). This process has greater implications in terms of changing agro-based land use, livelihood and occupational shift. The occupation of people is aligned with their social life which is ultimately guided by prevailing values and norms of society. Education remained one such changing agent generating new social norms and values in Nepali society. When there was a lack of formally educated people till a few decades ago, getting government jobs was quite easy for most of the educated people in Nepal. Such jobs were table works and less laborious than agricultural works. Moreover, such white collar jobs were considered as the symbol of power and prestige by the society (Bista, 1991). Thus, despite the government's intention to expand school education was guided by development agendas and making people literate (Bhatta, 2009; National Planning Commission [NPC], 1980), the general people understood it differently. In fact, the common were not happy with their traditional occupation such as agriculture which needed hardship of labor. So, for people, schooling meant occupational mobility from their traditional, manual and hard type of physical work to non-manual and easy table work (Shrestha, 1998). These social values were acting dominantly in Nepal's occupational shift from agriculture sector.

The country for the last couple of decades has experienced permanent rural to urban migration of its formally qualified educated people. Such practices have developed a social belief among Nepali youth that agriculture is a job of uneducated and unskilled people (Paudel et al., 2014). Not only limited to formally qualified educated people but the trend of migration has also been accelerated among youth as well, seeking different facilities such as education, health, employment and ultimately a better lifestyle. In this process, many youths of the country, at present, migrated for foreign employment. This has ultimately taken away all the working age group out of the nation and no human resources are available for continuing farm work. Such situation has not only increased barren lands but is slowly threatening the existence of agriculture profession from the nation (Subedi & Dhital, 2007). In addition, foreign employment has developed a new fashion in society. The spouses in foreign employment would send the remittances to the family while the counterpart runs their livelihood from that money.

The aforementioned occupational shift of the agricultural workforce has generated several adverse effects in the country. The declining agricultural production has made us dependent on other countries. Visualizing the favorable agro-ecological system, potentiality and competitive advantage of Nepalese agriculture, there are lots of efforts being made right from the first five-year plan at national level (Department of Agriculture

[DOA], 2018; Dhital, 1970). Each periodic and long-term plan includes at least few new programs. But, the agricultural productivity, competitiveness and earnings are at ground level. Rather than utilizing the boon of rich natural resources within the nation, the country has enforced its human resource to get employment in foreign countries. This is only wasting our precious resources and opportunities.

Methodology

Most of the existing literatures on occupational shift from agriculture to other sectors in Nepal seem more focused to explore the factors of occupational shift at macro level. But applying a qualitative research approach with an interpretive inquiry strategy, this study concentrates at people's experience and their perspective. Since the main purpose of this study was to understand the socio-cultural dynamics of occupational shift from agriculture to non-agricultural sector, it analyzes the people's experiences and stories. The rationale behind choosing interpretive inquiry approach is to describe, understand and interpret the experience, perception and interaction of people behind their action of occupational shift Lichtman (2013) Here the peoples; experience has facilitated to understand how the meaning and interpretations were made by the research participants in their occupational shifts based on their lived and told stories and their perception about the stories (Cohen et al., 2018). This approach helped me to understand the contextual and

individual meaning of occupational shift based on the life and livelihoods-related stories of my research participants in that specific context.

The research participants of this study were purposefully selected from the northern part of the Kathmandu Valley. The two localities; one of Gokarneshwor and another of Kageswori Manohara municipality were selected as the research sites. The rationale behind choosing these areas was the special characteristics of the nature of these places. Gokarneshwor municipality had been experiencing a rapid occupational shift of labor from farm to non-farm economies in the last two decades. Likewise, Kageswori Manohara municipality has been following a similar path since last one decade.

Kanchha Magar, Suntali Bhauju, Master Babu and Bhagyashali are the four participants of the study. The stories of these four participants were adequate to understand the socio-cultural dynamics of occupational shift in the research site. These are the dummy names given to them. In this regard, selection of two males and two female participants was not only to maintain gender balance but it also remained meaningful for the study to understand the different decision-making process for these two genders. Along with the in-depth interview, the detail observations were made on participants' day-to-day lives, behavior and surroundings. Several round field visits were made in the study adopting a circular and iterative process (Walliman, 2011).

Occupational Shift from Socio-Dynamic Lens

The stories and experiences of four different participants derived a clear picture of why and how occupational shift in Nepalese context is occurring. The interaction with these participants thus, portrayed four major dynamics behind the phenomenon elaborated in further sections.

Changing social norms, values and culture

The stories of my four participants reflected the change in their occupation was aligned with the transformation of society from traditional to a modern one. There were many events as a result of this transformation that guided not only the occupation of people but their culture and life as a whole. The modernization theory fundamentally explains how an old, rural, agricultural society transforms into a materialistic, urban and industrialized society (Kumar, 2020) in a uniform modality globally. There are some distinct features of modern society that define society as modern if it possesses those characteristics. The components such as individualism urbanization; changing from extending family to small and nuclear family; determining individuals by their property holding, occupation, and education level are some other distinct features of modern society (Kumar, 2020). I could visualize all these features of modern society in my research areas and these elements were strongly associated with the phenomenon of my participants' occupational shift.

One of the consequential event of modernization was the change in family nature. The traditional society was basically composed of large or joint family and each member in the family would engage in farm works. With time, the composition of family changed to the nuclear one in a modern society. This is believed to be the consequence of modernization (Ibrahim et al., 2011). The nuclear family as a result of modernization is a concurrent event of urbanization. The youths migrate to urban areas in search of high-earning employment opportunities and a better lifestyle leaving old members in the family (Mayowa, 2020). The tendency amplifies once an individual is engaged in multiple economic activities other than agriculture at diverse locations. This is visible in the lives of my research participants as well. Bhagyashali who came as a bride to the family of around 10-12 members during 2045 BS, has only four of them left in her family at present. Her husband lives in the quarter of the central office for being a government official, all the six children are in abroad for higher education. Only her handicapped mother in law, asthma patient elder sister in law and her brother in law were there at her house. She mentioned the sort of human resource to be the prime issue for not being able to cultivate their lands and lend all of them on lease.

A young, strong, and active participant of the study Kanchha Magar narrated similar experience about his family history. Around the 1990s, agriculture was everything for Kanchha's grandparents; their work,

occupation, source of income and their mainstay of survival. At that time, not only his grandparents, even the small children at house supported in farm work. Little Kanchha and his siblings had all the responsibilities of rearing livestock and looking after household chores when their guardians worked day and night on field. Slowly while coming to the period of his father around 2030 B.S., other alternatives were explored. The, his father completely left agriculture and started working at some construction company far from his house. Their ancestral agricultural lands were being managed by Kanchha himself even during his father's period. Kanchha frankly expressed that he felt his father's job to be much more productive, easier, and better than what his grandparents did during their time. The newer opportunities kept attracting youths and pulling them away from agricultural occupation. Just like how both of the Kanchha's daughters are planning to settle abroad, or Suntali Bhauju's grandson getting approval for PR in Australia, the younger generations in the family are migrating to other nations in search of better education, employment and ultimately the lifestyle. Meanwhile, the older members of the family like Suntali bhauju, Master babu's couple are left alone at home. They are physically weaker and unable to engage in the laborious tasks of agriculture. Then, due to a shortage of human resources to engage in the field, the agricultural occupation as a whole is at risk. Such a phenomenon is gradually pulling people away from the agricultural occupation.

Connecting to the first issue of changing socio-cultural aspect in the society brings another event i.e. foreign migration, either for work or education. Despite having four spouses (three daughters and one son), Master Babu felt lonely to live in his new house with his wife. In a heavily decorated, modern concrete house, there were only two people living there, Master babu and his wife. Deep down, he wished his children to return to Nepal. But he was frequently trying to hide that feeling by describing the luxurious and happy lifestyle of his son in the USA. Big house, cars and trucks, excellent job, handsome salary and quality lifestyle of his son looked pretty attractive for him. Likewise, Suntali bhauju despite of spending her entire lives in farm works seem to be proud of her grandson for holding Australian PR. In fact, she bravely addressed that she had kept her hardy earned land holdings as a security deposit in bank while sending her grandson abroad. Despite of being unsatisfied with their decision of settling in abroad, my participants expressed the matter of having their children in abroad as their pride and prestige. However, my research participants were not happy and wished to have at least some successors to take care of their ancestral lands and properties. To justify the need of going abroad, they used to argue that no career and employment opportunity was possible inside a country having a disgusting political environment. The sense of loneliness and the pain in their eyes were frequently reflected while interacting with Master Babu, Suntali Bhauju and Bhagyashali. Their wish was

to have their children return home and take responsibility for all the properties and land. But their children never returned after their education as they permanently settled there. Those youths were hardly found worried about their parents and their interests. Their priority was to enjoy a modern and luxurious life abroad, rather than valuing the family, culture and tradition in the home country.

The third thing that became trending with the changing norms and values was desire for luxurious, modern and so-called high standard lifestyle. This is because, determining an individual's status by their property holding, occupation, and education level is another feature of modernization (Kumar, 2020). Historically, peoples' status in the research area was judged based on the landholdings and quantity of grains harvested. Now in modern society it all depends upon their education level, their achievement in non-farm sector, income level, their clothing, food habits and so on. And my participants couldn't find all these pro-status features to be possible by engaging in agriculture. Kanchha Magar, Suntali Bhauju, Master Babu as well as Bhagyashali, all felt this in one way or the other. This doesn't appear to be happening all of a sudden, in fact it is groomed as a culture slowly with time and transformation in society. Despite of spending their entire lives and investments in farm, neither the Kanchha's grandparents nor Suntali bhauju, Bhagyashali's father in laws nor Master babu's parents encouraged their future generation to continue agriculture.

They always worked hard and earned to educate their children so that their children would not have to live a laborious life being into agriculture. The future generation always got something more and better than their forefathers. The same Kanchha who got new clothes once a year started buying new clothes for his daughter once a week. Spending entire lives by eating *dhido* so that they could save paddy to sell and make money for livelihood, Bhagyashali's or Suntali bhauju or even Master babu always tried their best to give high standard, luxurious lifestyle to their children of course with better education. So, the hard work, labor, patience, the risk incurred in this occupation is unfamiliar to the new generation. No doubt that they were made so by their surrounding culture at home or the lessons they got in life.

The culture that parents fulfilling each and every demand of their children at any cost slowly became an established norm in the society. This led to the situation of youth members dominating the family. How sad was Suntali bhauju when she talked about how rudely her son and daughter in law treated her when they saw her going to work in farm. Still she was forced to obey them and stay at home leaving all her work. Likewise, when Bhagyashali asked her small daughter to help in farm works, she always denied saying that it was none of her concern and her studies was something different than agriculture. The culture of following elders, respecting their thoughts or obeying them faded with time. Now, the youths who grew

up in modern culture and thoughts possessed individualism. Chiswell and Lobly (2018) explain individualism to be a prominent character of a modern societies of developed countries. The Western world is largely characterized by dominant modern theories where individuals are considered free and autonomous (Soars, 2018). Regardless of judging this feature as wrong or right, I found, especially the youth from the family of my research participants possess this character. Individualism is the attitude of human beings that emphasizes the importance of the self and individual actions are guided by the motive of self-benefits (Soars, 2018). One could find a drastic change in the society that along with the attitudinal change from collectivism to prioritizing individualism, greatly supported the process of occupational shift in the society. The narrations of my research participants signified that these new generations were usually talking about their rights and never fulfilling their responsibilities. Parents were compelled to fulfill any demands of their children and the children had a perception of enjoying a luxurious life. Thus, the agricultural land which was previously a place to work has now become a means of earning easy money for luxurious life. Today, the future generation of all my participants were planning to rent the land to commercial businesses like party palace, shopping malls, apartments, and earn easy money from it. Interestingly, I noticed that this was the same agricultural land that made the life of my research participants distressful and difficult during the past and it

was transforming to the means of enjoying a luxurious life at present.

Agriculture as a Low Graded Occupation

Agriculture was taken as a low-level and less prestigious occupation right from the participants' forefather's period. Despite relying solely on agriculture for their survival, they never prioritized agriculture over any other occupation. In the past, all my research participants relied on the agricultural sector to make money and run their livelihood. They worked hard on this occupation but these efforts were made not to foster the occupation. Rather, their hidden interest was to pull back their children from it. And one of the strong strategies for this was to educate their children. Its driving force was the belief that education could get them a respectful and clean table works, unlike laborious and dirty agricultural occupation.

Agriculture occupation being considered as a disrespectful occupation is a worldwide phenomenon. One of the studies conducted in a rural area of Indonesia revealed that youths have a negative perception of agricultural occupation (Widiyanti et al., 2019). It was guided by their interaction with friends and schoolmates. Moreover, their teacher also directed them towards other alternatives which seemed more respectful than agriculture. Khanal et al. (2021) obtained similar findings from a study in the Lamjung district in Nepal. Especially youths were abandoning agriculture occupation due to social beliefs of taking agriculture as a burdensome occupation done mostly by

the aged, under-privileged and uneducated people. They consequently found very little contribution from youths in agriculture; 45% of youths among the surveyed ones had negative opinions towards agriculture and were out of it.

The society where my participants lived believes agriculture to be an occupation of the poor and uneducated people. Hence, they or more strongly their children grew up constructing similar mindset. Moreover, the hardship and losses expressed by their parents became even more convincing for them to deviate from agriculture. Having said this, Suntali Bhauju, who spent her entire life in agriculture, belongs to the older generation. The rest of the participants were in a transition phase. However, regarding their future generation, they were very sure that they would completely abandon agriculture as an occupation. Widiyanti et al. (2019) supports the similar thinking of the older generation in society being obstructive for youths to be into agriculture. Thus, I understood this phenomenon of the occupational shift was due to socio-culturally constructed mindset which got stronger along the new opportunities created with time after each generation.

In Nepal at present, common people are not happy with their traditional occupations such as agriculture and animal husbandry which are considered quite laborious. At the same time, formal education has led occupational mobility from their traditional type of manual and hard physical work to non-manual and

easy table work (Shrestha, 1998). However, the judgment criteria of society upon the status of the family still includes landholdings. But, the eye of judgment behind it is different today. Holding more land being a source of higher agricultural production previously has changed to a high source of money today. Likewise, people with white-collar jobs are considered as superior over the inferior occupation of agriculture. Acquiring education has been highly valued considering it as a strong source of more power, property and prestige (Bista, 1991). Thus, in the name of becoming modern, people and societal values are changing regarding ownership of more property, acquiring higher education and engaging in a white-collar job. All these changing values have speeded up the occupational shift in society recently.

Role of Nepalese Educational System

Nepal holds quite a short history of formal education. If we go just seven decades back, there existed a very few schools in Nepal. Almost 98 percent of the population was illiterate and depended upon subsistence agriculture for livelihood, so there were merely 300 college graduates in the entire country (United States Agency for International Development [USAID], 2001). After the downfall of the Rana regime in the early 1950s and then of donor agencies, the country entered a new course of modern development with periodic plans. But there were very few educated people in the country. Thus, at that time even those school graduates of that period got employment in

some administrative work due to scarcity of educated human resources in the country. The life of these government employees was much attractive than that of the agriculture life in many ways. Just like how Master babu started his career in government job right from his early age (around 2030 BS) was quite attractive and supportive to his family. Such events were remarkable milestone for society in developing educational perception on education in many ways. This was also the starting point of an occupational shift from agriculture to non-farm sectors in the country.

The administrative work was much easier than the physically tough work in agriculture. The same Master babu was even complaining about how laborious agricultural tasks and working barefoot on frosty fields during their young age is causing various illness at present. People conceived that they get an opportunity in such works only if they attained formal education. That must be reason why Bhagyashali's father in law always cursed his fate for not getting access to education and always focused on educating all his five children. More than this, the government people had a different social status with their important role and scope. This created a kind of hierarchy where the government jobs remained at the top over other occupations, eventually the result of educational attainment. Hence, education became a symbol of power and prestige in society (Bista, 1991). But the government job and that also the educational institutions were available only in the capital

or cities. Thus, it led to the peoples' mobility from rural to urban areas. The government employees migrated from the rural areas with their families. Thus, this was, eventually, a starting point of the occupational shift from agriculture to the non-farm sector in Nepal. These phenomena established new norms and values towards education in the society that schooling meant occupational mobility from their traditional, manual and hard type of physical work to non-manual and easy table work (Shrestha, 1998). These values continued in society till today in one or another way.

Along with the planned development activities of the country, the government expanded its various development activities. The process of industrialization and opening new avenues of business and service continuously demanded the educated human resources in the country. Again, all these changes occurred in the cities which drove the flow of people to urban centers. Some were in pursuit of higher and better education while some were in seeking different occupations. People could migrate but they couldn't take their land and agriculture occupation along with them. Thus, the meaning of education as an occupational shift from agriculture to other sectors became a permanent social structure. Here also, the interaction between structure and agency made the occupational shift as a social structure.

After the 1990s, this practice of pursuing higher education extended to foreign countries as well. Especially the middle and

upper-middle-class people started to send their children to foreign universities. From among my research participant's at least one of their children were in the USA or Australia for higher education. Thus, agricultural activities no longer exist in their families. Thus, the occupational shift has become a deep-rooted phenomenon of our community in search of better and higher education to get better jobs in other non-farm sectors. The statistical data also yield the reverse order of educational development and peoples' engagement in agriculture occupations. While comparing the literacy rate, it has increased from two percent in the 1950s to 70 percent at present, while the people's engagement in agriculture reduced from 98 percent to 60 percent at present (USAID, 2001; MoF, 2020).

Formal schooling enables an individual for occupational mobility from traditional, manual and hard types of physical work to non-manual and easy table work. Sometimes it results because of our educational system. Our society has a perception that once people get educated, they should not engage in agriculture. Even the people having higher education in the agriculture stream are found looking for white-collar jobs. "*People who have no interest in soil are the ones who get degrees in agriculture sciences*" (Bista, 1991, p.132). The experiences show that parents educate their children because they want to take them out of agriculture occupation. At present, despite people's perception of the meaninglessness of formal education for their life and livelihood, their priority is to

educate their children with the hope of a better future. As Bista (1991) claims, despite the school and college education as less meaningful, people seek to get educational degrees just to acquire higher status in society. So the question is how to make those degrees meaningful.

Likewise, our education system hardly prioritizes the technical and vocational education and training (Parajuli, 2013). It has always been regarded as the second option for people or as the sector meant for socio-economically disadvantaged group. With the formulation of Constitution of Nepal 2072, nation has been prioritizing technical education for fostering the economic development (Nepal Law Commission, 2015). However, the red book of different fiscal years show that share of TVET in total educational budget had been declining from 4.6% in 2015/16 to 4% in 2016/17 and then to 3% in 2018/19. It is only after the formulation of new educational policy that budget allocation to TVET sector slightly raised to 5.19% in fiscal year 2019/20 (MOF, 2015/16-2019/20). The new educational policy “National Educational Policy 2076” focuses on producing educated, skilled, competent tech-friendly, human resources for transforming Nepal into prosperous nation (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MoEST], 2019). Ultimately, it intends to enhance citizen’s employability for having nation’s economic progress. Thus, after formulation of new educational policy in 2019, the budget allocation in TVET seems to be slightly risen, i.e. 5.19% in fiscal

year 2019/20. However, the rise is quite negligible.

Even within the technical education, plans and programs seems more focused towards other sectors like engineering, IT and hotel management. The new dual vet apprenticeship program has also been designed for mechanical, electrical, automobile engineering, hotel management and IT (Boli, et. al, 2019). Its focus on agriculture seems null. The informal sector barely recognizes the farmer’s knowledge and skill who does not have formal education. Society hardly gives respect to the farmers even they possess excellent knowledge and skills in this sector. However, with the new strategy of recognition to prior learning (RPL) and new national vocational qualification framework, there is a new ray of hope to retain people in agricultural sector (CTEVT & NVQS, 2019). If this concept could be practiced, it would give honor and self-respect to those farmers which would motivate them to continue their occupation.

Conclusion

The study was undertaken to explore socio-cultural dynamics behind the phenomenon of occupational shift. It explored the complex phenomenon explaining how the socio-cultural dynamics functions to deviate people from agriculture to other sectors. Despite of being established as a natural process during the course of development globally, the pace and modality of occupational shift varies with the context of different countries. Generally, people shift from agriculture to

industrial and then to service sector with the economic progress. The phenomenon of occupational shift in Nepal is different from the experience of the developed countries. In developed nations, the shift from agriculture to other sector was associated with the agro-based development of industries and service sector where resources and raw materials from agricultural sector is utilized to foster other sectors. But in case of Nepal, people seem to be simply escaping the agricultural sector and moving to other sectors without proper plans and vision. The phenomenon is thus, bypassing the people in Nepal instead of benefiting them. This is not only causing loss of foundation for industrial growth but also making people ignore the most potential sector of the nation, both nature-wise and resource-wise.

The study hence concludes that, the globally occurring phenomenon of occupational shift would be beneficial to people if it is taken in a natural way by utilizing agricultural sector to construct a strong foundation for development of other economic sectors and enhance their productivity. This can be eased with the meaningful implication of technical education in agricultural sector to enhance the employability and productivity of farmers. Simply, with the support of technical education, the indigenous skills and knowledge of farmers could be recognized hence acknowledging the value of agriculture to develop our nation.

Since the agricultural occupation is less valued in our society and considered the

income source of poor and uneducated people. So, the overall educational system needs to be remodeled in such a way that it values our traditional occupation such as agriculture. The awareness of its potentiality, contribution and essence in the lives of Nepalese people and, Nepal as a whole, should be highlighted right from the primary level of education. In addition to this, a negative feeling of value to work is developed among future generations. This could also be supported by agricultural practitioners and social activists. Demonstration of its worth in economic growth and even development of other sectors like industry, manufacturing and service can be highlighted by the agricultural practitioners. It may contribute to reduce the agro trade deficit which is related to the income and social status. Once people find their improved social status, other people may also follow it. Meanwhile, the social activists could refer to the study for understanding the social dynamics of occupational shift so that they would be aware of such phenomenon and help in reviving our agricultural sector.

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