



AGRICULTURE IN NEPAL

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Being widely known for its diverse prospect of nature and natural resources , cultural and religious diversity , Nepal is a small country (area around 147181 square meter), located In between India and china .Nepal is an agro-based country, and the economy of Nepal is widely influenced by agriculture .

Agriculture not only provides the daily need of food for the people in Nepal; it is also the way of earning and running livelihood for most of the people. Back in the 1950s, almost 90 % people were engaged in agriculture. This data has come down to about 65 % in the present time ; the decrease in the involvement of people occurring due to lack of development in farming system along with time , lack of governmental support and the frail agricultural policies of the government . Acc. to the statistical report of 2008/2009, 21% of land is cultivated whereas 6.99% of land is uncultivated. The main trade products of Nepal involve the agricultural products and agriculture contributes about 33% of the total GDP. Rice, maize, wheat, millet, etc. are food crops. Rice and wheat are grown in the plain areas, in the river banks where the land is hot and wet. Maize and millet are grown in the dry land of hilly areas. Jute, sugarcane, tobacco, tea, coffee, etc. are cash crops. Jute requires plain land with hot and wet climate. Sugarcane and tobacco are grown in the plain areas. Tea is grown in the slopes of hills which receive rainfall and the water does not stay for long. Tea is also grown in plains by providing favorable conditions for its growth. Animal husbandry is also a part of agriculture, along with fruit farming or horticulture that involves the farming of fruits such as banana, mango and orange etc. Fishery is another part of agriculture in Nepal. The southern part of Nepal has plain land which is highly suitable for agriculture as 70% of the total cultivable land is in terai. The slopes of hill have fertile soil and good prospect for farming but aren't well utilized due to its difficult topography. However, some of the youths have utilized this land for high agricultural production through the method of terrace farming and technology. The northern part of Nepal is made up of mountain region, the region with only few hectares of



cultivable land as the region is cold throughout the year and the topography is unfavorable along with soil particles being clay , slit or sand .



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Despite of the fact that large fraction of economy of Nepal is dependent in agriculture, large percentage of people are involved in it and it is the main economic activity of Nepal , it is facing ton loads of problems . The major problem with agriculture in Nepal has become frail governmental policy. Although, since the formation of the fifth five year plan (1975-80), agriculture has been kept in the highest priority, the implementation of the policies has been frail. Some attractive policies for rural areas are introduced from time to time but they vanish as if they never existed. The people who get chance to use these governmental aids are the rich people with power, who don't actually need it. Poor farmers in



the rural areas have been deprived of all kinds of aids though government in the capital claims that policies are well implemented and is in the reach of all the people. If government stays dedicated to develop agriculture in Nepal, the agricultural sector won't take much time to develop. Government should help all the farmers and all the people involved in it in different ways. Firstly, it should reduce the tax in machines used in agriculture so that it is easily accessible among farmers. Government should donate or distribute these instruments which can include paddy / wheat / maize planting and harvesting machines, irrigation machines etc. It should provide loan in less interest for the poor farmers so that they do not have to involve in subsistence farming but can engage themselves in productive farming. For those people who are interested in farming but do not have enough land, government should provide land for farming in some deal. The next big step that government should take is to distribute compost manure and give farmers ideas to prepare it locally instead of distributing them chemical fertilizers. The use of chemical fertilizers has been wide since shows good result in short term and excites farmers but most of the people aren't aware about the long term negative effects of it. Above all, government should not only make policies but make proper implementation of them. Government should ensure that every farmer in the country who dedicates his life for agriculture should get satisfaction, good economic benefit, modern tools, seeds, land and money for investment without any problem. Anyone who wants to start animal husbandry should get animals to farm in case they don't have it or enough money to buy some by their own. If a person wants to start fruit farming, then he should be privileged with seeds, plantlets or lands. Nobody should feel so insecure with agriculture that they have to decide to quit farming and seek for other job due to any problems with resources or policies in it.

Another big problem in the field of agriculture of Nepal is lack of skilled manpower involved in it. The literacy rate of Nepal is just around 65% as per the last data from 2011 by central bureau of statistics. This is the percentage that shows the both theoretically and technically aware manpower in Nepal. Technical manpower production in Nepal is very less; especially in the field of agriculture. It is mostly because there are no good universities or educational institutes offering



good knowledge in agriculture in higher level. Government has set up Institute Of Agriculture (IOA) but it has only 2 or 3 educational institutes affiliated under it. This shows that people who are interested in agriculture are also deprived of its knowledge. People should get chance to know about agriculture practically and theoretically. For this, there should be universities offering this education. This education must be affordable and if possible; free of cost to all the poor people and people from rural areas because they are the ones who are involved in agriculture. Students who get very low percentage In School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exam ; which is the exam issued by SLC board in class 10 in Nepal shouldn't be forced to leave formal education and let go abroad or work in fields but should be encouraged to gain knowledge about farming , horticulture , animal husbandry etc as far as possible . Interest and skill when combine together, they can produce a wonderful result. Anyone can be interested towards horticulture but only a person with correct skill and knowledge on it can do it right. Anyone willing to start horticulture should possess good knowledge of the land he is going to start farming in and also about the varieties of the fruit that can be well grown in his region. All of these aren't possible without formal or practical knowledge, even though the person interested. Not compulsorily formal education but practical knowledge should be provided to farmers through any convenient means.

Another reason for the lack of involved manpower in the field of agriculture in Nepal is due to the trend of foreign employment. The stats related to foreign employment in Nepal is heart breaking; it is reported that about 1500 Nepali leave Nepal daily for jobs. The migrants might be skilled, semi skilled or unskilled but one thing is certain that most of the qualified manpower is abroad looking for better opportunities. In one hand, they might not have been able to understand the opportunities available in their country but in the other hand, it is the weakness of the Nepali government that it is not able to hold its manpower in its own country. Nepal once known for agriculture is now known for exporting its labourers, especially to golf countries. There are a lot of advantages if government and we get able to control this trend of foreign employment by creating opportunities in the field of agriculture. In one hand, it will help to develop the sector of agriculture and make it more productive and on the other



hand, it will help in the overall growth of the country by making its central source of economy stronger. A lot of things should be done if we are to hold the manpower in our own country. Firstly, they should be well aware about the fact that there are a lot of possibilities for them in Nepal and agriculture is the most important of them. They should be shown hope, made aware about the possibilities, they should be enlighten with the success of people engaging in agriculture in the own country. Secondly, they should be provided with all the most essential resources to create suitable environment for farming in own country. Subsistence farming should be converted into productive farming. Trainings, seminars, mobile camps should be conducted from villages to villages , farms to farms , farmers to farmers to make them aware about the development happening in the field of agriculture and let them upgrade along with it . If people develop their interest in farming, then there should better not be lack of any resources in it, and they should get constant support from the government.

Holding manpower and involving people in agriculture won't be enough in Nepal. If government is to develop the agriculture then it should be in the highest priority list and a lot of investment should necessarily be done in it. Definitely, the initial investment will be high but the long term result will be worth it. Being a country with diverse geographical conditions, the policies should also differ. The main obstacle in the plain region is irrigation and on the other hand, floods. Irrigation is more of an obstacle in the hills than in Terai. Due to lack of irrigation, farmers are forced to cultivate seasonal crops, not actually the high productive ones. The main sources of water are the rivers flowing from north to south that is a bit easy to use to irrigate in plain terai in south but not in the hills and mountains. In the hills, the river water is used to field lying 10ft below the river but the land 10ft above the river remains dry. So, irrigation projects should be established by the government in such a way that water will be accessible to all the farmers in need. No farmers should be deprived of harvest just because the rain was later than expected, no plants must die due to change in rain pattern.

All these activities will definitely help to increase the agricultural production leaving the next stage of supply and trade that has been another problem in Nepal. The main economic benefit of agricultural production is obtained by



brokers. Brokers buy agricultural products at low rate from the farmers and sell them at high cost the shopkeepers and others who sell these products to consumers. Due to this, the producers and consumers are always in pain, and the brokers enjoy their job. Government can play an efficient role to eliminate this problem too, it can act as intermediate between farmers and sellers. It should buy agricultural products at good rate from the farmers and sell them to the consumers at proper rate as per the economic status of the nation. This will encourage both the producers and the consumers. The other problem with the selling of agricultural products is lack of storage. Since it is not possible to trade and consume all the products at once, there must be the facility of storage. There must be proper storage facilities all over the country. All the raw materials required for the agro-based industries shouldn't be imported from foreign nations; local raw materials should be used as far as possible. There is high potential of Nepali agricultural products in the foreign market. Nepal has been exporting textiles, vegetable oils and fats and crops to the foreign market esp. India and other neighboring countries. As Nepal has the potential to produce cent percent organic crops, fruits etc and it has been produced in some amount In some regions of Nepal. Organic farming can be encouraged in Nepal and those products can be exported at good rate to the foreign nations as there is good market for those things all over the world.

There's a lot of good in producing and distributing food not only over the country, but all over the world. Food, shelter and clothing have always been the trinity of most of the people. Nepal can develop its separate identity by being the first country in the world to produce organic products only. It's not hard to eliminate the use of chemical fertilizers but it takes time. Most of us aren't patient enough to wait for change to take place and we have resistance to change. However, if we become able to test the pH of soil , the nature of crops that can be grown well in a particular land structure with the help of different tests , then the production can be boosted by the use of compost manure and other organic manure and chemical fertilizers won't be necessary . This is one of the noble works we can do to establish ourselves all over the world through agriculture in a positive manner.



Statistically , Nepal produces about 4523693 MT (Metric Ton) of rice and paddy , 1343862 MT of wheat and about nearly 2754406 MT of vegetables annually [data source : open Nepal] . Experts in this field and economists claim that this data can be doubled in nearly 5 years by the help of modernized agricultural system just by simple involvement of farmers.

To demonstrate a sample survey, I like to take example my locality of hometown; mujung, mainadi. It consists of 14 families, with total member number of 59. They possess about 10 hectors of cultivable land. Among them, 10 members are abroad for foreign employment, 11 of them are outside of their village; in the urban areas and only 15 of them are involved actively in farming which is mostly subsistence type. Most of the families have some domestic animals that typically include two oxen and a buffalo, and some goats. Two families among them are involved in systematic animal husbandry. Rest of the people in the village is elderly people and children. There aren't enough manpower in the village to cultivate all the cultivable land, while some part of the land isn't cultivated due to irrigation problem. The only source of water for irrigation is the river flowing at the base of the hill where the village lies. This area also has great prospect for orange farming, as the climate and soil in the area favors it. However, orange farming isn't extensively done in that area because people do not have any idea about the possibility of orange farming in that area, the economic and different benefits that they can get from it and how it can change their living standard. talking about myself ; I was also unable to realize about the possibilities of farming in my area , and I didn't get enough resources for it even I had wanted to . So, I had to seek other job opportunities leaving my land bare.

In a nutshell, we can conclude that the possibility of agriculture in Nepal is undeniable but it is highly neglected by the government and the locals who are involved in it. Neither the government thrives to develop that sector nor the locals seek new ideas to increase production; they are happy if their production is able to feed family throughout the year despite of the hard labor they do there. I hope, in future days, everyone will realize this and work to develop this sector that can lead to harmonious development of my country NEPAL. Thank you!

