Agricultural Transformation in Nepal

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Abstract

This study examines the agricultural transformation in Nepal. Agricultural transformation is the dependent variable. The selected independent variables are technology adoption, climate change, government investments, land and property rights and gender. The primary source of data is used to assess the opinions of respondents regarding technology adoption, climate change, government investments, land and property rights and gender on agricultural transformation in Nepal. The study is based on primary data of 121 respondents. To achieve the purpose of the study, structured questionnaire is prepared. The correlation and multiple regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of agricultural transformation in Nepal.

The study showed a positive impact of technology adoption on agricultural transformation. It indicates that adoption of better technology in the agricultural sector will lead to better agricultural transformation. Similarly, the study showed a positive impact of climate change on agricultural transformation. It indicates that change in climate leads to better agricultural transformation. Likewise, the study revealed a positive impact of government investments on agricultural transformation. It indicates that proper and abundant investment by government leads to higher agricultural transformation. Further, the study observed a positive impact of land and property rights on agricultural transformation. It indicates that secured land and property rights and a proper managerial system lead to change in agricultural transformation. In addition, the study showed a positive impact of gender on agricultural transformation. It indicates that gender equality and equity on the agricultural sector the better will be the agricultural transformation.

Keywords: technology adoption, climate change, government investments, land and property rights, gender

1. Introduction

The process of modernizing and boosting the production and efficiency of the agricultural industry is known as agricultural transformation (Boettiger, 2017). Growing crops, maintaining livestock, and producing things for human consumption, such as food and fiber, is called agriculture (Harris, 2014). It involves several different activities, including as soil preparation, planting, watering, fertilizing, managing pests and diseases, harvesting, and post-harvest management. Transformation is the process of changing something's nature, form, or structure (Collins, 2005). Similarly, Deininger and Byerlee (2011) stated that agricultural transformation can also involve changes in land

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use, such as shifting from subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture or from forested land to agricultural land. Likewise, Pretty *et al.* (2018) stated that agricultural transformation is a complex and multifaceted process that requires interdisciplinary approaches and collaboration between different stakeholders. Further, Webb *et al.* (2018) stated that there is an ongoing research on the impacts of agricultural transformation on nutrition outcomes, with some studies suggesting that transformation can improve nutrition while others suggest it can have negative impacts. Agricultural transformation involves a shift from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture, with a focus on increasing productivity, improving supply chains, and integrating smallholders into markets.

Tschirley *et al.* (2015) found that agricultural transformation can promote good governance and social stability by creating a more equitable distribution of resources and reducing conflict over land and other natural resources. Likewise, Spielman *et al.* (2010) discovered that agricultural research and development can lead to new technologies and innovations that can improve agricultural productivity and sustainability. Agricultural transformation can promote innovation and technology adoption. Further, Wiseman (2019) examined that the adoption of modern technologies such as improved seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation systems can significantly increase agricultural productivity. The study found out that there is a positive relationship between technological adoption and agricultural transformation. Similarly, Haggblade (2019) stated that smallholder farmers can benefit from agricultural transformation through increased productivity, income, and food security. The study also stated that there is a positive relationship between finance, markets, and technology and agricultural transformation, as; smallholder farmers face several challenges such as limited access to finance, markets, and technology, which can hinder their participation in agricultural transformation. Likewise, Lipper (2017) examined the potential of climate-smart agriculture. The study found that although climate-smart agriculture has the potential to boost productivity, improve resilience, and lower emissions, smallholders frequently lack the tools and information necessary to implement these strategies. Further, Strutt (2021) assessed the agricultural transformation, economic growth and poverty reduction in Asia. The study found that despite all the success many challenges still exist like inadequate institutions, limited access to markets and financing, and environmental degradation. In addition, Rathod (2021) examined the major obstacles to overcome order to achieve proper agricultural transformation. The study found that the major obstacles including restricted access to infrastructure and technology, climate change,

and urbanization. Similarly, Groot (2015) assessed the role of agricultural transformation in reducing poverty and promoting rural development. The study found that agricultural transformation can play an important role in reducing poverty and promoting rural development, but that it must be accompanied by complementary policies and investments.

Singh (2019) stated that more money has to be invested in agriculture, along with better institutions, rules, and access to markets. The study also stated that there is a positive relationship between government investments, market access and policies (land and property rights). Similarly, Shiferaw (2022) analyzed the need for a more nuanced and context-specific approach to agricultural transformation that takes into accounts the diverse needs and priorities of different stakeholders. The study found that there is a positive relation between agricultural sector and a proper systematic overhaul of the system. Likewise, Gala (2023) analyzed the significant challenges, such as water scarcity, conflict, and political instability. The study found that there is still the need for policies and interventions and shows a positive relation between agricultural sector and policy making, climate change. In addition, Adesina (2016) examined the issues, such as food insecurity, poverty, and climate change. The study found that there is a positive relationship between climate change, market access and agricultural transformation and reminded the promise of agricultural transformation to create sustainable economic growth and prosperity in Nepal. Further, Reardon *et al.* (2014) stated that agricultural transformation can create employment opportunities in rural areas and reduce the need for migration to urban areas. Moreover, Herforth *et al.* (2016) suggested that agricultural interventions can increase the availability of nutrient-rich foods, improve dietary diversity, and reduce malnutrition. Likewise, Rosegrant and Cline (2014) stated that agricultural transformation is a complex and multifaceted process that involves a range of stakeholders and strategies. By promoting sustainable and inclusive forms of agricultural development, it can help to achieve food security, reduce poverty, and promote economic growth and development in developing countries. Similarly, Qaim (2021) examined the effects of technical change, market integration, and institutional reforms while reviewing the empirical evidence on agricultural transformation in developing nations. The study found that the necessity for agricultural transformation strategies that are context-specific and take into consideration regional limits. Likewise, Gustafson (2022) examined the role of agricultural transformation in the region's economic growth and decrease of poverty. The study found that although agricultural transformation and government investments, technological adoption have positive relationship as;

agricultural transformation has been a major factor in the region's economic growth and decrease of poverty. Singh (2019) examined the progress and challenges of agricultural transformation in Nepal. The study found a positive relationship between government investments, land and property rights that more funding for agriculture is required, along with improved institutions, laws, and access to financing and markets.

In the context of Nepal, Sharma and Pant (2017) analyzed and stated that agricultural transformation is a critical component of Nepal's development strategy, as agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the majority of the country's population. Nepal has a highly diverse agricultural sector, with a range of crops and livestock grown throughout the country. One of the key drivers of agricultural transformation in Nepal is the increasing adoption of modern technologies and practices. This includes the use of high-yielding crop varieties, irrigation systems, and other inputs that can improve agricultural productivity and efficiency. Similarly, another important aspect of agricultural transformation in Nepal is the promotion of value chains. This involves linking farmers to markets through improved storage, transportation, and processing facilities. By improving market access for farmers, value chains can help to increase their incomes and improve their livelihoods. Moreover, Gautam (2020) examined farmers in Nepal still rely on traditional farming techniques and outdated equipment, which not only limits their productivity but also makes them vulnerable to environmental hazards. The study found out that there is a positive relationship between technological adoption and agricultural transformation.

Joshi (2014) discovered that the challenges faced by farmers, including access to credit, markets, and technology, and suggests ways to overcome these challenges through policy reforms and institutional strengthening. Similarly, Pandey (2016) stated the emerging trends and opportunities in the agricultural transformation in Nepal. It highlights the potential for commercialization, diversification, and value addition in agriculture, and suggests ways to promote these activities through policy interventions and private sector engagement. Agricultural transformation in Nepal is the promotion of value chains. This involves linking farmers to markets through improved storage, transportation, and processing facilities. By improving market access for farmers, value chains can help to increase their incomes and improve their livelihoods. Likewise, Maskey (2018) found that the agricultural transformation in Nepal can be a pathway to sustainable development, as it can contribute to poverty reduction, food security, and environmental sustainability. It suggests ways to promote sustainable agriculture through

policy interventions, institutional strengthening, and community participation. Further, Shrestha (2019) examined and highlighted the important role of women farmers in the agricultural transformation in Nepal. It discusses the challenges faced by women farmers, including unequal access to resources and decision-making power, and suggests ways to empower them through policy interventions and institutional support. Moreover, Dhungana (2021) stated the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the agricultural transformation in Nepal. It highlighted the potential of ICTs in increasing productivity, improving market access, and enhancing resilience, and suggests ways to promote their adoption through policy and institutional support.

The above discussion shows that empirical evidences vary greatly across the studies on the agriculture transformation. Though there are above mentioned empirical evidences in the context of other countries and in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal. Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The major objective of the study is to examine the factors influencing agricultural transformation in Nepal. Specifically, it examines the relationship of technology adoption, climate change, government investments, land and property rights and gender with agricultural transformation in Nepal.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows: section two describes the sample, data, and methodology. Section three presents the empirical results and final section draws the conclusion.

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on the primary data which were collected from 121 respondents through questionnaire. The study employed convenience sampling method. The respondents' views were collected on technology adoption, climate change, government investments, land and property rights, gender, and agriculture transformation. This study is based on descriptive as well as causal comparative research designs.

The model

The model used in this study assumes that agriculture transformation depends upon several factors. The dependent variable selected for the study is agricultural transformation. Similarly, the selected independent variables are technology adoption, climate change, government investments, land and property rights and gender. Therefore, the model takes the following form:

$$AT = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TA + \beta_2 CC + \beta_3 GI + \beta_4 LP + \beta_5 G + e$$

Where,

AT = Agricultural transformation

TA = Technological adoption

CC = Climate change

GI = Government investment

LP = Land and property rights

G = Gender

Technology adoption was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "technology has helped a lot in the field of agriculture", "Nepalese agricultural sector can adopt better technology or it needs to be developed more" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.901$).

Climate change was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "I feel that climate in general plays an important role in the agricultural transformation in Nepal", "I feel like the climate now is better than it used to be 15-20 years ago" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.822$).

Government investments was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "I feel that Government of Nepal has invested a lot in the field of agriculture", "I feel like government investments has helped in the transformation of agriculture as expected" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.845$).

Land and property rights was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "I feel like the land and property rights are better now-a-days than it used to be 15-20 years before", "I feel like the current land and property rights can be revised and can be worked on to support the small scaled farmers more" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.818$).

Gender was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "I feel like I see more women doing harder agriculture related works now-a-days than in the past times", "I feel like gender plays a huge role in the context of agricultural transformation in Nepal" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.838$).

Agricultural transformation was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "The Agricultural Transformation in Nepal has reached its peak point and not much transformation can occur any longer", "Investments in agricultural research and development can lead to substantial advancements in the agricultural sector" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.853$).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with the hypothesis formulation.

Technology adoption

Technology adoption refers to the process by which individuals or organizations acquire and integrate new technologies into their daily lives or operations. Ugochukwu (2017) highlighted the adoption and commercialization of existing and emerging technologies. The study found that the adoption and commercialization of existing and emerging technologies both at the farm and industry levels have been of great concern to the agricultural sector and the food industry. The study also found a positive relationship between technology adoption and agricultural transformation. Similarly, Lane (2019) highlighted that governments, international organizations, and the business sector must collaborate in order to facilitate the use of technology in the agriculture sector. The study found that a rising understanding of the value of technology in agriculture has emerged in recent years, particularly in developing nations where a sizable portion of the population is comprised of smallholder farmers. The study reported a positive relationship between technology adoption and agricultural transformation as, better technology and modernization, leads to better agricultural transformation. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_1: There is a positive relationship between technology adaptation and agricultural transformation.

Climate change

Climate change is generally defined as a significant variation of average weather conditions, say, conditions becoming warmer, wetter, or drier, over several decades or more. Turrentine (2021) found that climate change would increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events like droughts and floods, which can have disastrous consequences on the agricultural transformation. The study also highlighted and suggested that climate-smart agriculture techniques must be used as part of agricultural transformation in order to address the issues of climate change. The study reported a positive relationship between climate change and agricultural transformation as, climate-smart agriculture techniques must be used as part of agricultural transformation in order to address the issues of climate change. Similarly, Phillips (2017) studied agroforestry, which involves incorporating trees into agricultural landscapes. The study found that agroforestry can aid in boosting biodiversity, enhancing soil health, and carbon sequestration. The study also confirmed a positive relationship between climate change and agricultural transformation as, incorporating trees into agricultural landscapes, can aid in boosting biodiversity, enhancing soil health, and carbon sequestration which aids in the betterment of climate change. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_2: There is a positive relationship between climate change and agricultural transformation.

Government investment

Government investments refer to the allocation of financial resources by the government towards various sectors of the economy, including agriculture, to enhance economic growth and development. Pant (2022) stated that food imports in Nepal are less than a few years ago. The study found that it is a result of billions of rupees being invested by the government in the agricultural sector. The study confirmed a positive relationship between government investments and agricultural transformation. Similarly, Lynam (2016) analyzed the impact of government investments on agricultural productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa. The study found that government investments in agricultural research and development, extension services, and irrigation infrastructure had a positive and significant impact on agricultural productivity. The study reported a positive relationship between government investments and agricultural transformation. Likewise, Shakya (2016) stated that the role of agriculture has been rapidly changing worldwide due to globalization, integrated value chains, rapid technological and institutional innovations,

and environmental constraints. The study found that the prime focus of the government at this stage is to develop competitiveness of smallholder farmers to enter into markets, generation of skilled labor in agriculture and to some extent establish effective value chains. The study found a positive relationship between government investments and agricultural transformation Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_3: There is a positive relationship between government investment and agricultural transformation.

Land and property rights

Land and property rights are the set of legal rules that governs the use, possession, and transfer of property. Chari (2018) stated the necessity for legal protection for agricultural land leasing contracts facilitates in agricultural sector. The study found that such legal protection for agricultural land leasing contracts facilitates productivity-enhancing trades, increases agricultural efficiency. The study found a positive relationship between land and property rights and agricultural transformation. Similarly, Webster (2019) argued that stable land and property rights is necessary for smallholder farmers to make farm improvements, adopt contemporary techniques and technology, and level up the overall agricultural transformation. The study also found a positive relationship between land and property rights and agricultural transformation as stable land and property rights is necessary for proper agricultural transformation to occur. Likewise, Landesa (2022) found that land disputes have decreased and agricultural output has increased as a result of the organization's collaboration with local people to explain and legalize land and property rights. The study also found a positive relationship between land and property rights and agricultural transformation as, in order to support efforts to strengthen land and property rights as part of agricultural transformation efforts, governments, international organizations, and civil society must collaborate. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_4: There is a positive relationship between land and property rights and agricultural transformation.

Gender

Gender in agricultural transformation refers to the different roles, responsibilities, and opportunities available to women and men in the agricultural sector, and the ways in which gender relations and inequalities shape agricultural production and development outcomes. Rickards (2021)

studied increasing recognition that sustainable agriculture requires attention to gendered power relations. The study found that agriculture has gendered impacts, with women farmers facing greater challenges in accessing markets, credit, and other productive resources. The study also found a positive relationship between gender and agricultural transformation. Similarly, Terefe (2021) found that women farmers faced multiple barriers to accessing, adopting new agricultural technologies, lack of education and training, and limited access to market information and extension services which ultimately lead to unproductive agricultural sector and food industry. The study also found a positive relationship between gender and agricultural transformation. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_5: There is a positive relationship gender and agricultural transformation.

3. Results and discussions

Correlation analysis

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients along with mean and standard deviation has been computed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients matrix

This table presents Kendall's Tau coefficients between dependent variable and independent variables. The dependent variable is AT (Agricultural transformation). The independent variables are TA (Technology adoption), CC (Climate change), GI (Government investments), LP (Land and property rights) and G (Gender).

Variable	Mean	SD	AT	TA	CC	GI	LP	G
AT	2.041	0.501	1					
TA	2.040	0.532	0.251**	1				
CC	1.823	0.429	0.234**	0.302**	1			
GI	1.901	0.514	0.211**	0.345**	0.351*	1		
LP	2.121	0.553	0.210**	0.354**	0.335*	0.454**	1	
G	2.073	0.421	0.225**	0.323**	0.382**	0.352**	0.342**	1

Note: The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent levels respectively.

Table 1 shows that technology adoption is positively correlated to agricultural transformation. It indicates that adoption of advance technology leads to increase in agricultural transformation. Similarly, the result shows that climate change is positively correlated to agricultural transformation. It indicates that change in climate leads to change in the agricultural

transformation. Likewise, government investment is positively correlated to agricultural transformation. It indicates that higher the government investment, higher would be agricultural transformation. In addition, land and property rights have positive relationship with agricultural transformation. It indicates that higher/better land and property rights leads to better agricultural transformation. Further, the result shows gender is positively correlated to agricultural transformation. It indicates that gender equality leads to increase in agricultural transformation.

Regression analysis

This section basically deals with regression results from various specifications of the models to examine the estimated relationship of Agricultural transformation in Nepal with its determinants, technology adoption, climate change, government investments, land and property rights and gender. The estimated regression results of a model are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Estimated regression results of technology adoption, climate change, government investments, land and property rights and gender on agricultural transformation

The results are based on 121 observations using linear regression model. The model is $AT = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TA + \beta_2 CC + \beta_3 GI + \beta_4 LP + \beta_5 G + e$ *where the dependent variable is AT (Agricultural transformation). The independent variables are TA (Technology adoption), CC (Climate Change), GI (Government Investments) LP (Land and Property rights) and G (Gender).*

Model	Intercept	Regression coefficients of					Adj. R_bar2	SEE	F-value
		TA	CC	GI	LP	G			
1	1.10 (7.172) **	0.707 (6.702) **					0.268	0.532	44.914
2	1.07 (7.921) **		0.402 (3.907) **				0.339	0.506	62.527
3	0.767 (4.353) **			0.518 (4.698) **			0.327	0.510	59.257
4	1.01 (5.858) **				0.736 (4.434) **		0.252	0.538	41.391
5	0.594 (3.530) **						0.405	0.479	82.829
6	0.807 (5.332) **	0.261 (3.353)**	0.359 (3.013) **				0.391	0.485	39.576
7	0.631 (3.775) **	(1.307) 0.196	0.316 (2.336) *	0.438 (3.042) **			0.414	0.476	43.464
8	0.503 (2.941) **	0.196 (2.550) *	0.244 (3.182) **	0.369 (3.372) **	0.456 (2.032) *		0.441	0.465	32.493
9	1.376 (1.215)	0.215 (1.756)	0.682 (2.203) *	0.556 (1.974)*	0.191 (2.543) *	0.746 (3.522) **	0.055	0.377	22.808

Notes:

i. *Figures in parenthesis are t-values*
ii. *The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent level respectively.*
iii. *Agricultural transformation is dependent variable.*

The regression results show that the beta coefficients for technology adoption are positive with agricultural transformation. It indicates that advance technology adoption has a positive impact on agricultural transformation. This finding is similar to the findings of Ugochukwu (2017). Similarly, the beta coefficients for climate change are positive with agricultural transformation. It indicates that climate change has a positive impact on agricultural transformation. This finding is consistent with the findings of Phillips (2017). Likewise, the beta coefficients for government investments are positive with agricultural transformation. It indicates that government investments have positive impact on agricultural transformation. This finding is consistent with the findings of Lynam (2016). Further, the beta coefficients for land and property rights are positive with agricultural transformation. It indicates that proper land and property rights have positive impact on agricultural transformation. This finding is consistent with the findings of Webster (2019). In addition, the beta coefficients for gender are positive with agricultural transformation. It indicates that gender has a positive impact on agricultural transformation. This finding is similar to the findings of Terefe (2021).

4. Summary and conclusion

Growing crops, maintaining livestock, and producing things for human consumption, such as food and fiber is called agriculture. It involves several different activities, including as soil preparation, planting, watering, fertilizing, managing pests and diseases, harvesting, and post-harvest management. Transformation is the process of changing something's nature, form, or structure". In the context of agriculture, the word "transformation" can be used to refer to a wide range of alterations to the agricultural sector's processes, technology, inputs, and markets. The process of modernizing and boosting the production and efficiency of the agricultural industry is known as agricultural transformation. Innovative technology, techniques, and policies must be adopted in order to increase agricultural productivity, the quality and quantity of agricultural products, as well as farmers' incomes and livelihoods. Increasing market access for farmers, diversifying agricultural production, and developing agro-industries to add value to agricultural products are all instances of agricultural transformation.

This study attempts to examine the agricultural transformation in Nepal. The study is based on primary data of 121 respondents.

The major conclusion of the study is that technology adoption, climate change, government investments, land and property rights and gender have positive impact on agricultural transformation in Nepal. The study also

concludes that land and property rights followed by technology adoption are the most influencing factor that explains the agriculture transformation in the context of Nepal.

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