

Agricultural Farmers Training in Nepal: A Review of Social Work Perspective

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Abstract: Social workers can mediate in the agricultural process on two crucial levels- first, it can familiarize the local people with the new technologies, information, training, available subsidies, and facilities either by the state or by institutions and organizations, secondly, it can use first-hand knowledge of the condition of the farmers to understand the need of the hour and convey the same to the policymakers. We have seen how many farmer's agitations and movements have been successfully organized in our country on a large scale, but still, two major lacunae in this whole process have limited the impact of these movements on a much greater scale- one, there is a dearth of larger social consciousness among the masses regarding the problem of farmers in general and these movements in specific. Social workers need to take this burden on their heads to ensure that not only the information is disseminated smoothly and effectively but also a larger audience can be built who not only can be aware of the condition of farmers but can also empathize with it, thus providing the base of mobilization of these groups for future causes.

Keywords: Social Worker, Farmers, Training, Information, Technology, Mobilization

Introduction

Social work is considered one of the noblest professions which allow people to make significant changes to society and is a worthy profession from a humanitarian perspective. These individuals and groups have made a significant impact across different areas but there are still many areas where social workers need to intervene in a more intensive as well as extensive way (Sarkar *et al.*, 2022). Social service is one of the cornerstones and essential needs in modern times to implement reforms, carry out utilitarian procedures and empower millions of marginalized groups and make them resourceful enough not just to be able to manage their own lives but also to empower others and maintain the cycle of empowerment (Krupnik *et al.*, 2021).

But over the years it has been observed that most of the people working for the society are convent educated urban sophisticated individuals and groups who despite their earnest attempts and intent are not able to make structural changes in the society for the simple fact that they are separated from the heartland of the nation and are not exposed to the ground realities of our society (McLaren and Challis, 2009). Learning these nitty grittyest also includes acknowledging their privileges and ability to adapt to the changing situation. Scholars have pointed out that one reason

why agriculture and pastoralist economies are often comparatively disadvantaged as compared to the industrial economies is that the policymakers who are entrusted with the job of policymaking on agriculture have no experience in the field on an individual level thus making their work a secondary patronizing gaze from above without developing the requisite skill for tackling them as well as the experience for should ensuring such responsibilities (Hall and Mogyorody, 2007; Hinrichs *et al.*, 2004; Hossain *et al.*, 2009). Thus, the proposal needs to be advocated to allow social service to penetrate the agricultural arena at a more inclusive and intensive level (Ray and Singh, 1980). Through this endeavor, we can aim for an amalgamation of experience with paper qualification. This would also bring to the table practical skills required for carrying out the agricultural process as well as provide ample opportunity for the social worker to work within the confines of limited resources and socio-cultural hassles (Furlani Green, 2018). In this case, the role of the social worker can be influential in bridging the gap between the state and the farmers.

The question that we need to ask is twofold- what is the role of a social worker in promoting agricultural innovation and training the farmers? And secondly, how is he supposed to do it? In many regions, a sizeable population is directly dependent on agriculture, which though the backbone of the

Nepalese economy, is also quite vulnerable and uncertain in terms of its results. Thus, people need to be aware of alternative and sustainable ways of irrigation, which for once lowers the dependence of farmers on agriculture. Secondly, it will allow the farmers to increase per area and person productivity. Though the use of machinery has its cons too both in terms of loss of workforce who are replaced by machines, which also can lead to direct as well as disguised unemployment. The social worker needs to be aware of the regional specifications to adapt and adopt a particular method of agriculture in tandem with agricultural scientists (Belay *et al.*, 2017). In many regions like the hilly areas of Nepal, the problem of migration is catastrophic. People here find no or negligible incentive in clinging to agriculture as there is hardly any scope for earning livelihood through agriculture. Adding to the problem is the lack of infrastructure both in terms of farming technology as well as health and education and all the basic facilities essential for dignified existence (Chhetri *et al.*, 2020).

Social workers need to follow the neo-deterministic or halt and go approach wherein innovations and developments should take place within the restraints of any potential threat to the habitat or the socio-ecological space, which is to say without making any drastic development (which anyways is not something that can be a small number of social workers in a stipulated period). We must note the importance of agriculture in village life which can be better expressed as their way of life and which emanates out of the primacy of food. What we find here is that the agricultural process is not merely an economic activity but cast its influence on all spheres of human existence as we find marriages being performed mostly in summers after the crops so that the agricultural work is never obstructed. The land is valued as a valuable asset and the headman of the village tries his level best to maintain his de facto control over the land (Pettigrew and Adhikari, 2009). The economic relations particularly agriculture paved way for other spaces of interaction for example in many villages the dead bodies are buried in the ancestral land. Here the control over land becomes a status marker as well as an economic prerogative because traditionally such land needs to be left in a vacuum for a few years which for the proletariat is a great loss. The village community has an acquisitiveness associated with it and land is the medium of this acquisitiveness. Also, land hunger which is a universal attribute of the village gives impeccable value to land. Gender relations also have a deep impact on this land (Messerschmidt, 2019). Using the classic Marxist paradigm land surplus is a major aspect of the domination of upper caste upper-class males over others.

Materials and Methods

This study, which is a review of literature, relies significantly on secondary data, as is typical of most desktop

studies in which existing data is used for analysis and drawing critical findings. Books, academic publications, unpublished studies, government reports, and organizational and private webpages are some of the particular data sources for the study. This research method is used when a large amount of work has been done on a research issue and the study's goal is to answer particular questions based on past work. For these reasons, the current work used this technique to analyze what other scholars have said about agriculture, farmers' training, and the role of social work.

Agricultural Farmers Training

In support systems, social work plays a major role to support farmers in terms of emerging issues in agriculture. For instance, if farmers are not having adequate access to resources from the local, state, and central government that moment social work plays the role to support farmers through advocacy and warning the governments to provide ample resources to the farmers. In, Nepal with the support of social workers, the concerned authority has addressed the farmer's problem in rural areas but it is not sufficient. More support should provide farmers to become independent in the agriculture sector.

Counseling is the process of communicating with a person who is having a serious problem in their personal and professional life. Here, the social worker is counseling those farmers who are having a psychological problem due to the loss in agriculture sectors or not having the proper market to transfer their produces resources. The social worker's prime objective is to make farmers more patient and able to create markets themselves in the community and address the problem with self-confidence.

In Nepal social worker has provided a lot of innovative information to the farmers in different rural through a different public program. Meanwhile, the social worker also communicates with the local leaders, stakeholders, and with the government to improve the agriculture sector. The government has brought a lot of programs for farmers to improve in the agriculture sector but most of the farmers are unaware of that. The social worker has provided appropriate information regarding the plan, program, and policy brought by the government to the farmers in terms of accomplishing the agricultural goal.

With the support of different NGOs/INGOs, Civil societies, and government organizations, the social worker has given several pieces of training in agriculture to the farmers in the different rural areas of Nepal. The practice of traditional agriculture was updated with training given by social workers. The social worker has given numerous Knowledge, skills, ideas, and practice to the farmers in the agricultural sectors. Along with that the social worker also observed the farmers' pattern of behavior to learn and develop themselves in agricultural sectors.

The social worker plays the most important role in promoting agricultural technology in Nepal with the support

of different organizations. The use of modern technology in agriculture is rising and the farmers felt that this technology has comforted their work and even they save time to produce ample goods. Also, the farmers felt doubt regarding the technology because it has created amount of unemployment in the rural area where people don't know how to use technology more effectively. That's why the social worker-oriented farmers regarding the use of technology in agricultural sectors.

The social worker has conducted several initiatives in collaboration with the local community along with local farmers, the participation of farmers was more to learn about the growth of agricultural products. The initiative has encouraged and motivated farmers to produce more organic products with less utilization of pesticides, and chemical fertilizers. Therefore, the encouragement and motivation of farmers play a vital role in sustainable development in the field of agriculture.

The most important role of the social worker is to understand the goal and vision of farmers in the field of agriculture which sustainably assists in the economic development of the country. The farmers have a broad goal and long-term vision to become sustainable farmers and make the community and country a stronger economy and create employment for all which will reduce the level of poverty within the community and country. Wherefore, the social worker must know the precise goal and vision of the farmers, and accordingly, social workers can support them by aligning with local leaders, stakeholders, and community members. Therefore, the social worker can play an active role to motivate and encourage farmers to work in a sustainable manner, which assists in the progress of an individual, group, and community in terms of creating a strong economic system as well as it will help in the growth of country's GDP.

Therefore, social work must address the farmer's problem with the utmost support system, encourage and motivate farmers, accomplish the goal and vision of farmers, and should provide necessary training and counseling to communicate and provide information regarding the achievement of the goal in agriculture sectors with the use of technology.

Overcoming Gender Disparity in Agriculture

Women are relegated to the position of the kitchen as a nurturer and dispensers of household chores. But even here, the concessions that women receive within this patriarchal structure have deep-rooted economic importance firstly because women acquire acquisition over land, not in their natal home but her husband's home (Sugden *et al.*, 2021). Secondly, women's economic sphere of interaction is mitigated by their economic duty of selling paddy for household objects. Thirdly women acquire resources and control over these resources as she acquires age. Thus in

social stratum, while getting influenced by the wife is an unmanly behavior, at the same time, the mother has great influence in society. Similarly, the teleological purpose of land and plants makes them sacred and thus we find how cutting trees become an inauspicious and unethical wastage of resources (Bhattarai *et al.*, 2021). Thus, training the farmers is also a caste, class, and gender-conscious activity. Men and women traditionally play differential roles in the agricultural process, which the social worker needs to take cognizance of. For the past year group of undergraduate students have been working in the region of Gandaki Province, Nepal to maintain the agricultural balance of the region and at the same time encourage people to return to their land by making basic arrangements in terms of social and built infrastructure (Maharjan *et al.*, 2012). Similar work has been carried out by committed individuals as well as organizations.

The Role of Social Workers in Making Agriculture More Advanced

Social workers need to overcome the logistical and administrative hurdles in overcoming the institutional problems in achieving the requisite results. While Nepal is known to be a predominantly agrarian country the province of development in terms of innovations and new research is hardly something to feel proud of. There are many administrative and logistical hurdles in their case first being their inability to function as an autonomous body beyond the confines of the Nepal government, secondly, new research is in a crippled stage in these institutions lacking the means, budget, and quality of faculty in such institutions.

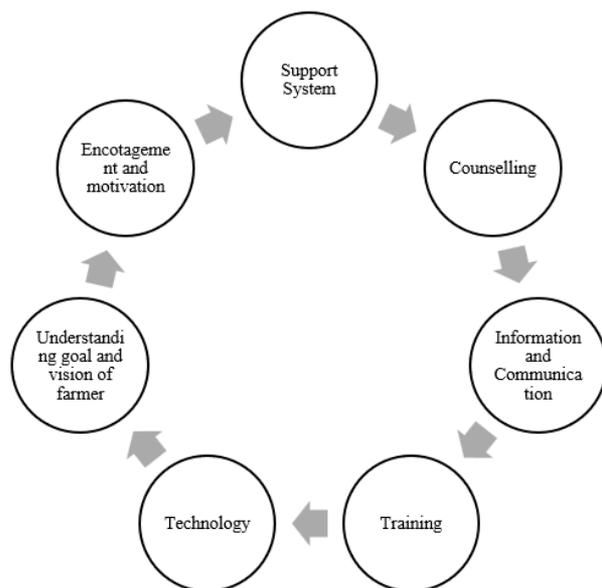


Fig. 1: Process of agricultural farmers' training

Rampant corruption and nepotism have narrowed down the chances of upsurge and despite food production techniques, food preferences of the consumer, and production structure of the nation, they are still not up to date with the recent developments in this area and the inherent bias of these institutions towards food production at the cost of neglect of animal husbandry is very much evident here (Ohmer, 2019) Fig. 1. To save the future of these institutions it is necessary to make these. Also, a larger part of the GDP needs to be allocated for their development. Technological innovations and administrative efficiency are both required to maintain the quality and relevance of these institutions and to fulfill the needs of the ever-growing state. These developments coupled with the efforts of social workers can work wonders in the emancipation of farmers and the overall progress of the Nepalese agricultural economy (Koc *et al.*, 2008). To achieve this end, it's not just important to initiate training programs but also there need to educate and inform people and raise awareness of this issue. For this purpose, widespread nationwide campaigns need to be initiated, in which not only common men but the participation of certain influential people of the society need to be included to increase its "face value". All in all, a social worker's job is not an act or event but a gradual process that requires an investment of time, effort, intent, and commitment on their part.

Discussion

Social work is a holistic profession where engagement of social work in different settings matters a lot for the improvement of the livelihood of human beings in the community. Nepal is an agricultural country with the beauty of flora and fauna. Overall, in Nepal, 75% of people depend on agricultural sectors and produce a variety of products that can be used for cash crops and food crops. The government of Nepal also encourages people to invest more time in agriculture, where peasants are getting a lot of support from the government in the name of loans, subsidies, and other facilities as well. But the problem is the farmer of Nepal still apply old traditional methods for the agricultural sectors that's why the production is low. The government of Nepal has brought a lot of programs and projects to motivate the farmers for higher production productivity in agriculture. But it was not sufficient until the farmers get training in agriculture export. Knowing these circumstances social work in Nepal has started different training programs for peasants in different parts of Nepal. However, Social work is playing a major role in engaging agriculture veterans to informative training to the farmers. Different NGOs/INGOs, Civil Societies are coming up with new programs and projects to motivate farmers to apply modern tools and technologies in the agriculture sector (Datt and Ravallion, 1998; give

Dorward, 1999; Fan and Chan-Kang, 2005). The social worker has visited a different remote area of Nepal, and they have conducted different programs in collaborating with stakeholders and local leaders to improve in agriculture sectors. Most Peasants are positive to apply modern technology in the land field for the cultivation of different crops. The technology which is used by the farmer will increase the high production of productivity and that will help to augment countries' GDP as well.

Implications

The social worker increased the social networks which have an especially important role in developing nations. Small landholders, in particular, are frequently denied access to institutional services that are skewed in favor of landlords or powerful farmers. Given Nepal's lack of expertise and information on climate change adaptation, the institutional component of adaptation has yet to be investigated. There is a critical need for studies that focus on the present connections and interactions among various social workers, as well as their roles in the local adaptation process. It is no longer enough to focus just on research policy as a driver of innovation; policy must also address the incentives, triggers, and support systems required to encourage and maintain creativity (DeLuca-Aconi, 2017). Policy imperatives, such as the desire to alleviate poverty, will only be satisfied if the habits, practices, and institutions in place to achieve such goals are in place, most likely at the expense of other competing agendas.

Future Research

This review explores the gaps, policies, and restraints, as well as future initiatives for successful policy implementation and farmers' training required to accomplish agricultural development goals. Nepal has enormous potential for agricultural growth in the future. It has an edge in export markets for low-tech agricultural products that need a lot of resources and manpower. To capitalize on such competitive advantages, the agriculture sector must be successfully implemented. Agriculture development concerns are multidimensional and multi-sectoral, which means that they are not limited to one area of production (crops, livestock, and horticulture). Other sectors connected to the processing, distribution, and trading of agricultural commodities are also significant. Cooperation and coordination among key social workers are essential for the development and execution of successful plans and policies that include suitable legal and institutional measures.

Limitation of the Study

The study is limited to the agricultural purpose. It cannot be taken as a base for policy making. The difficulty faced in collecting information and discussion was another limitation of the study.

Conclusion

Social workers, in particular, emphasize empowerment-based techniques that help agricultural producers feel valued and give access to resources and networks that free individuals from the need for aid, allowing them to reclaim their autonomy. Creating safe working environments with farmers, as well as developing and enhancing skills and competencies, must be viewed as critical to the effective integration of farmers. There is clear proof that agricultural feminization influences both the social and economic sectors. In the social sector, it creates conditions for social injustice against women by increasing the load of agricultural labor within male-dominated laws, institutions, and technology. Economically, agricultural underutilization leads to food insecurity and chronic malnutrition in agriculture-dependent poor and marginalized groups. This is also increasing women's reliance on economic possibilities other than agriculture, to which they have limited access. Nepal's agroecological approach to agricultural growth might mark a watershed moment in which policies, institutions, and frameworks must account for rising population dynamics such as migration, food security, climate change, and the continuous battle for a political transition. The influence of outmigration on women's greater responsibilities in agriculture, as well as the repercussions, must be included in the policy debate.

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Author's Contributions

Som Nepali: Contributed to the writing of the manuscript, designed and collected all the resources for the study.

Rajesh Tamang: Designed and coordinate the research work and helps to organize the study.

Ethics

This article is original and contains unpublished material. The corresponding author confirms that all of the other authors have read and approved the manuscript and no ethical issues involved.

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