Attitudes towards women in agriculture

- a case study of Nepali news media

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Introduction

Globally, migration has increased sharply leading to a debate on its positive and negative effects on the sending communities (Lokshin and Glinskaya, 2009:481). In 2013, 60 percent of the world's total migrant population originated from developing countries and since 2000 the average annual growth rate in the international migrant stock in the South have outpaced that of the North (United Nations, 2013:1). Studying the effects of migration on the sending countries and communities in the South is thus of high importance.

Migration is further a gendered phenomenon. The rapid increase in the number of male migrants in Asia has resulted in a decline in the proportion of women among all migrants in the South, where the proportion of women is lower than it is globally. This due to a strong demand for migrant work force in West Asia's oil-producing countries. The annual increase in the number of male migrants in Asia was 3.1 percent between 2000 and 2013 while the same number for women was 1.9 percent (United Nations, 2013:7). As for Nepal, the gender imbalance is even bigger than that of South Asia in general. In a study written in 2009 it is claimed that 97 percent of the Nepali migrants are men, in the ages 15–44 (Lokshin and Glinskaya, 2009:485). There is on average also a 20 percent increase of registered migration every year in Nepal as migrants leave to look for employment in other countries, and the real number of migrants is estimated to be much higher than the registered (Serrière and Centre for Economic Development and Administration, 2014:9). This makes South Asia in general, and Nepal in particular, an especially interesting case to study.

Migration and labour force patterns

Migration is connected to changes in the gender balance in labour force participation. In a report written in 2014 it is argued that the structure of the working age population in Nepal is considerable impacted by the strong emigration flows and that there are 123 women per 100 men at national level (Serrière and Centre for Economic Development and Administration, 2014:7). “The effect of male migration on the work patterns of nonmigrating women has important implications for women’s social status”, Lokshin and Glinskaya claims (2009:504). World bank statistics show that the ratio of the female to male labour force participation rate
in Nepal increased almost every year between 1990 and 2013 (The World bank, n. d.).

International Labour Organization further argues that “Nepal is an outlier among South Asian countries” as the female labour force participation rate in 2008 was 80.1 percent (ILO, 2014:3). This stands in contrast with the figures found in other South Asian contrast, where, for example, the female labour force participation rate in Bangladesh was 36.0 percent, and 27.2 percent in India. Studying changing labour force patterns in Nepal through a gender lens is thus highly relevant.

**Gendered labour force patterns in agriculture**

Agriculture is the major sector of employment and source of livelihood for rural farm households in Nepal (Maharjan, Bauer and Knerr, 2013:22). Traditionally there has been a gendered division of labour in Nepali agriculture. Women in Nepal have, however, increasingly been participating in the agricultural labour force as they, in the absence of their husbands, have taken on new agricultural work tasks (Gartaula, Niehof and Visser, 2010:571). Women in Nepal are not new to agriculture, however, they “broadened and intensified their involvement in agriculture as they increasingly shoulder the responsibility for household survival and respond to economic opportunities in agriculture” (Gartaula, Niehof and Visser, 2010:565).

**Purpose**

Studies have thus shown that the gender imbalance in migration has lead women to participate increasingly in the labour force in general and agriculture in particular in Nepal, but what would happen if the male dominance in migration, or migration overall, were to decrease? Will the female labour force participation decrease as well, or could migration have had a more long term effect on the perception of women’s role in agriculture? As will be elaborated in the theory section of this study, women’s actual labour force participation has been shown to be coupled with more positive attitudes towards women’s labour force participation in the North. If this is also true for agriculture in Nepal, migration from Nepal could have gendered effects far more long lasting than those of remittances and temporary loss of labour.
The purpose of this study is therefore to understand how the gender imbalance in migration affects women in Nepal. More specifically this study seeks to understand how attitudes towards female labour force participation in agriculture have evolved as male out-migration has caused changes in the demography of the agricultural workforce.

Theory

Labour force participation and attitudes

As shown in the section above, male out-migration has caused the gender composition of the agricultural workforce in Nepal to change. A change in female labour force participation could have implications for gender role attitudes in a society. Alwin, Braun and Scott examines attitudes towards female labour force participation in three Western industrialized countries (1992:14). The study indicates that women in general are more pro-feminist in their attitudes (Alwin, Braun and Scott, 1992:33-34), that is to say, women expressed “greater endorsement for women working” (Alwin, Braun and Scott, 1992:34). The study further indicated that women who are working, as well as men whose wives are working, are more positive towards women’s labour force participation. This could be because those who already have more pro-feminist attitudes to begin with are also more prone to work. It could, however, also be because attitudes have changed as a consequence of women working. Which of those explanations is true could not be answered within the framework of the study. Regardless, there is a connection between attitudes and behaviour, the authors argue (Alwin, Braun and Scott, 1992:33). A similar argument is found in by Thornton, Alwin and Camburn, arguing that “[f]emale labour force participation appears both to influence and be influenced by sex-role attitudes”. Attitudes affect the likelihood of taking a job outside of the home, but working outside of the home also “tends to change traditional orientations” (Thornton, Alwin and Camburn, 1983:225). Yet another study claims that the higher work experience in East-Germany also lead to an increase pro-feminist beliefs (Alwin, Braun and Scott, 1994:44).

The same authors, however, stress that “high female labour force participation alone does not automatically lead to liberal gender role attitudes” (Alwin, Braun and Scott, 1994:45). Another study also argued that there is no automatic link between increased female labour
force participation the perception of women’s role in employment (Haller and Hoellinger:1994:109). This indicates that changes in attitudes towards gender roles in the labour force do not necessarily go hand in hand with changes in the actual gendered division of labour. That women are increasingly participating in Nepali agriculture does thus not necessarily mean that attitudes towards women’s participation are increasingly positive.

In the US, for example, many women, especially married women, entered the labour market during the 1940’s. It has often been argued that married women’s increased labour force participation was caused by the Second World War (Goldin, 1991:741). The war increased the requirements for labour and lead to an increase in wages, especially for women, and “may have demonstrated to employers that women could function well in jobs that had previously been male domains” (Goldin, 1991:742-743). Policies that had made it difficult for women to participate in the labour force earlier may have eroded as a result of the war. Marriage-bars, for example, which were policies not to hire married women and to fire those that got married after employment, were abolished after the early 1940’s (Goldin, 1991:742-743). It is, however, argued in the study that it was only when there was a substantial reduction of young, single women and an increase in the number of well educated, older married women that the rhetoric surrounding women’s work changed (Goldin, 1991:755). This, it could be argued, indicates that real circumstances preceded changes in attitudes. About half of those who had entered the labour force during the war, however, left it sometime after 1944 (Goldin, 1991:755), indicating that there had been no substantial change in attitudes.

How women’s entry into work areas that had been traditionally male dominated challenged the idea that women were unsuited for these jobs, during the Second World War in the US, was further discussed in a book by Honey. The author argues that, while media legitimized women’s entry into the labour market it failed in altering old values on women’s role in the household, leading to “traditional views about womanhood at the war’s end” (Honey, 1984:1). This indicates that changes in attitudes is important for changes in a society to be sustainable and that media plays an important role in forming these attitudes. Whether attitudes towards female labour force participation does or does not take place can thus have great implications for the future of the female work force, making it important to study.
Fortin further argues that anti-egalitarian views have the strongest negative effect on women’s labour force participation (Fortin, 2005:416). An increased labour force participation by women could thus, arguably, have an important impact on attitudes towards women’s role in the labour force which, in return, could have a positive impact on the actual participation, thus creating a circle effect.

A number of studies have, as shown above, already payed focus to the connection between female labour force participation and attitudes towards women in the labour force. In common for all the above studies is, however, the focus on countries in the North. Could the impact of changed gender patterns in the labour force on attitudes towards women in the labour force be different in the South?

**Agriculture in Nepal**

Work migration changes the gender division of labour and affects both households and communities (Lokshin and Glinskaya, 2009:482). In Nepal, “[t]he effect of male migration on the work patterns of nonmigrating women has important implications for women’s social status” (Lokshin and Glinskaya, 2009:504). World bank statistics also show that the ratio of female to male labour force participation rate in Nepal has in fact increased since 1990 (The World bank, n. d.).

During the 1990’s there was a decline in labour force participation in agriculture in general. The proportion of women working in the sector, however, increased, especially in developing countries (Gartaula, Niehof and Visser, 2010:566). In Nepal, there has traditionally been a division of male and female work tasks in agriculture. According to hindu religion, for example, natural disasters and misfortune would be the consequence of women ploughing land and it is therefore forbidden for women to do so. There has, however, been a decrease in this gendered division of labour and an increased feminisation of agriculture in Nepal. This feminisation of agriculture is true for households both with and without migrants. Women are hired as labour more often than men when a household loses labour due to out-migration, this due to the lack of male labour which, in turn, is a result of the male-dominated out-migration, Maharjan, Bauer and Knerr argues (2012:114-121).
Feminisation is, in a study by Gartaula, Niehof and Visser, explained as “increased participation and authority of women in certain areas” (2010:566). Feminisation of agriculture is further understood as “women’s increased labour participation and role in decisionmaking”, where the former could mean both an increase in the number of women involved or in the time devoted by women (Gartaula, Niehof and Visser, 2010:566). The traditional idea of feminisation of agriculture is that it happens as men, as a result of industrialisation, leave the agricultural sector. In China, for example, men looked for urban jobs when market economy was introduced, leaving the farms to women. This, in turn lead to a significant change of the gender composition of agricultural labour (Gartaula, Niehof and Visser, 2010:566). This study, too, indicates that the female labour force participation in agriculture has increased due to male labour out-migration (Gartaula, Niehof and Visser, 2010:575). Interestingly it was found that women in households where the migrant had returned, in some cases, still had more entitlements to land (Gartaula, Niehof and Visser, 2010:575). This is interesting since it could, arguably, be a result of a change in attitudes.

The increased feminisation of agriculture in Nepal is thus argued to lead to an increase in women’s decision making power as well a their entitlements to land. Maharjan, Bauer and Knerr, however, points towards women’s increased workload and responsibilities. They further argue that women “are not adequately prepared for these new responsibilities” (Maharjan, Bauer and Knerr, 2013:22). This indicates that attitudes towards women’s increased participation in agriculture are not entirely positive. Moreover, it has been argued that these transformed gender roles “hints at the end of the gender division of labour in crop farming” (Maharjan, Bauer and Knerr, 2013:18). However, as indicated above, the feminisation of agriculture does not necessarily lead attitudes towards women’s role to change. If attitudes in Nepali agriculture have not become more pro-feminist it is questionable whether the end of gender division of labour is really as close as this study argues. This as the supply of male labourers in agriculture could increase if migration were to decrease.

In US the media failed to alter gender role attitudes and many women left the labour market when the war ended. Will the same thing happen in Nepal or could a more substantial change of attitudes lead women to stay in the labour force even if men were to return? Understanding
attitudes towards women in agriculture is thus highly important in order to make predictions about Nepali women’s future in agriculture. The aim of this study is therefore to answer the following question:

*How has the pattern of attitudes towards women’s role in the agricultural labour force in Nepal evolved since 2001?*

Due to the limited framework of this study *attitudes* will be restricted to attitudes towards women’s labour force participation. The scope of the study further limits the possibility of identifying a causal link between increased female labour force participation and attitudes towards women in the labour force. The aim of this study is therefore restricted to mapping attitudes. The chosen time frame is due to the accessibility of material, as will be elaborated on in the following section.

**Methodology**

To answer the research question attitudes will be measured in English speaking Nepali newspapers. Three different newspapers have been chosen to decrease the risk of bias in particular newspapers. Furthermore, a number of articles from the years between 2001 and 2015 have been chosen to enable a comparison over time which could indicate a change in attitudes during the chosen time period.

The external validity in a case study, Bryman argues, can be compromised since generalisation is sometimes difficult - what is true for Nepal is not necessarily true for other countries (Bryman, 2011:76-79). The high level of migrants, the gender imbalance in migration and the high female labour force participation compared to other south Asian countries described earlier does, however, make Nepal an interesting case to study in itself.

**News media and attitudes**

In a country where a large part of the population is agrarian it could be questioned whether attitudes reflected in news articles are representative for attitudes held by the larger part population. The authors of the articles are, for instance, likely to be more well educated than
other parts of the population. Zhou and Moy, however, argues that frame building in media is not only shaped by internal factors, like individual characteristics, organisational constraints and political orientation, but also by external factors. The media discourse on nuclear power was, for example, shaped also by cultural resonances and sponsor activities (Zhou and Moy, 2007:81-82). Honey further argues that media must reflect the “feelings and beliefs” of its consumers to be credible (Honey, 1984:2), and Bengtson and Fan argues that “[a]nalysis of the media has repeatedly been shown to produce results that parallel the findings of attitude surveys and opinion polls” (1999:517). Analysing Nepali media thus make for a relevant tool to understand patterns in attitudes held also by a larger part of the population.

Zhou and Moy further argues that “[o]ver the years, the impacts of political culture and social values on news construction have remained significant”, making news media in particular relevant to study (Zhou and Moy, 2007:81-82). Media is, of course, a wide concept and an analysis of social media, radio or television could have been interesting complements to the analysis of newspapers. Due to the scope of this study as well as the accessibility of different types of media the analysis of this study is, however, restricted to articles from newspapers.

Other than reflecting social attitudes media also forms public opinion by “emphasizing certain voices, highlighting particular views, and generating discourse about certain issues” (Zhou and Moy, 2007:81-82). Another study, that examines mass media’s impact on rural out-migration in Nepal, however points out that newspapers, while often inexpensive, are limited to a literate audience (Piotrowski, 2013:175). The total adult literacy rate in Nepal (year 2008-2012) was 57.4 percent (Unicef, 2013). The articles studied in this thesis are further restricted to an english speaking audience. News media in this study is therefore mainly used as a tool to understand attitudes due to its ability to reflect social attitudes. Its attitude-shaping ability is, however, not without importance. This since a shift in attitudes, if reflected in the news media, could then further fuel an even more extensive change in attitudes.

Material
As mentioned above, three different newspapers were chosen to minimise the risk of tendency. These newspapers are The Himalayan times, Nepali times and the Kathmandu post.
The Himalayan times and the Kathmandu post are both daily newspapers while Nepali times is a weekly newspaper. According to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal Media and Telecoms Landscape Guide these three newspapers are “widely read by the elite” (2011:11). As mentioned above, Honey argues that media have to reflect their readers attitudes. That these newspapers are read by the elite could thus be problematic as the actual agricultural labour force’s attitudes might then not be represented. As argued above, media is also shaped by attitudes in the society. Furthermore, the elite plays a key role in women’s further participation in agriculture as they are the ones shaping laws and policies. A shift in their attitudes could thus have great implications for women’s future role in agriculture. The Kathmandu post claims to sell 50,000 copies per day and The Himalayan times “is now believed to be the top-selling English language daily in Nepal”. Nepali times is popular in the expatriate community (Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal Media and Telecoms Landscape Guide, 2011:82-87).

The time period of this study is chosen to be between the years 2001 and 2015. This period was chosen both for accessibility reasons - no articles written before 2001 are accessible on the newspapers web pages - and to make it possible to study change over time. The theoretical framework of this study is based on the idea that women’s actual participation in the labour force could generate a change in attitudes towards women’s role in the labour force. The time period under study should thus also have seen a change in the labour force participation of women. During the chosen time period the female labour force participation in Nepal have increased. The ratio of female to male labour force participation rate (in percentage) was 90.47618 in year 2000 and 91.73364 in 2013 (The World bank, n. d.).

Articles from the Kathmandu post have, however, only been found since 2011. This could be misleading as there are more articles written in the latter half of the time period which, if not taken into consideration in the analysis, could falsely indicate an increase in certain attitudes. Articles from this newspaper could, however, be used to confirm or reduce the prevalence of certain attitudes during the latter half of the time period.

As for the articles the selection process was build upon two steps. In the first step articles containing the words “women” and “agriculture”, or “women” and “farm” or “female” and
“farm” were selected. Among these, articles were then selected by relevance in relation to the purpose of this study. This to enable a fruitful analysis and mapping of as many attitudes as possible. As only articles containing these phrases were chosen, articles revealing attitudes towards women’s participation in agriculture could have gone missing, however, due to the scope of this study the selection process had to be limited.

Analysing articles, as opposed to for example conducting interviews or surveys, could increase the validity of the study. This since the material in this case is not created for the purpose of the study and thus not affected by the author of the study’s values in the same way, increasing the chance of finding an answer closer to the truth, Bryman argues (Bryman, 2011:489). The analysis could, however, preferably be complemented with a survey or interviews. This could, however, not be done within the scope of this study. Also an analysis of policy documents could have been a fruitful complement to further triangulate. For scope and accessibility reasons this could not be done either.

Analysis
To answer the research question through news articles a content analysis will be applied. The qualitative nature of this method is preferable to gain a rich understanding of the attitudes represented in these articles.

Qualitative content analysis is used to identify underlying themes in a text and an analysis of mass media could be used to identify different themes in a debate, Bryman argues (2011:498-505). Pfeil and Zaphiris argues that “[q]ualitative methods often allow the researcher to freely adapt the steps to the peculiar characters of the research project” (2010:7). More specifically, a framework analysis will be applied to identify these attitude themes. The idea is to create an index, a matrix in which different frames and sub themes can be categorized. The data is then organised into core frames and the texts are analysed to identify themes that are repeatedly found (Bryman, 2011:528--529). The basis of the analysis in this study is to identify main themes in attitudes toward female labour force participation in agriculture in the articles. This to understand how the debate have developed and to investigate whether a shift can be indicated.
After thorough reading of the articles quotes where attitudes towards women’s participation in agriculture will lifted out and categorized into different themes in an index (see appendix). To simplify a comparison over time the quotes will also be categorised by year and then further coded in different colours depending on which newspapers they are published in. This to enable a comparison of the prevalence of attitudes in the different newspapers as well as to sort out articles from the Kathmandu post as these only goes back to 2011. The purpose of the index is to create an overview and to simplify the analysis of change over time.

This type of analysis, alike qualitative studies in general, is based on interpretation, making it difficult to achieve high reliability. Values that the author has is impossible to get rid of completely. Instead it is important to be aware of these values and show reflexivity (Bryman, 2011:43-44). The fact that I, as the author of this analysis, come from a swedish context and am a feminist might affect the interpretations of the text. A clear operationalisation of central important concepts can, however, increase the reliability.

**Operationalisation**

To be able to make an equal analysis of different articles an operationalisation of attitudes and agriculture is necessary. The focus of the analysis will be attitudes held by the journalists, this since quotes or statements by persons interviewed or referred to in the articles have been selected by the journalist and thus are affected by the journalists attitudes. When an article takes a stand in something related to women working in agriculture that will be categorised into a frame. These frames will be based on previous research as well as the empirical material itself, though the latter will be the most important. One of the advantages of this qualitative method is that the frames used to categorise attitudes can be modified along the way as new themes are discovered. This interactiveness of the method decreases the likelihood of missing important categories and therefore enables a fruitful analysis and mapping of attitudes.

Based on the research discussed in the theory part a number of themes can be identified as a starting point of the analysis. Fortin study the attitude that men are more entitled to jobs than women when opportunities are scarce as well as traditional gender role attitudes and anti-egalitarian views, defined as the belief that a woman’s place is in the home (Fortin,
Haller and Hoellinger studies the attitudes that women’s right to work depends on how family life is affected, or how a woman’s work contribute to the household income. The also study the attitude that women’s work is a means of independence (Haller and Hoellinger, 1994:100-101). Maharjan, Bauer and Knerr argues that women are not adequately prepared for the workload and responsibilities left to them when men migrate (2013:22), and, in another study the same authors, it is stated that these is a taboo attached to women performing certain agricultural work tasks (Maharjan, Bauer and Knerr, 2012:117).

Based on this previous research a number of possible frames can be crystallised: *male bias* (men are more entitled to jobs when opportunities are scarce), *anti-egalitarian views* (women’s place is in the home), *mother’s guilt* (a woman’s right to work is determined by the extent to which it affects the family), *extra income* (women should work if it is needed for the household income), *independence* (increased female labour force participation is good because it increases women’s independence), *underprepared* (women are not adequately prepared for the workload and responsibilities left to them when men migrate), and, finally, *negative* (women should not perform certain work tasks as the consequences are negative). These make up for possible frames to look for in the articles analysed in this study. Some of the frames will, however, be merged into larger analytical categories as subframes and some, if no relevant, will be taken away after reading the articles. This to make the analysis more comprehensive and fruitful. Other frames can also be added as the analysis unfolds. The flexibility of this qualitative method increases the validity of the study as the framework is constantly modified to answer the research question as accurat as possible.

The operationalisation of *agriculture* is based on the selection of news articles. Only articles including the words agriculture, farming or farmer are included in the study.

**Analysis**

To answer the research question - *how has attitudes towards women’s role in the agricultural labour force in Nepal evolved since 2001?* - articles from three english speaking Nepali newspapers were analysed. Three main frames were found in the articles; *positive, negative* and *patriarchy hindering women*. Quotes from these articles were then categorised into these
frames. The articles were then coded by year, to enable an analysis of change over time, and newspaper, to make it easier to identify potential biases in particular newspapers. In total, 39 articles were used in the analysis; 15 from Nepali times, 17 from The himalayan times and seven from the Kathmandu post. Fewer articles were picked from the latter as only articles from 2011 and onward were found from this newspaper. This could, of course have implications for the interpretation of change over time as there are more articles from the latter half of the time period in this analysis. However, as quotes were coded by newspaper the prevalence of articles from certain newspapers was easy to identify and was taken into consideration in the analysis. In total, in the positive frame 32 quotes were found, in the negative nine quotes were found and 16 quotes were categorised into the frame patriarchy hindering women, indicating that attitudes categorised into the positive frame were most prevalent while attitudes in the negative frame were less common. In the following analysis examples of quotes reflecting different attitudes will be presented, for a full presentation of the quotes used in the analysis see appendix.

**Patriarchy hindering women**

The frame patriarchy hindering women contains quotes reflecting the attitude that women in Nepali agriculture are hindered by patriarchal structures in different ways. Reflections of this attitude was found throughout the whole period, except for year 2003, 2004 and 2005. Discrimination in policy making was one of the ways in which women were commonly argued to be hindered by these structures:

In the Hindu Kush Himalaya, women are the major people involved in farming, agriculture, and livestock rearing; they are often the major caretakers of natural resources. Yet policies still tend to think of farmers in terms of men (Nepali times, 2002:A)

Women are important stakeholders in forest-related activities and have been successfully playing the role of forest users, managers, conservation leaders and farmers in the country. However, the existing policy documents and initiatives [...] have neglected and undermined the role of women and their rights over natural resources like forests (Kathmandu post, 2012:A)

Though playing an important role in agriculture, women are hindered by patriarchal
structures as policies are made with male farmers in mind. The latter article further argued that women are neglected and undermined in policy documents and initiatives. Another way in which women were claimed to be hindered by patriarchal structures was through difference in wages:

Twenty thousand female workers of the total population of the district are working in the agriculture sector, but they too are not getting the equal amount of payment like men (The Himalayan times, 2002:A)

Also in this quote women’s contribution to agriculture is, arguably, claimed not to be recognised. Another recurring theme in the articles was how women are discriminated in terms of access to ownership of land and loans:

In an extreme patriarchal society like Nepal’s, women do need to be given a special focus because it is clear that gender-neutral programs generally only benefit men. Nepali women do most of the agricultural work but have no rights over the land they till. They cannot even get loans (Nepali times, 2008:A)

Women peasants today called for getting equal ownership of land and initiation of land reforms [...] More than 90 per cent of the owners of land and property are men though it is women who spend more than 80 per cent of their time working as farmers in the field (The Himalayan times, 2009:A)

Yet again, it is argued that women are not recognised for their contributions to agriculture. This argument is even more clearly pronounced in an article in The Kathmandu post in 2010:

Although more than 75 per cent of women are reportedly engaged in agriculture in all least development countries (LDCs), they are not duly recognised for their contribution nor accorded an enabling environment, as evidenced by gender-blind policy interventions. For instance, they seldom have legal land ownership and have limited access to extension services, technology, information, credit and other support systems (Kathmandu post, 2011:A)

Compared to men, women have almost no access to new technologies related to their
Here again, land ownership, policy making and access to credit is put forward as issues. Access to technologies, information and extension services is, however, also claimed to be smaller for women. Another prevalent attitude was that patriarchal structures hinders women’s ability to contribute to agriculture:

Most rural women are uneducated and have to rely on their male counterparts to maintain their livelihood. There being less employment opportunities in many rural areas, they are deprived of such facilities [...] Although rural women’s contribution to agriculture is not less than that of men’s, in the process of development, they have remained at a lower level of skills and remuneration than men. Socio-cultural problems and family responsibilities have further hindered their opportunities to make full contribution to diverse development activities (The Himalayan times, 2010)

Lack of employment opportunities deprives them of bringing their labour to productive use. Consequently, most of them cannot earn and are unable to support their respective households (The Himalayan times, 2007)

Employment opportunities, level of education, socio-cultural problems and family responsibilities are argued to hinder women’s ability to contribute to agriculture. That family responsibilities are seen as a hinder indicates that women are still seen as responsible for taking care of the household. In another article this was, however, seen as something that needs to change:

Though husbands and in-laws no longer hold them back, they still have to fulfil all of their household duties. This results in women having to wake up earlier and going to bed later in order to manage. There is a solution to this [...] “It’s not just about getting support from the family, the family also has to take responsibility” (Kathmandu post, 2012:B)

In one of the quotes above it was argued that women are forced to depend on their husbands. This argument was also found in other articles:

Though women play a vital role in rural areas, as most of them are uneducated, they still have
It was also argued, for example, that men’s traditional and legal right to inherit land and the larger share of inheritance increases women’s dependency in men (The Himalayan times, 2015:D). A number of articles also called for action to decrease these inequalities:

“The South Asian people need government support and mainly for women peasants in this region,” he added [...] CPN (UML) leader Sahana Pradhan also insisted on revolutionary land reforms and full ownership for women in land and property (The Himalayan times, 2009:A)

Giving attention to gender issues in development activities, especially in the agricultural sector, is a necessity. [...] Quisumbing also emphasised the need to include gender issues during the procedure of making of policy and strategies. They should also be given rights to own land and to borrow money by themselves (The Himalayan times, 2002:B)

Calls for action was found also in a number of other articles (see appendix). In other articles, however, scepticism about politicians ability to change the situation was expressed:

[I]n order to provide more income generating opportunities for rural women, it is important to provide them appropriate skill development training [...] But still, despite the tall claims of political leaders, the majority of rural women continue to be exploited by men (The Himalayan times, 2007)

These women farmers and many more like them have turned their lives around with little or no help from the government. Most of Nepal’s progress has happened not because of, but despite the government (Nepali times, 2014:A)

This frame reflects the attitude that women in agriculture are, in different ways, hindered by patriarchal structures. One of the ways in which women are argued to be hindered is in discriminatory policy making. Difference in wages between women and men as well as the lack of right to own land is also pointed out in many of the articles. Furthermore, women’s ability to contribute to agriculture is argued to be hindered by patriarchal structures as women have less access to technology, education and employment opportunities. This is also argued to lead women to become dependent on their men. Dubble responsibilities in agriculture and
the household was further pointed out as problematic. Finally, calls for action in terms of, for example, policy making was found throughout the time period, although scepticism about politicians ability to intervene was also expressed.

Though only explicitly stated in two articles towards the end of the time period (see appendix) the argument that women in agriculture are not adequately recognised for their contributions was found to be an underlying theme in many of the articles. Moreover, the two most prevalent arguments in this frame was found to be that policy making in Nepal is discriminatory towards women (this argument was found in 2002, 2002, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014) and that it is problematic that women have less access to ownership over land (found in 2002, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2014, 2015). Both these arguments were found mainly towards the end of the time period (see appendix).

That no quotes in this category were found for the years 2003, 2004 and 2005 could indicate that the attitude has become more prevalent since 2005 or that this idea, for some reason, was not common during these years.

Negative

In this frame quotes reflecting the attitude that the lack of male labour force has had a negative impact on either women in terms of, for example, workload or on agricultural production were categorised. In contrast to what was found in the studies in the theory section of this study, namely that female labour force participation is coupled with more pro-feminist beliefs, attitudes in the negative frame seems to have become more prevalent in the latter half of the time period. Only two quotes were categorised into this frame between 2001 and 2012:

> In the absence of young men, the entire burden of agriculture has been shifted onto women, children and the aged (Nepali times, 2001:A)

This quotes was categorised in the negative frame as the increased agricultural work is described as a “burden” rather than, for example, an opportunity for women to earn their own income or increase their decision making power. In Nepali times in 2008 it was further stated that:
Nepal’s agriculture is caught in a vicious cycle: young men don’t have jobs so they migrate, and the shortage of men affects farm output (Nepali times, 2008:B)

Here male out-migration is described as a “vicious cycle” which affects agricultural production. While the article from 2001 argued that women are affected negatively, in this quote it is argued that agricultural production is affected. From 2012 and onwards, quotes were categorised into this frame for every year. In The Kathmandu post in 2012 it was argued that the lack of male work force affects both the women that stay, agricultural productivity and the country as a whole negatively:

Women are required to work longer hours, but they show a lower farm production because they find it difficult to replace the physical competence of men. In a nutshell, migration of a male member affects women negatively in the case of poor households or marginal farmers. It is irrefutable that a country cannot dream of achieving industrial growth in the absence of competent human resource (Kathmandu post, 2012:C)

The lack of male labour force is thus argued to have implications not only for the affected families but for Nepal as a country. In another article patriarchal structures are discussed again. Here it is, however, argued that women are affected negatively by patriarchy, not because they are treated differently, but because they are different:

There are many reasons why the linear design of technology by capitalist patriarchy cannot benefit women [...] these intensive-agricultural systems use lots of chemicals, which affect the women even more (Kathmandu post, 2013)

Another argument was found to be that women’s increased workload has negative effects also for other members of the household:

As men migrate, family-run small farms are also increasingly women-run. Gender imbalance and poor sanitation stunt children, impairing their physical and mental development (Nepali times, 2014:B)
Around one in four of these households are headed by women, with many men working overseas to help support their families. These women and their children are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity; they’re more likely to try to cope with natural disasters by eating fewer meals, or selling valuable assets such as farm tools to buy food (The Himalayan times, 2015:A)

In the negative category arguments indicating that women’s increased participation in agriculture, due to the increased lack of male labour, has a negative effect on both women, other members of the family and farm production are thus found. Women are, according to the articles, affected negatively as their workload increase and the farm productivity decreases. One article also argued that the lack of male work force affects women negatively as they are forced to perform tasks more suitable for men. Other members of the family were also argued to be affected negatively due to increased food insecurity. Gender imbalance in the household was further claimed to impair children's physical and mental development. Finally, it was claimed that the lack of male work force affects not only women and their own families but the nation as a whole as the lack of “competent human work force” makes industrial growth impossible.

Only two quotes were categorised into this frame before 2012. These two quotes were both found in the newspaper Nepali times. The attitude was only found in one article from The Himalayan times, in 2015. In 2012 and 2013 quotes were only found in articles from the Kathmandu post, which, as stated earlier, only has articles from 2011. The idea thus seems to have been more prevalent in the newspaper Nepali times and later also the Kathmandu post. However, the attitude did occur in an article from The Himalayan times in 2015, and the analysis does indicate an increase in the attitude also without the articles from the Kathmandu post. Although seemingly increasing, the analysis indicates that this frame of attitudes has been less prevalent than the other two frames throughout the time period.

None of the arguments in the negative frame were found to be notably more prevalent than the others, although the argument that women’s burden in agriculture has increased was slightly more prevalent, as is was found for three years (2001, 2012 and 2014) while the other argument were found in articles from two or one year. Furthermore, as very few quotes in this
frame were found in the beginning of the time period no clear development of argument over time have been found, though the argument that women’s increased participation in agriculture has negative consequences for farm production were found somewhat earlier (in 2008 and 2012) whereas the argument that it has negative consequences for their families were found later on (in year 2014 and 2015) (see appendix).

Positive

In the positive frame, which in this analysis is the most prevalent, two main themes have been identified; the first concerns the attitude that women’s increased participation in agricultural activities has positive consequences for the affected women and their families as it, for example, increases their confidence and independence. The second category concerns the attitude that the same phenomenon has a positive impact on the society as a whole - that women in agriculture are crucial for development.

The first theme, that increased participation has a positive impact on women and their families, was found throughout the whole period with exceptions for the years 2004, 2007, 2010, 2011 and 2013. In 2005, for example, it was stated in The Himalayan times that:

Women of Churiyamai Village Development Committee [...] are being able to support their families through ginger farming [...] Women are happy with ginger production. They are optimistic of earning more money to support their families by this occupation (The Himalayan times, 2005:A)

Here it is argued that women’s participation in ginger farming increases their ability to support their families and that they are “happy” and “optimistic” about it. In another article it was argued that:

[V]egetable farming has augmented women’s participation in income generation and they have become self-reliant (The Himalayan times, 2005:B)

This article, too, points towards women’s increased ability to earn an income. It also argues that this further leads women to become more self-reliant. Increased independence as a
consequence of increased participation was discussed also in an article in The Himalayan times in 2006:

[W]omen of the VDC have become financially independent from the programme [...] Now women don’t have to depend on their husbands for money (The Himalayan times, 2006:B)

Another argument that was found in this theme was that women’s confidence increases:

I hesitated at first fearing that I might not succeed...but staff from LI-BIRD [Pokhara-based NGO Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development] encouraged me and my confidence increased (Nepali times, 2006)

These women, who at one point were unaware of their capabilities, are confident and more than that, they are motivated to continue the work that WOCAN has started (Kathmandu post, 2012:B)

In two articles from the Himalayan times from 2006 and 2009 it was further stated that gender roles within the household had been altered as a consequence of women’s involvement in agriculture:

Due to women’s involvement in income-generating activities, men have been helping them do the household chores (The Himalayan times, 2006:A)

Indira Bhujel, a local farmer expressed happiness saying that vegetable farming had helped her good income. She said her husband also has been assisting in farming even though in the past he never showed interest (The Himalayan times, 2009:B)

In Nepali times in 2014 it was further claimed that women’s increased participation has altered perceptions about women:

Surja BK from Dadeldhura used her success as a vegetable farmer to abolish the chaupadi system that consigned women to the cowshed every month (Nepali times, 2014:A)
The 22 women farmers honoured recently spoke of similar struggles, and broke down when they shared tales of the hardships they overcame. They are all proud of their achievements: having the money to send their children to school, becoming the primary breadwinner, owning a piece of land and earning social acceptance and respect (Nepali times, 2014:A)

Furthermore, in this article from Nepali times in 2015 it was argued that women’s participation also increases their decision making power:

With the men gone, women have more of a say in school management committees, forestry user groups, irrigation committees, village development councils. Women have had to take on jobs traditionally done by men, and while this has increased their responsibilities it has also given them more say than they had previously (Nepali times, 2015)

Finally, in this article from 2006 women’s participation was argued to have a positive impact also on other members of the family:

Women’s engagement in dairy farming has improved living standard of their families, led to increased investment in children’s education and improvement in health of family members (The Himalayan times, 2006:A)

In the negative frame it is thus argued that women and their families are affected positively by women’s participation in agriculture for a number of reasons. One argument is that women can earn their own income and support their families and thus become more self-reliant and less dependant on their men. Women’s confidence is also argued to have increased and gender roles within the household altered as men assist more in both farming and household duties. The perception of women is also claimed to have changed as they, in some cases, have gained social acceptance and respect. By taking on jobs previously performed by men women’s decision making power is argued to have increased. Finally, women’s increased participation is argued to increase investment in education for children and health for other family members.

All the quotes used in this analysis can be found in the attached appendix, among these, articles reflecting the argument that women’s participation in agriculture is positive as it
gives them access to earn their own income and thus increases their independence was found mainly in the beginning of the timed period (in year 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006 and 2014). This argument thus seems to have become less prevalent towards the end of the time period. The argument that women’s participation is positive because it improves the living standard of their families as well as the argument that women becomes increasingly able to support their families, however, became more prevalent towards the end of the time period (articles reflecting these arguments were found in 2006, 2014, 2014, 2015, 2015 and 2005, 2009, 2014, 2015 respectively). Also the argument that it leads women’s confidence to increase (2005, 2006, 2008, 2014) as well as that it alters perceptions of women (2012, 2014, 2014) were found to be increasingly common towards the end of the time period. The latter one seems to have been common first towards the very end of the time period.

The second theme in this category - the idea that women in agriculture is important for the development of the country - was found more frequently towards the end of the time period as only two quotes were found before 2006:

Her contribution to farming innovation had been recognised by the government in Kathmandu, and she has bagged numerous awards (Nepali times, 2001:B)

Though the above quote is not a clear cut example of this category, it could be argued that the government's decision to reward this woman for her innovations is an indication that women are seen as playing an important role in Nepali agriculture. In 2002 an article in Nepali times discussed the importance of mountain women:

Since women are so critical to mountains - and, subsequently, to the lowlands that depend on mountains - we'd like to set up regional and global networks and bring the profile of mountain women much higher (Nepali times, 2002:A)

It is, however, not clearly indicated that this is in reference to women in agriculture. This could be an indication of the idea that women are important for development, however, as the focus of this analysis is women in agriculture, this is not clearly enough connected to the
subject of the analysis. Apart from these two, only somewhat connected, quotes the idea that women in agriculture are important for development was not found until 2006:

[W]omen of the village have been able to turn the bare hills of the forest into green and lush forest. The women of the group said that the programme, if expanded to other villages of the district, might help alleviate poverty from the district (The Himalayan times, 2006:B)

[W]omen’s participation in development activities, who constitute over half the total population of the rural areas, is far from satisfactory. If the available women workforce can be utilised more productively, it will greatly contribute to rural development (The Himalayan times, 2007)

In these two articles it is argued that the inability to make use of the female workforce has hampered the development in Nepal. A similar argument was found in an article from 2010:

[I]f the existing rural women’s labor can be suitably utilized in more production sectors, they will greatly contribute to this country’s overall development (The Himalayan times, 2010)

Though the above quote is not explicitly about women in agriculture, but about rural women, this is taken into the analysis as agricultural labourers could arguably be categorised as rural.

Combining SRI with mechanisation and setting up farmers’ cooperatives, boosts productivity, creates jobs and empowers many women like Sabita Chaudhary. If what is happening here can be scaled up to the national level, Nepal could even export rice again (Nepali times, 2008:B)

This quote also reflects attitudes from the first positive theme - that participation is empowering for women. It further, arguably, indicates the attitude that more working women are needed for Nepal to export rice again. In 2011, first, the connection between women in agriculture and development became clearer as women in agriculture were argued to be important in terms of food security:
If a country like Nepal takes agriculture seriously, it is crucial that women farmers are targeted as equal partners. Household food security and economic benefits can only be ensured when there is surplus yield for the market (Kathmandu post, 2011:A)

Nepal must adopt equitable access to food for all as a core goal, and to make progress towards this goal it should: [...] Increase agricultural investments that benefit smallholder farmers, especially women (Nepali times, 2012)

It was further argued that women in agriculture are needed to create positive change in Nepal:

More than foreign aid or remittance, these women and their role in agriculture and community development could end up being key players in pushing Nepal forward (Kathmandu post, 2012:B)

We need an agriculture that is conservation oriented, rebuilds the soil, conserves water and brings back biodiversity. We need to think of things women in Nepal can grow which reduce their work burden while empowering them. Women are the storehouse of knowledge of agriculture, skills of agriculture. This knowledge and skill, which focuses on conservation of earth’s resources, environment and nutrition for all, should be used as capital for agriculture to take a new direction (Kathmandu post, 2013)

In the latter quote it is argued that women possess certain knowledge and skills, The quote, however, also indicates the attitude that women are different in relation to men as the author expresses the need to find things that can be grown by women. The articles presented above discuss how women could bring, or how they could have brought, about change. This article from Nepali times in 2014, however, argues that women actually have been bringing change to Nepal:

There is a tendency in over-indulged Kathmandu to dismiss the work of non-profits and rural cooperatives. While they could be more transparent and inclusive, local NGOs, women's groups and community forestry user groups have been central in bringing about the small changes we see across rural Nepal today (Nepali times, 2014:A)

The Agriculture for Food campaign honoured 22 women farmers in Kathmandu recently.
They came from all over the country and had overcome great odds to become model farmers and leaders in their communities. Their husbands are away in Dubai, Punjab or Saudi Arabia and most were raising their children alone, and doing well (Nepali times, 2014:A)

It is also argued that women have increased productivity:

[W]omen now also manage the land. And across the board there’s been an increase in productivity” (Kathmandu post, 2012:B)

After 2006 attitudes in this theme was found more often in the articles. Articles from the Kathmandu post included, this attitude was found for every year except 2009 and 2015 after 2006. However, in year 2011 and 2013 quotes were only found in articles from the Kathmandu post, which, as elaborated in the methodology section of this thesis, could be misleading since articles from this newspaper have only been found since 2011. The fact that this attitude is found in this newspaper, however, confirms that this idea is prevalent during the latter half of the time period under study, which is why these articles are included in the analysis. The connection between women’s participation in agriculture and development became clearer in the argumentation first in 2011. Food security was one of the ways in which women’s participation in agriculture was argued to be important for Nepal. Other arguments were that women possess certain knowledge and skills and that they increase productivity. It was argued both that women could have led Nepal in a different direction, that they can do so in the future and that they already have brought about change in Nepal. The different arguments seems to have been almost equally common and no apparent change over time has been identified (see appendix).

**Discussion**

The aim of this study is to answer the research question: *how has the pattern of attitudes towards women’s role in the agricultural labour force in Nepal evolved since 2001?* This through a content analysis of three english speaking newspapers.

Three main frames of attitudes towards women in agriculture were found in the analysis of the articles; *patriarchy hindering women, negative and positive*. The latter frame was divided
into two main themes; positive effects on women and their families and positive effects on development. These two themes were, however, not divided into two different frames as they both reflect the attitude that women’s participation in agriculture is essentially positive. In terms of quantity of quotes categorised into the frames, the positive frame (with 32 quotes) was the most prevalent while the negative frame (with 9 quotes) was the least prevalent in the analysis. 16 quotes were categorised into the frame patriarchy hindering women.

In the latter frame, patriarchy hindering women, quotes reflecting the attitude that women in Nepali agriculture are hindered by patriarchal structures were categorised. These patriarchal structures were argued to have negative effects on both women, their families and farm production. Except for the years 2003, 2004 and 2005 articles containing this argument were found throughout the whole period. As four different articles reflecting this idea was found in the first two years of the analysis the attitude seems to have been existing also before 2005. As elaborated in the analysis section this could indicate either that the attitude has become more prevalent after 2005, although existing before that, or that the attitude, for some reason beyond the scope of this study to investigate, was not common during those three years.

Explicitly argued in two articles towards the end of the time period, and found as an underlying theme in many of the articles, was the attitude that women are not adequately recognised or rewarded enough for their contributions to agriculture. This arguably indicates that the attitude that women actually can contribute to agriculture has been prevalent and later on more pronounced. As many of the articles also calls for action the attitude that women should be able to participate more is further indicated. If, as indicated in the section above, this attitude has become more prevalent, this could thus have implication for women’s participation in agriculture in the future leading women to increasingly, or at least not decreasingly, participate.

The arguments found to be most prevalent in this frame, and mainly towards the end of the time period, is that policy making in Nepal is discriminatory towards women and, secondly, that women are hindered as they have less access to ownership over land. Interestingly, social norms, though found in the analysis, were not as commonly argued to be a hinder as was indicated in the previous research discussed in the methodology section of the study. This
could, arguably, indicate that social norms might actually have already changed in Nepal and that policy making and legislation is lagging behind. Moreover, as policy making and legal access to ownership of land is described as the most important hinders for women in agriculture, the results of this study indicates that an important step towards women’s continued participation in agriculture also lies in policymaking and legislation. This also highlights the importance of the results found in this study as well the importance of further research on the matter as it could influence the direction of policy making.

That the positive frame contained most quotes indicates that attitudes towards women’s participation in agriculture in Nepal are mainly positive. The theme representing the attitude that women are needed for development was found to be more common towards the end of the time period and became clearer in the argumentation first in 2011. This is in line with the results of the studies described in the theory section of this study as this positive attitude has increased during the same time period that women’s participation in agriculture has increased. As explained in the theory section, this could be because the actual experience of women’s increased participation in agriculture could have lead attitudes towards women in agriculture to become more positive.

However, the theme representing the attitude that women’s participation is positive for women themselves and their families has, in contrast, been prevalent throughout the whole time period. This could be because attitudes towards the effects of women’s role in agriculture on themselves and their families had already become more positive before the chosen time period. It could, however, also be so that this attitudes has been common long before the start of the time period.

The analysis, however, indicates that the argument that women’s participation in agriculture is positive as it gives them the opportunity to earn their own income and thus become more independent was more prevalent in the early half of the time period in the theme representing the argument that women’s participation in agriculture has positive implications for women and their families. The two arguments that women’s participation has positive implications for their families and that it increases women’s ability to support their families, however, became more prevalent towards the end of the time period. This development hints at the
other theme in this frame - that women’s participation in agriculture has positive implication not only for these women themselves but also for other people. If women’s participation in agriculture is increasingly seen as being important also for other people than themselves, this could have implications for women’s further participation in agriculture as more people have a stake in women’s continued participation. Furthermore, though attitudes in this theme have been prevalent during the whole time period in terms of number of articles, the fact that the arguments that women’s confidence as well as perceptions about women became more prevalent towards the end of the time period indicates that there has, in fact, been a change of attitudes also in this theme.

In complete contrast to the theory stands the evolvement of the negative frame. In this frame articles representing the attitude that women’s participation in agriculture has a negative impact on both these women as well as other family members, agricultural production and the country as a whole were categorised. This frame was found to be the least prevalent in the analysis in terms of number of quotes. The idea, however, became more prevalent towards the end of the time period. This stands in contrast to the results of the studies presented in the theory section of this thesis in which female labour force participation was found to be coupled with more pro-feminist attitudes. That negative attitudes towards women’s participation, according to this analysis, has increased under the same time period as women’s participation in agriculture has increased could be the result of strong reactions towards a norm breaking change. Women’s participation in agriculture has increased which might have increased the perceived need for those who earlier have been comfortable with the gendered division of labour to react against this change.

Though not clearly indicated, the focus of the argumentation for why women’s participation in agriculture is negative seems to have changed slightly from negative effects on farm production to negative effects on other family members. This development is, as argued above, found to be true also for the arguments as for why women’s participation in agriculture is positive where there has also been an increase in the focus on the effect on family members. Though the results in this study to a large extent confirms the results of the studies presented in the theory section of this analysis - that attitudes towards women’s labour force participation is likely to be positively coupled with increased labour force participation
- this specific result arguably points in another direction. In line with one of the potential frames, based on previous research, that was described in the methodology section this could indicate that the approval of women’s right to work is conditioned by its impact on other members of the family, indicating that women are seen as being primarily responsible for their families. Similar to what was argued about the increase in negative attitudes, this too could be a reaction towards changing gender roles within the household. If this is true, women’s future in agriculture is dependent on how family members are affected rather than on how women themselves are affected.

The development of attitudes towards women’s participation thus seems to have been heading in two different directions, as both negative and positive attitudes have become more prevalent. This indicates that women’s increased participation in agriculture has lead to a debate on its implications. The results, however, also indicates that the positive frame of arguments is more prevalent also after 2008, when the negative frame of arguments became increasingly common. In fact, more than twice as many quotes were found in the positive frame than in the negative after 2008 and, as argued above, many of the quotes in the frame patriarchy hindering women also indicates positive attitudes. It is thus indicated by this study that attitudes towards women’s participation in agriculture are increasingly positive. As studies have shown a link between female labour force participation and pro-feminist beliefs the development of attitudes in Nepal is likely to be coupled with the increased feminisation of agriculture. Furthermore, though it is beyond the scope of this study to determine any causal link between the two phenomenons, as studies argue that the feminisation of agriculture is largely due to the lack of male labour force caused by male out-migration, the actual increase in women’s participation in agriculture is, arguably, likely to have preceded changes in attitudes.

**Conclusion**

As shown in the section introductory section of this study, migration is a global and increasingly common phenomenon. The larger share of the world’s migrant population originates from developing countries and the growth rate in the migrant stock in the South has outpaced the growth rate in the North. Furthermore, migration has been shown to be a
gendered phenomenon as the majority of migrants are men. This is especially true for South Asia and even more so for Nepal where 97 percent of the migrants are claimed to be male.

This, in turn, has implications for the gendered labour force participation in Nepal as a sending community where the proportion of women in the labour force has increased. A number of studies have further shown that a feminisation of agriculture in Nepal has taken place. As this phenomenon has already been shown in a number of studies, the purpose of this study has been to investigate whether male out-migration could have had more long term implications for women’s participation in agriculture. More precisely, this study has set out to map attitudes towards women’s participation in agriculture in Nepal.

Studies have shown that there is a link between women’s actual labour force participation and positive attitudes towards the same phenomenon, but that increased female labour force participation does not necessarily lead attitudes to change. This made it interesting to investigate whether a change in attitudes have taken place in Nepal as female labour force participation in agriculture has increased, resulting in the research question: *how has the pattern of attitudes towards women’s role in the agricultural labour force in Nepal evolved since 2001?*

To answer this question a text analysis of English speaking Nepali newspapers was performed. Studies have shown that news media is shaped, not only by internal factors but also by external factors such as attitudes in the society. Thus making media a relevant research material. Based on both previous research and, mainly, the text material itself, frames of attitudes were developed into which quotes from the articles were categorised. The quotes were also categorised by year and newspaper to enable a comparison over time. As the ratio of the female to male labour force participation rate in Nepal increased during the following time period, as well as for material accessibility reasons, the time period of the study was chosen to be between 2001 and 2015.

The analysis of the news articles resulted in the development of three main frames; negative, positive and *patriarchy hindering women*. The frame *patriarchy hindering women* was found both in the beginning and the end of the time period. No articles reflecting this attitude were,
however, found in 2003, 2004 and 2005 which could indicate either that the attitude was not common during these years or that it became increasingly common after 2005. The argument that women in agriculture are not rewarded for their contributions was found as an underlying theme in many of the articles though not explicitly argued until the end of the time period. This could indicate that the attitude towards women’s participation in agriculture has become increasingly positive as this argument indicates that that women actually can and do contribute to agriculture. It was further found that patriarchy was more often argued to hinder women in terms of policy making and discriminatory legislation that in terms of social norms. This, it was argued, could indicate that social norms have already changed and that attitudes towards women’s participation in agriculture thus are becoming more positive.

In the positive frame quotes representing the attitude that women’s participation in agriculture has positive implications were categorised. This frame was further divided into two main themes: the attitude that women’s participation in agriculture has positive implications for these women and their families and the attitude that the same phenomenon has positive implications for development. Quotes reflecting the former theme was found throughout the time period with only a few exceptions while the latter theme became more prevalent in the later half of the time period and fully pronounced first in 2011. The arguments in the theme of attitudes pointing toward the positive effects on women and their families however changed over time. As articles arguing that the perception of women in the eyes of themselves as well as of others has become more positive became prevalent first in the latter half of the time period the analysis indicates that attitudes towards women in agriculture, in line with the theoretical framework of this study, actually has become more positive. The result also indicated that the argument that women’s participation is positive as it has positive implications for other members of the family, as opposed to for themselves, became increasingly common towards the latter half of the time period. This could have different implications for women’s future in agriculture. It could increase their participation as more people are perceived to have a stake in their continued participation. It does, however, also indicate that women’s increased participation in agriculture is perceived as positive only as long as it affects their families positively, as women are seen as the primary caretaker of the family.
In contrast to the results indicating that attitudes towards women’s participation in agriculture are increasingly positive stands the results of the negative frame of attitudes. This frame contains quotes reflecting the attitude that women’s participation in agriculture has negative implications for women, their families and farm production. The negative frame, too, become more prevalent in the analysis in the latter half of the time period which arguably could be seen as a reaction towards an increasingly norm breaking phenomenon. The focus on the effects on other family member became increasingly common also in this frame. This too could be seen as a reaction towards women’s increased participation in agriculture.

As the result of this study indicates that both negative and positive attitudes towards women’s participation in agriculture have become increasingly common it is indicated that women’s increased participation in agriculture has fueled the debate on its implications. However, as arguments categorised as positive are more prevalent than those categorised as negative also after 2008, when the prevalence of negative attitudes started to increase, the results also indicates that attitudes towards women’s participation in agriculture, especially towards the end of the time period, are mainly positive. As the studies presented in the theory section of this analysis indicates that increased female labour force participation is coupled with more pro-feminist beliefs this could thus, arguably, be connected with the feminisation of agriculture. Finally, as feminisation of agriculture is argued to be largely due to the lack of male labour force, it is, arguably, likely that the actual increase in women’s participation in agriculture have preceded these changes in attitudes.
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Appendix

In this appendix the frame indexes into which quotes from the articles were categorised are presented. All of the colored text is directly quoted from the articles used in the analysis. Quotes found in articles from the Nepali times is coded in pink color, quotes from The Himalayan times in green and quotes from the Kathmandu post is coded in blue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive consequences for women and their families (20)</th>
<th>Positive consequences for development (12)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2001</strong> [S]he decided to start rotational cropping of vegetables with maize and wheat on her 0.1 hectare farm. That was a bold decision, and a gamble [...] she is a role model for many women farmers in this district [...] She has overcome social, economic and geographical odds to become a successful farmer in one of the world's most difficult agro-ecological conditions (Nepali times, 2001:B)</td>
<td>Her contribution to farming innovation had been recognised by the government in Kathmandu, and she has bagged numerous awards (Nepali times, 2001:B)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2002</strong> &quot;Although this corn belongs to my family, I don't really feel that it is my own. But I feel that the cow that I bought with the loan from the village bank is really my own.&quot; Laxmi sells the milk to save in her village bank and uses the rest of the money for purposes that she sees fit. Her friend, Subhadra Chaudhari, says she has one less anxiety: &quot;When I get old, I won't have to worry even if my husband leaves me because I have my own savings.&quot; (Nepali times, 2002:B)</td>
<td>Since women are so critical to mountains-and, subsequently, to the lowlands that depend on mountains-we'd like to set up regional and global networks and bring the profile of mountain women much higher, give women a space to discuss issues important to them and reorient programs to better support them (Nepali times, 2002:A)</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>Dil Maya Tamang has been running her ghatta for the past 18 years and is the only one with an improved water mill in Basamari. For the last two years her income has improved and the efficiency of her mill has more than doubled. &quot;I used to grind only three pathis in one day. Now I can finish seven pathis,&quot; says Dil Maya, who is helping other women try out the new mill. &quot;I'm not greedy, I want other women to benefit and become more independent too.&quot; (Nepali times, 2003:A)</td>
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| 2005 | Five years ago, Bisshu Khadka, a housewife used to buy vegetables from Kalimati Fruit and Vegetable Market. But now Khadka has become a businesswoman as she sells vegetables in the same market [...] the other housewives are gradually attracted to this profession after Makhkhan Karki, another housewife, proved vegetable farming to be a profitable business (The Himalayan times, 2005:D)  
Women of Churiyamai Village Development Committee (VDC), Hetauda are being able to support their families through ginger farming [...] Women are happy with ginger production. They are optimistic of earning more money to support their families by this occupation (The Himalayan times, 2005:A) |
“Since the cooperative provides cash on easy terms, villagers face no financial difficulty in their farming ventures. “Now women have gained confidence. They come without male counterparts to borrow upto Rs 20,000 to Rs 30,000,” says Indira Bhuju, chairperson of the cooperative. Following Goma Sapkota, who is also coordinator of loan monitoring committee in the cooperative, dozens of women have started poultry farming and are doing fine, Bhuju added (The Himalayan times, 2005:C)

They also said that vegetable farming has augmented women’s participation in income generation and they have become self-reliant (The Himalayan times, 2005:B)

| 2006 | I hesitated at first fearing that I might not succeed...but staff from LI-BIRD [Pokhara-based NGO Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development] encouraged me and my confidence increased (Nepali times, 2006) |

Women’s engagement in dairy farming has improved living standard of their families, led to increased investment in children’s education and improvement in health of family members (The Himalayan times, 2006:A).

The community fruit and vegetable-farming programme based on forest agriculture farming has brought significant improvements in the economic

The women have been involved in income generating fruit and vegetable farming on the forest land of local Triveni Community Forest Users’ Group for the last four years now. Chairman of the Forest Users’ Group, Nava Raj Pokhrel said women of the village have been able to turn the bare hills of the forest into green and lush forest. The women of the group said that the programme, if expanded to other villages of the district, might help alleviate poverty from the district (The Himalayan times, 2006:B).
status of women at Triveni Village Development Committee, Grasgaun-6 of Udaypur district. A group of women [...] have reaped a quite a bit of economic benefit from this farming”. “One Rebati Khadka involved in the group said the money earned by the sale of fruits and vegetables is distributed equally among women after deducting expenses each month. Coordinator of the forest farming programme, Sarita Thapa stating that women of the VDC have become financially independent from the programme said, “Now women don’t have to depend on their husbands for money” (The Himalayan times, 2006:B).

The women farmers group have taken loan amounting to Rs 5,000 from the Group’s Saving Mobilisation, which is over three times compared to men’s group. They have been borrowing more money from the body because they have less access to financial institutions compared to men. Due to women’s involvement in income-generating activities, men have been helping them do the household chores (The Himalayan times, 2006:C)

Moreover, local resources remain unexploited due to shortage of sufficient capital and lack of skilled manpower. Amid this ‘shortage’, women’s participation in development activities, who constitute over half the total population of the rural areas, is far from satisfactory. If the available women workforce can be utilised more productively, it will greatly contribute to rural development (The
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Combining SRI with mechanisation and setting up farmers’ cooperatives, boosts productivity, creates jobs and empowers many women like Sabita Chaudhary. “I was scared of the machine in the beginning but now I can’t imagine planting with my hands,” (Nepali times, 2008).</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>The economic condition of women in Hatpate-5 of Sindhuli district has improved after they cultivated vegetables commercially in their own village. Women groups were formed last year with assistance from Hatpate Ekikrit Bikas Samaj (HEBS) aiming at growing seasonal and non-seasonal vegetables, which have now upgraded the economic status of these village women (The Himalayan times, 2009:A). Indira Bhujel, a local farmer expressed happiness saying that vegetable farming had helped her good income. She said her husband also has been assisting in farming even though in the past he never showed interest (The Himalayan times, 2009:B).</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>If the existing rural women’s labor can be suitably utilized in more production sectors, they will greatly contribute to this country’s overall development. (The Himalayan times, 2010).</td>
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| 2011 | If a country like Nepal takes agriculture seriously, it is crucial that women farmers are targeted as equal}
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<th>Year</th>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>Previously women were just working on small farms, but since a large number of able men are working abroad, the women now also manage the land [...] Nanu, who is a wife and mother, and also chairperson of Kavre District Branch of HIMAWANTI has been one of the major success stories of the program. While managing her land she’s also become a community leader, but her method of leading isn’t the authoritative ‘masculine’ method most associate with leaders. Calm but involved. Nanu consults and in a gentle manner she has been able to gain the support of not only fellow women but also of her family and husband. A clip in the film shows a shy husband speaking praises of his wife while Nanu sits in the background beaming with pride. In her words, “Before people knew me as someone’s wife or before marriage as someone’s daughter or sister, but I’ve been able to create my own identity,” she says with dignity and Nanu has good reason to be proud [...] These women, who at one point were unaware of their capabilities, are confident and more than that, they are motivated to continue the work that WOCAN has started (Kathmandu post, 2012:B)</td>
<td>More than foreign aid or remittance, these women and their role in agriculture and community development could end up being key players in pushing Nepal forward (Kathmandu post, 2012:B)</td>
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“Nepal must adopt equitable access to food for all as a core goal, and to make progress towards this goal it should:” “-Increase agricultural investments that benefit smallholder farmers, especially women.” (Nepali times, 2012) |

<p>| 2013 | We need an agriculture that is conservation oriented, rebuilds the soil, conserves water and brings back | |</p>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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| 2014 | Surja BK from Dadeldhura used her success as a vegetable farmer to abolish the chaupadi system that consigned women to the cowshed every month” “Tankamaya Magar from Morang ploughed her own fields even though it is not socially acceptable. Rajkumari Sada (pic, above) from Mahottari broke social conventions and overcame discrimination for being from the Musahar community [...] The 22 women farmers honoured recently spoke of similar struggles, and broke down when they shared tales of the hardships they overcame. They are all proud of their achievements: having the money to send their children to school, becoming the primary breadwinner, owning a piece of land and earning social acceptance and respect (Nepali times, 2014:A)  

When Manmaya Budathoki decided to seek loans from a local cooperative to switch to tea after generations of subsistence farming, she had to take a lot of ridicule. “Back then cooperatives weren’t biodiversity. We need to think of things women in Nepal can grow which reduce their work burden while empowering them. Women are the storehouse of knowledge of agriculture, skills of agriculture. This knowledge and skill, which focuses on conservation of earth’s resources, environment and nutrition for all, should be used as capital for agriculture to take a new direction (Kathmandu post, 2013)  

There is a tendency in over-indulged Kathmandu to dismiss the work of non-profits and rural cooperatives. While they could be more transparent and inclusive, local NGOs, women's groups and community forestry user groups have been central in bringing about the small changes we see across rural Nepal today [...] The Agriculture for Food campaign honoured 22 women farmers in Kathmandu recently. They came from all over the country and had overcome great odds to become model farmers and leaders in their communities. Their husbands are away in Dubai, Punjab or Saudi Arabia and most were raising their children alone, and doing well (Nepali times, 2014:A)
as common or popular as they are now,” explains the 55-year-old farmer from Phikkal of Illam district. “Women were forced to take loans in the name of male relatives.” Today, Budathoki’s prosperity helped change her neighbours’ perspective towards cooperatives and encouraged many to follow suit. [...] Our main aim is to make everyone self sufficient and thus we encourage women to build a business to sustain their families (Nepali times, 2014:D)

2015 The other, less studied, aspect of male migration is that households and community groups in rural Nepal today are being run mostly by women. This may be why, despite a dysfunctional government, there is still some development going on and there has been steady improvement in health and education [...] With the men gone, women have more of a say in school management committees, forestry user groups, irrigation committees, village development councils. Women have had to take on jobs traditionally done by men, and while this has increased their responsibilities it has also given them more say than they had previously (Nepali times, 2015)

The women have set an example in the district that they can achieve things if they get the opportunity. A group of women involved in ‘Manakamana Farmer Women Group’ were able to irrigate land for 90 households at Thapachaur [...] “They have been involved in carrying sand, boulders, pebbles
among other construction materials,” she added (The Himalayan times, 2015:B)

The women of Kewat community have been making good income from mushroom farming in Banke district in the recent days. The women from Kewat community, the ethnic community enlisted as the marginalised one, have earned a decent life besides managing money for their children’s education from the mushroom farming. The women of the community have also formed a group of their own for the commercial mushroom farming after getting the skill-oriented trainings and technical assistance from the District Agriculture Development Office and other organisations. Kalawati Kewat, a member of Parbat Women’s Microenterprise Group, said that commercial mushroom farming has been a big help for reducing their economic burden as well as in making some savings too (The Himalayan times, 2015:C)

### Negative

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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>In the absence of young men, the entire burden of agriculture has been shifted onto women, children and the aged (Nepali times, 2001:A)</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Nepal’s agriculture is caught in a vicious cycle: young men don’t have jobs so they migrate, and the shortage of men affects farm output (Nepali times, 2008:B)</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>Household food security and economic benefits can only be ensured when there is surplus yield for the market. If smallholder farmers have nothing to sell, how are they to buy the required inputs for the following year? When this continues for two subsequent farming seasons, they get trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty. Before long, they have to start relying on emergency support packages. This is why livelihood protection should always be at the back of policy interventions, especially for smallholder, marginalised and women farmers (Kathmandu post, 2011:A)</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>Focused group discussions held as part of my research have revealed significant changes in the role of women in a migrant household. Women are required to work longer hours, but they show a lower farm production because they find it difficult to replace the physical competence of men. In a nutshell, migration of a male member affects women negatively in the case of poor households or marginal farmers. It is irrefutable that a country cannot dream of achieving industrial growth in the absence of competent human resource (Kathmandu post, 2012:C)</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>There are many reasons why the linear design of technology by capitalist patriarchy cannot benefit women. First, ecological agricultural diversity does not have demand of labour in peaks as in monoculture farming. Second, these intensive-agricultural systems use lots of chemicals, which affect the women even more. The most important thing we need to consider while talking of feminisation of agriculture is how to use biodiversity to increase the incomes while reducing work burden of women (Kathmandu post, 2013)</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>Male outmigration is also increasing the workload for those who remain - the women and elderly (Nepali times, 2014:C)</td>
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As men migrate, family-run small farms are also increasingly women-run. Gender imbalance and poor sanitation stunt children, impairing their physical and mental development (Nepali times, 2014:B)

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<td>2015</td>
<td>[N]early half the young men of this country are working abroad leaving many villages with only women, children and the elderly [...] In Nepal, we now have to worry about our ‘missing men’ [...] The gender imbalance has many consequences, from a shortage of farm hands and construction labour, to increased domestic violence in families which suffer long periods of separation (Nepali times, 2015) Around one in four of these households are headed by women, with many men working overseas to help support their families. These women and their children are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity; they’re more likely to try to cope with natural disasters by eating fewer meals, or selling valuable assets such as farm tools to buy food (The Himalayan times, 2015:A)</td>
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Patriarchy hindering women

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<td>2001</td>
<td>&quot;She has overcome social, economic and geographical odds to become a successful farmer in one of the world's most difficult agro-ecological conditions.&quot; [...] China Kumari has certainly shown how one person with initiative, commitment, and knowhow can persevere over overwhelming odds (Nepali times, 2001:B)</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>In the Hindu Kush Himalaya, women are the major people involved in farming, agriculture, and livestock rearing; they are often the major caretakers of natural resources. Yet policies still tend to think of farmers in terms of men, small enterprise development in terms of men, and even mountain climbers in terms of men. Since women are so critical to mountains-and, subsequently, to the lowlands that depend on mountains-we'd like to set up regional and global networks and bring the profile of mountain women much higher, give women a space to discuss issues important to them and reorient programs to better support them (Nepali times, 2002:A) Twenty thousand female workers of the total population of the district are working in the agriculture sector, but they too are not getting the equal amount of payment like men (The Himalayan times, 2002:A)</td>
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Giving attention to gender issues in development activities, especially in the agricultural sector, is a necessity. In agricultural affairs, the roles and needs of women differ from that of men to a significant degree [...] women have little access and control over resources and ownership over land. Thus mainstreaming gender issues for all round development in the agriculture sector is crucial [...] Impressed by the participation of Nepali women in farming systems, Quisumbing also emphasised the need to include gender issues during the procedure of making of policy and strategies. They should also be given rights to own land and to borrow money by themselves, said Quisumbing [...] Participants emphasised issues such as the need to provide training and land ownership to women, technology dissemination and gender impact assessment at policy-making level and the inclusion of women in such matters (The Himalayan times, 2002:B)

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<td>2006</td>
<td>[T]hough women and men have equal access to resources and revenues generated from agricultural products, women have less access in handling these resources. Compared to men, women have almost no access to new technologies related to their occupation, the report says. Only eight per cent of women from women’s groups and eight per cent of women from the mixed groups have access to new technologies [...] Women do 70 per cent of work related to dairy production, though only 10 per cent of milk products are sold officially (The Himalayan times, 2006:A)</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Though women play a vital role in rural areas, as most of them are uneducated, they still have to rely on their male counterparts to sustain their livelihood [...] Moreover, lack of employment opportunities deprives them of bringing their labour to productive use. Consequently, most of them cannot earn and are unable to support their respective households. Denying them work opportunities will never make them self-reliant. In this light, in order to provide more income generating opportunities for rural women, it is important to provide them appropriate skill development training [...] But still, despite the tall claims of political leaders, the majority of rural women continue to be exploited by men [...] Even today, a large number of rural women are involved in agriculture, besides other subsidiary work like livestock raising, construction work, cottage industry, teaching, nursing and clerical activities. However, until now, women</td>
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have not been encouraged to emerge as entrepreneurs. Until entrepreneurship is developed among womenfolk, they will continue to be subjected to exploitation and discrimination by men. It is the demand of modern times that women’s entrepreneurship be developed in order to expedite rural development (The Himalayan times, 2007)

| 2008 | Typically, when the national budget is formulated, it tends to ignore the different, socially determined roles, responsibilities and capabilities of women and men [...] One school of thought believes that if Nepal truly wants to reduce the gender gap, policy makers must stop designing separate programs for men and women. But in an extreme patriarchal society like Nepal's, women do need to be given a special focus because it is clear that gender-neutral programs generally only benefit men. Nepali women do most of the agricultural work but have no rights over the land they till. They cannot even get loans (Nepali times, 2008:A) |
| 2009 | “During the process of land reforms we will be concerned about granting equal ownership of land to women,” said Khanal. “The South Asian people need government support and mainly for women peasants in this region,” he added [...] CPN (UML) leader Sahana Pradhan also insisted on revolutionary land reforms and full ownership for women in land and property [...] Addressing Nepal as an agriculture country is not enough if there is no facility for farmers and especially women peasants [...] Women peasants today called for getting equal ownership of land and initiation of land reforms [...] More than 90 per cent of the owners of land and property are men though it is women who spend more than 80 per cent of their time working as farmers in the field and they are still deprived of ownership [...] Women are more involved in the farming sector but they are the ones deprived of getting a platform. There is a need for appropriate laws and policies to boost women peasants here (The Himalayan times, 2009:A) |
| 2010 | Most rural women are uneducated and have to rely on their male counterparts to maintain their livelihood. There being less employment opportunities in many rural areas, they are deprived of such facilities. Consequently, they cannot earn and are unable to add income to their respective households. Although rural women’s contribution to agriculture is not less than that of men’s, in the process of development, they have remained at a lower level of skills and remuneration than men. Socio-cultural problems and family responsibilities have further hindered their opportunities to make full contribution to diverse development activities (The Himalayan times, 2010) |
| 2011 | There is a stereotype that subsistence farmers and producers, particularly women, are unwilling to take |
risks and thereby respond adequately to market opportunities. That sounds obvious in a patriarchal society known for marginalising women. The point is such assumptions should not form the basis of excuse for not including women in market-oriented interventions (Kathmandu post, 2011:C)

And, unsurprisingly, the evaluation showed that the given animals, with an objective of improving the income of women, were sold by the male members of the households and the revenues generated were not equally shared with women—the intended direct project beneficiaries. Many of these women, who provided most of their labour in caring and feeding the cattle for years, were left high and dry as they did not get any share of the revenue [...] Although more than 75 per cent of women are reportedly engaged in agriculture in all least development countries (LDCs), they are not duly recognised for their contribution nor accorded an enabling environment, as evidenced by gender-blind policy interventions. For instance, they seldom have legal land ownership and have limited access to extension services, technology, information, credit and other support systems. Lack of women’s legal control over resources has serious repercussions on their and future generation’s wellbeing [...] Women farmers face the additional burden of juggling multiple responsibilities amid systematic prejudices, especially in patriarchal communities. For instance, various socio-cultural prejudices and biological factors like menstruation, childbirth and lactation make them more vulnerable to malnutrition (Kathmandu post, 2011:A)

Women are important stakeholders in forest-related activities and have been successfully playing the role of forest users, managers, conservation leaders and farmers in the country. However, the existing policy documents and initiatives, including the Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP), the REDD plus Interim Strategy and REDD plus pilot projects, have neglected and undermined the role of women and their rights over natural resources like forests [...] Despite the fact that women have played a vital role in forest resources management in the country, they are not rewarded equitably for their contribution as their male counterparts (Kathmandu post, 2012:A)

Dr Jeannette Gurung, and Annina Lubbock from International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) came up with a project to test just how much positive change women can bring. The idea behind the Rural Women’s Leadership Project is to hold workshops with women at the grassroots level to encourage them in their endeavours and to educate them on policies that they could benefit from. As Annina explains, “The idea behind the project is the fact that 80 percent of food is created by small farms and a large percent, 45 percent, of it is done by women.” While women are out on farms, they are cultivating the land and
generating income with far less access to needed services and input since women are not involved and
don’t have the necessary connection and power at all levels to garner support [...] The path to leadership
did not come easy for Nanu as her husband protested for about a year before being supportive and Shobha
is no exception. When she started taking part in the workshops and becoming more active her family and
in-laws went as far as subjecting her to violence and accusing her of trying to become involved in politics
but that did little to deter her. Now, she too is a leader in her community. Besides issues from family and
society rural women have to put up with bureaucratic obstacles. Though there are funds allocated for
women and for their farms, they are denied access to these provisions as the designated funds are used in
other sectors. When going to local leaders the women were often turned away, but instead of being
discouraged they discovered methods that work to their advantage—they still take up issues to local heads
but instead of going by themselves they go in groups so they can’t be brushed aside as easily. Now, they
are recognised figures and have been learning the essentials skills of negotiation and networking. While
these women are taking a stance and overcoming barriers to better their lives, family, and community, there
are looming issues. Many women claim that taking on the role of a leader has been a burden since time
management has presented itself to be a large problem. Though husbands and in-laws no longer hold them
back, they still have to fulfil all of their household duties. This results in women having to wake up earlier
and going to bed later in order to manage. There is a solution to this, Dibya Gurung, Coordinator WOCAN
says, “It’s not just about getting support from the family, the family also has to take responsibility,” in
essence, households need to share the workload. And it comes as no surprise that men are reluctant to play
assistant to their wives. Yet again, there are means of getting around this. An answer to dividing household
work comes in the form of technology. Gita Bohara, another participant who is also the General Secretary
of HIMAWANTI says, “Technology makes a difference, because men automatically come running to help
with machines. This not only saves time but it allows women to become leaders [...] And if the change
women can bring is to be a permanent fixture, it is essential that men are involved. The Rural Women’s
Leadership Project workshops did include men and have therefore aided in changing their mentality but
men present another problem, once the initiatives taken by women are well on their way to success, the
men not only endorse it—they move to take over (Kathmandu post, 2012:B)

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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Women now do much more of the work in the farms than men, but only a tenth of Nepali women own land. National agricultural policies are not made with women farmers or their priorities in mind. These</td>
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women farmers and many more like them have turned their lives around with little or no help from the government. Most of Nepal’s progress has happened not because of, but despite the government (Nepali times, 2014:A)

2015

Improving agriculture production requires access to land, access to knowledge, and access to markets. This is not so easy for women in some Asian countries where men are traditionally or even legally entitled to inherit land or receive a larger share of it as inheritance than women. These customs increase the dependency of women on men, and limit them from owning land which to generate income for themselves and their families (The Himalayan times, 2015:D)

It shouldn’t just be March 8 that should be marked as International Women’s Day in Nepal. And we shouldn’t be giving women a token holiday on this day. The day should be marked by striving even harder for gender equality in the home and workplace. Every day should be International Women’s Day (Nepali times, 2015)