

# Portrayal of Farmers in Nepali Broadsheet Dailies

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## ABSTRACT

*This article attempts to explore the portrayal of Nepali farmers in the Nepali dailies. It explores the situation of the agricultural landscape in Nepal and the picture of Nepali peasants painted by the Nepali dailies.*

*The revelation of the portrayal of farmers in Nepali broadsheet dailies is based on a thorough analysis of contents for the period of 16 days that appeared in three major 'national' broadsheet dailies published from the Capital city Kathmandu. The analysis of the news and opinion articles on agriculture and farmers reveals that merely 2.12 % of the total news was on agriculture while only 10 items were particularly about farmers and just seven portrayed farmers in a positive light. Compared against the 66 per cent of the population engaged in agriculture and its 28.2 % contribution to the economy, it's an injustice to farming and farmers.*

*The study shows that the number of items that showed concerns to the farmers' plight are so nascent that they would barely make any impact. The picture of agriculture as painted by the major broadsheets is gloomy, arduous, complex, and less profitable. The social attitude on farmers carried by the media is they are poor, sad, and neglected human beings living in a hope that someday they will be able to get the inputs with government subsidy. Nepali newspapers have solidified the image of farmers as dirty and living in poor houses waiting for some external support or intervention to rescue them, like the studies found in other societies.*

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**Keywords:** agriculture, farmers, portrayal, media coverage, framing, newspapers

## Background

Nepal has a two-thirds population involved in agriculture and the country is in dire need to promote commercialization, mechanization and modernization in the sector to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It's been more than 60 years of planned development in Nepal, but agriculture, like other many development sectors, is neglected and stunted. To increase income of farmers and the pace of the socio-economic development with the modernization of the agricultural sector, every institution including the mass media can play an instrumental role. Mass media as the communication infrastructure would be functional to raise productivity as well as the

quality of work, and subsequently to improve the livelihood of the people involved in it. Against this backdrop, this essay has made an effort to evaluate the performance of the Nepali broadsheet dailies in terms of social expectations to facilitate and encourage peasants by providing needful information. It has explored the situation of the agricultural landscape in Nepal and the picture of Nepali peasants painted by the Nepali dailies.

There have been efforts to create better agricultural communication to expedite the adoption of innovation and modernise agriculture across the country. The Agricultural Information and Training Centre (AITC), earlier known as Agricultural Information and Communication Centre (AICC), runs a radio programme, television programme, and publishes magazines, folders, posters, and agricultural diaries. The radio programme is being regularly broadcast for the last 54 years while TV programme is on air for the last 23 years (AITC, 2020). Its programmes on the broadcast media are largely focused on the diffusion of innovation and feature agriculture and the farmers in a positive light.

However, in terms of the other mass media coverage, the coverage of agriculture is poor and largely focused on informing the damage, loss, or hardships in the occupation. About 1,845 online news portals were registered at the Department of Information and Broadcasting (DoIB, n.d.) by August 2020, and 881 newspapers and magazines are in publication (Press Council Nepal, 2019) while 740 FM radios (MoCIT, n.d.a), 116 satellite television channels and 875 cable TV operators (MoCIT, n.d.b) are active in the country. Despite such a strong media presence, the primary sector of the economy has received very little attention. Therefore, this study aims at measuring the coverage of agriculture news in the print medium and the light in which the farmers are presented.

Agriculture is the bread and butter of two-thirds of Nepali people and the largest contributor to the national economy. A small portion of agriculture in the country is commercial and modernized while a large portion covers subsistence farming and traditional techniques. It is the largest employer with about 66 per cent of the population involved in it, though this figure includes ranges of subsistence to small-scale enterprise farming and wage employment that is seasonal and part-time to permanent (ILO, 2019). The ILO has maintained that the commercial-oriented end of farming (including in smallholdings) together with remittances had helped reduce poverty in Nepal over the years, with primarily subsistence farming and on-farm labour helping people to survive.

The agriculture sector, including a small participation of mining and excavation, contributed about 28.2 % to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2019/20 while the manufacturing had 13.7 % and the services sector 58 % share (CBS, 2020). The size of Nepal's economy in consumer price is Rs. 3,767 billion in 2020. The government has given priority to the modernization and mechanization of agriculture through various policies and budgets. It is providing subsidies in various agricultural inputs and distributing machines that support enhancing productivity. However, most of them have failed to make any profound impact on the sector in terms of production and growth.

## **Definition of the Terms**

The term portrayal means the way that someone or something is described or represented in a painting, film, book, or other artistic work (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Hence, this study uses the definition considering the newspapers as the form of book or other artistic work. Likewise, farmers in this study are used to refer to the people who hold no title and are just the members of Nepali society involving in agricultural works and are not the professionals, political leaders and celebrities who are often quoted and presented as the news sources in the media.

## **Statement of the Problem and Research Questions**

Newspapers are not only the oldest form of mass communication but also a powerful and influential medium that can shape public perception or create a world view about many things. With their archival value and online presence, they could exert even more power on the audience and society, including the policymakers. What media carries is the expression of social attitudes. So, the news stories, interviews and other opinion-based articles on agriculture and farmers inherently carry the social attitude towards the occupation and farmers.

The commercialisation of mass media has serious ramifications on the selection and coverage of the issues and topics. Advertising and sales are important aspects that impact media content. News or events that can be sold or draw the attention of the readers and can positively impact the revenue of the medium are the primary choices of the gatekeepers and the communication channel. While the adage 'media is the mirror of the society' truly explains the media responsibility that it should not exaggerate or distort the facts but should report the truth, it interestingly connotes that the attitudes and beliefs of the society are also carried by the media along with the coverage of each event or issue. Such coverage creates images in the minds of the audiences about their environment. Therefore, people infer meanings of the events, persons, or organisations according to the media coverage.

While the media coverage or representation also exhibits the power and the relations of the people it portrayed in the society, the content carried by the mass media channels has the power to establish new words and definitions, expand the definitions of the established words, displace or replace the older meanings and definitions, and reinforce conventions between the words and symbols and their meanings (Communication Theory, n.d.). Likewise, media can carry three stereotypes – victim, hero and villain – in terms of the coverage of the individuals be they common people like farmers or celebrities. This study will investigate what light the farmers are being put into.

Against this backdrop, the article attempts to answer three questions. First, what is the status of coverage and portrayal of agriculture and farmers in the broadsheet dailies? Second, what stance or tone do the dailies have on farmers in their coverage? And the

third, what is the nature of farmers as presented in the news and other published items? Hence, the article has objectives to answer those questions.

### **Literature Review**

Media has long been stereotyping women, aged people, disabled and other special groups in the society. Take an example of the media in the United States of America. Despite the strong presentation of the aged people, 50 years and older make up a third of the country's work force with half of 110 million employed, in the economy with annual contribution of about \$7.6 trillion to the economy, they are portrayed often as patients in medical settings or sitting alone on park benches staring into space than engaged in jobs, using technology or vigorously interacting with people and surrounding (Collins, 2019).

Collins (2019) maintains that how older people are portrayed affects how people treat them, what they expect of them and how seniors see themselves with ramifications to their health, quality of life and even affluence. In Australia many older people feel some sense of invisibility and they think it is contributed by the media (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.). Since people get information about various strata and groups of people in their and other societies from mass media, primarily, both the portrayed and the audiences are affected by the coverage.

Portrayal of common people in the mass media channels, especially in the newspapers and magazines and televisions, has been a favourite topic of the mass media researchers, sociologists and anthropologists and linguists for the last many decades. In the developed countries representation and portrayal of the senior citizen and mentally challenged people had received higher attention, for example see Koskinen, Salminen and Leino-Kilpi (2014) and Wahl (2003). Koskinen, Salminen and Leino-Kilpi (2014) maintain that media portrayals of older people, such as those in newspapers, both inform and reflect public attitudes. After studying 1999 newspapers, Wahl (2003) found that 'dangerousness' was the most common theme of stories about mental illnesses while stories of recovery or accomplishment were found to be rare. Likewise, negative stories involving the mental illness continued to far outnumber positive ones.

Another study on the media portrayal of obese people in the United States of America found that popular television shows that include people who were obese portrayed them either as comedic, lonely characters or freaks (Whyte, 2010). The same study discovered astonishing number of coverage bias in terms of the actual number of obese people in the society and their portrayal in the television. Only 25 per cent of men on television were overweight or obese, compared to almost 60 per cent of American men, and about 90 per cent of women on TV were at or below normal weight, compared to only 50 per cent of women in the US (Whyte, 2010). This imbalanced coverage of the society creates frustrations in audience. A BBC report that summarises various studies

on social media and body image concludes: 'fitspiration' images in particular – which typically feature beautiful people doing exercise, or at least pretending to – might make you harsher on yourself (Oakes, 2019).

Media is found to be expressing bias to various ethnicities and races. Mainstream news media in Canada has portrayed the non-white immigrants as 'problems' (Tamang, 2011). "Such representation obscures the tensions that exist between ethnic groups, thereby contributing to the ongoing invisibility of minorities in the Canadian political landscape" (Tamang, 2011).

Study of farmers and their media representation has attracted the researchers and scholars in line with many other areas (for example health and body images (Fardouly and Vartanian, 2015; Vandenbosch, 2017; Mills, Shannon and Hogue, 2017), teachers (Alhamdan et al., 2014), refugees (Wright, 2010), and women officials (Lee, 2004), doctors (Jiwa, 2012), drivers (Hennessy, Hemingway and Howard, 2007)).

In terms of media portrayal, most of the professionals or issues have found negative representation. Probably, the adages 'bad news is good news' or 'negativity sells' are the ultimate truth in the media industry. Although the doctors have been cast as heroes and villains, public figures, poster boys and celebrities, more recently, the media has sown seeds of distrust in the profession that is committed above all else to doing no harm (Jiwa, 2012). Another study on the United Kingdom on the general practice medicine has concluded that the newspaper portrayals of the profession were very negative (Barry and Greenhalgh, 2019). Likewise, social workers also perceived that their profession to be depicted negatively in both news and entertainment media (Zugazaga, Surettle, Mendez and Otto, 2006).

The above discussion establishes that fact that the media coverage and portrayal of certain group of people and professional has a profound impact on how the portrayed people and the others think about them. This function or impact of media is called framing or the second layer of the agenda-setting function. Mass media can also create hype about some agricultural products such as organic food (Cahill, Morley and Powell, 2010) or successful farming and farmers.

Former US Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack had come hard on the media for their biased portrayal of the farmers. "No child would choose to come into agriculture because of what the media shows them. The media needs to get behind showing farmers' use of leading-edge technology" (Vilsack, 2010). He also said that people might never need a police officer but every day they need a farmer. Such concerns were expressed elsewhere as well. Farmers in Ghana and across the African continent are being presented as old and poor illiterates. From newspapers to television to radio, the default symbol of farmers is that of dirty and torn-up elderly people (Farmerline, 2016). The same article in Farmerline observes that "They are often portrayed as folks who smell of dirt,

live in mud houses without potable water and who can't pay the school fees of their wards." Such stereotypes, perpetuated through the mediums of television, newspapers and radio, present an incomplete, subjective and sometimes false image of the reality of farmers (Farmerline, 2016).

After studying the reality TV channels' coverage of agriculture, Lundy, Ruth and Park (2005) had concluded that the portrayal of agriculture had reinforced traditional stereotypes. Even the children picture books had the most stereotypical images (Koller, 2013). While the modern mass media is supposed to revolutionize the thinking of the masses by helping them to break the stereotype images, it is going quite contrary. Ross (2019) argues that mass media play a role in shaping collective identities and intergroup attitudes and, by typecasting certain groups, distort the picture that audience see of different groups.

In Nepal, demand of entertaining and informative agricultural content is high (NDRI, 2015). A significant number of farmers in Terai had started news businesses like off season vegetable cultivation under plastic houses and poultry farming, after watching the agricultural programme on the Nepal Television while radio has also contributed to the adoption of modern technology (NDRI, 2015). Reliable information contributes to the development of the sector as well as promotes better image of the farmers. Mass media can support the farmers in timely decision making and creating mutual understanding among the stakeholders.

However, the literature on media coverage on agriculture and portrayal of farmer is scanty. As mentioned earlier in this article that the study on the portrayal of the farmers in mass media are very few. Hence, this study will explore into the coverage and portrayal of agriculture and farmers in Nepali print media through the broadsheet dailies. This article will not only put forth the status of coverage and portrayal of agriculture and farmers but also make comparisons with the amount of coverage with the number of farmers in the country, about 66 per cent, and contribution of farming to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), about 29 per cent, of Nepal. Each object on farmers and agriculture, including news, photo, interview and illustration, will be analysed and described in the study.

### **Media Framing**

This study on the portrayal of the farmers in the mainstream print media aims to put the things in the perspective of framing theory of media. Developed by anthropologist Gregory Bateson in 1972, the very year when the agenda setting theory was developed by M. McCombs and D. Shaw, and considered as the second-level agenda setting theory, the framing theory was further expanded by Goffman (1974) and Fairhurst and Sarr (1996).

Framing is the ability to shape the meaning of a subject, to judge its character and significance (Fairhurst and Sarr, 1996, p.3). According to them, to hold the frame of a subject is to choose one particular meaning (or set of meanings) over another. When we share our frames with others (the process of framing), we manage meaning because we assert that our interpretations should be taken as real over other possible interpretations (Fairhurst and Sarr, 1996, p.3).

Framing theory suggests that how something is presented to the audience influences the choices people make about how to process that information (Mass Communication Theory, n.d.). Use of certain words, phrases, mode of address, putting the individuals and things in the context and placement of the news in the media conveys different meaning to the audience. Cissel (2012) states framing is, on the most fundamental level, the combination of words that form a sentence, phrase or story that consequently provides a message to its recipient.

At the same time, the frame of reference of the audience is another important factor that determines the meaning of the information. The foundation of framing, however, emerges from the socialization of the journalists and editors, their political and market ideologies, pressure from the owners, advertisers, policymakers and interest groups, and competition among the media. According to Fairhurst (2005), the skill of framing is based on three key components: language, thought and forethought. The Art of Framing highlights five key language tools: metaphor, jargon/catchphrases, contrast, spin, and stories, yet also emphasizes the ways in which truth and reality, objectivity, and legitimacy claims manifest themselves linguistically and may contribute to mixed messages.

The events, institutions or individuals can be painted in positive or negative framing and single issue can be framed in either dimension. It is the organization, processing and communication of reality. The framing is an integral part of human life as it is closely related to the way people form or perceive the meaning of verbal to nonverbal as well interpersonal to mass communication. The formation of words used in a news article creates a vehicle for persuasion that has the opportunity to form stereotypes and generalizations among the minds of its readers (Cissel, 2012).

Media frames influence the perception and thinking process of the audience. People have their own framework to view the environment and the world which is called primary framework. This framework is divided into two categories – natural and social (Goffman, 1974 p.22). According to Goffman (1977), natural frameworks identify occurrences seen as undirected, unoriented, unanimated, unguided 'purely physical', and social framework provides background understanding for events that incorporate the will, aim, and controlling effort of an intelligence, a live agency, the chief one being the human being.

Since the present study has observed the portrayal of farmers in the broadsheet newspapers and studied their presentation, issues covered, mode of address, nature and tone of the stories, it is eligible to enter into the domain of framing theory. The researcher has measured whether the three national broadsheets have framed the farmers in a positive, negative or neutral way, if they have any. It has also investigated the nature of the farmers portrayed, and tone and objectives of the news published.

### **Research Design and Methodology**

This study has resorted to the content analysis method of the quantitative research technique thus adopting the positivist approach in measuring the portrayal and framing of farmers in the print media. According to Wimmer and Domininick (2005, pp. 142-143), content analysis can be applied in describing communication content, testing hypotheses of message characteristics, comparing media content to the 'real world', assessing the image of particular group in society and establishing starting point for studies of media effects.

Newspaper selection is made based on availability because of the lockdown and restriction on movement due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Three vernacular popular broadsheets – Kantipur daily, Naya Patrika daily Nepal Samacharpatra daily were selected and observed for the period of 16 days, from 17 August – 1 September 2020. The rationale behind the selection of the time was the chemical fertilizers mayhem. Fertilizers are imported and supplied by the government at a subsidized rate. But farmers did not get it in time this year and all sorts of news media were running fertilizers stories.

News related to agriculture were listed in the coding sheet and news that was about farmers were selected and analysed while the news discussing the general issues in agriculture such as the shortage of chemical fertilizers while this study was conducted were not analysed in detail. However, the presence of farmers in such stories is investigated.

News articles and opinion pieces including interviews and photographs covering agricultural issues and farmers are coded in the study and analysed. News items that were published with separate by-line and dateline inside a story were counted and analysed separately. The letters to the editor section is counted as a single article. The average news carried by a newspaper in a day is calculated by adding the total news and opinion published in three days period from 17-19 August and dividing it by three. So, the total number of news published in the 16-day period is obtained with the multiply of the number of days and per day average of published items.

This study only describes the status of the portrayal of the farmers in the national broadsheet dailies which can be generalized as the newspapers are chosen consciously to include two largest selling dailies and one with lower circulation. The researcher had to rely on his and general perception about the circulation of the newspaper since there is no agency to measure the circulation of the newspapers while the Department



of Information and Broadcasting relies on the size of circulation submitted by the publisher, which are mostly inflated as high as five-time the average distribution.

### Findings and Discussion

Analysis of the content of the three broadsheet dailies Kantipur, Naya Patrika and Nepal Samacharpatra showed that the amount of the news and their presentation was starkly varied from one newspaper to another. The coronavirus pandemic has affected the newspaper industry significantly which has severe repercussion on the size and content of the newspaper. Kantipur used to be printed in as much as 24 to 30 pages a day but shrunk to 12 pages while Naya Patrika and Samacharpatra are being printed in eight pages. Advertisement was occasional, however, Kantipur comparatively has more advertisements and with higher frequency. Samacharpatra bore deserted look in terms of advertisement.

Interestingly, Naya Patrika and Samacharpatra carried more news than Kantipur, partly because of the greater amount of advertisement and partly because of the latter's liberal presentation of the news story. Most of the news stories carried by Kantipur are spread in more than four columns while Samacharpatra largely carried single or double column stories. These three newspapers carried about 106 items on an average, including the single column news items, interviews, editorial, opinion pieces and letters to the editor, each day.

**Table 1: Average Number of News Printed Each Day**

S.N.	Newspaper	Average news/day	Total news observed
1.	Naya Patrika	26	416
2.	Samacharpatra	42	672
3.	Kantipur	38	608
	Total	106	1696

About 1,696 news items were observed for the study. As shown in Table 1, the average number of news carried each day by Naya Patrika, Samacharpatra and Kantipur is 26, 42 and 38 respectively which brings a day's news load at 106. But the total news about agriculture including the editorial and opinion were 36 making just 2.12 % of the total published news.

News stories that featured farmers as an individual were just 10, about 0.58 per cent of the total news published in the three newspapers. Of these news 7 news items had painted the picture of farming and farmers in positive way, 7 of them presented the farmers as beneficiaries of various policies and activities. Some were benefitted by the coronavirus pandemic itself as the restriction on transportation had created market for the locally grown vegetables while some had received grants from the government or earned better income from agricultural or livestock business.

The news stories bore four major tones in them – sympathetic to the farmers and their situation, positive about the achievement and future progress, neutral, and concerned to their plight or hardships. Five news items were sympathetic, seven were positive, one was neutral and four exhibited concerns. Since the number is too small, the percentages of these varieties are not calculated. The objective of the news or opinion pieces were estimated as to inform, support, promote, motivate the farmers, entertain the readers, or perform advocacy for the farmers.

Since mass media production has the power to give meaning to various elements through their coverage and, sometimes, change the definition, the omission of farmers in the coverage could impact the image and prestige of farmers in other social and professional groups. Likewise, as mentioned earlier, the portrayal of people in media affects other people's treatment to them while imbalance in coverage can create frustration in audience of the concerned groups.

But only a couple of stories on farmers or farming truly inspire other people to take up the profession. The picture of agriculture as painted by the major broadsheets dailies is gloomy, arduous, complex and less profitable. One has to continuously struggle to get the better yield or benefit from the agriculture, according to the published items in the newspapers.

**Table 2: Portrayal of Farmers**

S.N.	Nature of portrayal	Published items
1.	Victim or sad	14
2.	Entrepreneur	2
3.	Beneficiary	7
4.	Happy	4
	Total agriculture news	36

While the newspapers' attention to farmers is nascent, the small number of stories carried by them portray them as either victim or sad. Of the total 36 news related to agriculture, 14 depict farmer as victim of the situation, natural disasters like floods or locust attack. Considering the number of news on farming, this is staggering 39 per cent. Only two items portray farmers as entrepreneurs, as shown in Table 2. Farmers are presented as beneficiaries in seven stories. Only four news items portray them as a happy individual. This finding matches with the facts presented by Farmerline (2016) that the farmers are the people with smell of dirt, poorly live in mud houses without proper water supply. It discourages other people from joining agriculture, and they pity the farmers.

Not a single newspaper presented a farmer's story on the front page. In the period of 16 days only two display photos of agriculture with caption were published. In contrast, the papers carried large display advertisements of processed foods.

**Table 3: Portrayal of Farmers (Newspaper-wise)**

S. N.	Newspapers	Total news on agriculture	News on farmers	Farmers as victim/sad	Farmers as entrepreneur	Farmer as happy/beneficiary
1.	Kantipur	16	2	5	0	2
2.	Nepal Samacharpatra	5	3	2	1	3
3.	Naya Patrika	15	5	7	1	2

So far as the individual newspaper is concerned, Samacharpatra had the poorest coverage of agriculture and farmers. Of the total 672 news it carried in 16 days period, only 5 were on agriculture and only three were about farmers and two of them presented the farmers as sad or victim. As shown in Table 3, Kantipur published 16 items, including 3 op-ed pieces, but only 2 of them were about farmers. Most of its news had political slant and were largely focused on the capital city Kathmandu or national/policy issues. It happened so because the reporters in Kathmandu know less about actual farming while reporters in Mofussil consider agricultural issues trivia, and find less news value in them.

Five of its stories portrayed farmer as sad people and three stories were sympathetic to them. Similarly, Naya Patrika carried 15 stories on agriculture and five on farmers. Seven of the stories in agriculture published by Naya Patrika portrayed farmers as a sad being while they were happy in only three news. In two of its stories, it said that the farmers were 'crying' as they did not get the fertilizers. One of them was the main story on the front page.

Although it is natural for media to get attracted to negative happenings and issues, they also have the responsibility to motivate and inspire people to involve in agriculture, respect farmers and paint them in positive light. Otherwise, no one would like to enter into agriculture as the sector has less prestige but lots of hardship.

The news stories carried by the newspapers lacked the element of inspiration and motivation. Another astonishing fact found by the study is no women farmers were portrayed in the news items.

Most of the media houses in Nepal don't have dedicated reporters covering agriculture beats, however, Kantipur and Naya Patrika have reporters covering beat but Samacharpatra does not. Likewise, journalists based in the Capital city Kathmandu are less concerned to the issues of the farmers while reporters in Mofussil also give less priority to the sector. Unlike in other areas of economic reporting such as banking, trade, infrastructure, share market, tourism and education, there are less training and orientation programmes for the journalists.

## Conclusion

While the coronavirus pandemic affected the newspaper industry severely and forced to reduce the size and content in order to cope with the situation, the national newspapers in Nepal significantly neglected the primary sector of the economy and the supplier of the food for the daily consumption. In 16-day period, three major dailies carried about 1,696 news and opinion items with just 2.12 per cent – 36 items in total - news of agriculture sector. But the news portraying the farmers were just 10 – 0.58 per cent - in all three dailies, and only seven published items portrayed farmers in positive light and seven presented them as beneficiaries of the situation or government announced facilities.

This sheer indifference to the sector that engages about two-third of the population, generates one third of employment and has about 28.2 % share in the national economy means that the news coverage of farming and farmers was poor and inadequate. There is no way that the papers could justify their 2.12% coverage of agriculture news with the staggering 66 per cent people's engagement in the sector. This is an injustice to the society.

If media is the mirror of the society, then farmers have less importance and less attention, as the society views farming substandard and the job of the poor and lower-middle class people, primarily in rural area. They are poor, sad, and neglected human being living in a hope that someday they will be able to get the inputs with government subsidy.

This study found that the number of items that showed concerns to the farmers' plight as so nascent that they do not make any impact. The picture of agriculture as painted by the major broadsheets dailies is gloomy, arduous, complex, and less profitable. What media carries is the expression of the social attitudes. So, the news stories, interviews and other opinion-based articles on agriculture and farmers inherently carry the social attitude towards the occupation and farmers.

As mentioned earlier and proved by various studies that the common picture of farmers is that of dirty and torn up, and they live in poor houses. The situation of Nepali farmers in terms of media coverage is no different. The negative portrayal of farmers and only a couple of stories with the elements of inspiration and motivation, means the sector is absent in the media despite its importance in the society and economy. As the media has the power to establish new definitions about the issues and profession, agriculture in Nepal does not have aspects to get the media coverage and consider important enough.

As the framing is the combination of words, phrase or story that provides a message to its recipient, framing of Nepali farming and farmers is poor and largely negative. Of the 36 news and opinion pieces on agriculture, 14 % farmers as victim and sad while only 2 entrepreneurs were covered in the 16 days period, and only four stories portray farmers as happy human being. The absence of agriculture-related news in the front page means that the sector was not important for the newspapers. Since media presentation

influences the choices of people, according to framing theory, such coverage doesn't motivate people to take up farming.

To some extent, it might be because of the restriction on mobility due to the COVID-19 had discouraged the reporters going to the field and meeting farmers or agricultural entrepreneurs but media do not have the luxury to sit behind during the time of crisis and wait for the normalcy, it should be a frontline agent in supporting to dawn the normalcy in the society and country instead. With the negligence and indifference to agriculture and farmers, the newspaper industry has given up the basic tenets of journalism such as the advocacy of the voiceless, responsibility to the society and fair play.

The news media has vigorous standards to identify, select, write, edit, and present the news stories therefore it must not be assumed that its framing is done unknowingly or accidentally. It's the result of deliberate and sustained act resulted from the institutional culture and policies. Therefore, although the 16 days content might not describe the overall apathy of newspapers to farmers and farming, it certainly indicates to the unbalanced and unjust coverage of the sector. The portrayal of farmer in the newspaper is nominal, biased and neglected.

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