

# Contribution of Non-agricultural Sector in Economic Development of Nepal

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## Abstract

*The non-agricultural sector has made a significant contribution to the Nepalese economy. The non-agriculture sector now contributes 76.1 percent of GDP. In the fiscal year 2078/2079, the per capita income rises by 10.8 percent as a result of this contribution. In the fiscal year 2078/2079, it is anticipated that this income would rise to US\$ 1381. The per capita income for the fiscal year 2077/2078 was only US\$1246. GDP growth rates from the industrial and service sectors are 5.05 percent and 4.43 percent, respectively, in the non-agriculture sector. Average percentage of total GDP for the previous five years: 65.7 percent, 65.9 percent, 68.6 percent, and 74.9 percent for 2059/60 to 2063/64, 2064/65 to 2068/69, 2069/70 to 2073/74, and 2074/75 to 2078/79 respectively. The average growth rate for this industry over the thirteenth plan period is 3.4 percent. Likewise, 37.2 percent of revenue in 2010/11 came from industries outside than agriculture. In Nepal, 21.6 percent of the population continues to live in poverty. Thus, it is intended to reduce poverty from 21.6 percent to 18 percent by the end of the 14th plan period and to eradicate it entirely by 2030. As a result, the non-agricultural sector will assist Nepal in moving from a less developed to a middle-income country. Hence, this study focuses on the contribution of non-agriculture sector in economic development of Nepal.*

**Key Words:** Gross Domestic Product, Economic Growth, Employment, Income.

## Introduction

Nepal is among the poorest and least developed countries in the world. Currently 21.6 percent of population is living below poverty line(14<sup>th</sup> plan (2073/74-2075/76). Nepal is heavily dependent on remittance which amounts to about 30 percent of GDP (MOF 2073/74). Recently the remittance flow of the country until Falgun 2078/79 in comparison to 2077/78 is decreased by 1.7 percent (MOF 2078/79). Agriculture is providing livelihood for almost two-third of the population in the country. Therefore, Nepalese population is still dependent on agriculture but contribution to total GDP production from this sector is only 23.9percent (MOF 2078/79). However, the contribution from agricultural sector to GDP is declining these days and increasing from the non-agriculture sector. Recently the share of non-agriculture sector contribution to GDP is 76.1 percent. The year 2078/79 has been satisfactory with respect to the country's economic growth. It is estimated that the economic growth of Nepal is increased by 5.84 percent in 2078/79. The production from agriculture sector has increased by 2.30percent in this year. Also, due to remittances, tourism and other factors the production from non-agriculture sector increased by 8.66percent. The contribution of non-agriculture sector is increasing in

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the economic growth of the country. This sector increases in employment opportunity, income and improvement in the living standard of the people.

In Nepal, non-agriculture sector is a key for the national economy and it is also the mainstay for the economic development of the country. Non-agriculture sector represents the main sources of employment and generates income for the majority of people in the country. In this way, non-agriculture sector plays a very important role in running the daily consumption pattern of the people. Nowadays, many people are running their livelihood from the industry as well as service sector and also upgrading their living standard and healthy life style. In this connection, industry sector is regarded as the main sector of non-agriculture side of Nepalese economy because the economic development of the nation depends on the stages of industrial development of the country.

Industry sector mainly comprises of manufacturing, trade, service etc., which contributes as a non-agriculture sector to GDP by 13.5 percent. Similarly, service sector also plays a very important role as a non-agriculture sector to develop formal and informal employment in the country. The most popular service sectors of Nepalese economy are education, healthcare, finance, travel and tourism, communication, foreign employment, hydropower. Besides, additional services are transportation, trading (wholesale and retail), construction, consultancy, social services, informal services etc. Service contributes as a non-agriculture sector to Nepalese GDP by 59.5 percent (The World Fact Book 2019).

### **An Overview of Non-agriculture Sector**

The contribution of non-agriculture sector is continuously increasing the economic growth of the economy. Under non-agriculture sector, the production from industrial sector increased by 5.05 percent which was -3.69 percent in the previous year whereas in the service sector it was -3.97 percent which is increased by 4.43 percent in the following year (Table 1).

**Table 1: Growth Rate of GDP by Sector (%)**

Sector	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20*	2020/21**
Agriculture	2.61	5.16	2.23	2.64
Non-agriculture	9.50	6.90	-3.91	4.57
Industry	10.36	7.38	-3.69	5.05
Service	9.25	6.76	-3.97	4.43

Source: Annual Report 2020/21, NRB, Kathmandu, Nepal

\*Estimates, \*\*Preliminary estimates

The GDP share of the primary sectors (agriculture and forestry, fishery, mining and quarrying), secondary sectors (production-oriented Industry, electricity, gas, water and construction) and third sectors (services) contributions are 26.4 percent, 12.5 percent and 61.1 percent respectively in fiscal year 2020/21. The previous fiscal year 2019/2020 these sectors contributions was 26.8 percent, 12.8 percent and 60.4 percent respectively (NRB 2020/21). Hence, industry and service sector composition as a non-agriculture sector plays a dominant role in the Nepalese economy (Table 2).

**Table 2: Share of Primary, Secondary and Third Sector in GDP (%)**

Sector	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20*	2020/21**
Primary	27.4	26.3	25.6	26.8	26.4
Secondary	14.0	14.5	14.4	12.8	12.5
Third	58.6	59.2	60.0	60.4	61.1

Source: Annual Report 2020/21, NRB, Kathmandu, Nepal

\*Estimates, \*\*Preliminary estimates

### Formal and Informal Employment as Non-agriculture Sector

Formal sector (non-agriculture) comprises of those employed in government, state owned enterprises, international organizations/foreign embassies, and working for incorporated companies, establishments which are registered relevant authorities. Similarly, informal sector (non-agriculture) comprises of those employed in enterprises that are neither incorporated nor registered with authorities. Private households are regarded as informal sectors. The employment in non-agriculture informal sector is 41 percent while formal non-agriculture sector is only 36.5 percent (Table 3).

**Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Employment by Sector**

Description	Male	Female	Total
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Formal</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>33.5</b>	<b>37.8</b>
Agriculture	1.3	1.2	1.3
Non-agriculture	39.0	32.3	36.5
<b>Informal</b>	<b>59.7</b>	<b>66.5</b>	<b>62.2</b>
Agriculture	13.4	31.8	20.2
Non-agriculture	45.8	32.9	41.0
Private households	0.6	1.8	1.0

Source: Nepal Labour Force Survey 2017/18, CBS, Kathmandu

The participation of non-agricultural sector in the nation's economy is increasing in the past ten years and this leaves an impact on the total GDP of Nepalese economy. The share of total GDP production average in the last five years (2059/60 to 2063/64, 2064/65 to 2068/69, 2069/70 to 2073/74 and 2074/75 to 2078/79) due to non-agriculture sector is 65.7 percent, 65.9 percent, 68.6 percent and 74.9 percent respectively whereas due to agriculture sector, the average percentage is 34.3 percent, 34.1 percent, 31.4 percent and 25.1 percent respectively, in the decreasing rate. Hence, the contribution due to non-agriculture sector is increasing rapidly every year in Nepalese economy (Table 4).

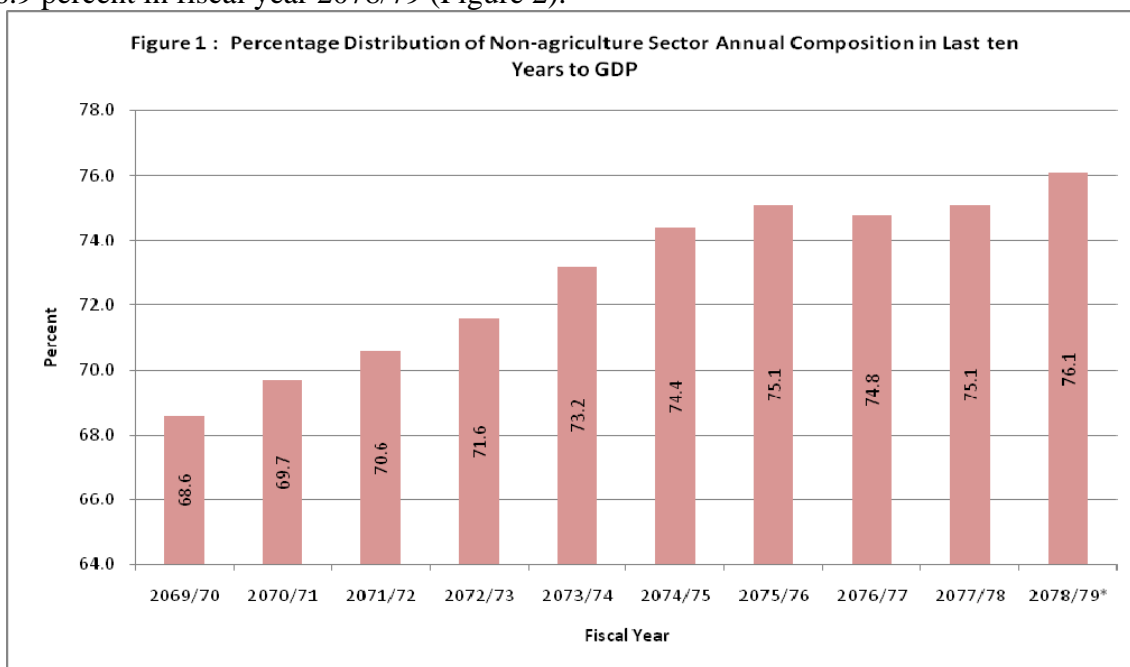
**Table 4: Share of Total GDP by Sectors (average of five years in percent)**

Sectors	2059/60-2063/64	2064/65-2068/69	2069/70-2073/74	2074/75-2078/79
Agriculture	34.3	34.1	31.4	25.1
Non-agriculture	65.7	65.9	68.6	74.9

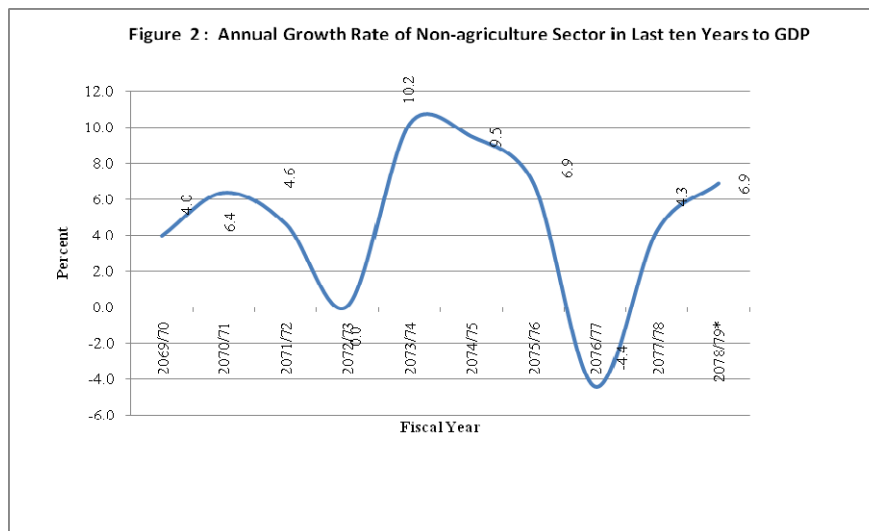
Source: Economic Survey 2073/74 and 2078/79, MOF, Kathmandu, Nepal.

### Share of Non-agriculture Sector to GDP in Past Ten Years

The average economic growth rate is 4.6 percent in the past ten (2066/67-2075/76) years. During this period, agriculture and non-agriculture sector average growth rate is 3.1 percent and 5.3 percent respectively. Due to earthquake and road blockage in the fiscal year 2072/73, the economic growth was slow which later improved in the fiscal year 2073/74 and became 7.3 percent. In this way, the contribution of agriculture sector to total GDP production is in a decreasing rate whereas non-agriculture sector is in an increasing rate. Hence in the fiscal year 2075/76 the share in the total GDP production due to non-agriculture sector is estimated to be 73 percent. Therefore, the contribution of agriculture sector to GDP in last ten years is decreasing annually. The contribution of agriculture and non-agriculture sector to GDP is estimated to be 23.9 percent and 76.1 percent in fiscal year 2078/79, which was 24.9 percent and 75.1 percent in fiscal year 2077/78 (Figure 1). Due to improvement in trade and service non-agriculture sector is estimated to expand by 6.9 percent in fiscal year 2078/79 (Figure 2).



Source: Economic Survey 2078/79, MOF, Kathmandu, Nepal. \* Estimated



Source: Economic Survey 2078/79, MOF, Kathmandu, Nepal. \* Estimated

The total GDP production in the past decade has slow impact on the economic growth rate having different values until the fiscal year 2075/76 where the total GDP production due to non-agriculture sector is assumed to increase by 7.5 percent. Therefore, this will create a positive impact on the Nepalese economic development.

### Problems of Non-agriculture Sector

Nepal's economic development is dependent on both the agriculture as well as non-agriculture sectors. Development of these sectors is necessary for the economic development to take place. The agriculture sector should be modernized in order to facilitate the population that are dependent on agriculture. Similarly, the non-agriculture sector also has to be developed for the overall economic development. Nepal is currently indicated as less developed country. So, in order to make Nepal a middle-income country, attention has to be given towards the increment of various indicators. Due to the prevalence of various problems in the economy, the development of non-agriculture sector is difficult. Hence, the main problems of non-agriculture sector are as follows:

- ❖ Inadequate infrastructure
- ❖ Low economic growth rate
- ❖ Lack of industrial revolution
- ❖ Lack of adequate resources
- ❖ Lack of capital
- ❖ Lack of investment
- ❖ High population growth rate
- ❖ Lack of skilled and expert manpower
- ❖ Technological problems
- ❖ Electricity cut-off problems
- ❖ Lack of well-organized national and international market
- ❖ Complex tax policy and process

- ❖ Broad level of financial corruption
- ❖ Lack of incentives facilities
- ❖ Lack of clear and bold government policies

The above listed problems need to be solved in time, in order to achieve satisfactory economic development of the country from non-agriculture sectors.

### Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the contribution of non-agriculture sector to GDP.
2. To highlight the features of non-agriculture sector in the Nepalese economy.

### Methodology

The study is to provide effective data and information for research on “Contribution of non-agriculture sector in economic development of Nepal”. The study is mainly based on secondary sources of information and the study approach is analytical and has descriptive methods. The data used in this study are published in government publications like Economic Survey (various issues) of the Ministry of Finance, Living Standard Survey (various issues) and Nepal Labour Force Survey (various issues), Statistical Pocket Book of the Central Bureau of Statistics, various plan period documents of the National Planning Commission, Nepal Rastra Bank Annual Report and Bulletin (various issues) as well as published reports of international organizations such as Asian Development bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations Development Programmes, World Bank etc.

Overall, the study mainly focuses on the non-agriculture sector which includes (a) industry (mining and quarrying, electricity, gas, water, construction) (b) Services (wholesale and retail, hotel and restaurant, transport and communication, housing, rent, business activities, general administration and defense, education, health and social work, community, social and personal services) related with the economic activities.

### Investment and Economic Growth

From six decades the country has started implementing policies in a planned process. But the development process, poverty alleviation, unemployment are the problems that are not completely solved. In Table 5, it can be seen that the non-agriculture sector and other economic indicators didn't have the assumed progress as per the 13<sup>th</sup> plan period (2070/71-2072/73).

**Table 5: Target and Progress in 13<sup>th</sup> Plan Period (2070/71-2072/73)**

Indicators	2069/70	Target of 13 <sup>th</sup> Plan	Progress
1. Annual average economic growth rate (%)	3.5	6.0	2.9
2. Agriculture sector average growth rate (%)	1.1	4.5	2.2
<b>3. Non-agriculture sector average growth rate (%)</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>3.4</b>
4. Annual average employment growth rate (%)	2.9	3.2	2.9
5. Below poverty line population (%)	23.8	18.0	21.6
6. Average age	68.8	71.0	69.0

Source: Fourteenth Plan (2073/74-2075/76), NPC, Kathmandu, Nepal.

The economic development of the country can also be achieved through government sector including private and co-operative sectors. Hence the investment in the non-agriculture sector as per the 14<sup>th</sup> plan period is shown in the table below (Table 6).

**Table 6: Investment in 14<sup>th</sup> Plan Period (2073/74-2075/76) by Sectors**

(Rs. in crore)

Sectors	Public		Private		Cooperative		Total	
	Rs.	%	Rs.	%	Rs.	%	Rs.	%
Agriculture	14024	14.7	10336	7.8	3897	27.2	28257	11.7
<b>Non-agriculture</b>	<b>81418</b>	<b>85.3</b>	<b>122394</b>	<b>92.2</b>	<b>10427</b>	<b>62.8</b>	<b>214239</b>	<b>88.3</b>
Total	95442	100.0	132730	100.0	14324	100.0	242496	100.0

Source: Fourteenth Plan (2073/74-2075/76), NPC, Kathmandu, Nepal.

### Employment and Income

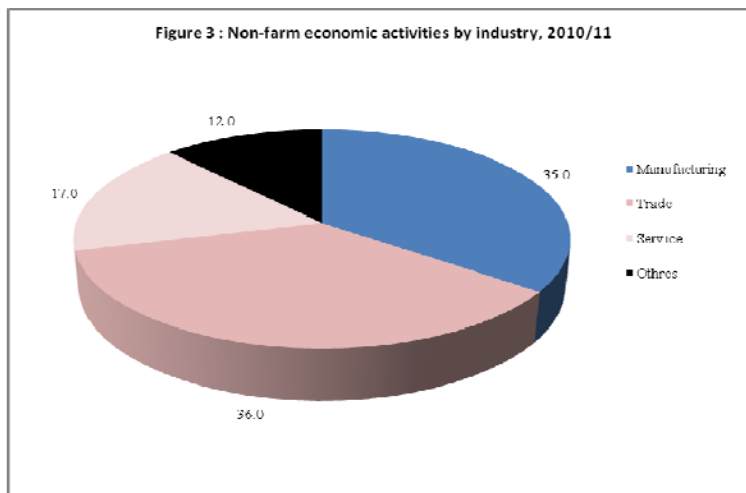
Nepalese people who are involved in non-agricultural activities instead of agricultural activities have created employment opportunities for themselves as well as others. This increases their involvement of people in non-agriculture sector. As a result, the contribution from the non-agriculture sector also increases. Therefore, different activities that fall under non-agriculture sector such as: business, construction industry, services have contributed to the Nepalese economy by 36 percent, 35 percent, 17 percent respectively and 12 percent for other activities (Figure 3).

In the 15th plan (2076/77-2080/81) targeted to reduce the poverty percent from 18.7 to 11.0 percent. In addition, the percent of people below poverty line is assumed to be zero by the year 2100/01 (Table 7).

**Table 7: Long term Vision of Fifteenth Plan (2076/77-2080/81) Period for Prosperity**

Indicators	2074/75 (fact)	2080/81 (aim)	2100/01 (aim)
Economic growth rate (%)	6.8	10.3	10.5
Per capita national income (US\$)	1047	1595	12100
<b>Below poverty line population (%)</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Agriculture sector to GDP (%)	27.0	23.0	9.0
Non-agriculture sector to GDP (%)	73.0	77.0	91.0
Industry (%)	15.2	18.0	30.0
Services (%)	57.8	59.0	61.0

Source: Fifteenth Plan (2076/77-2080/81), NPC, Kathmandu, Nepal.



Source: Nepal Living Standard Survey 2010/11, CBS, Kathmandu, Nepal.

The Nepalese economy is slowing down since the employment and income is at a slow pace. Due to the non-agriculture sectors and increase in remittance, the per capita income in the fiscal year 2077/78 is US\$1246 which has estimated to be increased US\$1381 by the fiscal year 2078/79. Hence, it is necessary to rapidly develop the economic indicators that has an impact on the economy of the country in order to promote Nepal from less developed country to middle-income level country (Table 8).

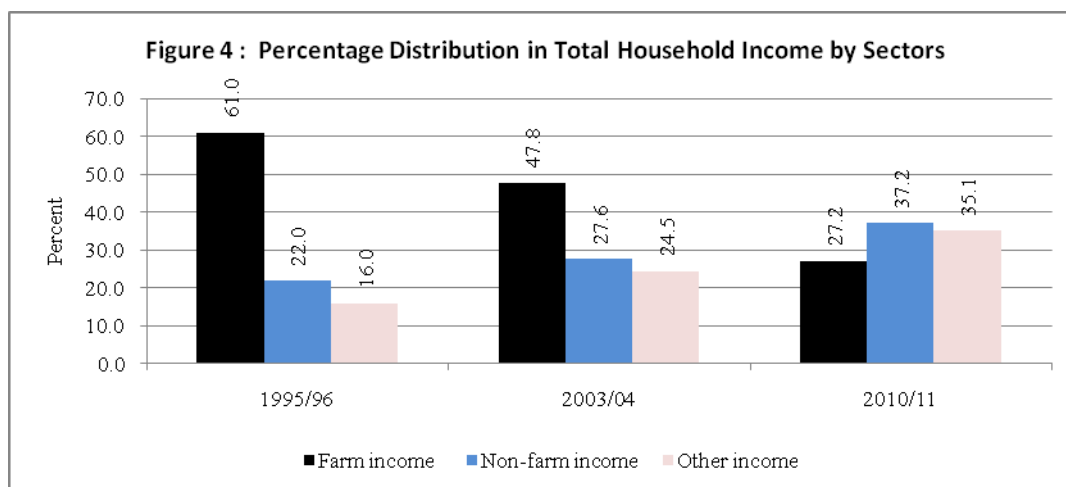
**Table 8: National as well as Sector Level Income Distribution**

Description	1995/96	2003/04	2010/11
Nominal average household income (Rs.)	43,732	80,111	202,374
Nominal average per capita income (Rs.)	7,690	15,162	41,659
Share of non-agri. income in household income (%)	61.0	47.8	27.2
Share of non-agriculture income (%)	22.0	27.6	37.2
Others income (%)	16.0	24.5	35.1

Source: Nepal Living Standard Survey 2010/11, CBS, Kathmandu, Nepal.

The country’s economic development means an increase in per capita income and national income in the economy. In this context, the income share of non-agriculture sector in the year 1995/96, 2003/04 and 2010/11 is 22 percent, 28 percent and 37 percent respectively (Figure 4).





Source: Nepal Living Standard Survey 2010/11, CBS, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Under non-agriculture sector the share of wage employment in the year 1995/96, 2003/04, and 2010/11 is 9.5percent, 10.2percent and 12.6percent respectively. Also, the share of self employment is 7.7percent, 9.3percent and 12.7percent respectively. In agricultural sector, the share of self employment in the year 1995/96, 2003/04 and 2010/11 is 70.7percent, 64.3percent and 61.3 percent respectively. This depicts that the population working under agricultural sector is relatively high (Table 9).

**Table 9: Percentage Distribution of Employment by Sector**

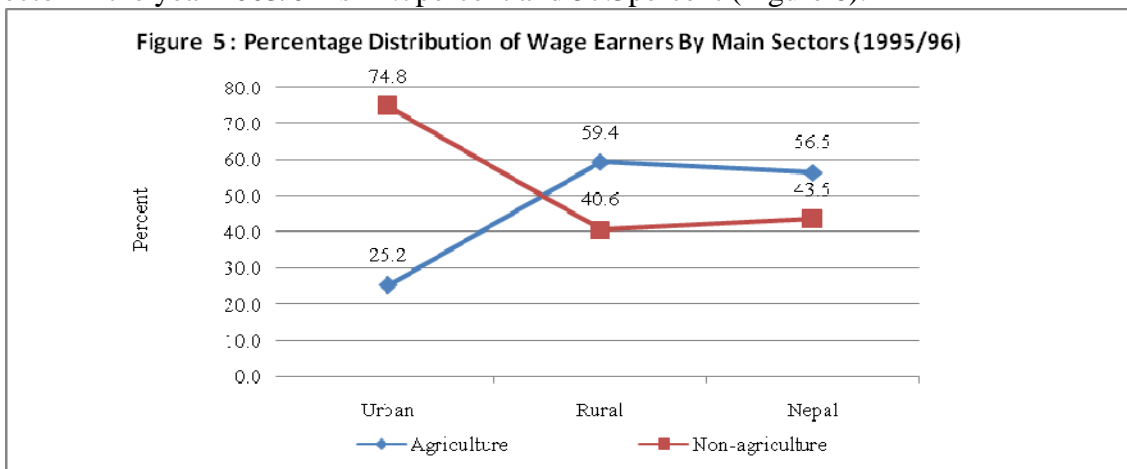
Description	1995/96	2003/04	2010/11
Share of wage employment in agriculture sector	12.2	6.8	2.8
Share of self employment in agriculture sector	70.7	64.3	61.3
<b>Share of wage employment in non-agriculture sector</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>12.6</b>
<b>Share of self employment in non-agriculture sector</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>12.7</b>
Share of increased economic work	-	9.4	10.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Nepal Living Standard Survey 2010/11, CBS, Kathmandu, Nepal.

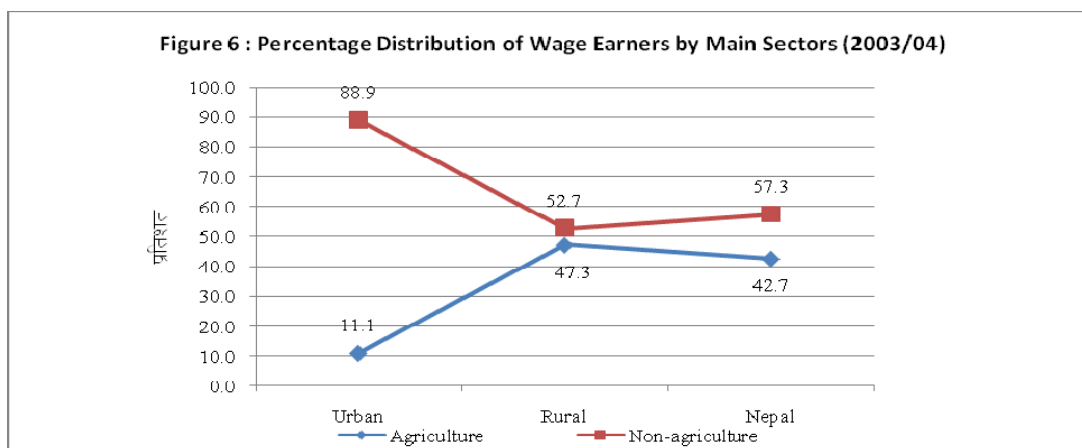
In order to generate wages, the share of urban sector and rural sector lying under agriculture sector in the year 1995/96 is 25.2percent and 59.4percent. During the same period the share of urban sector and rural sector lying under non-agriculture sector is 74.8percent and 40.6percent. Therefore, it can be concluded that the share of agricultural sector is 56.5percent and that of non-agriculture sector is 43.5percent (Figure 5).

Similarly, in the year 2003/04 the share of urban sector and rural sector lying under agricultural sector is 11.1percent and 47.3percent. Also, in the non-agriculture sector during the same time period, the share of urban sector and rural sector is 88.9percent and

52.7percent.Hence the share of wage earner in agricultural sector and non-agriculture sector in the year 2003/04 is 42.7percent and 57.3percent (Figure 6).

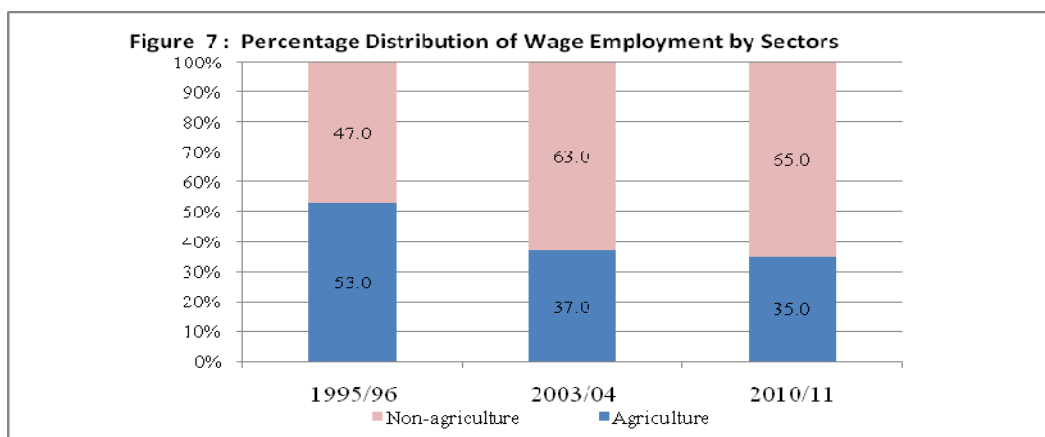


Source: Nepal Living Standard Survey 2003/04, CBS, Kathmandu, Nepal.



Source: Nepal Living Standard Survey 2003/04, CBS, Kathmandu, Nepal.

The share of wage employment in non-agriculture sector in the year 1995/96, 2003/04 and 2010/11 is 47 percent, 63 percent and 65 percent respectively as shown in the figure below. This clarifies that due to wage employment, there is development in the economy gained from non-agriculture sector day by day (Figure 7).



Source: Nepal Living Standard Survey 2003/04, CBS, Kathmandu, Nepal.

### Features of Non-agriculture Sector

The contribution of non-agriculture sector in the development of Nepalese economy is already justified. Hence the importance of non-agriculture sector can be felt. The important characteristics of non-agriculture sector are as follows:

- 1. High contribution:** The share of non-agriculture sector contribution to the total GDP production of the country is 76.1 percent. The average of last five fiscal years (2074/75 to 2078/79) non-agriculture sector contribution to GDP is 74.9 percent. Therefore, the contribution of non-agriculture sector to the total GDP production of the country is one of the important characteristics.
- 2. Increase in employment:** Increase in employment opportunity is one of the important aspects in the development of a country. In today's context, the youth manpower is moving abroad in search of employment. So, the important contribution through the non-agriculture sector is by creating employment opportunities in Nepal. The average share of this sector in increasing employment is 2.9 percent.
- 3. Increase in per capita income:** The income level of the Nepalese population is very low. It is very important to increase the income level. The non-agriculture sector as well as the remittance received has contributed by increasing the per capita income of people in the fiscal year 2078/79 which is estimated to be US\$ 1381. This will then uplift the living standard of the people and also promote the country's status as a middle-income level country.
- 4. Maximum uses of labour force:** Decreasing the incidence of maximum labour force is also one of the important characteristics of non-agricultural sector. The contribution of current wage employment share of non-agricultural sector is 65 percent.
- 5. Contribution in poverty alleviation:** The population of Nepal lying under poverty line is 21.6 percent and according to 14<sup>th</sup> plan period, the aim is to reduce the poverty from 21.6 percent to 18 percent. In the 9<sup>th</sup> plan period the poverty percentage was found to be 40 percent. Therefore, the non-agriculture sector has increased the country's total GDP production and reduced poverty.

6. **Capital collection:**In Nepal 83 percent population (census 2068) reside in the rural (village) areas. The collection of whatever little capital/property these people have and establishing the small and medium type industry is also facilitated with the help of non-agriculture sector.
7. **Low level of dependency:**The male and female population in Nepal (census 2068) is 48.5 percent and 51.5 percent. Though the female population is more than the male population, the dependency of female is more. In order to reduce this dependency of female, the formal, as well as informal sector of non-agriculture sector, plays a very important role. Under this there is high involvement of female in household economic activities and homebased work.
8. **Export-oriented:**International trade of Nepal is almost import oriented with excessive import and less export. This is the cause of broad level trade deficit every year which is not good from economic point of view of the country. Hence by increasing the share of non-agricultural sector's contribution to the total GDP production, it is assumed that balance situation can be created in the economy.
9. **Increased foreign currency:** Foreign currency increases in the country if there is more export than import in the international trade business. With the help of export-oriented trade, the foreign currency can be earned and collected more which is facilitated by the contribution of non-agricultural sector.
10. **Rapid economic development:** Rapid economic development and economic welfare is the primary aim of Nepal. Also, decreasing the poverty percentage to zero until 2087 and promoting the country's status to middle-income level country has already been started with planned policies. The non-agriculture sector has an important contribution here as well since till the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> plan (2070/71-2072/73) this sector's average increase rate is 3.4 percent.

## Conclusion

The non-agricultural sector's contribution to the growth of the Nepalese economy is crucial. This sector's share of the overall GDP production is 76.1 percent. Through this, the economy of the nation will grow strongly and advance towards perfection. For more than 60 years, planned development has already begun in Nepal. The economy went through a lot of ups and downs throughout this time. With the political changes that took place and created social justice, human rights, and economic and sustainable community development, these have become the most important needs of people. Reconstruction efforts have been made difficult by the effects of globalisation on the nation's economy and social aspects, natural disasters, and border blockades. Therefore, it is crucial to shift the nation's economy from a low rate to a very high one. The primary areas that require additional attention in this case are infrastructural development, industrialisation, and modernisation.

Increased domestic production, export-focused international trade, investments, employment opportunities for the country's young labour force, appropriate use of the available resources, capitalised expenditures, and strong administration are all necessary

for the country to experience good economic development. Community and marginalised people development may be accomplished with the prevalence of gender equality, the execution of focused programmes, considerable budget distribution, and provision of social security to the backwards class people. To help the poor who are suffering, effective policies and programmes must be developed. It was intended to lower the poverty rate from 18.7 percent to 11.0 percent during the 15th plan period (2076/77-2080/81) due to the non-agriculture sector's significant contribution. It is anticipated that Nepal's poverty would be totally eradicated by 2100/01 B.S. Therefore, the non-agricultural sector's contribution should be sufficient to support rapid economic growth in the nation.

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