



Ethnographic Study on Changing Regime of Milk Production in Nepal

Sahadev Gautam¹, Dipak Tharu², & Saroj Pokharel³

¹Faculty Member, Central Department of Public Administration, Tribhuvan University.

²Lecturer in English/Anthropology, New Millennium College, Kathmandu, Nepal.

³Central Department of Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Corresponding Author: Sahadev Gautam, **Email:** sgautam@cdpa.edu.np

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture as a by-birth gift to most Nepalese people is the main pillar of the national economy. The milk production system is one of the main segments of Nepalese agriculture. Its regime merely has been providing approximately nine per cent contributions to the national economy. The farming activities of farmers that have been described in this study were not an isolated discourse. This study seeks to find push and pull factors in the milk production regime. Several shreds of evidence and genuine information were described by the respondents about the milk production regime. Using the agrarian and social lenses in this ethnographic work, phenomenological data from nine respondents were collected to examine the existing practice of milk production. This study reflects on the poor condition of milk producers, though they have adopted dairy farms as a strategy of living. The dairy farm has still been a household strategy for rural farmers. It has also been a good local business for income generation and improvement of the socio-economic life of local farmers.

KEYWORDS: Dairy sub-sector, Dairy value chain, Milk production, Agricultural Productivity, White Revolution, Pull-Push factors.

INTRODUCTION

Kavrepalanchowk is one of the first independent districts which produced milk enough for local consumption, and it is also an exporter in markets, where the study area lies. The global dairy sector is currently going through the change (Burke, et al, 2018). Growing consumption of dairy and other livestock products is bringing important nutritional benefits to large segments of the population of developing countries (Jaiswal, Chandravanshi, and Netam, 2018). The rapid urbanization, change in food habit and preference, improved purchasing power due to the remittance boom, and better economic status has created a huge demand for milk products in the country (Kumar, et al., 2016). From the import-export calculation of milk products proving plus ledger to the national economy, other goods and services are in loss ledger except for milk. Milk production in Nepal has been a small and private enterprise among rural farmers. The aggregate agrarian process in Nepal is found characterized by a low technical level of production (Bhattarai, 2003), so those farmers are doing their dual works at the same time: one is agriculture and the other is milk production very equally. As Hagen (2012) states private enterprises in a free-market economy have to be successful, otherwise, they go bankrupt. The milk regime as a private enterprise around the study area has been helping local farmers as it is the source of income. Availability of market and development in various factors are responsible to convert a market-oriented system of milk. The White Revolution is short-hand for improvements in the dairy sub-sector of livestock agriculture (Scholten, 2015). Commercialization of productive goods is the main association in the white revolution.

The vast majority of the populations in Nepal are peasants owning their means of production (land, livestock, implements) and producing primarily for their consumption (Seddon, et al., 2002, Adhikari, 2008). Also, the improvement in livestock production is important for increasing the income of marginal and small farmers and landless labourers, given the uncertainties of crop production (Jaiswal, Chandravanshi & Netam, 2018). The dairy sub-sector not only provides employment and income generation opportunities but also ensures the flow of money from urban (consumers sites) to the rural sector (production sites) that has tremendously helped in livelihood improvement of the rural people as well as the development of the rural sector (NDDDB, 2073 BS¹).

Recent periods have witnessed higher expenditure on milk and milk products as compared to cereals and millets (Krishnadas, et al., 2016). Though the dairy sector had made significant

achievements in production in the state. There are lacunae in the form of low productivity, differences in production potential and lack of scientific pricing policy based on the cost of production to provide remunerative price to the dairy farmers (Pandian, Selvakumar & Prabu, 2013). Dairying helps the inequitable distribution of income and employment among the rural farming households, thereby reducing the disparity in the holding of resources by the rural communities (Jaiswal, Chandravanshi & Netam, 2018).

This study, based on the present literature and the primary data, seeks the anthropological research questions about milk production and its relationship with rural farmers. How has milk been becoming a source of income? How are pull and push factors affecting the regime of milk production? The main stages and their features in the dairy farming development of the country and their impact on the efficiency of milk production in agricultural enterprises and households were emphasized to further investigate the research objectives of this study (Svynous, Mykytyuk & Semysal, 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The present study takes a significant role in exploring the milk production regime in rural areas where it has been primarily practised as a paternal occupation, though it has been established as a household strategy for rural farmers' living. None of the researchers has previously done researches in this field. Therefore, this study aims to explore the daily lifestyles of rural people based on milk production. It also deals with the prevailing milk practices in rural villages of the Kavrepalanchowk District.

Despite various facts, practices and changes that occurred in agro-sectors, people are carrying out something new and innovative for the cultivation of dairy farms. Sometimes, farmers adopt new tools and techniques, and they also escape from agriculture or milk production regime. Because of their better access and employability in the government and private sector, and their preference towards the non-farm sector, agriculture has become one of the most neglected sites (Luintel, 2018). Milk and its products have occupied an important place in the dietary regimen of human beings (Krishnadas, et al., 2016). Through the improved breeding, feeding and management programmes, there has been a marked improvement in the country's milk production and productivity of milk animals (Pandian, Selvakumar & Prabu, 2013). The dairy farming system is known to enhance the sustainable livelihood of farmers in drought-prone areas because it has been

considered as one of the most important activities aimed at alleviating poverty, unemployment, and nutritional related problems especially in rural areas of drought-prone areas (Jaiswal, Chandravanshi & Netam, 2018).

Good-quality raw milk is required to make good-quality dairy products (Tiwari & Paudel, 2018). A very influential feature for the development of dairy sectors in developing countries is the nature of traditional domestic dairy consumption habits (Knips, 2006). Now, the access with market and transportation facilities of milk products have become a sellable commodity. Before milk was only the goods for local consumption, it had several local meanings and utilities. Milk from the perspective of the Hindu religion is very pure and auspicious, and milk from the household is a source of energy as well as a regular drink. But now, milk is gaining popularity in today's new markets and is considered the best way to increase economic growth. That is to say, milk has transactional values. By maximising marginal families' incomes, dairy cooperatives can bring most of these useful tools of modernity to rurality, retaining talented youth, stabilising rural-to-urban migration, and optimising imbalances in dual economies (Scholten, 2015). Farmers have gained a favourable price for their milk production, which was essentially self-reliant and now has been transformed into a commercial proposition (Barad & Mehta, 2017).

CASE STUDY & METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive research for which qualitative data was collected through the case study, observation, and field visit in rural villages of Kavrepalanchowk District. This study was conducted there from May 2019 to April 2020 during the first phase of the COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown. Ethnographic narrations were borrowed through the case studies. For this ethnographic study, two perspectives were practised: one from the perspective of milk collectors and the other from farmers. Those respondents/farmers were comparatively doing commercial milk production. All farmer respondents were foreign returnees, among them one respondent passed away due to heart attract. Cattle and buffaloes are the major dairy species in the country and to some extent yak in the high mountain region. The dairy sector is gradually emerging as a commercial/semi-commercial enterprise particularly in the peri-urban areas of the country and has a great prospect to develop as a high-value commercial product (NEPC, 2074 BS).

Milk as Best Alternative

During my field visit, I (main author) encountered Bishnu Humagain, who gave me the deep insights to make ethnographic narrations regarding changing regime of milk production. Bishnu was engaged in his dairy collection centre in Panauti Municipality 3, Dihigaun (former Kushadevi VDC-2) which was the study site and my birthplace. This study commenced with a personal life story of Mr Bishnu Humagain. He narrated:

I faced lots of hardships because of political strikes, transportation problems and lack of other more technological advancements than now. But now, competition between dairies is very simple. See now here are three dairies running, Sachai Vannuparda_(to be Frank), this locality is not big but production scale and public choice matter here for competition in the dairy collection. 25 years before three (one among them is passed away) offered/called me to establish a dairy collection centre in Dihigaun area. I think that point was the very foundation of the commercial dairy collection centre in this particular area. Before that, very few were selling milk to other places which were far-distanced for them. I am still learning different ideas regarding dairy but I am one of the old milk masters for this place. I think this is also a process of learning. I am popularly known as Deri Thekdar (owners of dairy centre). This is also a respected term to address the head of the collection centre. This is just a collection centre of milk; it is also a risk for Milk collection from here and sells big dairy in Banepa. This place is a much-empowered area around this region. If I did commit even a small mistake or I did misbehave, they would chase me. But I am running dairy very honestly and diplomatically. I spent almost 28 years in the dairy sector. I used to run 4 collection centres but now two centres are running. It is due to loss of energy and big accident. I am running a collection centre in Dihigaun for 25 years. I am alive because of my strong fate, nearly 14-15 years ago I had faced a terrible accident, due to which one of my legs is still unwell. (Field notes, August 2019).

Dairying contributes more positively and significantly to the income and employment of rural farming households, especially the marginal and poor farmers, thereby providing them with livelihoods and sustenance (Jaiswal, Chandravanshi & Netam, 2018). One product that is commonly sold is milk. Thus, the relative location of the household to a market becomes important since fresh milk has to be carried into the market early every morning (Seddon, et al., 2002). He worked for nearly 24 continuing years in Bishnu's dairy collection centre. He joined the milk collection centre (Locally pronounced dairy) in 2052 BS. At that time, milk production and collection were in the phase of just commercialization that would come to this village, but on a small scale. Rishibhakta Neupane narrated:

I am an expert in the dairy collection system in my village, and popular among local people as a knowledgeable person on how to collect, when to collect and the process of advancing milk productivity. And also, I recommend local people to be more flexible in carrying out social works and/or issues. Presently, I am not engaged in daily activity that many people (including Bishnu Dai) trust me as an expert in dairy collection around the locality. Now, I am a farmer producing 12-14 litres of milk a day. For 3-4 years, milk production has become larger scale than in the past, because people nowadays are more market-oriented for production scale as well as for consumption. People are producing milk on a larger amount (comparatively than the past) scale at the same time as consuming more modern foods from the market. In our locality, cross cows (cross inbreeding) are rearing, and they are not hybrid, but let's call crossed. These crossed breeds are giving a larger amount of milk than the local-before we had used to the domesticated local cow. The scale of milk production was lower than the crossed cow.

Now, few numbers of buffalos have been domesticating in the locality because crossed cows are becoming the best and easiest alternative source of milk production on a large scale. At the same time, cows are comparatively better in milking, breeding and pricing than buffalos. Farmers have to invest more in buffalos than in the cow. If we are concerned with production scale and price, two good cows are better than

one good buffalo in terms of the price. It's because one buffalo can buy two cows. But, if a cow becomes Tharo (notable for milking and fertility), it will be priceless at the time farmers have to pay money to receivers of tharo cow. But if a buffalo becomes Tharo, it will be easily sold for various purposes like a buff. To sell Tharo cow is very hard and priceless, and buffalo can be sold at a buff price. This is mostly practised in Hinduism. In this locality, all people are belonging to Hinduism, where the cow is considered a sacred and important mythical animal to all the Hindus.

Milk is providing fifty per cent profits to farmers- but farmers must have sold a minimum of ten litres a day, otherwise, profit is impossible on small scale. In this area, farmers are providing a green diet to their castles (including goats, buffalos and others). There is a lack of well-managed incomes. All farmers are running their economic life through the incomes of dairy. If milk production is not occurring, it will be hard for farmers to live a life in the present context. Farming, poultry and vegetables are also the main sources of people's incomes, but milk is a 'cash and smooth' production for the farmers. Approximately, four to six lakh rupees is distributed on the monthly basis (cash distribution pattern is two times a month). Abroad employments are also playing a secondary role in the upliftment of the local people's life, but I think milk is the primary source of income. Milk is the main and easy way to run the smooth and sophisticated life of the locals. Productive land has become barren gradually. But the scale of milk production is increasing, and hence it will be longer in my locality because this is an alternative and best source of smooth income. Milk production will be gifted from generation to generation if we talk from the present reflection. (Field notes, September 2019)

In the field notes, the researcher found that the majority of dairy-related tasks was running according to the males' decisions, but now women are becoming a vital part of it (in) directly. Falgun – Jestha (from February/March to May/Jun) is the period of high demands in the market,

but unfortunately this is the time for the initial phase of reproduction, where cows/buffaloes are not able to milk, and is also known as ‘dry season in milk’.

Insurance is not necessary, but it is good for the farmers if cattle die suddenly, then insurance will compensate them eighty per cent as a remedy. Men have become more sophisticated than before because the income of milk is providing the main role for this.

Such changes are considered to alter both spatial and temporal heterogeneity of habitats, and thus it is important to consider how culture, livelihood, and farming systems maintain birds’ habitats (Moktan, et al., 2006). Social systems and adaptations are playing a significant role in a new practice of agriculture. In Kavrepalanchowk, milk production is moving towards commercialization rather than the past. Domestication of cows is mostly influenced by hybrid breeding for high quantitative milk production.

Before the advent of the Dairy Development Corporation (DDC), the marketing of milk was limited to a nearby town by the individual producer/farmers. Even, in some parts of the country, there was the social taboo of not selling milk with the fear that their pet animals would be harmed with this activity (Milk Marketing Strategy Study, 2069 BS), but the large farmers have to purchase the green fodder to feed their dairy animals (Pandian, Selvakumar & Prabu, 2013). There are many direct and indirect problems occurring and should be faced by farmers or milk producers.

The world’s milk is predominantly cow’s milk, followed by buffalo milk. The leading producers include Asia (30%), followed by the EU (28%), North and Central America (18%), South America (9%), other European countries (9%), Africa (5%), and Oceania (5%). To be named a dairy product, food must be produced from the milk of cows, buffalo, goats, etc. The dairy sector includes food such as liquid milk, milk powders, cheese, butter, and yoghurt, as well as ice cream (Burke, et al., 2018). Bishnu Humagain shared his reflections on the milk regime as:

I divided two collection centres for two sons because of my physical health, but all ledgers were under my control. As it was a kind of natural rule, I transformed it into the new generation. Dairy at Kushadevi has currently been conducted by a young son and dairy at Dihigaun conducted by an elder son. Milk collection is the process of credit. I collect for 15 days and will pay bi-monthly to farmers. I think this system nearly meets the cash

process. Dairy collection centre is also the focus of trust. Everything is based on mutual or oral understanding. There is no legal or written document between Ghase (farmers) and Thekdar for advance. For 6-7 years, the advanced system is popular among farmers if they are in a needy condition. They ask for advance money and a later small amount of money will be deducted, but there is no interest rate. (Field notes, February 2020)

From the above narrative, it is obvious that Arjun, an elder son of Bishnu, is currently running the milk collection centre at Dihigaun. He is conducting a dairy business as a family business. He is still learning different ideas from his father) and with farmers. He spent almost 5 years in Dubai as a heavy truck driver but now he is enjoying this business. It is also clear that he is enjoying this business, however, he is sure with total security in the milk regime.

Local environments are strictly influenced by the culture, livelihood, and farming systems of the associated villages. Recently, commercialization and intensification of agriculture have triggered an expansion of arable land and changes in cropping patterns, which has caused fragmentation and degradation of remnant habits (Moktan, et al., 2006). In similar views, Manoj Sapkota also highlighted local commercialization by milk production. He narrated:

I am one of the main collectors in my locality. I spent two years in Dubai. After my return, I engaged in milk production. Currently, I have been providing milk to a private company. But I used to deliver milk to Dairy Development Cooperation (DDC), Panauti branch. I have adopted this local business of milk production as my father's heir. For me, the dairy collection centre is a legacy of my family who had inaugurated it as a local business in my locality. Now, 17 farmers are delivering milk to my dairy collection centre. Being an elder son of my family, I am taking responsibility to support my family and my younger brother is helping me with the operation of another dairy collection centre in another locality. The dairy/milk collection centre is very beneficial for my family. Dairy is my family business from my fathers' time. (Field notes, March 2020)

From the field notes, it is obvious that Sapkota has operated a dairy centre in a newer form and large scale. He pays more advance for new consumers to expand his dairy centre. Since the

inception of his dairy centre, he has been collecting 300-350 litres of milk a day. Now milk production regime is becoming more commercial than before. Advance is necessary to attract new farmers/comers/customers, and also old farmers ask for advance during emergency condition such as money needed for bringing new cattle, health emergency and for another required period. For advance, there is no ceiling because this is based on mutual and oral understanding, and also there is no legal practice. In his personal experience, the dairy or milk collection process is based on very mutuality because the majority of farmers just pours and leaves, they believe their owner/workers earnestly. Due to people's trust in Sapkota's dairy centre, he is successfully making good earnings and expanding it to different localities.

On the other hand, dairy farming is gradually transforming into a commercial system from the subsistence, and large dairy farms are emerging in the country to meet the unmet demands for milk and milk products. Young-educated foreign returnees are being attracted to this enterprise recently (NDDB, 2016).

Milk As Average Alternative from Perspectives of Foreign Returnees

As in many developing countries, climatic conditions for dairy production are unfavourable for high-yielding breeds and productivity and production volumes are low while demand for dairy products substantially exceeds domestic production (Knips, 2006). It is a very sophisticated and knowledge-intensive system of animal production requiring a high level of knowledge and skills, directed to safeguard not only human health but also the welfare of animals and the environment on the whole (Sinha, et al., 2016). Production volumes per cow and herd sizes are usually relatively small, which in turn leads to high collection costs and makes it difficult to set up profitable processing plants (Knips, 2006). The quality of milk produced and marketed in Nepal is of sub-standard quality. Behavioural practices of the persons involved in milk production and handling influence the quality of milk (Tiwari & Paudel, 2018).

Bhim Bajagain (late): Poultry farming was his first business which gave him a lot of losses. Therefore, he moved to Malaysia for economic recovery. He worked there for 5 years and returned to Nepal. He changed milk production from small scale to large which he thought would be better for him and would be able to manage money for the future of his siblings. But he was deceived by his fate. He brought three cows and initiated commercial milk production but all went in vain. Two cows became *Tharo* and one was in good condition. He is now planning to move on to the old

company in Malaysia. He is also planning to take loans at low interest for agricultural purposes. Later, this amount of money will be used in the share market. Subsidy loans and share market are the secondary preference, while primarily he is planning to return to Malaysia. Because of weak governmental policies and lack of insurance, he is interested in agriculture and dairying for a sustainable lifestyle. Milk can provide simple life but if future children are around the face, then how can we manage? His question demarks the reality of young and energetic persons who the victim of weak agro policies are:

Uddav Sapkota: He does not have enough *Khet* (irrigable field) and *Bari* (non-irrigable/barren field). Therefore, producing milk is directly a loss business. If he starts commercial milk production, he can buy everything; from green grass to hay, other diets for the cow. His experiences taught him milk production and farming are not merely for his carrier. He was born in soil, and he has lots of experiences regarding it. Profit is rare for farmers. So, milk production for me is not the real solution. Foreign employment is the only best alternative for him.

Uddav tries to get in Saudi airways for catering cook, but now corona pandemic stops it. He has already spent two years in Dubai, three years in Malaysia and two and half years in India. Lack of future security in agro-business is the main problem in Nepal. He had a huge number of losses in poultry. It is hard to find life solutions from milk, poultry and agriculture so moving to another nation is our necessity.

Mitharam Sapkota: Currently, he has been delivering milk production to two (Arjun and Manoj) dairies. He made so much *Unnati/Pragatti* (progress). He bought land in two places and built an RCC house. Now, he is on loan but foreign employment helped him to do such activities. He had spent 11 years in a foreign country. Now he is selling NPR 40,000 monthly in a round figure- but this is not profitable, said he. Everything should be bought for cow, there is nothing cheap so cow domestication is harder and not good than what our market think, like milk production on a commercial scale is better for farmers. Sounds good to hear milk is good for farmers but the reality is different. Currently, a total of seven cows are domesticated by him, this is the best alternative but he is also thinking to return to Malaysia. Foreign employment gives more than milk so it is secondary- said he.

Umesh Sapkota: Now, he is working as an agent of cow and small store in the study area. Buy and sell with little margin is also part of the milk production regime. His notion is quite the same

as mentioned by Pyakuryal (2013), 'Nepal suffers from widespread poverty, deep structural inadequacies, less competitive productions in the international market, modest performance in per capita terms, and poor governance.' Now permanently 3 cows are domesticated for milk production. He spent three years in Qatar. He shared his life experiences:

I did poultry and farming, went in loss from poultry. Before foreign employment I had NRS-6, 35,000 loans, after 2 years of work there 5, 00,000 rupees became surplus. I went as a security guard when I was familiar with the local language, they promote me. My position had changed then I became more powerful and my income increased. I took more risks for extra income, overall spending three years at that company I reserve a handsome amount of money. At that time, I badly remember my family. I did modern agriculture and poultry because of my carelessness that went into loss. When I moved to Qatar I learn many things- Nepal is the best place for youth and agriculture, but administratively and from a policy level it is weak. Nepal is not the land of gold but the land of diamonds. I left college in the last of intermediate because of my fathers' tragedy. But the achievement of my college life is love marriage (...laugh). Now I am trying more new ideas and techniques in milk production and commercial farming. I utilize my free time on YouTube for new ideas regarding farming. Your father (the father of the main author was the first JTA in this region) used to share many new ideas but we care damn but now I realize he was right. Qatar opens my insight regarding the value of milk and farming. All of us in this locality have to change subsistence to the market practice of agriculture. We have to stop the gambling culture and utilize valuable time on milk production and in agriculture.

In Nepalese context, there is a lack of guarantees in milk and agriculture. If we change our agro-system agro-tourism will be possible in this locality because we are sitting near to the capital city-Kathmandu. The local government has been providing lots of subsidies but it is not giving real fruits to real farmers. The subsidy is being influenced by either political link or Afno Manchhe (owns own person). We are staying in a rural setting

but buying vegetables from the bazaar at the same time we are wasting land around the house (Karesa Bari). We are very sophisticated than the reality- dreaming to be foreigners but working attitude is very local, shame on this. Lack of management and system are the main problems in agriculture. A 'So-called educated' person like me is not willing for change. Educated are killing valuable time by playing cards and doing unnecessary tea Guff (cheat chat-sitting and conversation at tea shop). What joke attitude we are showing, youth are feels hesitate to touch the soil. Lack of dedication, lack of strategies and sophisticated life are the main problems in milk and agriculture production. Families in our area are very supportive of agriculture and milk but youths are not giving their full attention to it. Milk and agriculture are the main way to change life in progressive form for that we have to make our production system more market-oriented. Government is the main agency to give us guardianship, first, we must stop pretender ship on other things. Nepal Banchha Vane Krishi Batai Banchha (If Nepal/Nepalese wants to be developed only through agriculture is possible). (Field notes, January 2020)

Ganesh Sapkota: The regime of milk has been changing according to the demand and situation. One of the main reasons for the weak enthusiasm among marginal farmers in adopting new approaches is the absence of insurance policy Pyakuryal (2013). The government initiated such a policy on a small scale by offering insurance packages in dairy farms. Sapkota shared his personal experience, “Cow domestication is more profitable and easier than the poultry”. He did poultry farm when he returned from Dubai after a two-year stay as an automatic repairer. He did a diploma in automatic engineering from CTEVT (Center for Technical Education and Vocational Training), Panauti, Kabhrepalanchok District. Seven cows are domesticating now, and no options are taking into much more consideration for now than the cow. He took ten lakhs for the commercialization of milk production. He paid a total of 25 thousand extra money for the agent after the loan process had been successfully done and made easier. He knew that was corruption, but it was medicine also and more profitable than other types of loans. We have to pay a minimum of 7-8 per cent interest for other loans but this one is cheaper just a two per cent interest rate than a subsidy loan. For five years he has planned that they will have changed. Sapkota further said:

If milk production and destiny will adjoin to make a lucky mark as present time, I will continue this task. I assume time teaches me what the next step to put forward to making a successful life. My father and mother are actively engaged in milk production, and my wife is also busy with other household activities to smoothly manage the family. (Field notes, March 2020)

In my field visit, I observed that Sapkota had wasted three years. As he returned from abroad and he started to run a bike garage at the same time he was conducting a poultry farm. First, he made a good earning from poultry farming but later went in the loss. From his profits, he bought a bike and got married. Later on, I earned a good amount of money from the garage. Due to carefree lifestyles being involved with bad company, he could not maintain profits as before.

The municipality is proving local farmers with numerous facilities and services due to no direct support/involvement of the ward office. Lack of farmer's interests, they are not getting those fruits. They realise it is their laziness. And also, administrative bodies are the victim of *Afno Mcnchhe* (nepotism), hence government bodies are providing farmers with subsidies to support them in agro-farming, poultry farming and dairy farming. Sapkota is still not getting a small veterinary facility during the needy condition. However, he is a larger producer of milk in the study area. He thought that all things were happening because of the unstable political system. The question of whether economic conditions have shaped the political system of the society or vice versa can hardly have a definitive answer (Regmi, 2011).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted in Panauti Municipality, Kavrapalanchowk, Nepal to especially concentrate on the anthropological research questions about milk production and its relation with rural farmers. The main stages and their features in the dairy farming development explored the milk regime practiced in Kavrepalanchowk District. Similarly, it concerns the populations of returnee migrants living in rural villages. It also deals with the total process of milk production occurred one year from May 2019 to April 2020 during the first phase of the COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown as the research duration (time) for this study. During this period, milk productions of the returnee migrants in Panauti Municipality, Kavrepalanchowk district were closely observed and taken under the main concerns of this study.

CONCLUSION

This paper discusses the milk production regime practised by migrants and non-migrants in Panauti, Kavrepalanchok District. From the ethnographic narrations, it is concluded that the Nepalese milk production regime is still in a very transitional phase. Lack of life security from milk products is still unsatisfied by many farmers who are thinking continuously to make milk production an alternative to their life. Various socio-political factors and conditions are playing a vital role in agro-farming and dairy farming activities like milk production. The yield rates of crops or land productivity are found not only low but are seen consistently declining over time (Bhattarai, 2003). Milk is not necessarily a local product and has developed into a global trade with the development of milk powders (Burke, et al., 2018). From various perspectives of data gathered in a field visit, those who are engaging in the collection process are satisfied with the milk production regime, but the producers are still in very confusing condition whether to make milk production as a way of earning or an alternative for living. Very low development of productive forces in the agriculture sector is reflected in overwhelming domination of traditional factors of production like land and human and animal in total factor inputs (Bhattarai, 2003). Reducing the cost incurred in feeding through utilizing the locally available feed resources and improving the feeding technology would ultimately reduce the cost of milk production (Pandian, Selvakumar & Prabu, 2013). Farmers are becoming unsatisfied with the dairy farms though it has been the best and primary source of income for their livelihoods.

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