

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT THROUGH GURUNG AAMA TOLI
A Case Study of Sikles Village, Kaski District

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Central Department of Sociology
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of Tribhuvan University in
Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for Master of Arts in Sociology**

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is certified that Mr. Rupak Gurung has completed the research work entitled "Women's Empowerment Through Gurung Aama Toli: A case study of Sikles Village, Kaski District" under my supervision and guidance. I therefore, recommend the thesis for approval and acceptance.

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LATTER OF ACCEPTANCE

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACAP:	Annapurna Conservation Area Project
CBS:	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDSA:	Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology
CNSP:	Cornell Nepal Study Program
DDC:	District Development Committee
INGO:	International Non-Government Organization
MG:	Mothers' group
NEFDIN:	National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
Rs:	Rupees
TCHTSN:	The Council House of Tamu (Gurung) Students' Nepal
TU:	Tribhuvan University
UK:	United Kingdom
UNDP:	United Nations Development Program
USAID:	US Agency for International Development
VDC:	Village Development Committee

LIST OF LOCAL WORDS AND THEIR MEANING

<i>Aama Toli/samuha:</i>	Mothers' group
<i>Kachokathar:</i>	A Song sung by Mothers groups
<i>Rodi/ Rhondhin/ Rodhin:</i>	Traditionally a centre for weaving and knitting the garments during the off-agricultural season
<i>Chiva Aapa:</i>	An elder man who maintains law and order inside the <i>Rodi</i> and supervises the activities of the boys and girls
<i>Chiva Aama:</i>	An elder woman who maintains law and order inside the <i>Rodi</i> and supervises the activities of the boys and girls
<i>Lahure:</i>	Returnee British or Indian Army Men
<i>Paisa Jharne:</i>	Fund Collection
<i>Gumba:</i>	Buddhist monastery
<i>Varna:</i>	Cast
<i>Jatis:</i>	Sub-cast
<i>Lhochhar:</i>	New Year
<i>Allo:</i>	Nettle fibre
<i>Bhangra:</i>	A kind of cloth made from nettle fibre
<i>Kohla:</i>	Gurung State
<i>Cheelee Nkgaru:</i>	Old name of Sikles
<i>dhiki, jato, panighatt:</i>	Traditional mill
<i>Tamu:</i>	Gurung
<i>Samaj ghar:</i>	Community Building
<i>Topi:</i>	Cap
<i>Bhoto:</i>	A kind of vest
<i>Bhangra:</i>	A kind of cloth made from nettle fibre
<i>Kachhar:</i>	A kind of cloth rolled/round/twine skirt which consists of one cloth
<i>Cholo:</i>	A kind of vest
<i>Lungi:</i>	A kind of cloth which is similar to longer <i>Kachhar</i> and consistsof a pipe of cloth and whose cloth is printed cotton colourfully
<i>Maghimela:</i>	Local festival
<i>Maghesakranati:</i>	1 st day of Magh/festival

<i>Dashain:</i>	Greatest festival celebrated by Hindu people
<i>Tihar:</i>	Festival celebrated by Hindu people
<i>ChaiteDhasain:</i>	Festival celebrated by Hindu people
<i>Saune Sankranti:</i>	1 st day of Saun/festival
<i>Dhungri, madwari, mundri, phuli, silimundri, tilahari, bala, aunthi, kalli, chura,</i> <i>potey:</i>	Ornaments wore by women
<i>Dharmashala:</i>	Rest house
<i>Chautara:</i>	A place for people rest
<i>Dhido:</i>	a kind of food which is made with the mixture of boiled water and roasted millet
<i>Selroti:</i>	A type of doughnut which is made from rice flour
<i>Chatini:</i>	A kind of pickle
<i>Mahi:</i>	It is a drink which is made with the rest of the milk after making butter
<i>Puja:</i>	Worship

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Study Context

Nepal has an incredible diversity of ethnic groups and cultures. As one delves into the intricacies of ethnicity in Nepal, it becomes apparent that the country Prithvi Narayan Shah conquered 200 years ago is not "a garden bedecked with 4 *Varna* and 36 *Jatis*", but rather is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-tribal modern state with its share of political and ethnic differences (Bourguignon 1996).

The Gurungs, one of the major ethnic groups of Nepal, have historically occupied the southern slopes of Annapurna and Machhapuchre Himalayas in central west Nepal. Like the neighbouring Magars, Tamangs and Thakalis, they live at the interstice between two great cultural and social traditions – Indian Hinduism and Tibetan Buddhism and between two ecological zones – the low subtropical valleys and the alpine highlands. Their population is distributed mainly in the Kaski, Lamjung, Syangja, Tanahun, Gorkha, Parbat and Manang districts of the Gandaki zone. However, migration to other parts of the country, particularly eastern Nepal, dates as far back as the Gorkha conquest and the related events of the 18th and the early 19th centuries. Traditional Gurung villages are found at the height of 2000 to 3000 meters where they have their compact settlements. The houses are constructed in the varying levels on the hill slopes. In any one level, there may be a cluster of houses ranging in number from 20 to 100, and sometimes even more. The Sikles village in Kaski district is one of the many examples of such settlements where more than 600 houses are clustered together (Gurung 2007).

General Introduction of Gurung

Gurung is one of the major Indigenous ethnic groups of Nepal. Gurungs are one of the indigenous ethnic group of Nepal. They are called "Tamu" in their mother language. According to Nepal National census of 2001, its population is 543,571 (it is the 2.39% of total population of Nepal. Gurung is also called 'Tamu'. Gurung caste densely lives in western part of Nepal. The densely Gurung populated district are; Kaski, Lamjung, Gorkha, Syangja, Mustang, Tanahun, Dolpa. However, they have been living in Eastern part of Nepal too such as Sankhuwasabha, Okhaldhunga, and Illam districts

including new settlements in Terai region and Kathmandu valley. Gurung people live each and every parts of Nepal may be that more or less from west to east and Himal to Terai.

Gurung's have more than hundred clans and sub clans. According to social structure, they have been divided in three groups.

1. Pling (having four clans) – Cle (Ghale), Rilde, Kyalde and Dangi.
2. Swogi (having three clans) – Lam (Lama), Lem (Lamchhane), Kwon (Ghotane) and sub clans.
3. Kuhgi (having nine clans) – Rest of the nine clans, co-clans and sub clans.

Gurungs look like Mongoloid in Physical feature.

Language:

Gurung people have their own distinct mother language i.e. “Tamu” originated from Tibeto-Burman. It is very similar to the Tamang language. They fluently speak Nepali and educated Gurung people can also speak English.

Religion:

Gurung people generally follow their own clan-religion “Tamuwan Religion”. Pachyyu, Kabri and Bonpo lump priests have been nominated for religious activities. Due to the influence of Buddhism in the recent years, many Gurungs follow “Mahayani Lama Buddhism”. But still there is in practice Bon Religion. Mostly the Gurung people feel proud to say Buddhist to them. They go to *Gumba* (Buddhist Monastery) and pray to their God Buddha. They follow the Buddhist customs in their social activities. They invite to Lama in their birth ceremony and cremation. Lamas give name to new birth child according to their religious book. Their culture is closely related with Tamang and Sherpa.

Festivals:

“*Tamu Lhosar*” is main festival of Gurung. In the Gurung Language '*Lho*' means Year and '*Chhar*' means New. According to terminology *Lhochhar* means 'New Year'. Gurung people celebrate this festival around one month. This festival falls in month of 15th *Poush*. They celebrate this festival gathering and dancing. In the occasion of this festival they make tasty food and they eat in group. They see their relatives and friends in this time. However, Gurung people celebrate many more other festivals.

Like; *Dhasain* and *Tihar* (it is the main festival of Hindu), *ChaitiDhasain*, *SauneSankranti* so on. The '*Rodi*' culture is most famous in the Gurung.

Occupation:

Gurung peoples' main occupation is still agriculture followed by sheep keeping. They rear wool from sheep, and they earn a little with sale of home made products such as Radi and Pakhi. Gurung caste is also very famous for Gurkha Soldier and Indian Soldier. And they are also good position in the Nepal Army. Nepal Army Chief Chhatra Man Gurung is also from the Gurung community. In this sense we can say Gurung people have the strong military power in their caste. But these days divers occupation they follow. Gurung people are also involved in Tourism Industry. Famous trekking destination Annapurna region is also full of Gurung People. GhaleGaun and Sirubari is very famous Gurung community managed touristic village. Some people follow business, official job, and go to abroad employment in these days.

AamaSamuha (Mothers Groups):

In general, Mothers Group is an informal organization with the membership of the females of a particular village. So, Mothers Group is some kind of organization which consists of only female members. Before the discussion of the Mother's group, it would be relevant to take note of the '*Rodi*' a socio-cultural institution prevalent for centuries among the Gurungs of Nepal. '*Rodi*' (traditionally a centre for weaving and knitting the garments during the off-agricultural season) is a place where young boys and girls get together to work and entertain themselves by singing and dancing. But in the changing perspective of Nepal, '*Rodi*' has been losing its importance and it has been replaced by another creative institution called the 'Mother's Group'. The Mother's Groups have been emerging in Nepal originally in Gurung villages. In Annapurna Conservation Area, it has been flourishes with the support of Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP). In this region the Mothers Groups are known as *Kanchokatar* or *Aama Toli* (by the name of Nepali folk song) (Gurung 1994).

According to Gurung (1994), the first Mothers Group was formally registered in Ghandruk village of Kaski in 1990. Mothers Group has been organized with two objectives: (I) to protect their culture by continuation of cultural nights, songs and dances; and (II) to collect money for the implementation of certain development

activities in the villages. Nowadays, the Mothers Groups have become active in fund raising programs through the organization of various folk songs and folk-dances for guests. On special occasions like marriage and death ceremony in the village. They also organize cultural programmes to raise funds. With this fund, the Mothers Groups have started development projects in the village which were noted by the researcher as follows:

-) Construction and repairing of village trails and their surroundings.
-) Construction of *Gumba* (Buddhist monastery) and temples.
-) Construction of toilets.
-) Plantation of trees in public lands.
-) Assistance in the construction of a school building and purchase of school furniture.
-) Managing the literacy classes.

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In this research I have discussed about the Mother's Group, who are active in rural area. In general, Mothers Group is an informal organization with the membership of the females of a particular village. So, Mother's Group is some kind of organization which consists of only female members. According to Bhattachan (2002), Mother's Groups are perhaps one of the most universalized traditional voluntary organizations in Nepal. It first started with the Gurungs of Western Nepal. As most of the Gurung men used to join in the British Army, and more recently, in Indian Army, for the last two centuries, Gurung women formed Mother's Group to sing, dance, and organize

cultural activities in the evening. One of the most interesting activities they perform is to welcome returnee *Lahures* (returnee British or Indian Army Men) and guest visitors. They *Lahures* and guest visitors donate money to the Mother's Group. Mother's Group usually organize singing and dancing programs in the evening and collected money is used to build trails, temples and so on. These days, many INGOs and NGOs have formed and promoted Mother's Group across the country among different caste and ethnic groups to another local process for development.

In this research I have attempted to relate the Mothers Group with women's empowerment. According to the USAID Nepal, women's empowerment as defined by the rural Nepali women is a complex set of conditions, being knowledge skilled and confident, having the ability and willingness to share, time skills and able to speak in public, earn money and generally be able to stand in own feet in the development sectors empowerment of the women are more pronounce as it is the key of women's social, cultural, economic and political development and sustainable growth of the nation.

The process by which people, organizations or groups who are powerless (a) became aware of the power dynamics at work in their life context (b) develop the skills and capacity for gaining some reasonable control over their lives (c) exercise this control without infringing upon the rights of other (d) supports the empowerment of others in the community (McWhirter 1991 quoted from Achrya 2067 BS). According to Sara Langwe, Empowerment is a process of enabling people to take change of their own lives and escape from poverty which arises not from lack of productivity but from oppression and exploitation.

According to the census 2001, 42.5 percent female literacy in comparison to 65.1 percent of the male and out of the total population of Nepal, nearly 51 percent (1, 15, and 87,501) is occupied by the population of Nepal. Women are still victimized by the violence, discrimination, prejudice, and inferiority complex because of male domination in different sectors and levels. In the subsistence -based economy of Nepal women contribute in the area of agriculture but their work is invisible to their families, communities, and country. Most of the women are self-employed but their experience and expertise are not recognized by society (Poudel 2011).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Role of women is very high in the religious belief of Gurung community. The traditional social characteristic of Gurung society was based on matriarchy. The Gurung people do not discriminate the women. This society has been based on the equality between male and female. There is no discrimination between sons and daughter in Gurung community. Except the eventual influence from outer society for such discrimination, the status of women is very respectable and high in Gurung society. In the past, foreign clothes were not imported to Nepal. The Gurung women used to produce different kinds of clothes out of sheep-wool and cotton. Such skills found in the Gurung women, used to make the Gurung community economically self-reliant. Culturally, the Gurung women give great importance on fairs and festival, pray and worship special ceremonies etc. Even from religious perspective, the role of women is very essential. The funeral rite is not completed in the absence of daughter. Socially the Gurung society is equitable.

According to Keller and Mbwebe, empowerment is a process whereby women became able to organize themselves to increase their own self-reliance, to assert their independent right to make choice and control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination. The social status of women and their access to resources varied widely depended on the cultural group they belonged to. Generally, women belonging to Tibeto-Berman cultural groups had considerably greater freedom in matters such as choice of marriage partners, deciding the time for marriage and in selection of economic activities they wished to pursue, as compared to their sisters belonging to the Indo-Aryan cultural group (Acharya 1994 Quoted from Okamura 1999).

The government and private sectors in Nepal have been engaged in relentless promotion of Nepalese women's empowerment through education, training and various other programs and research since long, but still most of the women's social status seems awfully poor. Their representation in social, economic and political life has been minimal. (Khatri 2011)

As mentioned above, the Nepali society shows that Nepal is a male led and male dominated society. In many aspects we can see the impact of male dominance. On the other hand, women have been treated as a factory of producing children and limited

them only into household chore. Actually, they have no freedom in the society and education status of woman in Nepal is very low. Nepal is the poorest country and listed into third world country. In Nepal female have no access to education because of conservative social structure. For example, female should not be educated and keep them only in household activities. Moreover, some societies still wouldn't see positively if girls go to school. As a result, woman has no accessibility to get any job such as government and private. As consequences, ultimately they should fully depend on their Woman Empowerment Program family and husband in terms of finance. By all above mentioned truth which is existed in our Nepali society would excite us to help them by giving some sort of non formal education and income generating as well as awareness building training related to women through volunteering service. We feel that providing education and training to them would increase their education level and uplift their living standard. In addition the concept of society would change gradually. Finally, they shouldn't rely on their husband and woman in terms of money and can get freedom in family and society too.

Women have started empowering themselves through the formation of their own groups-Mothers Groups in the rural area of Nepal.Especially this study was focused on the Gurung Mothers Groups and attempt to identify the involvement and participation of Mothers Groups in the process of women empowerment and community development at local-level.

Major research problem of my research is that Mothers Groups have been instrumental to empower the rural women over the historical period of time. In order to substance my research problem I raise the following questions:

-) What is the historical context of the origin of Mothers Groups?
-) What is the process of formation of Mothers Groups?
-) What is the role of Gurung Mothers Groups for empowerment of rural women?
-) What is the role of Gurung Mothers Groups to preserve cultures and contribute to community development in the rural village?
-) What are the main functions of Mothers Groups?
-) What are the problems faced by Mothers Groups?
-) Is there positive attitude of male and female towards Mothers Groups?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Gurung women of rural areas are making self effort to empowerment themselves through the formation of Mother's Group at local level. The general objective of this study is to assess the role of Gurung Mother's Group for empowerment of women and their participation contribution and leadership in the development process of village and preserve cultures through the intervention of development activities. The specific objectives of this research are:

-) To reconstruct the history of Mother's Group.
-) To assess the role of Gurung Mother's Group (*AamaToli*) for empowerment of women.
-) To examine the role of Gurung Mother's Group (*AamaToli*) for preserving the cultures and together with contributing to the community development

1.4 Rationale of the Study

Nepal is male dominated society where women are dominated, suppressed and oppressed. They are comparatively far behind the main stream. Women are aware of their suppression although they cannot express openly against their husbands or male partners. Women cannot work independently and from their organization to empower themselves. But it is not doing in Gurung society. They enjoy a great amount of cultural freedom. Previously, they had *Rodi* but these days they have Mother's Group. Yet, the study on the assertion is still lacking. The study on women has not done the ethnographic attention of Sociologist/Anthropologist. So, this will be the first study by a student of Sociology. Therefore, the present study may very rational in various ways as follows:

-) The study will be useful to the feminist and the students of Sociology/Anthropology who must know about the role of Gurung Mother's Group (*Aama Toli*) in the process of women empowerment.
-) The study will be useful to the planners to help in the formulation of the policy for the uplift of the women population.

) Gurung Mothers Group (*Aama Toli*) who have found working in the development of their village, preserving natural resources and their cultures which contributes the national development.

The findings of the study will be useful to the both native and foreign researchers who will have in-depth study on the Gurung Mothers Group (*Aama Toli*).

Thus, the present study is very useful in various ways.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Informal associations like Mothers Groups simultaneously promote women's political influence and economic contributions on the one hand and discourage their subordination, victimization, or exclusion on the other. The internal dynamics of women's informal associations explain neither the origins of nor the variations in women's position; these can be better accounted for in light of the linkages between formal and informal spheres. But an appreciation of informal organizational patterns makes women visible and marks their influence in a way that theories focusing narrowly on formal organizations cannot (March and Taqqu 1986). In the Sikles village we can find the women have been empowered socially, politically and economically. They have been involved in various local level committee and their opinion and views are given importance lately.

Women empowerment means to get equal status, participation in development programme and control in resources and achievement like as men. Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social, or economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities. Gurung women of Sickles are not only preserving cultures; they are also playing the role for social development and making self-efforts to empowerment themselves through the formation of Mothers Group at local-level. Based on this knowledge, I draw the conceptual framework of Gurung Mothers Groups who are preserving cultures and playing the role for social development and making self-efforts to empowerment themselves.

Mothers Group is universalized traditional volunteer women's organization in Nepal initiated from 1980s in rural Nepal. In the initial stage those groups were flourished in Gurung and Magar communities where most of the male members were out of home and joined army in Nepal, India and UK. Those women were organized for cultural social, religious matters and started to convince meetings, discussions and small programs initiated by various NGOs in rural Nepal since 1980s (Poudel 2011). In Sikles village also we can find the mothers group was first formed for entertainment and cultural and social events later it was involved in community development and started conduction meetings, discussion and small programs.

Autonomy is the ability to obtain information and make decisions about one's own concerns. It facilitates access to material resources such as food, land, income and other forms of wealth, and social resources such as knowledge, power, prestige within the family and community. Women's autonomy in health-care decision-making is extremely important for better maternal and child health outcomes, and as an indicator of women's empowerment. Gender-based power inequalities can restrict open communication between partners about reproductive health decisions as well as women's access to reproductive health services. This in turn can contribute to poor health outcomes. Evidence from other developing countries show that women's age and family structure are the strongest determinants of women's authority in decision-making. Older women and women in nuclear households are more likely than other women to participate in family decisions (Sathar 2000). In Sikles village also we could find more involvement of older women and their decisions were given more prioritization.

Mothers Groups (MGs), a non-political group, have played a significant role on women's empowerment and mobilization at grassroots. Decision-making capabilities of members were found to be highly dependent upon the family background of the members in response to the question whether they had felt any significant changes in their decision-making capabilities after getting involved in MG, mothers have agreed that there has been change in the pattern to decision making. They reported that they used to limit their decision only in the kitchen maintenance and agree what their husband or rest of the family had decided on the concerned issues, before getting involved in MG but these days they analyzed the issues logically and sometimes they disagreed the decisions made by others and gave their own decision.

According to them, the change occurred due to change in their self-confidence, behaviour, knowledge, communication skill etc, after getting organized in to the groups. It was found that 63% (21 mothers) of the members have felt change in the attitude of family members towards them. According to them, due to organizational practices in MG along with access to new knowledge and skills they become more confident to talk on any issues, directly or indirectly related to them, without hesitation. They started getting themselves involved in household decision making which made the family members to realize their role in the family altogether.

All the mothers, who were found to have represented various social institutions, said that they had not involved in any social institutions as representatives of women before they got involved in MGs. According to them, they used to feel shy and nervous to speak just their names in front of mass and distinguished personalities before their involvement in MGs. However, these days they could express their ideas and dissatisfactions in front of the concerned authority without feeling hesitations.

Literatures have shown that MGs have completed larger projects like constructing roads, temples, resting places, making irrigation ponds etc. with collaboration of other line agencies. It has also been mentioned that they are shifting their focus from infrastructure development to social reform, nowadays(Lingden 2009). The mothers group of the Sikles is not linked with any political party and they have empowered women and mobilized them.

The women of Sikles have empowered and they have been able to make decision themselves. Before the women of the village were shy and afraid to be social but now they are the faces of the village. There has also been change in the attitude of people towards the mothers groups after their contribution in the community development. They have contributed in development of infrastructure by building *dharmasala*, *chautara*, temples, public taps and toilets, community building, foot trails and so on.

In theory a woman is considered the better half of a man, he himself being the other half, but in practice the woman is only a slave, the bearer of her husband's children and an instrument to continue to generation (Luintel 1992-9 Quoted from Gurung 1994). In the past, the women of the Sikles village were considered as second class they were not given any value.

In the process of development, the female groups have recently been appeared in the national area. Because male domination is another notable feature of Nepal where women are hidden and have no leadership as well as participation. The emergence of Mothers group in the development process is the milestone (Okamura 1999). Sikles though it was a matriarchal society due to the heavy settlement of Gurung people but the women were not given power in the community level area but with the involvement in the Mothers group they have gotten access in community level decision making rights.

A Nepalese woman, after marriage, loses her identity. Without the consent of her husband even a single and simple decision is unexpected. A man can do everything; play cards in tea-shops the whole day, visit the liquor shops or is absent from the house for several days, months, or years or may even come back with another wife. This is acceptable to society and culture. But a woman is strictly prohibited from doing all these things. She is expected to look after children, herd the cattle, take care of cultivation, and cook food and collect fuel and fodder (Gurung 1994). The women of Sikles village are able to make decision even without the consent of their husband to a certain extent.

Women in Nepal are not suffering from the lack of resource, but from the lack of power to use the available resources, lack of power to assert their rights. They are suffering from exploitation and injustice. To uplift the women from strategic needs, the disadvantage position should be address. Some examples of strategic needs of Nepalese women as a group are increased confidence and competence, increase mobility, increase economic security, independence, option opportunities, organized group of women for strength and solidarity and active, increased ability to improve the lives and future children, increase political power etc. (Pandit 2002). In Sikles we can find the women who do not have any decision making power are suffering from low self esteem, opportunities and abilities to make the life and future of their children better.

Rhondhinis under the strict supervision of an elder man and woman called *ChivaAapa*, and *ChivaAama* who maintain law and order inside the *Rhondhin* and supervise the activities of the boys and girls, since they also sleep in the same house (Gurung 2007).As the Gurung people have been very wealthy culturally, the '*Rodhin*' has been gradually disappeared. Meanwhile, the 'Mothers Groups' have been active instead (Gurung 2068 B. S.). In Sikles village in the past there was *Rodi* but in place of it we can find mothers group today.

Aama Samuha, Mothers groups and informal institutions have become agents for coo unity development in the Annapurna Conservation Area. Mothers groups from different ethnic returnee British or Indian Army Mengroups often preformed cultural shows to raise community funds, which they frequently said was *Paisa Jharne*, raise

funds in all parts of the Annapurna Conservation Area (Gurung 2008). We can find the mothers group of Sikles utilizing their fund for the community development.

At the modern time, the existence and activeness of the Mothers groups has been very important. They have been active in the programs as conducting literacy class, establishing school, road-making at village, preservation of the forest, and keep the village free from the evil activities as gambling (Gurung 2068 B. S.). The Mothers' group of Sikles village plays an important role in social reforms.

Empowerment of women and rural development go together. Mothers of rural areas are getting organized and making efforts to empower themselves by the name of 'Mothers group'. Mothers groups have played vital role for women empowerment and developing social awareness of mothers. Mothers groups have provided a safe platform for mothers to exercise power relationship within organization, enhance their communicational skills, share personal feelings and experience there by learn something new, that helps them change the traditional concepts prevailing in the society on their role and responsibilities, to increase their confidence level because of their access to new information, knowledge and skill, which in turn enhance their capability to increase their participation in local institution (Poudel 2011). We can find the women of Sikles have become more skilled, organized and informed after their involvement in mothers group and this has increased their confidence.

Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) helped to mobilized *AamaToli* and got everyone involved in community service. The village women had always worked for the community prior to the establishment of *AamaToli*, but now, through Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), their work was suddenly legitimized and valued differently. This helped to increase their self-esteem (Gurung 2004). In Sikles also we can find the Mothers group were given more value after they collaborated with ACAP.

The Mothers' Group has taught women how to work in a team, how to organize events and work for the betterment of their village. They have understood the importance of education and are getting market exposure (Thapaliya, Rai, Shrestha, Parajuli, and Pande). The women of the village have been aware and informed from

the various programs of the Mothers' group and thus we can find them giving importance to education and market exposure.

In the past, initiation and decision-making in infrastructural development activities were strictly a "men's area" of work. Today with the availability of funds and the ability to mobilise the community, a favourable situation for women to prove their potential has been created. Women have realised the importance of their involvement in community development activities, especially infrastructural development, as it is a major means of gaining credit and respect in society (Gurung 1995). The mothers group has understood the importance of developmental activities and the respect and value it brings thus they have utilized their fund in developmental sector for the improvement of women condition.

Women have equal responsibility and potential for development activities and nation building. The example is presented by the activities of a Mothers group of a Gurung village in Nepal where women have been made aware of environmental problems and activities to maintain the balance between man and nature (Gurung 1994). It can be related to the mothers group of Sikles.

Nepal is a small country characterized by both bio-diversity and socio-cultural diversity. Nepal indeed is a multi-racial or multi caste/ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-cultural and more recently multi-political country. Prior to the 'territorial unification' under the Gurkhas imperialism or internal colonization of 1768. Different indigenous nationalities had their own home land and self rule. It was during those times that different indigenous nationalities had evolved and sustained different voluntary organization. After 1768, the rulers imposed the policy of domination of one caste, one language, one religion and one culture over many others. Unfortunately, the Nepalese people had to go through different variety of autocratic rules for 122 out of 134 years. Despite of predatory state most of under developed transportation and communication system in the country. Also, it is a historical reality that rapidly expanding process of globalization and intensification of previous policy of cultural violence through the domination of one caste, one religion, one language and one culture, The very process of marginalization or peripheralization, grinding poverty and isolation from lack of transportation, communication and education have indeed helped, on the one hand, to maintain some of the traditional local governance

intact, and on the other hand, many of them were either lost or at the verge of extinction. Mothers' groups are perhaps one of the most universalized traditional voluntary organizations in Nepal. It first started with the Gurungs of Western Nepal (Bhattachan 2002).

Women empowerment, referring to the empowerment of women in society, has become a significant topic of discussion in regards to development and economics. It can also point to approaches regarding other marginalized genders in a particular political or social context. While often interchangeably used, the more comprehensive concept of Gender empowerment refers to people of any gender, stressing the distinction between biological sex and gender as a role. It thereby also refers to other marginalized genders in a particular political or social context. Entire nations, businesses, communities, and groups can benefit from the implementation of programs and policies that adopt the notion of women empowerment. Empowerment is one of the main procedural concerns when addressing human rights and development. (Wikipedia)

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Selection of the Study Site

For the study of this thesis, the Mother's Groups are active in the Sikles village, situated in 'Parche' VDC of Kaski district, lying within the Annapurna Conservation Area which is supposed to be second largest Gurung village of Nepal was taken as the field of thesis study. It is a well-preserved example of traditional Gurung culture. Folk songs and dances are an important part of Gurung life and cultural performances are common occurrences in Sikles. Approximately six Mother's Groups are there in Sikles. As the 'Mother's Groups' of Sikles have played important role in the culture preservation, social development and women's empowerment. I was curious how they are preserving culture, developing their community and empowering themselves. So, this area was selected as my study area.

3.2 Research Design

The research design is descriptive and analytical based on qualitative and quantitative facts. In this research, the available facts have been explained and analyzed by presenting them in documents and photographs as it is required. The qualitative facts have been analyzed accordingly.

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data

Nature: The nature of the data in this research is qualitative primarily. It is quantitative where it is required.

Sources: In this research work, both the primary source and secondary sources have been used as the sources of data. As the primary source, the members of 'Mother's Groups' and experts of this field were visited and interviewed. Similarly, the data published by Government of Nepal and different organizations in different times and places, reports, documents, journals, and books, as well as the articles, books, bulletin etc written by different experts was collected, and analyzed as the secondary sources.

3.4 Data Collection Tools/Techniques

For the purpose of this research study, data collection tools/techniques such as interview, observation, and case study were used to collect information from respondents during the field visit.

3.4.1 Interview

This method is one of the best methods of obtaining information from respondents. In this method, there is direct contact between respondents and researcher to obtain required information from them. Interview has been used as a major tool for data collection. I met with the senior leaders of Mother's Groups and some key informants, and I took an interview and oral history.

3.4.2 Observation

In this research, observation was used as an additional tool for collecting facts. An observation was used to obtain qualitative information. Whenever there was an opportunity I observed the cultural and other programmes organized by Mothers Groups. Their photos were also taken.

3.4.3 Case Study

I participated in the concerned community, area and programs, and met the members of Mothers Group of these community and informed persons; I made case study of some of the participants.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis in this study was qualitative primarily. In this research, the available facts has been explained and analysed by presenting them in documents and photographs as it is required. The qualitative facts has been analysed accordingly.

CHAPTER IV

SETTING

4.1 Background

Sikles village, the southern Gurung settlement of Nepal above the Mardi Khola (1,980m) overlooking Annapurna IV to the north and Annapurna II and Lamjung Himal to the east lying within the Annapurna Conservation Area, is situated in 'Parche' VDC of Kaski district, Gandaki zone of Nepal, it is supposed to be second largest Gurung village of Nepal. Sikles has a climate similar to subtropical type. This type of climate and weather is more suitable for human beings. *Chyeelee* is the actual and old name of Sikles. The priests recite *chyeeleepaehnmae tohwn* and *chyeelee nkgaru*. When the *Kohla* state dissolved, five clans of Gurung directly migrated to Sikles. So the old name that priests recite, *Cheelee Nkgaru*, in Gurung language (Gurung, 2014).

Sikles village is about 5-6 hours distant by vehicle from Pokhara. The village has 24 hours supply of electricity due to the community hydro project service which produces around 100KW of electricity.

The total number of household in Sikles village is 332 with a total population of 1357, which consist of mainly Gurung and small population of so-called Dalits. The female population is 739 and the male is 618. (CBS 2011)

Almost all the people in Sikles are engaged in agriculture, some of the male members of the village join the army for earning and some of the villagers are engaged in home-stay business.

Sikles is a well-preserved example of traditional Gurung culture. Folk songs and dances are an important part of Gurung life and cultural performances are common occurrences in Sikles. Approximately seven Mothers Groups are there in Sikles. The 'Mothers Groups' of Sikles have played important role in the culture preservation, social development and women's empowerment.

We can find secondary school, child day care centre, health post, post office, lodges and home-stay with wireless internet service in the village.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics

4.2.1 Sexual Distribution and Family type

The total number of household in Sikles village is 332 with a total population of 1357, which consist of mainly Gurungs and small population of so-called Dalits. The female population is 739 and the male is 618. (CBS, 2011)

In most houses the family type is joint family which some are nuclear. It shows that the female population is more than the male as seen in the national figure.

4.2.2 Ethnic Composition

The study area is mostly concentrated by the Gurung ethnic group and few so-called Dalits can be found. The Gurung are dominant due to their large size population but the so-called Dalits voices have also been heard recently.

According to the findings of the research the Gurungs and the so-called Dalits have good relationship. They live in the same village but the place of each group's settlement is respectively different. In ward no 6 the mother group is composed of both the groups whereas in other wards they have different mother groups respectively.

4.3 Economic Characteristics

4.3.1 Agriculture and Stock Raising

Almost all the people in Sikles are engaged in agriculture, but they don't have sufficient earnings from it so they are engaged in other areas like army, tourism, trade and so on. Their harvest is sufficient for food but not for commodity in market, so their agriculture style is self sufficient rather than commercialized.

There is sufficient number of grocery shops in the village since it a tourist based area. The local people buys groceries like tea, sugar, salt, biscuits, noodles, tobacco, meat and so on, they also buy stationary items for education materials from the shops.

Maize, wheat, millet and paddy are the major crops. Paddy and wheat is grown in wet land whereas maize and millet are grown in dry land.

Buffalos are preferred more by the villagers for livestock, then goat and cow and sheep and chicken and bull are following in each household.

4.3.2 Land Usage

The village is located in the eastern-north lap of Annapurna II and Lamjung mountain region some places are steep, others are slope and some of the upper part of the village is used for grazing. The people use the concept of terrace farming for cultivation of the crops.

4.3.3 Occupation

Their traditional occupation was based in sheep herding, Trans Himalayan trade and farming. In the 19th and early 20th century, many Gurung were recruited to serve in the British and Indian Gurkha regiments. Today, the Singapore police, Brueni reserve units and the French foreign legion incorporate ethnically Gurung members. While serving in the British army they have earned more than 6 Victoria cross awards, Gurungs are not only restricted to military occupation; many live in urban area and are employed in all types of labour, business and professional services (Wikipedia).

The active population of the area is mostly engaged in farming, rearing live stock. Few of the male members are either engaged in army or in foreign employment. The people are also engaged in local scale industry, they produce local goods like handicrafts made from bamboo, sheep's wool, *allo* and they still use local technology (*dhiki, jato, panighatta* and so on).

The whole village runs the home-stay business in collaboration with different mothers groups, ACAP and different clubs.

4.4 Socio Cultural Characteristics

4.4.1 Language

Gurung people of Sikles speak their own mother language 'Gurung'. Their language is based on Bhot-Barmeli language. New generation fluently speak Nepali and educated Gurung people can also speak English.

4.4.2 Education and Literacy

Education has recently been given importance due to the awareness program of ACAP and establishment of formal school. The older generation have received adult literacy from ACAP and the children receive education from formal schools. We can find one formal secondary school in the village. Almost all the parents send both their sons and daughters for education, discrimination is not seen.

4.4.3 Religion and Practice

Gurung people follow Buddhism. But still there is in practice Bon Religion. Mostly the Gurung people feel proud to say Buddhist to them. They go to *Gumba* and pray to their God Buddha. They follow the Buddhist customs in their social activities. They invite to Lama in their birth ceremony and cremation. Lamas give name to new birth child according to their religious book. Their culture is closely related with Tamang and Sherpa.

Traditionally, Gurung are adherents of Shamanism—known as Bön among communal circles, although there exists significant distinctions with the Tibetan Bön religion. Contemporary Shamanistic rituals such as ancestor and nature veneration, blood offering rituals found in the Gurung faith are no longer practiced by Tibetan Bön. The role of religion among the Gurungs plays an integrated role within their cultural circles. Centuries of cultural influence from Tibet and its northern neighbours—which adopted the Tibetan culture to a heavy extent resulted in many Gurungs gradually embracing Tibetan Buddhism—particularly among Gurungs in the Manang region—over the centuries, particularly the Nyingma School. However, Shamanistic elements among the Gurungs remain strong and most Gurungs often embrace Buddhist and Bön rituals in all communal activities. The influence of Hinduism is also particularly

strong among sections of Gurungs who live among ethnic groups who are more in contact with the mainstream Hindu Nepali culture. Veneration of Hindu, Buddhist and Bön deities are not unheard of among Gurung households (Wikipedia).

4.4.4 Clothing

In the research area, elderly men wear *Topi* on their head, *bhoto* and vest with *bhangraon* the upper half of the body and *kachhar* and belt in the lower part of the body. The elderly women wear scarf on the head, *cholo* on the upper half of the body and *lungi* on the lower part of the body. The new generation prefer to wear western clothes but during local festivals' (*maghimela*) and program they prefer their traditional dress. They prefer to use shoes, sandals or slipper.

The women also wears different ornaments like *dhungri*, *madwari*, *mundri*, *phuli*, *silimundri*, *tilahari*, *bala*, *aunthi*, *kalli*, *chura*, *pothay* and so on. The younger and unmarried females prefer less ornament.

4.4.5 Food

The harvest is sufficient for food but not for commodity in market, so their agriculture style is self sufficient rather than commercialized in Sikles village. The people prefer rice than grains but the principle food is rice and other grains because they can't get sufficient rice from their harvest.

They normally eat twice a day. They have rice and *dhido* with fried vegetables or bean soup and they make *chatini* with tomato or sesame seeds with chilli. They also add butter to their food.

They also take light snacks in the morning and between their dishes. They prefer milk tea and snacks which are easily available in the shops (biscuits, noodles) or seasonal and local food like popcorn, boiled yam or potato. The people get milk from their buffalo and they use the milk as milk, butter or curd or *mahi*.

On the occasion of religious ceremony or festival (*Maghi mela*, *lhosar*) or some kind of events like marriage, birth, gatherings, they make *selroti* which is made from rice flour with butter and sugar. It looks like a doughnut. They also take fruits and meats.

4.4.6 House

The houses found in the area are two-story houses. The lower floor is mostly used as kitchen and the upper floor is used for sleeping and storage. The pen for livestock is normally separated from the main house while some houses have it attached.

The houses are made of stones and then plastered by soil and coloured with white and orange colour, sometimes the stones of the walls can be seen directly if not plastered. The roof of the houses are either made from stones or covered with tin.

CHAPTER 5
WOMEN EMPOWERMENT, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND
PRESERVATION OF CULTURE BY MOTHERS GROUP; A CASE STUDY
OF SIKLES VILLAGE IN PARCHE VDC

5.1 The Origin of Mothers Group and Group Formation in the Study Area

5.1.1 The Origin of Mothers Group of the Study Area

In general, there are three origins of Mothers Group. As said by Indra kumari Gurung of ward no 6, "Firstly, the mothers of ward no 6 sang the song *kachokatar* song in a marriage ceremony and the house members gave some amount of money to them and slowly the mothers started forming a group which sang *Kachokatar* song in various social events and collected funds for community development which was later established formally."

Kachokatar Song:

"Kachokatar nirajale

Ma jaanchhu ramkhola

Roka motor"

"Jaya samjhi sumi ram

Hare bachan garne lai bhulnu hudaina

Bhulyo bhane ke hunchha?

Chaurasima padhne lai bhulnu hudaina"

The other origin can be traced back to the efforts made by ACAP. The third origin can be the imitation of Gurung Mothers group by the so-called Dalit Mothers Group.

5.1.2 Structure, Rules and Regulation of the Mothers Group

Only Lamathar Aama Samuha of Ward no 9 has been registered formally on 2070/11/29 B.S.

According to the copy of the Mothers Group ordinance, the contents are as follows

Objectives

- J) To develop the society economically, socially, physically and culturally according to the need of the villagers by working in different sectors like education, health, communication, infrastructure, tourism and environment management.

Preconditions to achieve the objectives:

1. The objectives should be implemented in action after being approved by the Nepal government.
2. To buy or take land in lease and construct office building.
3. To buy office goods like telephone, computer, fax machine, type writer and so on.
4. To buy or take transportation vehicle in lease.
5. To recruit the needed staff.
6. To open bank account and the circulation of the fund will be through bank.
7. It will collaborate together with local level committees.

Membership can be gained in the following conditions:

1. If the person has Nepalese citizenship.
2. If the person is 16 years and above.
3. If the person has not committed any public offence.
4. If the person is moral and not involved in any criminal activities or corruption.
5. If the person has keen interest in social service.

Membership cannot be gained in the following conditions:

1. If the person is Non Residential Nepali and foreigner
2. If the person is below 16 years.
3. If the person has committed any public offence.
4. If the person is immoral and has been involved in any criminal activities or corruption.
5. If the person has self profit gaining thought from the organization.
6. If the person has not paid membership fee.

Resignation can be gained in the following conditions.

1. The vice president and other members can resign after writing a letter to the President of mothers group and his/ her proposal should be accepted in the meeting.
2. The president has to propose her resignation through vice- president in the committee.

Rights and Duties of the Members

President

-) To hold presidency of committee and meetings and to conduct it.
-) To give conclusive opinion.
-) To take leadership of the organization.
-) To represent the organization or select representatives.
-) To order secretary to conduct meetings and distribute work according to need.
-) To verify the documents.
-) If any work is conducted in their work area without meeting then the work should be presented in the next meeting for approval.

Vice President

-) To assist the President in his duties.
-) To fulfil the duties given by the president.
-) To act as the president in her absence.
-) To fulfil her other duties.

Secretary

-) To look after the overall organization.
-) To conduct meetings as ordered by the president.
-) To keep the documents safe.
-) To fulfil her all duties given by the president.
-) To present proposal in the agreement of the president.

-) To present various papers(recommendation, feedback and decisions) in the committee.

Treasurer

-) To mobilize and look after the organization's fund.
-) To present annual budget and the works done in the AGM.
-) To keep the account stable.
-) To audit the account annually.
-) To withdraw the fund from the account under the approval of the president for any expenses.
-) To look after the goods of office.

Vice- Secretary

-) To look after the overall organization.
-) To work under the secretary's order.
-) To keeps the documents in order.
-) To fulfil all the responsibilities given by the secretary.
-) To work as secretary in his/ her absence.

Member

-) To play an active role in the meetings of the organization.
-) To play a creative role in the organizations activities.
-) To fulfil the responsibilities given by president, committee and general meetings.
-) To present report and clear visions.

5.2 Mothers Groups Financial Circulation

5.2.1 Mothers GroupSource of Income

The source of income for the mothers group is donation given by the visitors or local people. They also collect fund through fine system. They also receive financial

assistance from the VDC and DDC. They also earn money by renting kitchen essentials to the people.

The main source of income for the Mothers Group is the cultural program. They hold such programs to welcome visitors and *Lahures* or during social events (marriage, birth ceremony, *lhosar*, *Maghi Mela* and so on) by holding amusing and enjoyable programs.

5.2.2 Mothers Groups Fund Management

The mothers group also manages their fund. They try to make their fund larger by the following activity:

Management of Loan

The Mothers group provides loan to people who requires it after the agreement of the members. The villagers seek loan for various reasons like medical treatment or business and so on.

Management of Utensils in loan

Mothers group has brought large utensils which are used during gatherings and social events from their fund. They give the utensils on loan, charging certain amount. All the people are charged equally and people who are not members of the Mothers' group can also use this facility.

5.2.3 Mothers Groups Contribution

1. Hindu Temple

The Gurungs also follow Hinduism to some extent. The Mothers group has contributed in making temples in various locations.

2. Bridges

The mother group has constructed small size bridges in the village for easy movement. The bridges has helped to connect ways and made it easier for the locals and visitors to move.

3. Community building

The entire mothers group has created community buildings in their ward for community meetings and events. The establishment of such building has made it easier for the people to be gathered in the building and the call meetings.

4. Rest house

Commonly known as *dharmashala*, it is established with the aim of letting the visitors and passers to take shade and rest for a certain time.

5. Maintenance of public property

The mothers group plays an important role in maintenance of the public property through cleanliness programs and reconstruction of the properties.

6. Drinking water supply

The villagers had problem of carrying drinking water from a distant place but now the mothers group has constructed water taps which is connected with water source and the water is drinkable.

7. Public toilets

With the development of awareness and home-stay business the mothers group has made an effort to improve the sanitation and health of the village. They have constructed toilets in the village area.

8. Donation to various associations

They mothers group also fund and contribute in other sectors like education , health, hydro power, child care and so on, The Mothers group have donated bed to the

community hospital, books to the library. Certain amount for hydro power project, fund to child day care centre and so on.

9.Tree Plantation

The mothers group has planted trees in the area for preservation of land from natural disasters.

10. Managing adult literacy classes

The mothers group assists ACAP for conduction of adult literacy classes.

11. Collection of common utensils

The mothers group has collected utensils for the Communities use. The mothers group has bought utensils which are needed to feed a large number of people and during social gatherings and events. The villagers rent such utensils whenever they have some function or gathering to organize.

12. Stopping Alcoholism and Gambling

Mothers group has also contributed in the area of social reforms. They have restriction in gambling and alcoholism this has helped to manage social problems

5.3 Role of Mothers Group in WomenEmpowerment

5.3.1 Case Study 1

Introduction

Name: Budhi Maya Gurung

Age: 54

Marital Status: Married

District: Kaski

Village: Sikles

Ward No: 7

Education: Informal Education / Literate

Occupation: Farmer

Head of the Family: Wife and Husband

Family members No: 7

Involved Organization: DhaprangtharAamaSamuha

Position in Organization: President

Past Issues

The research participant was facing problems of gender based marginalization. The Nepali society shows that Nepal is a male led and male dominated society. In many aspects we can see the impact of male dominance. Women have started empowering themselves through the formation of their own groups-Mother's Groups in the rural area of Nepal. The research participant could not speak in Nepali. The research participant faced lack of access in decision making in the community. The research participant could not participate or involve in different committees (Hospital/ school management/ Community Forest/ Drinking water and Sanitation Committee). The research participant had Family issues. The research participant was not able to face any situation with confidence. The research participant felt shy even to wear new clothes and to walk around the village wearing it. The research participant was involved only in the household work. The research participant feared walking alone in the village or interacting with new people. The research participant lacked the knowledge of women rights and its importance. The research participant was only known about her village area, she lacked outer knowledge.

Effort made by research participant to empower

The research participant was first involved in *Kachokatar* and started collecting fund through this program. Then the research participant was made to involve in the *AmmaToli/Samuha* and has been working as the president of the organization. Especially the research participant is focused on the Gurung Mother's Groups and attempt to identify the involvement and participation of Mother's Groups in the process of community development at local-level. The research participant has been involved in the Mothers Group for the past 22/ 23 years. The research participant participated in various trainings and awareness programs, the research participant received adult literacy classes organized by ACAP. The research participant also

became members of various local committees (Hospital/ school management/ Community Forest/ Drinking water and Sanitation Committee and so on).

Outcomes

The research participant was able to integrate in her society and with the outer member of the society. The client learned to speak in Nepali language. The research participant has access to decision making along with other females of the society. The opinions and views of the client is heard in the community level after being involved in the Mothers group and empowered. After being empowered the research participant was involved in various committees (Hospital/ school management/ Community Forest/ Drinking water and Sanitation Committee).The research participant has received adult literacy classes organized by ACAP after her involvement in mothers groups. The research participant has seen fewer problems in her family after being empowered. The research participant has access to economic activities. The client's status and work has been given value as of the male members.The research participant has got assistance to solve women violence prevailing in the society.

5.3.2 Case Study 2

Introduction

Name: IndraKumariGurung

Age: 63

Marital Status: Widowed

District: Kaski

Village Sikles

Ward No: 6

Education: Informal Education / Literate

Occupation: Farmer

Head of the Family: Wife

Family members No: 5

Involved Organization: GairhitharAamaSamuha

Position in the organization: General Member

Past Issues

The research participant was facing problems of gender based marginalization. The Nepali society shows that Nepal is a male led and male dominated society. In many aspects we can see the impact of male dominance. The research participant was married at the age of 19 and widowed at the age of 35 and faced discrimination from her community. Women have started empowering themselves through the formation of their own groups-Mothers Groups in the rural area of Nepal. The research participant could not speak in Nepali. The research participant faced lack of access in decision making in the community. The research participant could not participate or involve in different committees (Hospital/ school management/ Community Forest/ Drinking water and Sanitation Committee). The research participant was not able to face any situation with confidence. The client was involved only in the household work only. Lack of access to easily available water. The involvement of the research participant in Mothers group was not taken positively by the male family members and society.

Effort made by research participant to empower

The research participant was first involved in *Kachokatar* and started collecting fund through this program. Then the client was made to involve in the *AmmaToli/ Samuha* and worked as the president of the organization and currently works as the general member. Especially the research participant is focused on the Gurung Mother's Groups and attempt to identify the involvement and participation of Mother's Groups in the process of community development at local-level. The research participant has been involved in the Mothers Group for the past 38 years.

Outcomes

The research participant was able to integrate in her society and with the outer member of the society. The research participant learned to speak in Nepali language. The research participant has access to decision making along with other females of the society. The opinions and views of the research participant is heard in the community level after being involved in the Mothers group and empowered. The research participant has received informal education. The research participant is more

respected and her widow case is not a major problem due to her involvement in the Mothers Group. The research participant is taken as an advisor for general decision making by her community. The research participant has access to economic activities and earning money. The research participant status and work has been given value as of the male members. The research participant's achievement has been published in local newspaper. The research participant has received access to easily available water through construction of community tap. The involvement of the research participant in Mothers group has been taken positively after the funds collected by the mothers group were utilized in community development. Development of skills has been seen in research participant after attending training provided by ACAP. The research participant has understood the importance of bank and its advantages and opened a bank account for savings.

5.3.3 Case Study 3

Introduction

Name: Shova Pariyar

Age: 30

Marital Status: Married

District: Kaski

Village: Sikles

Ward No: 9

Education: Literate

Occupation: Farmer

Head of the Family: Mother

Family members No: 15

Involved Organization: Lamathar Aama Samuha

Position in Organization: General Member

Past Issues

The research participant was discriminated on the basis of her caste and gender by other members of the society. The research participant also faced gender based discrimination with her own caste. The research Participant faced domestic violence.

The research participant had no access to public and community property. The research participant was not called in community level meetings and programs.

Effort made by research participant to empower

The research participant became member of the Mothers group where she got the opportunity to participate in various programs and trainings which helped to empower her. The research participant got involved in various community development work and committees. The research participant got aware about women rights.

Outcomes

The research participant is facing less amount of discrimination on the basis of her caste and gender. The research participant has been able to attend various training and programs of the community organized by the Mothers Group and ACAP. The research participant has been freed from domestic violence. The research participant has access to community and public property. The research participant and other so-called Dalits are now informed about various community level meetings and programs. The research participant feels attached and responsible towards her community development. The research participant has we-feeling even with other group members of the community.

5.4 Roles of Mothers Group in Community Development

Ward no 5

Sabhathar Aama Samuha

The mothers group has constructed foot trails for easy access to ways and for the safety of the people. The mothers group organize cleanliness programs where they clean the foot trails and other public property. They have created various community building (*samaj ghar*), *dharmashala*, *chautara* for people to rest. They have also contributed for water supply facility in their ward by creating public tap. They annually provide donation to the child day care centre.

We-feeling towards their community members can be seen after being involved in the mothers group which has helped to create a healthy and cooperative scenario, the people assist each other during the time of need. The mothers group has helped to alleviate the prejudice attitude towards the so-called Dailt groups.

The mothers group has bought utensils, chairs and tables for community gatherings and social events, so local people can utilize them in times of need by renting them for certain amount.

Ward no 6

Gairhithar Aama Samuha

The mothers group has constructed foot trails for easy access to ways and for the safety of the people. The mothers group organize cleanliness programs where they clean the foot trails and other public property. They have created various community building, bridges, *dharmashala*, *chautara* for people to rest. The mothers group has planted samplings in the area for forestation and to prevent from landslides.

The women of the ward had to walk for 2-3 hours daily to reach the water source before, seeing this mothers group contributed for water supply facility in their ward by providing water in everyone's homes. The easy availability of the water has made it easier for the ward to keep their area, toilets and them self clean. This has helped in sanitation of the ward and in the personal hygiene of the people. The mothers group has also created public toilets. They annually provide donation to the child day care centre.

The mothers group plays a major role in the home-stay business. They welcome the guests, perform cultural shows, take cares of the guest during their stay in the village and give a proper farewell to them.

The mothers group has also contributed in the area of security and justice, the mother group has created fine system for vegetable thieves in the area. After this fine system the villagers has seen decrement in the number of stolen vegetables. The thief is fined Rs 1500, Rs 500 is given to the victim, Rs. 500 goes in the mothers' group fund and Rs. 500 for the informer.

The mothers group has also solved social problems like gambling. The mothers group has made a certain criteria/ condition for gambling. (3 days in *Dashain*. 2 days in *Tihar*, 2 days in *Maghe sakranti* and so on). The mothers groups aware the local people about various issues in various days like Women's day through dramas, programs and so on.

The mothers group has helped in negotiating various conflicts among neighbours, husband and wife, family and so on through counselling and table talks.

The mothers group actively seek for proper health facilities, supplies of medicine and good doctor for their local health post from headquarters.

Ward No 7

Dhaprangthar Aama Samuha

The mothers group employs the male members of the village for the construction of public property. They annually provide donation to the child day care centre. The mothers group has constructed foot trails for easy access to ways and for the safety of the people. They have created community building for various community level programs, meetings and gatherings. They have also reconstructed a dress changing room near the temples water tap which has made it easier for people to change their clothes before and after their bath. The local people usually take bath before doing *puja* in the temple.

Ward no 8

Harputhar Aama Samuha

They have created various community building, bridges, *dharmashala, chautara* for people to rest. The mothers group organize cleanliness programs where they clean the foot trails, the whole ward and other public property. The mothers group has also prevented youth from being involved in drug addiction, gambling and drinking. This has led to fewer amounts to dispute among them. They continuously maintain the public property (bridges, public taps, foot trails and so on).

They donate Rs 100 to the child day centre after each and every fund collected from cultural program i.e. *Kachokatar*. They annually donate Rs 5000 to them.

The mothers group has bought utensils for community gatherings and social events, so local people can utilize them in times of need by renting them for certain amount.

Ward no 9

Lamathar Aama Samuha

The mothers group has constructed foot trails for easy access to ways and for the safety of the people. The mothers group organize cleanliness programs where they clean the foot trails, the whole ward and other public property. They annually donate Rs 5000 to the child day centre

They have created various community building, *dharmashala*, *chautara* for people to rest.

5.5 The Relationship within Mothers Group, Between Mothers Group and Between Mothers Group and Society

Within Mothers group

We can find harmonious relationship between the members of mothers group. In ward no 9 we can find some so-called Dalits in the Mothers group, they seems less discrimination within the mothers group. There is trust and reliability among the members.

Between Mothers group

In Sikles village, we can find mothers groups on ward wise and one mothers group is made in collaboration of the entire ward wise mothers group. As said by research participant, The people of Sikles village has made different mothers group because firstly the other community organization(Community Forest, Drinking Water Supply Group and so on) are made ward wise, secondly the area of the Sikles village is large and it is difficult to organize meeting, there is more attachment towards their own

ward which increases the efficiency of the mothers group when it is based on ward, the understanding and cooperation among the same ward people is more.

The ward wise Mothers group has sound relationship among them since they are from the same area and most of them are Gurungs and most importantly their objective is to develop the overall Sikles village, to promote their home-stay business and preserve their culture and tradition.

Between Mothers group and Society

In the past the mothers group were not looked positively but when the mothers group started contributing their fund for community development then we can see shift in the attitude of the society.

Today we can find good relationship among the mothers group and the society. The society members respond positively and support the mothers group through volunteering in various community development works, gatherings and meetings.

5.6 Roles of Mothers Group in Preservation of Culture

The mothers group aware the local and the youth about the importance of preservation of their own language. They emphasize the children to speak in their own language rather than Nepali but they also make sure that the children understand Nepali language since it is the national language. With the flow of dish televisions in the area, the children are speaking in Hindi language due to the influence of Hindi Channels, it is also one of the major concerns of Mothers group.

The mothers group sews *bhangra* for the males, which has also helped to preserve their cultural dress; similarly they give importance to their own cultural dresses and ornaments during any programs or social events.

The mothers group has active participation in the home-stay business, they promote and follow their culture while welcoming the guests in their own dress, they provide Gurung authentic foods, and the cultural programs are all related to Gurung community. In this way we can see there is heavy influence of Gurung culture in the home-stay business, which has helped to preserve the Gurungs culture.

5.7 Their Problems

Education

Most of the members of the mothers group have attained adult literacy classes, few are educated and some are illiterate. The lack of educated members in the mothers group has created problem. Due to their lack of education, the mothers group has problem in documentation and accounting the affairs of the mothers group. This creates problem in future reference and transparency of the fund.

The members who are uneducated have low self esteem and this causes problem in their leadership ability. They feel they don't have the capacity to lead.

Leadership

Leadership is both a research area and a practical skill encompassing the ability of an individual or organization to "lead" or guide other individuals, teams, or entire organizations. (Wikipedia) Some of the members of the mother's group still lack the ability rise up and take responsibility. As said by some of the research participant, it is difficult for mother's group to choose the executive members since many of them still lack leadership qualities. Though they have membership in various community level organization but they don't stand as nominee for election which shows their lack of self esteem.

Discrimination

We can find caste based discrimination to a certain extent in the whole village. Except ward no 9 we do not find the so-called Dalits involvement in the Gurung Mothers group, this shows there is some tension between Gurung and so-called Dalit. The so-called Dalit are marginalized in social events and gatherings. They are discriminated even today due to their strict rules in their religious practices and by blindly following their passed down tradition. In some cases the discrimination seems more of a habit. The lack of education, awareness and prejudice attitude in most of the Gurung people of Sikles has contributed in the discrimination.

The discrimination has slowed down the community development and we-feeling among all the villagers, which can be seen as one of the problem.

Discrimination depends on the individual basis rather than ethnic background.

Cooperation with So-called Dalit Mothers groups

In Sikles village we can find two types of Mother's group, Gurung Mothers Group and so-called Dalits Mothers group. The cooperation of the two groups has some problems due to the discrimination. The discrimination has acted as a catalyst in creating misunderstanding among the groups.

The lack of cooperation among them has caused problem in unity and progress of the community.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

In Nepal, we can find various traditional local self-governances of different caste and ethnic groups. These organizations are made for the development of the communities groups or an area. Mothers group is also an organization which works for the welfare, progress and development of women residing in a particular group, area or community.

The total number of household in Sikles village is 332 with a total population of 1357, which consist of mainly Gurung and small population of so-called Dalits. The female population is 739 and the male is 618. (CBS 2011)

In Sikles village, we can find mothers groups on ward wise and one mothers group is made in collaboration of the entire ward wise mothers group. The Mothers group activities are related to women empowerment, community development and preservation of culture.

After being involved in the mothers group women have been empowered. They had felt significant changes in their decision-making capabilities, there self esteem has been increased and they have been involved in various community level organization. Empowered women family's condition is improved, their social, political awareness.

Mothers group plays a vital role in the overall development of the community. Mothers Group has developed community through construction of infrastructure like constructing trails, temples, resting places and so on. Today we can find mothers group with collaboration of other agencies are shifting their focus from infrastructure development to social reform, nowadays.

The mothers group of Sikles village has contributed in women empowerment, community development and preservation of culture.

6.2 Conclusion

Nepal is a multicultural and multiethnic country. It has a diverse ancient cultural heritage. The population of Nepalese is estimated to be 26,494,504 people based on the 2011 Nepal census. Total population of Gurung people of Nepal is 522,641. This is 1.9 % of total population.

In Sikles village, we can find mothers groups on ward wise and one mothers group is made in collaboration of the entire ward wise mothers group. The people of Sikles village has made different mothers group because firstly the other community organization (Community Forest, Drinking Water Supply Group and so on) are made ward wise, secondly the area of the Sikles village is large and it is difficult to organize meeting, there is more attachment towards their own ward which increases the efficiency of the mothers group when it is based on ward, the understanding and cooperation among the same ward people is more.

History of Mothers group in Sikles

There is no written history about the Mothers' groups' establishment and formation in Sikles village of the early times. Most of the mothers group are running informally but the Lamathar Aama Samuha of ward no 9 was formally established in 2070/11/29, rest of the mothers group are in the process of being registered.

Women Empowerment

After being involved in the organization the women were able to integrate in the society and with the outer member. The integration has lead to involvement in the community level organization and empowerment of the women. The women are able to make decision regarding their body, private property, family issues, community and so on. The opinions and the views of the women are being heard now after their involvement in the mothers group. Their status and work value has increased. There has been development of skills after their involvement in the trainings provided by the mothers' group and other organization. The women have been literate through adult literacy classes organized in collaboration of the ACAP. This has lead to improvement in the education sector of the village. The involvement in the mothers

group has led to less amount of gender-based discrimination in the village. The so-called dalit women have seen less amount of violence from their family after their involvement in the mothers group. The women are aware about women rights and this has helped in maintaining the status of women and justice in the society.

The women have got access to economic activities and their income this has led to their empowerment. The women have access to their land, decision making rights in their private property and utilization of their own income.

After the involvement in Mothers group the women have been active in other community level organization like Drinking Water Supply Management Committee, School Management Committee, Hospital Management Committee and so on. The presence of at least one woman in any organization is given thought of. The women have also been involved in local government level election. The women have been socially, economically and politically empowered after their involvement in the mothers' group.

Community Development

The mothers group gained popularity and positive response among the society after its fund was utilized for community development. The mothers group has helped in construction and development of infrastructure and social reforms.

The mothers group has constructed foot trails for easy access to ways and for the safety of the people. They have organized cleanliness programs where they clean the foot trails and other public property. They have created various community building, *dharmashala*, *chautara*, temples, bridges and so on. They continuously maintain the public property (bridges, public taps, foot trails and so on).

They have also contributed for water supply facility in their village by constructing public tap. The women of the village had to walk for 2-3 hours daily to reach the water source before, seeing the mothers group contributed for water supply facility in their village. They have been able to use their time in productive areas. The easy availability of the water has made it easier for the village to keep their area, toilets and

them self clean. This has helped in sanitation of the ward and in the personal hygiene of the people. The mothers group has also created public toilets.

We-feeling towards their community members can be seen after being involved in the mothers group which has helped to create a healthy and cooperative scenario, the people assist each other during the time of need. The mothers group has helped to alleviate the prejudice attitude towards the so-called Dailt groups.

The mothers group has also prevented youth from being involved in drug addiction, gambling and drinking. The mothers group has made a certain criteria/condition for gambling. (3 days in *Dashain*. 2 days in *Tihar*, 2 days in *Maghe sakranti* and so on). The mothers groups aware the local people about various issues in various days like Women's day through dramas, programs and so on. This has led to fewer amounts to dispute among them.

The mothers group has also contributed in the area of security and justice, the mother group has created fine system for vegetable thieves in the area. After this fine system the villagers has seen decrement in the number of stolen vegetables. The thief is fined Rs 1500, Rs. 500 is given to the victim, and Rs. 500 goes in the Mothers group fund and Rs. 500 for the informer. The mothers group has played role in providing justice to women in the society, in the past many young girls were left after having physical relationship before marriages and not taking responsibilities, the female's life were in distress due to it. The mothers group has helped to provide some form of justice or relief to them by fining the boy or by making them marry the girls. This issue has been lessened lately.

The mothers group has bought utensils, chairs and tables for community gatherings and social events, so local people can utilize them in times of need by renting them for certain amount.

They annually provide donation to the child day care centre. They have donated books, furniture and desk in the school and library. They have donated in beds in the hospital and donated in construction of hydro power project and school building. Similarly they donate in other organization. This shows the mothers group has helped in community development through construction of infrastructure and social reforms.

Preservation of Culture

The mothers group is linked directly with the preservation of the ethnic culture. The mothers group has active participation in the home-stay business, they promote and follow their culture while welcoming the guests in their own dress, they provide Gurung authentic foods, and the cultural programs are all related to Gurung community. In this way we can see there is heavy influence of Gurung culture in the home-stay business, which has helped to preserve the Gurungs culture.

The mothers group sews *bhangra* for the males, which has also helped to preserve their cultural dress; similarly they give importance to their own cultural dresses and ornaments during any programs or social events.

The mothers group aware the local and the youth about the importance of preservation of their own language. They emphasize the children to speak in their own language rather than Nepali but they also make sure that the children understand Nepali language since it is the national language. With the flow of dish televisions in the area, the children are speaking in Hindi language due to the influence of Hindi Channels, it is also one of the major concerns of Mothers group.

In conclusion, the mothers group of Sikles has played a role in women empowerment, community development and preservation of culture.

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APPENDIX-I

Sabhathar Aama Samuha

Parche VDC-5

1. Nou Maya Gurung
2. Hom Kumari Gurung
3. Rosh Maya Gurung
4. Purna Gurung
5. Bhoj Maya Gurung
6. Dil Maya Gurung
7. Tulasi Gurung
8. Chyona Gurung
9. Sapana B.K.
10. Indrasuwa B.K
11. Aash Maya B.K.
12. Men Bahadur Gurung
13. Yam Prasad Gurung
14. Tilak Gurung
15. Dil Prasad B.K.

Gairhithar Aama Samuha

Parche VDC-6

1. Lilsuwa Gurung
2. Reshmi Gurung
3. Khu Maya Gurung
4. Indra Kumari Gurung
5. Haisuwa Gurung
6. Kul Devi Gurung
7. Mensuwa Gurung
8. Bir Maya Gurung
9. Tulsuwa Gurung
10. Shir Maya Gurung

11. Dil Maya Gurung
12. Padamsuwa Gurung
13. Hum Gurung
14. Tul Bahadur Gurung
15. Tul Bahadur Gurung

Dhaprangthar Aama Samuha

Parche VDC -7

1. Buddhi Maya Gurung
2. Gesuwa Gurung
3. Piu Maya Gurung
4. Lalshree Gurung
5. Laxmi Gurung
6. Harikala Gurung
7. Dil Maya Gurung
8. Kumari Gurung
9. Suk Maya B.K.
10. Indra Kumari B.K.
11. Lal Maya B.K.
12. Peu Maya B.K.
13. Dambar Sing Gurung
14. Ruplal Gurung
15. Kumar B.K.

Harputhar Aama Samuha

Parche VDC-8

1. Om Kumari Gurung
2. Tasi Maya Gurung
3. Sun Maya Gurung
4. Sanda Kaunre Gurung
5. Nou Maya Gurung

6. Tirtha Maya Gurung
7. Aesuwa Gurung
8. Apekshya Gurung
9. Kamala Gurung
10. Bishnu Gurung
11. Indra Kumari Gurung
12. Aash Maya Gurung
13. Sul Kumari B.K.
14. Bhadra Sing Gurung
15. Dhan Bahadur Gurung

Lamathar Aama Samuha

Parche VDC-9

1. Santoshi Gurung
2. Bishnu Kumari Gurung
3. Mensuwa Gurung
4. Kalam Suwa Gurung
5. Goma Devi Gurung
6. Sun Maya Gurung
7. Buddhi Maya Gurung
8. Aati Gurung
9. Sobha Pariyar
10. Sangita B.K.
11. Bal Sing Pariyar
12. Bhim Raj Gurung
13. Purna Bahadur Gurung
14. Pas Bahadur Gurung
15. Kuman Sing Gurung

APPENDIX-II
QUESTIONNAIRE

Interview Questions for Mother's Group Members

Background Information:

Name:

Age:

Occupation:

Education:

Head of the Family:

Marital Status:

Family members No:

Involved Organization:

Position in Organization:

Head of the Household:

1. Is there Mothers' group in your village?
2. Are member of any Mothers' group? (If no, go to Q 5)
3. How long did you involve in mothers group?
4. Why did you get involved in Mothers group?
 - A. self -motivation
 - B. Family suggestion
 - C. External pressure
5. Why didn't you involve in Mothers group?
6. From whom and when did you know about Mothers group at the first?
7. How many Mothers groups are there in your village?
8. Why didn't you make single group?
9. In which Mothers group are you involve and why?
10. Are there any criteria to get membership in Mothers group?
 - A. Married-unmarried
 - B. Rich- poor
 - C. Gurung- so-called Dalit
11. Are there any so-called Dalit women members in Mothers group?
12. If yes, how is their role in group?

If no, why didn't they involve?

13. Is the impact of mothers groups towards so-called Dalit women positive or negative?
14. Where mothers group was first established?
15. Where was mothers group first formed before it was established in your village?
16. Where do you think mothers group was first established?
17. With what objectives was the mothers group first established in your village?
18. In what sectors are the mothers group involved and what are their major activities?
19. In your opinion, in which sector is the mothers group successful to make an impact?
20. What kind of impact has mothers group made in the society and culture?
21. How do the women, men and the whole society who is not involved in the mothers group perceive them?
22. Has the women of your society faced any discrimination in festivals, markets, health posts, social and religious practices due to her gender?
23. Can the women of your village roam securely in the village?
24. Who decides to sell or buy private property (land, cattle's, jewelleries and so on) in your family?
25. Who decides the children's education and the whole family member's health checkups?
26. Who makes decision related to the agriculture? (Q. No 27-33 for women only)
27. Has the family members included you in deciding the above mentioned situations?
28. Has your family members taken your consent while buying/selling private property?
29. Do you keep the income of your family?
30. Are you allowed to keep and spend your income by yourself?
31. Do you have any land, jewelleries, saving account and so on in your name?
32. In which program of mothers group have you been involved?
33. Have you been involved in any other social activities organized by other organization?
34. Through what process is the Mothers group committee formed?

35. How does the mothers group collect their fund?
36. What kind of problem arises during the programs?
37. How do you solve them?
38. Do the men play any role in solving such problems?
39. Are you satisfied with the community women's involvement in the mothers group?
40. What kind of role does the mothers group play in social unity?
41. Has the mother group organized any program related to skill-development, awareness or women empowerment?
42. In the past has the women of your society faced any women violence?
43. If yes, then what kind of steps has the mothers group taken to provide them with justice?
44. Is any member of mothers group involved in any other community level organization?
45. Has any member of mother group ever been nominated for local government?
46. Has the mothers group made any request for developmental programs to the VDC/ DDC?
47. What are the contributions made by the mothers group up to now?
48. If the women are provided with equal opportunity in education, health facilities, skill development trainings then do you think they will be capable of taking in charge as much as a men?
49. In your opinion what is women empowerment?
50. To what extent are you aware about women rights?
51. In your opinion, do you feel mothers group has played a major role in women rights by providing access in employment, skill development, vocational trainings, education, land use, good health and so on?
52. Do you think the women of your society needs as much as rights as the men? If yes then why? If no then why?
53. Do you feel Mothers group attempts have lessened women violence and increased women rights, their involvement and status?
54. Do you feel the women who are involved in mothers group have increased her self confidence and leadership then the past?
55. Have you seen any social and cultural empowerment in women who were not social and shy in the past, after being involved in the mothers group?

56. How aware and organized have the women been after being involved in the mothers group?
57. Have the women been politically and economically empowered after being involved in the mothers group?
58. Has the mothers group helped in making women self independent? If yes, then how?
59. In the development activities carried out by the mothers group, do you find the involvement of both men and women?
60. What roles has the mothers group played in the preservation of mothertongue, clothes and ornaments, and culture and tradition?
61. What attempts and programs has the mothers group organized to preserve their ethnic traditions?
62. After being involved in the mothers group, have the women who didn't wear their own cultural dress and ornaments start wearing it?
63. What are the roles of mother groups in birth, death, marriage ceremony, gatherings, social events and festivals?
64. Do you find the mother group involved in community development, women empowerment and preservation of culture or only for entertainment after being involved in the mothers group?
65. Has the women gained any trainings after her involvement in the mothers group?
66. After being involved in the mother group have the women who did not listen to radio start listening to it, have the women who did not vote in the election started voting and the illiterate become literate?
67. Before and after the involvement in the mother group what changes have you found in the relationship of women with their family, relatives and society?
68. Has the women faced any problems due to her involvement in the mothers group?
69. Is mothers group important for your society? If yes, then Why? If no. then why?
70. What are the future plans of the mothers group? (For members only)
71. Sometimes, do you find any conflicts between mothers group?

Photographs



