

Women's Empowerment through Aama Samuha (Mothers' Group)
(A case study of Hanshpusha VDC, Sunsari District)

A presentation by
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Introduction

This study has been carried out in Hanshpusha VDC, Sunsari district. The central theme of this study is to assess the role of Aama Samuha (Mothers' Group) for empowerment of women and social development.

We all know the old saying that "male and female are two wheels of cart". If we take society as a cart, the role of women in social development is crucial that results in national development as a whole, until women are socially mobilized in our traditional patriarchal society, their participation in different social activities remains nominal. The participation of women in social activities cannot be assured until the attitude of our male dominated society towards their participation in social activities is taken positively.

The census 2001 shows 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 (1,15,87,501) is occupied by the population of Nepal. 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 whether in villages or cities. The life of most women is a struggle against the odds. Women lack self- confidence in their own inherent skills because they are deprived of opportunities in all area of life. If given the chance women will be able to lead with confidence.

Women's empowerment is the process of generating and building capabilities of women to exercise and control over one's own life. It is understood to mean the ability of women to make choices to improve their well being and that of their families and communities. According to the USAID Nepal. Women's empowerment as defined by the rural Nepali women is a complex set of conditions, being knowledgeable 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 on own feet in the development sectors empowerment of the women are more pronounced as it is the key of women's social, cultural, economic and political development and sustainable growth of the nation.

Mother's 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 pograms initiated by various NGOs in rural Nepal since 1980s.

The very patriarchal culture has restricted women and bounded them inside the four walls of the house. The man is the head of the family and its breadwinner, while the women is the procreator and housekeeper. Women are assigned to perform household activities like cooking, washing, cattle rearing and looking after the children. As mentioned earlier, it is men in particular kind of society who ensure, construct reinforce and perpetuate the social structure due to the underlying patriarchy and by virtue of this power and control over women, feminists particularly those who held a radical position in feminism and affirmed that "personal is political" argued strongly that violence against women in necessarily neither a women's issue, nor a feminist one. It is an outcome of patriarchy: therefore it is a men's Issue (Mishra 2003: 26). In rural villages women have started empowering themselves through the formation of their own groups-Mother's Group (Aama Samuha). Such groups seem to be playing important role for women's empowerment. Establishment of mothers Group at local level has at least united women for their common goal of increasing their participation in community development. However, such groups arenot getting proper support and guidance from the government and community itself. This study has been carried out to answer the following research questions:

- * What is the role of Aama Samuha (Mother's Group) for empowerment of women and social development?
- * What are the problems faced by women working in such groups?
- * Is there positive attitude of male and female towards such groups?
- * What implications do such groups make for empowerment of women?

Objectives

The general objective of this study was to find out the role of mothers group for empowerment of women. Moreover, the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To assess the role of Aama Samuha (Mother's Group) for empowerment of women and social development.
2. To find out different types of problems faced by women working in such groups.
3. To identify the attitude of both male and female towards the empowerment of women through Aama Samuha.

Rational of the Study

Social exclusion is a process and a state that prevents individual or group from full participation in social, economic and political life and from asserting their rights. It derives from exclusionary relationship based on power (DFID, 2005).

Empowerment of women has been a topic discussed at length in recent times and many strategies have been implemented to address enhance women's condition. The present study is expected to the actual situation of women, before and after joining in mothers group. It has tried to explore how the women are being empowered by formation of the mothers group programs. This study has been equally important for the prospective researchers in the areas of women's issue and their mobilization of society and provide a valid picture and ground reality of women's participation in social activities.

Limitation of the Study

This study is an academic research conducted as a partial fulfillment of a degree in M.A. sociology. Women Empowerment framework (WEF) has been used as a theoretical framework for the particular study. Women empowerment is defined in terms of whether it addresses women's issues as defined in the framework. However, these issues of equality between men and women must be the concern of both women and men.

Literature Review

Various literatures related to present study have been reviewed in order to seek the overall status of Nepalese women, origin of MG, characteristic of MG, and MG in the communist development and the notion of empowerment and so that I could draw logical conclusion.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research design of the study includes both exploratory and descriptive research. Descriptive design has been adopted to describe the prevalent condition of women in the research area while exploratory has been conducted to the role of women empowerment and social development through mothers group.

Selection of the Study Area

The study was conducted in Hanshposha Village Development committee (VDC) of Sunsari district. It has heterogeneous community of diverse culture. It is 15 kilometer north-east of the district headquarter Inaruwa. The study area was an appropriate place for the study of the role of mothers group for empowerment of women and social development because Hanshposha mothers group has been working for more, than 10 years there. The field has been chosen purposively because of researcher familiarity of formation of MG in that VDC.

Sampling

Hanshposha mothers group was the universe of this study. It has 300 women members, who are directly involved in different activities conducted by MG. Most of those activities are like formation of women group (Saving and credit groups), women empowerment and mobilization, leadership development, income generation activities training, social activities manage literacy classes and so on. Therefore, the total number 300 were universe of the study, 90 women's (30% sampling) were selected adopting random sampling for the study. Furthermore, researcher has selected 10 males especially fathers to check their attitudes towards such group and 15 mothers, who were not directly involved in such groups on the basis on snowball sampling.

Nature and Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data were utilized for this study, primary data has been collected through field survey, interview schedule, focused group discussion (FGD). Case studies and key informant interviews for selected MG members, non-members female and male. The secondary data collected through published and unpublished literature Journals, NGOs/INGOs reports, web-sites, research report and other relevant literatures. The primary data helped to collect general information and secondary data helped to understand the subject matter historically. Both the quantitative and qualitative techniques were used for the data collection. quantitative information were gathered through field survey and qualitative information were collected through personal interview and focused group discussion.

Tools of Data Collection

Survey Questionnaire

A self of questionnaire was prepared for the survey of mothers group in Hanshposha VDC. Open ended as well as close ended questions were prepared. Those questions focused on the socio-economic, educational background, age group, religion and caste/ethnic composition of women working in mothers group. It also focused on the information about the women empowerment programs and social activities conducted by MG in society.

Interviews

The researcher conducted both structured and unstructured interview. The interview was focused mainly on empowerment of women through mothers group, problems faced by the members of MG, while working in the group, attitude of both males and females toward mothers group and role of mothers group in social development.

Focused Group Discussion (FGD)

Altogether three focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions were conducted among MG Members and villagers, teachers, and social workers. The FGD was centered on the role of mothers group for women empowerment and social activities. It also focused on communication skill of women's while participating in social activities.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Collected data was processed and tabulated during the completion of the study. Both qualitative and quantitative data were presented and interpreted. The data was broadly categorized according to the research objectives. The data were analyzed and interpreted in a systematic way, mainly characterizing in various headings and sub-headings to meet the objectives of the study. To illustrate the research work table and figures were manually used for data presentation. Some statistical tools such as ratio, percentage and average were used to analyze the data.

Summary

Mothers group is only the organization of women where 100 percent participants are women especially mother and they must run the organization themselves. Therefore, MG is the only place, where mothers make decisions themselves. Mothers group has played a vital role for empowerment of women and social development. Women empowerment program especially focuses on women issues, opportunities, responsibility, authority, value and equity in the social formation.

Hanshposha mothers group had launched programs such as literacy advocacy, organizational skill enhancement training, vocational training, tailoring, leadership training, beautician training etc focusing on mothers inner as well as their organizational capability enhancement, productivity, efficiency, social awareness and economic upliftment, which plays the vital role in their empowerment. The researcher has found various changes on mother's status and

attitude after involvement in MG, MG programs change the mother's various aspect like decision making, skill development, economic independence, increase in mobility, change in social, political and psychological situation. MG has provided platform to mothers for exercising organizational norms, values and skills which has enhanced their level of confidence to deal with other people. As a result, 70 percent mothers have felt positive change in the attitude of family members towards them after their involvement in MG. And 33 percent mothers have felt positive change in the attitude of the neighbors towards them.

Mothers Group of Hanshposha has contributed much in social development like cleaning trails, making road, plantation on public area, financial support to local school, and construction of building for temples, financial support to helpless people and poor people and maintaining peace and harmony in the community. They have initiated door-to-door campaign for making local people aware of good sanitation around home and making toilet. As a result, nearly 90 percent of the toiletless family built temporary toilets. There is increment of self motivated women's participation in various social institution like school management committee, drinking water supply management committee, forest users group, road construction committee, temple construction committee etc. Saving and credit groups were organized to increase the scope of income generating activities and help women gain access to family credit.

MG members are facing various problems like internal dispute among members, lack of creativity and innovative activities in the group, frequent influence over the group by the few dominant mothers, lack of sufficient guidance from social leaders, lack of networking with other women related organization, lack of sufficient financial resource, lack of education, inter-MG networking and low level of self encouragement of the mothers because of lack of family members encouragement to get involved in mothers group.

In response to how they regarded the mothers' effort to empower themselves through MG, males said that it was positive change in the attitude of mothers. 40 percent non-members mother were found dissatisfied with the existing MG in their community and 60 percent non member mothers were found satisfied with the social activities carried out by MG in their community.

Conclusion

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. MGs 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.

Mothers group members are actively involved in antiliquor campaign and fight against atrocities on women etc. MG members are interviewed about their group activities and changes in the living standards of the members. The various factors like income generated from group activity income from other sources, family assets, family size, savings and repayment of the loans are taken into consideration to find out the changes in the living standards of the MG members. These factors are treated for the purpose of the study as indicators of economic empowerment. The social aspect of the group activities was taken for study. The social aspects of the MG activities like, training, management of group, functioning social activities and financial support etc. are studied by deriving the data about the number of group meeting attended and about the formation of the group etc for the purpose of the study as indicators of social empowerment.

After getting involved in MG, mothers were able to defend social evils and male domination against women. It was a great change in their perspective, attitude, authority, prestige, knowledge, ability and social relationship and training program had helped in building self-confidence among the members. The caste and ethnic group have equal participation in executive committee members and general members of mothers group of Hanshposha. However, all the mothers had not progressed at same level mothers from nuclear family were much empowered than the mothers' from joint families. One of the important conclusions of the study was that the MG activities have been helping the poor women in economic and social development. The capacity of women leaders to communicate with other women was seen as an important factor in helping the development of women. Conclusively, through the different activities of mothers group the involved members have gained confidence and this had led them to the path of empowerment.

CHAPTER - ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

We all know the old saying that "male and female are two wheels of cart". If we take society as a cart, the role of women in social development is crucial that results in national development as a whole, until women are socially mobilized in our traditional patriarchal society, their participation in different social activities remains nominal. The participation of women in social activities cannot be assured until the attitude of our male dominated society towards their participation in social activities is taken positively.

In Nepal, the status of women in different sectors is miserable in comparison to that of man. The status of women in rural areas is rather upsetting. Women are still victimized by the discrimination, violence, prejudice and inferiority complex because of male domination in different sectors and levels. It has been clear that women's empowerment in society is still nominal. They are not given opportunity in different decisions making activities that makes women's participation in different sectors less important.

The census 2001 shows 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 (1,15,87,501) is occupied by the population of Nepal. 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 whether in villages or cities. The life of most women is a struggle against the odds. Women lack self- confidence in their own inherent skills because they are deprived of opportunities in all area of life. If given the chance women will be able to lead with confidence.

Considering the important role of women in national development the government of Nepal included policies to promote women's contribution to national development in the sixth five-year plan (1981-1985) for the first time. Since 1981, there has been a gradual shift in policy and development such that welfare has become an issue of equity and antipoverty is empowerment. The policies and programs of the government

for women, children and social welfare are guided by the constitution of the kingdom of Nepal (1990) the CEDAW convention; BPFA, tenth plan (2003-2007), other bilateral and multilateral agreements and conventions (CRC, Stockholm and Yokohama convention on commercial sexual exploitation of women and children, the 82 and 138 ILO conventions. UNGASS declaration and the SAARC convention on preventing acts and regulations of Nepal. Realizing the need for a separate ministry to deal with the issues of women and social welfare, the government formed the ministry of women and social welfare in 1995. In 2000 it was renamed the ministry of women, children and social welfare (MWSCW).

Women's empowerment is the process of generating and building capabilities of women to exercise and control over one's own life. It is understood to mean the ability of women to make choices to improve their well being and that of their families and communities. According to the USAID Nepal. Women's empowerment as defined by the rural Nepali women is a complex set of conditions, being knowledgeable, 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 on their own feet in the development sectors empowerment of the women are more pronounced as it is the key of women's social, cultural, economic and political development and sustainable growth of the nation. 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.

Mother's Group is a universalized traditional volunteer women's organization in Nepal initiated from the 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 convene meetings, discussions and small programs initiated by various NGOs in rural Nepal since the 1980s.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Nepal, most of the rural areas are poverty-ridden. Due to women's low status in comparison to males, it is women and girls who bear the brunt of the hunger, which will certainly have an impact on their health and well being.

The very patriarchal culture has restricted women and bounded them inside the four walls of the house. The man is the head of the family and its breadwinner, while the woman is the procreator and housekeeper. Women are assigned to perform household activities like cooking, washing, cattle rearing and looking after the children. As mentioned earlier, it is men in particular kind of society who ensure, construct reinforce and perpetuate the social structure due to the underlying patriarchy and by virtue of this power and control over women, feminists particularly those who held a radical position in feminism and affirmed that "personal is political" argued strongly that "violence against women is necessarily neither a women's issue, nor a feminist one. It is an outcome of patriarchy: therefore it is a men's Issue" (Mishra 2009: 26).

Nepali women are not often seen public life. Their voice are not heard, their work is not valued and their future depends upon the decision made by the male of family, government and communities. They perform food production tasks, house-hold and child caring tasks and carry fuel and water for the family. Women's participation in income generating tasks from house is very low in Nepal. The work done by women in household care and their contribution in agriculture are not considered as economic activity and thus, remain unreported. Women therefore, find themselves as powerless citizens, women's living standards are very low. Many women cannot carry out a decision on their own. Male family members continue to guide women even the energetic and educated women cannot do their work without assistance and guidance of their male guardians. It is the perception that must be changed in Nepal to empower in the work force.

According to Human Development Report, 2007, Nepal's Human Development Index (HDI) is 142 out of 177 countries. Although Nepal is making continuous progress in its HDI, it still lags behind all South Asian Countries. Similarly, the report shows that gender inequality is high in the country. In Gender-related development Index (GDI), Nepal ranks 134. Similarly, Nepal's HDI of 0.534 is below the regional average of south Asia and substantially below the average of HDI for all developing countries. The government is making its efforts to achieve almost all millennium development goals by 2015. Among them, promoting gender equality and empowering women is one of the goals that the government is targeting to achieve by 2015. Women are still lagging behind in society. Although women's empowerment is society remains unseen, in rural villages women have started empowering themselves through the

formation of their own groups-Mother's Group (Aama Samuha). Such groups seem to be playing important role for women's empowerment. Establishment of mothers Group at local level has at least united women for their common goal of increasing their participation in community development. However, such groups arenot getting proper support and guidance from the government and community itself. This study has been carried out to answer the following research questions:

- * What is the role of Aama Samuha (Mother's Group) for empowerment of women and social development?
- * What are the problems faced by women working in such groups?
- * Is there positive attitude of male and female towards such groups?
- * What implications do such groups make for empowerment of women?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Women of rural areas are making self-efforts to empowering themselves through the formation of Mothers' group (MG) at local level.

The general objective of this study was to find out the role of mothers group for empowerment of women. Moreover, the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To assess the role of Aama Samuha (Mother's Group) for empowerment of women and social development.
2. To find out different types of problems faced by women working in such groups.
3. To identify the attitude of both male and female towards the empowerment of women through Aama Samuha.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

Women's Empowerment Framework (WEF) developed by Sarah Longwe in 1991 has been applied for the purpose of the present study. This framework has been used to assess the extent of empowerment of women, through Aama Samuha (Mother's Group).

Longwe used this framework to help one think through what women's empowerment and equality means in practice. Women's empowerment as defined by Longwe is to enable women to take an equal place with men and to participate equally in the development process in order to achieve control over the factors of production on an equal basis with men. Longwe argues that poverty arises not from (lack of poverty) but from oppression and exploitation.

After the Beijing conference (1995) the issues related to women focused on empowerment, gender equality and mainstreaming of women, many NGO, INGOs have also turned their attention towards such striking issues of women. UNDP (2000) reports that altogether 481 organizations are working in women service only in Nepal.

Women's empowerment approach brings out changes by mobilizing women to become aware of their own traditional subordinate roles and taking action for strengthening women's self confidence. This is an indicator for the rise of women's self-esteem and increased capacity to interact with world beyond the domestic circle (Acharya 1978: 38) women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision making process and access to power are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace (Beijing Declaration cited in Hyppju 2005: 20)

According to MC Whirter (1991), The process by which people, organizations, or groups who are powerless; (a) become 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 others; (d) supports the empowerment of others in the community.

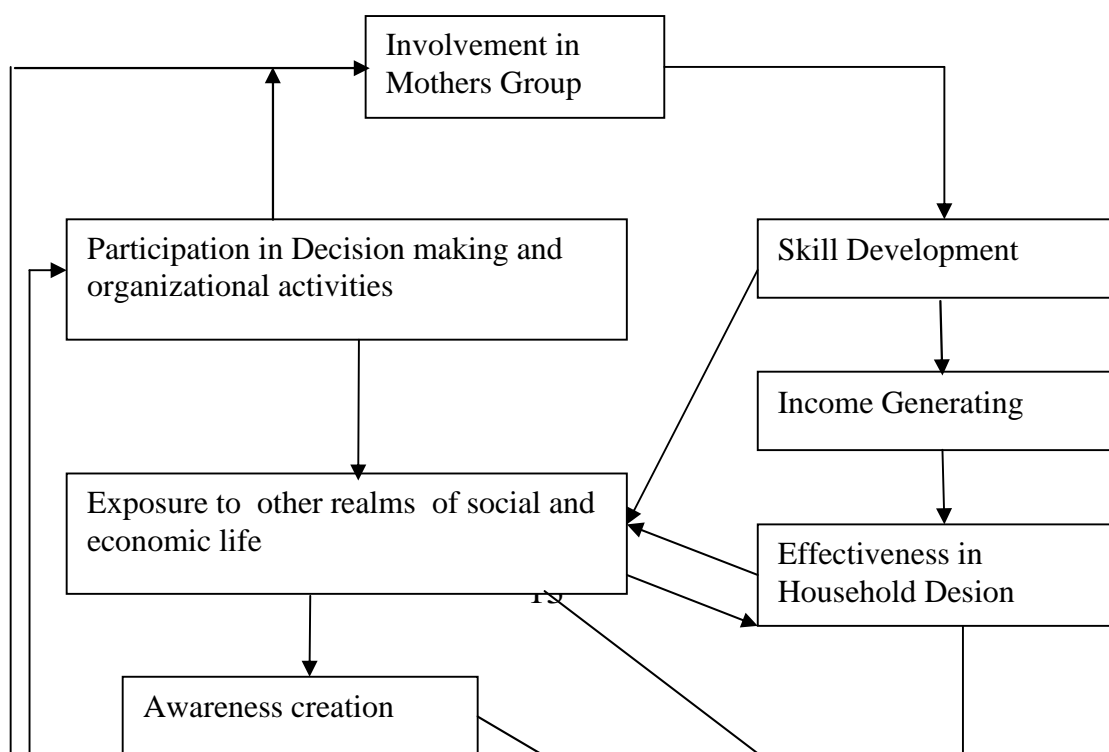
1.5 Conceptual Framework

Mothers' Group have played a vital role in the field of women's empowerment, social activities and social awareness rising of mothers in terms of primary health care, child care, nutrition, sanitation around home, family planning, changing traditional concepts regarding child care and child birth, child education and women's education, and in increment of self motivated women's participation in various social institutions like road construction committee, Temple construction committee, school management committee, forest users' group, drinking water committee etc.

In the research area, mothers group has been functioning for women's empowerment and social development. For the empowerment of women, mothers group has managed many skill development programs, income generating programs, literacy programs etc. which helped them to make independent. In case of economic development of participant women's, MG has managed and provided loan for income generating activities that has helped them (to) make economically independent. Result of their training and economic growth has made them empowered. They have become capable of decision-making, Self-dependent, participation in social, political and development programs.

After getting involved in mothers Group, they have made them socialize in present society, technology that has helped them solving their problem the awareness creation of women has helped them and their family for household decisions making, social welfare, self opinion. From different result, involvement in mothers group has made them empowered in society. This makes the position of women as men in the society as shown in the diagram below.

Figure No. 1
Conceptual Framework



1.6 Rationale of the Study

Social exclusion is a process and a state that prevents individual or group from full participation in social, economic and political life and from asserting their rights. It derives from exclusionary relationship based on power (DFID, 2005).

Empowerment of women has been a topic discussed at length in recent times and many strategies have been implemented to address enhance women's condition. The present study is expected to the actual situation of women, before and after joining in mothers group. It has tried to explore how the women are being empowered by formation of the mothers group programs. This study has been equally important for the prospective researchers in the areas of women's issue and their mobilization of society and provide a valid picture and ground reality of women's participation in social activities.

Thus, the findings of the study would be useful for national policy maker, other women organization, NGOs/INGOs and other relevant field in the sense that it has reflected how it is important to promote the legacy of forming such groups for active participation of women in social activities, which ultimately increases the awareness of women in every aspects of country for national building.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

This study is an academic research conducted as a partial fulfillment of a degree in M.A. sociology. Women Empowerment framework (WEF) has been used as a theoretical framework for the particular study. Women empowerment is defined in terms of whether it addresses women's issues as defined in the framework. However, these issues of equality between men and women must be the concern of both women and men.

Due to various constraints of time and cost, I could explore the role of mothers group for women empowerment and social development in the research area. Likewise, the study is only limited to Hanshposha VDC of Sunsari district. The sample size of the study includes 90 (mothers) MG member, 10 male and 15 non-member mothers.

CHAPTER-TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overall Status of Nepalese Women

According to the united Nations (1975) "Status of women may be defined as to what do women, compared with men have access to knowledge, to economic resources and political power".

The binary opposition between men and women construct two antithetical sets of characters that position men as superior and women as inferior. This scheme includes dichotomies between rational/emotional, assertive/passive, strong/weak, or public/private. These are strategic oppositions which place men in the superior position of a hierarchy and women in the inferior position, as the second sex (Best and Kellner, 1991). Wherever women are subordinate, and they have been subordinated almost always and everywhere, they seem to have recognized and protested that situation in some form (Learner, 1993).

Nepalese women are deprived and discriminated in every nook and corners at individual family, society and national level. Women are subordinated and oppressed. They have less access to productive assets. The land, property and credit. They have been deprived of modern education, health, training, household resources and technology. As a result they are lagging behind in every sector of development. Women have inequal position with men at work. They are mainly employed in low grade, low paid jobs. They also have less career building opportunities than males because of gender stereotyping at school and the socializing process. Family is the first institution and school is the second, that plays a vital role in child socialization. Women in Nepal, still have less access to decision-making level because they are less educated. The census of 2001 shows 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 is occupied by the population of women.

According to a preliminary report of "census 2001" presented by central Bureau of Statistics, women outnumber men by over 25 thousand (cited in TKP, 2002). As elsewhere, women in Nepal hold the tripple responsibility of reproduction, production and community work. (Moser, 1993)

In general, educated women have higher status in the society and the family size becomes smaller as the education level of the mother rises indeed women's education is low in Nepal and the lowest in SAARC (Word Bank, 2004).

According to a study carried out by "stri shakti" in 1995, it has stated that women work for 10.9 hours per day as compared to men's input of 7.8 hours a difference of 3.1 hours. The study also depicts that there is an increase in male-control over decision-making (61.7 percent) and a corresponding lessening influence of women 29 percent over these decisions.

After marriage Nepalese women lose their identity. Without the consent of her husband even a single and simple decision is unexpected. A man can do everything: play cards whole day in the teashop, visits the liquor shop or be 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. However, a women 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).

Marriage is an important social indicator of women's status in the country. Women have little option for survival other than marriage. Culturally, marriage and children are supposed to be the ultimate goals of women. More than 86 percent of women are married at the age of below 25 (Acharya, 1995). Marriage limits women within her household boundary where his foremost duty would be to please her in-laws and to secure her future life (Luintel, 2000)

According to Acharya 2008, even the social and political leaders have not yet freed themselves from male dominant thoughts. Although LSGA has provision of 20% and 30% women representation in local self- governance and all types of users' groups, district and local level politicians and community leaders show little commitment to addressing gender issues. She further says that the provision for committees and representation in the committees under VDC/DDC do not ensure women's equal

representation as an integral part of the system, although it is ensured in the political representation in DDCs and VCDs. The representation of women in various LSG institutions is too low- less than 2% in district councils and less than 10% generally in LSG executive bodies-which is not efficient because they nominated by male.

Nepalese women are one of the most socially and culturally vulnerable groups exposed to discriminations at home due to patriarchal structure to exclusions in the working place due to deficiency in the literacy and skills and marginalization in the decision making process due to lack of executive and polity experience, non-affirmative actions from government and constitutional flaws (Adhikari, 2000).

The government of Nepal has addressed the issues related to women since its sixth five-year plan. Women in Development (WID) approach addresses the miseries of women to enhance their access to economic resources and thereby uplift their socio-economic status and their participation in decision-making in governmental, semi-governmental and private sectors during sixth, seventh, and eight plans. Several WID related institutions like, Ministry of Women and Social Welfare a division in National planning commission and Women Development Division in Ministry of local Development were established during that period to make special provisions for women. Ninth plan also adopted the policy of mainstreaming, eliminating gender inequality, and empowerment as the main concern for women to involve women actively in various development fields, to increase women's access to political, economical and social sectors and promulgate legal reforms to ensure women's equal rights.

Women's work outside the home is just an extension of their work in the family. A large number of women work as kindergarten and primary school teacher or nurses and airhostess jobs which entail authority, power and control are considered men's jobs and jobs that involves caring, nurturing, servicing are seen as women's job. They are subservient at home and continued to be subservient outside in Nepal the post of legislators, senior officials and managers hold by male includes 48713 while only the 7822 female hold the given post. Similarly the male professional includes the number of 186788 where as the female professional includes the number of 5687 only (population census, 2001: 198). The table 2 shows educational attainment by sex in Nepal.

Table No. 1
Educational Attainment by Sex in Nepal

S.N.	Completed levels of education	Male	Female
1.	SLC and equivalent	598941(71.89%)	234146(28.11%)
2.	Certificate level and equivalent	379816(76.16%)	118906(23.84%)
3.	Graduate and equivalent	223856(80.76%)	53344(19.24%)
4.	Post Graduate and equivalent	62853(84.41%)	11608(15.59%)

Source: Population census 2001:144

Women receive little schooling because their lives revolve around the home. Table No. 1 illustrates how extensively females are discriminated in education. Women, until recent years, were less likely to have completed higher education. Even if they receive college degrees, they are more likely to major in fields that pay less well. The hegemony of male over the creation of knowledge has marginalized the women's knowledge and experiences, their expertise, aspirations. Men have dashingly controlled the whole areas of knowledge, philosophy, literature, laws, arts, science and others.

Even in the 21st century Nepalese women are suffering not only from social, economic and political discrimination but also from state-made laws. Women are deprived from providing citizenship to their children and spouse. Even after its commitment to CEDAW and other international treaties including the Beijing Declaration, it has not been able to amend or repeal laws to incorporate concept of equality. His Majesty's Government has introduced the *Mulukin Ain* (country Code/Eleventh Amendment) Bill, 2056 in Parliament in pursuance of a directive order to His Majesty's Government issued by the Supreme Court to introduce the bill based on the concept of equality in the writs filed before it for repeal of discriminatory laws. According to Human Rights Organizations the Bill has not fully incorporated the principle of equality. Violation of women's human rights are taking place not only in public but also in private places.

2.2 Origin of Mother's Groups

Mother's group is perhaps one of the most universalized traditional voluntary organizations in Nepal. It first started with the Gurung's 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 decades. Gurung women formed mother's group to sing, dance and organize cultural activities in the evening one of the most interesting activities they performs is to welcome returnee Lahures and guest visitors. The lahures (returnee British or India army men) and guest visitors donate money to the Aama Samuha. Aama Samuha usually organize singing and dancing programs in the evening and collected money is used to build trials temples etc. Many NGOs/INGOs have formed and promoted Aama Samuha across the country among different caste and ethnic groups. The Aama Sumuha of Bahun-chettri caste have very aggressively raised anti-alcohol movement in the villages. (Gurung 1999).

According to Ganesh Gurung, (1994), before the discussion of mother group, it would be helpful to take a note the "Rodi" a social cultural institution prevalent for centuries among the Gurung of Nepal. "Rodi" (Traditional a centre for weaving and knitting the garment dress--the off-agricultural season) is a place where young boys and girls could entertain themselves by singing and dancing but on the changing perspective of Nepal "Rodi" has been losing its importance and it has been replaced by another creative institution called the "mother groups" The mother groups has been emerging in Nepal mainly in Gurung Villages and Annapurna Conservation area as it has been encouraged by the project.

Some literatures show that Rodi, a socio-cultural tradition of Gurung community, as the origin of MG. Rodi was a place for knitting and weaving a place for young Gurung boys and girls where they could entertain by singing and dancing at night. As the time passed "Rodi" lost its cultural importance gradually and it was replaced by creative institution called MG. (Gurung, 1998). But okamura, 1999 doesnt agree the fact that Rodi is the origin of MG. She presents another description about the origin of mothers groups. According to her, MG as a program was first introduced as mother's club during international women's Year in 1975. The objective of the program was to enhance mother's social and economic status. The social services, National Co-ordination council initiated it. The activities of mothers' club consisted of family planning, health, education, and income generation, social and economic development of mothers. The concept of mothers' club changed into mothers group and got popularity as the ministry of Health. Others organizations a adopted the concept

widely and began to form mothers' group of both service delivery as well as women's development.

According to Gurung, 1998 MG started form Gurung community of Gandaki Zone. Annapurna conservation Area project (ACAP) has important role to begin MG.

Gurung (1998) has provided following rationales for the emergence of the MG:

- * Women can also do developmental works.
- * Women are not united till MG is formed.
- * To improve the condition of village.
- * To fight against discrimination to women and mobilize women for development.
- * To make women actively participate in community development
- * To conduct planned work for the community development.
- * To develop self- confidence, activate and raise awareness in women.

2.3 Characteristics of Mothers' Groups

Sharma (1997) points outs that there are two types of MG: (a). Induced and (b). Self-initiated on the basis of her study in Parbat district. Induced MG means a group of women who were motivated to form a group either by men folk or youths of their communities or by some external organizations to fulfill the latter's objective. Self-initiated MG, on the other hand means those groups where members were inspired to form the group either seeing the activities of other similar groups or hearing about them through other people or through radio, newspaper, etc. In this type of group, mothers themselves select the members after holding intensive discussions with the group. She has listed out following characteristics of mother group.

- * Either self-initiated or induced
- * Organize locally and work according to group decision and through participatory process.
- * Plan and implement activities independently.
- * Collect and mobilize resources their own.
- * Not totally dependent on external support of daily survival.
- * Benefit members through own efforts and help members in need.
- * Build on existing knowledge, system and capacity.

- * Have no direct affiliation with any political parties.
- * Transparent in their organization, financial and managerial affairs.
- * Not fully capable, qualified and financially sound but have a high potential for improving their condition and qualifications.
- * Work mostly on social reform and community infrastructure development.

Sharma, (1997) says that mothers' groups, historically, were exclusive to the Gurung community. But in recent years, they have evolved as an organization of all castes and ethnicity residing in particular area.

2.4 Mothers' Groups in the Community Development

The activities of mother groups are implemented for community development. Such activities have played crucial role to empower women and helped in community development (Gurung 1994 cited in Okanmura, 1999) has pointed out following contributions of MGs in Sayangja district .

- * Construction and repairing of village trails and their surroundings.
- * Construction of Buddhist monasteries and temples.
- * Construction of toilets.
- * Plantation of trees in public lands.
- * Assisting in the construction of school building and furniture.
- * Managing literary classes.

Gurung (1998) has mentioned the following functions of mothers' Groups in the community:

- * Construction and maintenance of road and trails.
- * Cleaning up the trails
- * Tree plantation.
- * Collection of common utensils.
- * Construction of temple, resting places and monastery
- * Stopping alcoholism and gambling.
- * Establishment of child care centre.

Literature have shown that MGs are evolving and modifying their objectives and goals according to the changing local needs. Initially they started their contribution with community and infrastructure development but now they focus more on social

reforms such as discouraging alcoholism, gambling and other social evils (Sharma, 1997).

2.5 The Notion of Empowerment

"Empowerment" is a word widely used but seldom defined long before the word became popular, women were speaking about gaining control over their lives, and participating in the decisions that affect them in home, community, in government and international development policies. The word 'Empowerment', captures this sense of gaining control over their lives, participating and decision making. Recently, the word has entered the vocabulary of development particularly in the case of women development.

Empowerment is a comprehensive process, and is not, therefore, something that can be given to people. The process of empowerment is both individual and collective since it is through involvement in groups that people most often begin to develop the awareness and the ability to organize to take action and bring about change.

At a workshop of pacific women entitled "Women Development and Empowerment" Vanessa Griffen ¹⁷ spoke about what empowerment means to her "To me the word simply means adding to women's power -To me power means:

- * Having control or gaining further control;
- * Having a say and being listened to;
- * Being able to define and create from a women's perspective
- * Being able to influence social choices and decisions affecting the whole society (not just areas of society accepted as women's place.
- * Being recognized and respected as equal citizens and human beings with a contribution to make.
- * Power means being able to make a contribution at all levels of society and not just in the home. Power also means having women's contribution recognized and valued.

In short, empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building to greater decision making power and control resulting in transformative action.

Empowerment emerged as an important theme in the women's movement for 1975 onwards. In fact, empowerment as a theme arose out of a failure of "Women in Development" (WID) programs, notably the equity approach all of which failed to question the interrelationship between power and development. According to Moser (1993), empowerment approach developed out of dissatisfaction with the original WID as equity approach, because of its perceived co-option into the anti-poverty and efficiency approach.

Empowerment as defined Nepal rural women is a complex set of conditions, being knowledgeable, skilled, confident, having the ability and willingness to share time and skills, able to speak in public, earn money and generally being able to stand on your own feet. ... rural women unanimously agree that economic opportunities and literacy are critical to their becoming empowered. They do not fully comprehend, however, the causal relationship between their problems and their limited knowledge of their legal and political rights (Thomas and Shrestha, 1998).

The empowerment approach according to Moser (1993) also puts emphasis on the importance of women increasing their power. It envisages identifying powerlessness in terms of domination over others, more in terms of capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and strength. This is identified as the right to make choices in life and to influence the direction of change through the ability to gain control over crucial materials and non-material resources. Batliwala (1994) also discusses the term power while dealing with empowerment where she sees empowerment as a manifestation of balance of power in terms of resource distribution and change in ideology or ways of thinking.

Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality on spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access equality, development and place (Beijing Declaration, cited in OCED-DAC, 1998).

Empowerment is the process of gaining control over the self, over ideology and the resources, which determine power. To empower women, they need adequate social and economic facilities, employment opportunities, and access to property and wealth, marketing as well as changing the division of labor. Nepalese women need social and economic support from the governmental and non-governmental sectors to achieve

women's empowerment. In her book "Gender Equality and Empowerment" Acharya (1997) viewed the process of empowerment in the context of Nepal as:

- * Increasing women's access to economic opportunities and resources (employment, credit, wealth, technology and non-economic resources, such as education, knowledge and health)
- * Increasing women's political power through women's organizations, solidarity and collective actions (political will and ability to bring about changes in women's legal status to direct resources to women give the access to positions of power)
- * Rising women's consciousness about the symptoms and causes of prevalent oppressive religious, economic, cultural, familial and legal practices.
- * Strengthening women's self-confidence (An indicator for this is the rise of women's self-esteem and increase capacity to interact with world beyond the domestic circle)

In economic empowerment, economic power is considered the basic source of all other kinds of power in society. Batliwala (1954) notes that women's low status is seen to stem from their lack of access and control over economic resources, resulting in dependence and lack of decision-making power. Batliwala (1994), views women's economic powerlessness deriving from a combination of following factors.

- * Gender discrimination, which prevents women from acquiring the education and more remunerative skill, which could make them economically independent.
- * The traditionally socially sanctioned restriction of women to low- skilled and low paid work.
- * Women's lack of access of credit.
- * The "invisibility" and unpaid nature of much of women's work.
- * The majority of women being in the "inorganized" or "informal" sector of the economy, where they are socially and economically vulnerable.

Studies regarding "women's Role in Economic Development' Boserup, E. 1970) revealed that women have often been victims of development programs rather than beneficiaries. Many development programs that were assumed to benefit everybody really benefited men only and negative effects not only on women but on the whole community. The high rate of failure of government's development programs and

policies is attributable at least in part to neglect or lack of knowledge of women's productive roles.

Women empowerment means "the idea that giving women power over their economic, social and reproductive choices which will raise their status promote development and reduce population growth". Women empowerment can be viewed as a continuum of components:

- * Awareness building about women's situation discrimination, and rights and opportunities as a set towards gender equality. Collective awareness building provides a sense of group identity and power of working as a group.
- * Capacity building and skills development, especially the ability to plan make decision organize, manage and carry out activities to deal with people and institutions in the world around them.
- * Participation and greater control and decision making power in the home, community, and society
- * Action to bring about greater equality between men and women. (Rao and Kumari, 2005: 24-25)

2.6 Women Empowerment Measure (WEM) in Nepal

Women empowerment measures proposed in HDR, 1995 attempted to see the females deprived of opportunities of rights from a different perspective, the types and the quantity of women participation in economic, political and commercial field has been considered as the indicator of women empowerment by WEM. The conning of this measure is based on the overall participation of women in these three fields.

Income has not been taken as the means of fundamental Human capacity achievement rather it is considered as the source of economic strength by the women empowerment measures. The ratio of women in administrative, managerial and commercial sectors indicates the access and participation in economic-decision making process of women in occupational opportunities. In the like manner, the ratio of women in cabinet indicates the access and political decision making process of women in political opportunities. (Nepal Human Development Report, 1998).

Table No: 2

Women Empowerment Measure in Nepal by Region

Name	Seats	in	female	Female	Women's	Women
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	parliament held by women (%)	administrators and managers (%)	profession and technical work (%)	real GDI per capita PPPS (%)	Empowerment measure (WEM)
Nepal	3.41	9.30	15.06	17.38	0.191
Development Region					
East	0.88	5.21	12.69	22.26	0.125
Central	0.59	10.47	19.76	15.12	0.182
Western	0.83	11.38	14.14	18.41	0.159
Mid-western	0.52	5.51	10.42	16.40	0.109
Far -western	0.19	3.20	8.26	17.61	0.076

Source: CBS, 1991, 1996 election commission.

There is least achievement in three-fold dimension of women participation. There is more gender inequality in political, economic and occupational participation in Himal and Terai than in Hilly region. These sorts of inequalities especially persist in far western development region and mid-western development region in intensified form.

CHAPTER - THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design of the study includes both exploratory and descriptive research. Descriptive design has been adopted to describe the prevalent condition of women in the research area while exploratory has been conducted to the role of women empowerment and social development through mothers group in the research area.

3.2 Selection of the Study Area

The study was conducted in Hanshposha Village Development committee (VDC) of Sunsari district. It has heterogeneous community of diverse culture. It is 15 kilometer north-east of the district headquarter Inaruwa. The study area was an appropriate place for the study of the role of mothers group for empowerment of women and social development because Hanshposha mothers group has been working for more, than 10 years there. The field has been chosen purposively because of researcher familiarity of formation of MG in that VDC.

3.3 Sampling

Hanshposha mothers group was the universe of this study. It has 300 women members, who are directly involved in different activities conducted by MG. Most of those activities are like formation of women group (Saving and credit groups), women empowerment and mobilization, leadership development, income generation activities training, social activities manage literacy classes and so on. Therefore, the total number 300 were universe of the study, 90 women's (30% sampling) were selected adopting purposive simple random sampling for the study. Furthermore, researcher has selected 10 males especially fathers to check their attitudes towards such group and 15 mothers, who were not directly involved in such groups on the basis on snowball sampling.

3.4 Nature and Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data were utilized for this study, primary data has been collected through field survey, interview schedule, focused group discussion (FGD). Case studies and key informant interviews for selected MG members, non-members female and male. The secondary data collected through published and unpublished

literature Journals, NGOs/INGOs reports, web-sites, research report and other relevant literatures. The primary data helped to collect general information and secondary data helped to understand the subject matter historically. Both the quantitative and qualitative techniques were used for the data collection. quantitative information were gathered through field survey and qualitative information were collected through personal interview and focused group discussion.

3.5 Tools of Data Collection

3.5.1 Survey Questionnaire

A self of questionnaire was prepared for the survey of mothers group in Hanshposha VDC. Open ended as well as close ended questions were prepared. Those questions focused on the socio-economic, educational background, age group, religion and caste/ethnic composition of women working in mothers group. It also focused on the information about the women empowerment programs and social activities conducted by MG in society.

3.5.2 Interviews

The researcher conducted both structured and unstructured interview. The interview was focused mainly on empowerment of women through mothers group, problems faced by the members of MG, while working in the group, attitude of both males and females toward mothers group and role of mothers group in social development.

3.5.3 Focused Group Discussion (FGD)

Altogether three focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions were conducted among MG Members and villagers, teachers, and social workers. The FGD was centered on the role of mothers group for women empowerment and social activities. It also focused on communication skill of women's while participating in social activities.

3.5.4 Key Informant Interview

The key informant Interviews was taken with Kamala Khadka, the chair person of mothers group and others executive committee members of mothers groups, social worker, social mobilizer, local teacher and was also conducted with VDC chairperson, (Bhesh Raj Koirala), Sanjeep Khadka and Ram Parshad B.K (Chairperson of Dalit aayog of the VDC)

3.5.5 Case Study

Case study is taken to draw the real experience of the respondents who are working in mothers group. The study had collected six case studies.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Collected data was processed and tabulated during the completion of the study. Both qualitative and quantitative data were presented and interpreted. The data was broadly categorized according to the research objectives. The data were analyzed and interpreted in a systematic way, mainly characterizing in various headings and sub-headings to meet the objectives of the study. To illustrate the research work table and figures were manually used for data presentation. Some statistical tools such as ratio, percentage and average were used to analyze the data.

3.7 Definition of Key Terms

Empowerment: 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. (Longwe, Sara)

Gender: Gender refers to the socio-cultural definition of mind and women: the way societies distinguish men and women and assign them social roles.

Mobilization: A process in which an individual or a group is activated or motivated for action or service and to get organized to achieve specific objectives through group work. (Social mobilization manual, 2058, Neapl government, ministry of local development)

CHAPTER -FOUR

THE SETTING AND BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENTS

4.1 General Topography of Nepal

Nepal is a mountainous and agricultural country. It is surrounded by India to its east west and south and China is in the north. It covers 1,47,181 sq. km. its east-west length is 885 km and north-south an average of 193 km it is one of the land locked countries of Asia. It cover 0.03% in the world and 0.3 percent in Asia. Out of its total coverage Himala covers 15 percent of the land Hill covers 68 percent and Terai covers about 17 percent of the land.

4.1.1 Introduction of Sunsari District

Sunsari is one of the important districts of Koshi zone of east Nepal. It covers the area of 1,257 Sq Km and has a population (as of 2001 census of 625,633).The area was original part of Morang but became its own district in 1962 when Nepal was divided into 14 zones and 75 districts. there are 49 VDCs and 3 municipalities, Dharan, Itahari and Inaruwa, Tarahara and Duhabi are the major town in Sunsari district.

4.1.2 Introduction of Hanshposha VDC

Hanshposha VDC lies in Sunsari district and in CA election constituency no. 2. To the west there lies Baklauri VDC. Charkoshe Jhadi is to the north and Pakali and Ekamba VDC are to the south. To reach the VDC office we have to walk 3 km towards Sourth-west from Tarahara Bazzar, also, we can reach VDC office from Laipur chowk of Mahindra highway by walking 3 km north. It is believed that since many ducks are kept, the village is named" Hanshposha". Some years ago, the population of Tharu were maximum. But, due to migration from hilly area, the percentage of Tharu is decreasing now.

4.1.2.1 Population composition

Hanshposha VDC has total population of 19027, male population is 9011 and female is 10016. Female population is higher than male because of the higher birth rate of female children. It has 3367 households (VDC program household Survey 2060 B.S.)

4.1.2.2 Education

Education in the largest sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character, or physical ability of an individual. In its technical sense, education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills, and values from one generation to another.

The literacy rate of the VDC exceeds 65 percent. In it, there is one higher secondary school, two secondary, two lower secondary and two primary schools. The students of this area go to Dharan, Itahari, Biratnager for higher education. Educational status of people in that VDC is followed below.

Table No. 3
Education Status of Hanshposha VDC

Education Background	Total	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	6633	34.9
Literate	10279	54
S.L.C.	991	5.2
Higher Education	1124	5.9
Total	19,027	100

Source: VDC program, Household Survey 2060 B.S.

The table no. 3 shows the educational status of the Hanshposha VDC. It is found from the table that 54 percent are literate. 34.9 percent have not got education, 5.9 percent have got higher education and 5.2 percent have got education of S.L.C. level.

4.1.2.3 Economic

There is decline in the agriculture as occupation. The land is getting sold. People are engaged in cattle farming, dairy production and trade. Himal katha industry, Herbs production and refine centre, Kamdhenu Diary Co-operative limited are some of the large scale industries of the area. Some of the organizations like Miteri Development Bank, Pathivara Development Bank, Shanti Janakalyan Co-operative limited, Lord Buddha co-operative limited, Aama Saving and Credit Co-operative Limited are assisting in various economic activities.

Table No. 4
Occupation of Hanshposha VDC

Occupation	Total	Percent (%)
Agriculture	1281	20.1
Business	494	7.7

Services	3784	59.2
Foreign employment	828	13
Total	6387	100

Source: VDC program household survey 2060 B.S.

The table no.4 shows the occupation of the Hanshposha VDC. It shows that out of 6387, majority 59.2 percent are found to engaged in service, 20.1 percent are involved in agriculture, 13 percent are involved in foreign employment and, a few of them 7.7 percent are involved in business.

It has one sub-health post. The VDC building is in the alien place thereby it is not so safe. The building had caught fire in 2067 Baisakh. So, the new building for VDC office is under construction.

4.2 Mothers' Group of Hanshposha

Hanshposha mothers' group has been formed with self initiation of mothers'. This group was established by the help and active participation of 17 women in 2057 B.S. The main objective for the establishment of this group was to take action against those who trouble women due to excessive drinking and gambling and to establish good society eradicating women violence. Their successful operation around the area made them interested to establish group to contribute their effort on social development rather than killing time by doing nothing. In the beginning of the group formation there were 17 members who contributed their time and effort for the social work. Later, the success of the operation dragged the attention of the other women made them loyal to the group, and formed 300 members in the group.

Since establishment, this mothers group has been focusing its programme especially for the women, children and development of society. It has also been launching various technical and skillful training time to time for women empowerment. Moreover, for the financial empowerment of women, the group has established "Aama Saving and Credit co-operation Ltd." and conducting it successfully since Srawan of 2066 B.S. At present 300 members are in this group and more than 300 women are the share members of this "Aama Saving and Credit Co-operative Ltd.

4.2.1 Organizational Structure of Mothers Group

This group of women has their own strategy and process of work. MG has -11-member executive committee, the members are selected through the consensus among

the members. The executive committee comprises of chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, treasurer and members, which is elaborated in the following figure.

Figure No. 2
Organizational Structure

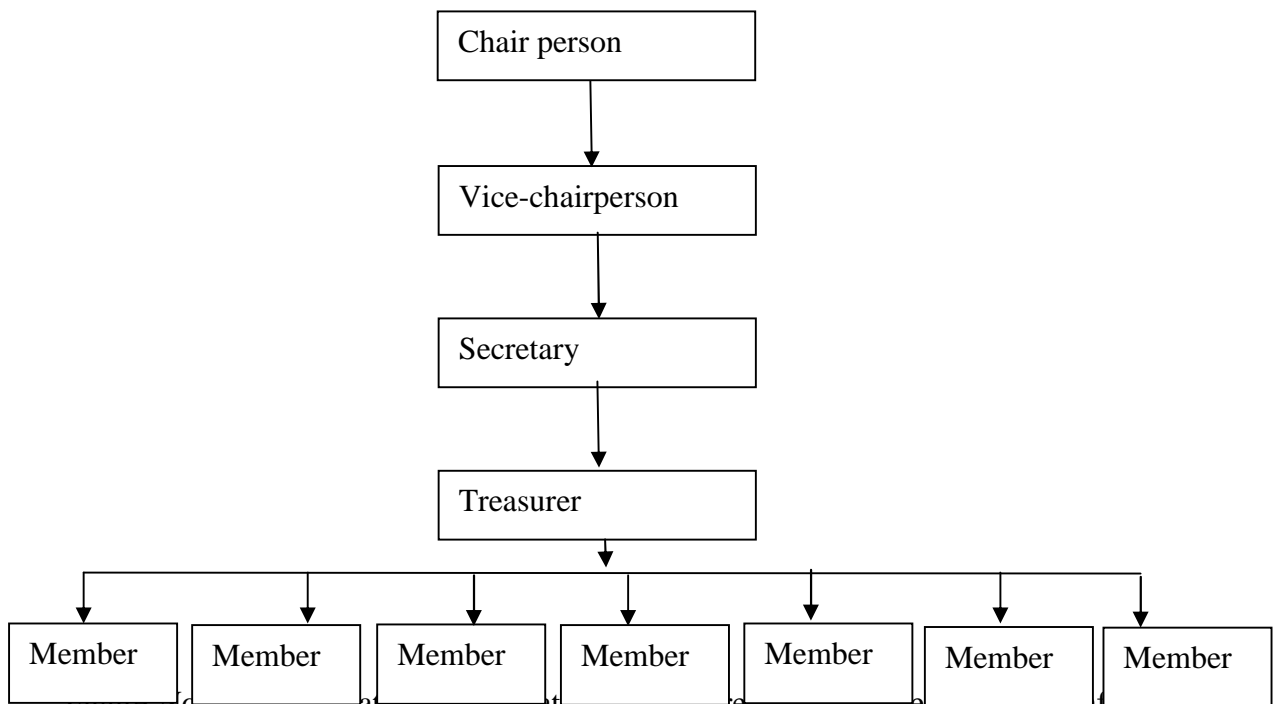


Figure No. 2 shows that the organizational structure of the mothers group contains themselves in the rules and regulation forms it. It consists of various legal processes. The structure is based in the 11 members executive committee, selected through the consensus among the members for the one consecutive year. A chairperson and secretary bear all the power and guide members for the planning and development of the program Vice-chairperson, treasure and six executive members bear their power of decision making in ascending order. they also form various sub committees to operate special situational work.

4.2.2 Resource Generation

The resource of the fund generation is monthly saving of the executive and general members of the mothers group, collect additional found by playing deusi, Bhailo on Tihar and collecting money. It has non-formal link with other organizations NGOs/ INGOs, VDC office, DDC office, as well as line agencies of the government.

4.2.3 Resource Mobilization

The MG was found to have given high priority to the mobilization of the collected fund as a loan with relatively cheap interest rate within the group members and to help helpless people.

4.2.4 Registration

Hansposha mothers group was registered in district Administration office Inaruwa in 2064 B.S.

4.2.5 Frequency of Meeting

Generally, the MG meeting takes place once a month. Their meeting generally focuses on fund collection and its mobilization. They hold the meeting in their own office.

4.2.6 Activities of Hansposha Mothers' Group

Mother's Group has conducted many programs. Every organization is primarily established for the service purpose. Later on they become more professional in working sense which makes them more valuable. Basically Hansposha mothers group was established for the help of domestic suspects to get success in social status. They also used their funds as a loan to enable people to get financial success and they collected interest as their source of income. This was their major activity, which they perform as social work.

Table No. 5
The Source of Fund, Programs and Result

Fund raising source	Program	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Membership fee - Donation from NGO/INGOs - Local government - Donation from local people - Festivals, marriage, - Cultural program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training and development program (Tailoring, Agriculture, Beautician, doll making) - literacy program - Public awareness program - Social reform program - Social awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growth in income generating activities - Effectiveness in household decision making - Increase confidence - Self dependence - Public awareness - participation in social activities

Source: MG office, 2011.

The table no. 5 shows the source of fund and its utilization in different program and its effect as result in positive way. To raise fund they collected it from NGOs/INGOs and also by arranging donations cultural program etc. They utilize fund in various developmental program as training, literacy program, public awareness program The result of this type of activities they have got positive response of society, admiration of the public, development of the conceptualization and adaptability which seemed much more better than other developmental activities.

4.3 Background of the Respondents

4.3.1 Age composition

The respondents were selected purposively. Ninety women members were selected as sample of this study. All members of mothers group were married and most of them were in the age group of (25-50). The following table shows the age factor of the respondents.

Table No. 6
Age Composition of the Respondents

Age group	Total	Percent (%)
20-30	15	16.67
30-40	35	38.89
40-50	25	27.78
50-60	14	15.55
Above -60	1	1.11
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

The table no. 6 shows that majority of mothers belong to the age group of 30-40 years, which covers 38.89 percent. 16.67 percent of mothers belong to the age group of (20-30) years following by 27.78 percent and 15.55 percent of mothers within the age group of 40-50 years, 50-60 years respectively. Only one women was found be above 60.

4.3.2 Educational Background

Mahatma Gandhi said "Educate a man and you will have educated one person but educate a women and you will have educated a whole family". Education is a not only a means of knowledge but also a step towards self dependence. It is one of the most effective means of empowerment of women.

Table No. 7
Educational Background of the Respondents

Educational Background	Total	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	16	17.78
Literate	45	50
Lower Secondary	8	8.89
Secondary	14	15.55
Intermediate	7	7.78
Total	90	100

Source: Field survey, 2011.

The table no. 7 shows the educational background of the respondents it is found from the table that 50 percent mothers were literate by attendings literacy programmes conducted by mothers group in the area. 17.78 percent have not got education, 15.55 percent of the sample acquired education up to secondary level and among them 8.89 percent women have got education up to lower secondary level. Out of the 90 respondents 7.78 percent respondent have got education of intermediate level.

4.3.3 Caste and Ethnic Composition

The study area represents the people from different caste and ethnic groups following table shows the caste and ethnic composition of the respondents.

Table No. 8
Caste and Ethnic Composition of the Respondents

Caste/Ethnic Background	Total	Percent (%)
Chhetri	20	22.22
Gurung	18	20
Brahmin	16	17.78
Rai	10	11.11
Dalit	10	11.11
Tharu	8	8.89
Newar	5	5.56
Limbu	2	2.22
Magar	1	1.11
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Table no. 8 above reveals the caste and ethnic composition of the respondents. Out of the total samples interviewed, majority of the women are Chhetri 22.22 percent , Gurung 20 percent and Bramian 17.78 percent Rai 11.11 percent, Dalit, 11.11 percent, Tharu, 8.89 percent, Newar 5.56 percent and very limited numbers of women are Limbu 2.22 percent and Magar 1.11 percent.

4.3.4 Religious Composition

According to Tylor, "Religion is the belief in spiritual beings".

According to Durkheim " A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things".

Since Hindu religion is the dominant religion of the study area, majority of the respondents follow Hindu religion, some of them are from Buddhism and very limited numbers of women are Christian and Kirat. The following table shows the religious composition of the respondents.

Table No. 9
Religious Composition of the Respondents

Religion	Total	Percent (%)
Hindu	55	61.11

Buddhist	25	27.78
Christian	6	6.67
Kirat	4	4.44
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Table no. 9 reveals the religious composition of the respondents. The table shows that, majority of women are Hindu, consisting 61.11 percent, the number of Buddhism is also remarkable having 27.78 percent and 6.67 percent women are Christian. 4.44 percent women are follow Kirat religion.

4.3.5 Family Background

Majority of the respondents belong to nuclear families. Some of them belonged to extended/joint families.

Table No. 10
Family Background of the Respondents

Family Background	Total	Percent (%)
Nuclear	45	83.33
Joint/extended	15	16.67
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Table no. 10 represents the family background of the respondents which shows the 88.33 percent members having nuclear family and 16.67 of them live in joint family.

4.3.6 Occupation

Majority of the mothers are engaged in household activities and agro-based activities. Some of them are run small businesses. A few of them are found to be engaged in service. The following table shows the occupation of the respondents.

Table No. 11
Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Total	Percent (%)
Agriculture	35	33.89
Small Business	25	27.78

Foreign Employment	15	16.66
Tailoring	8	8.89
Service	7	7.78
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

The table no. 11 shows the occupation of the respondents. It shows that majority 38.89 percent of mothers are involved in agriculture, 27.79 percent of them are involved in small business, out of them 16.66 percent women are involved in foreign employment. 8.89 percent women are involved in Tailoring and a few of them 7.78 percent are found to engaged in service. The members who are in engaged in foreign employment belong to young generation.

CHAPTER -FIVE
MOTHERS' GROUP AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Mothers' Group (MG) initiated by Gurung women as a self-help organization in the past, has become popular women organization all over the country for women development. Mothers' Groups are recognized as a non-political group which have played a significant role for the empowerment and mobilization of women at grassroots.

Women and mothers Groups are established under the organization registers act 2034 in district administrative office, after registration they get legal authority to operating their activities in the society. They submit annual report and audit report to chief district office ever year. They follow law and rules and other government policy. They do not go without their rules and policy. Empowerment of women refers to the attempts made by MGs to organize local mothers into group.

5.1 Women Empowerment Programme

Women empowerment program especially focuscs on women issues. Women empowerment means increase their power, access and opportunity. Women empowerment programs are skill development vocational training, rural women development program, banking program, income generating program, literacy program etc.

In the research area training is a part of women empowerment. Training has made them empowered in various aspects. Mothers Group provide different kind of training and women development program income generating and skill development training made them economic freedom, after involvement in that type of trainings, they are able to banking activities and solve household economic problem. In the study area, most of the trainings related to tailoring, agriculture, Beautician, and economic related activities, these trainings promote the women for their economic growth and change their lifestyle and other types of training related to community development, literacy, environment, leadership development, health, hygiene etc. All these trainings helps to increase knowledge awareness skill, self-esteem, confidence of the beneficiaries. Hanshposha mothers group has provided such types of training and development programme. The following table shows the training conducted by Hanshposha Mother Group.

Table no. 12
Training Conducted by MG.

Types of Training	Years	Total	Sources of Program & fund
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* One month training on tailoring	2062	35	Aaviyan Nepal
* Four days training on women right	2062	120	V.D.C office
* Two days training on women empowerment.	2062	100	D.D.C office
* Three months literacy program	2062	75	Member fee, fund collection
* Three days training on banking activities	2062	60	R.R.N.
* One day training on violence against women	2063	65	Public help committee
* One day writing skill training	2063	67	Hanshposha Community Forest
* One week training on agriculture	2064	25	Agriculture form, local police office
* One week training on health education	2065	30	District Education Office
* Two weeks training on the role of women in new constitution	2065	750	Local Press And Media Action AID. Nepal
* Six months (non-formal) literacy program	2065	160	District Education Office
* Three months training on tailoring	2065	22	Skill Development Itahari.
* One month training on Boutique	2065	33	Fond Collection
* Two months beautician training	2067	30	Cultural program (Deusi/Vailo in Tihar)
* Three months doll making training	2067	17	Cottage and small industries, Itahari.

Source: MG Office, 2011.

The table no. 12 shows the type of programs, conducted year, total participants and source of program and fund. Most of the trainings are based on Tailoring and literacy program. During the training programs different groups interact with each other and find out the ways of prospering their activities. They innovate the different methods of marketing their activities. Thus, training to the group members and exposure visits to other successfully functioning groups are useful to achieve this end. Through training

program involving credible resource persons, the salient concepts and other program detail can be explained to the participants.

Box. 1

"If women get opportunity they can do anything that man cannot do."

Name: Puja Magar

Age: 29

Marriage: With Vijaya Magar in 2056

Education: Class 8

Occupation: Small business

Family type: Nuclear

I was born in an extremely poor family in Dharan. I had studied upto class 8 in Shree Sahid Smiriti Secondary school in Dharan but couldn't continue my study due to the lack of economic support. I got married to Vijaya Magar of Hanshposha in 2056 B.S. I have two children, one of 8 years and another of 6. My husband was a drunkard and tortured me a lot. But by thinking about the future of children he went aboard for earning money. When he went I had given birth to a child and it was quite small. After going there my husband did not contact and he also did not send the money, due to which it was quite difficult for me to manage the house. But when I entered in Mother Group in 2065, I got support from it. By taking 100 as loan I opened a small Chatpate shop and I was quite confident after getting the training that helped me in my business. Further more, by the help of Mother Group I got a job of a cleaner in Miteri Bank. By these all, I have become able to provide the education to my children.

5.1.1 Saving and Credit Groups

Since establishment, Hanshposha Mothers Group has been launching its programme actively in all 9 wards of Hanshposha VDC; Moreover, it has been launching various programs for financial, social and political empowerment of women of Hanshposha VDC. In addition, various saving and credit groups have been established and launching various saving and credit programmes by these mothers groups saving and credit groups for the fact that availability of capital has been considered to be a fundamental prerequisite for meeting resources required for promoting investment in income-generating activities. The role of this activity is not just to initiate a monetary exercise but through this strategy, help women evolve as a collective act with a distinct identity and acquire skills. Women groups went through several learning stages in addressing their economic problems. They learnt how to start savings through training received from direct exchanges with other women's groups. First, they were exposed to the concept and practice of savings and loans through a series of visits, training and workshops. Secondly, they initiated savings. Thirdly, they started borrowing larger amounts for collective economic activities.

Women went through a succession of personal changes where attitudes within the group were transformed with empowerment both economical, social saving and more profitable than individual attempts. Confidence in handling cash, opening bank accounts, the loan repayment capacity of women, informal mechanisms by which maintaining accounts helped to create bonds among women that empowered them both individually and collectively. This was facilitated by the changing social and economic relations that the freedom from new source of credit afforded poor women along with not having to resort to traditional source of credit,

such as money lenders. There are 25 saving and credit groups (only mothers) initiated by MG, these are: Shikhar, Sayapatri Jyoti, OM Shanti, Srijana, Pushpanjali, Phulbari, Chetana, Yojana, Namuna, Hariyali, Shushanta, Kirat Rai, Dalit Mahila Mukti, Chaudary Mahila, Tamu-Chodi, Newakhal, Milan, Sangam Aasaya, Surjatole, Sagarmatha, Jagirti, Ujjal Sakchham, Saving and credit.

Box. 2

"Training helps to make success".

Name: Manju Katwal

Age: 37

Marriage: With Val Bahadur Katwal in 2055 B.S.

Education: SLC

5.1.2 Aama Saving and Credit Co-operative Ltd.

For the economic empowerment of women, Hanshposha Mothers Group has established a micro-finance called "Aama Saving and Credit Co-operative Ltd." and conducting it successfully since Srawan of 2066 B.S. MF for women empowerment is one of the most successful activities of government and development agencies, According to the state of micro credit summit campaign 2001 Report, 14.2 million world's poorest women now have access to financial services through specialized microfinance institutions (MFIS) banks, NGOs and other non-bank financial institutions.

The ASAC Co-Ltd. has 300 general members out of which an executive committee is formed consisting of ten members The ASAC Co-Ltd. has its own organizational laws, rules and policy to run the organization effectively.

Following objectives are hoped to be achieved for the socio-economic welfare of the members:

- * To develop the habit of saving by increasing the co-operation and thriftiness among the members included in the organization.
- * To make income source and employable increase for economic and social position progress by unifying the members.
- * To increase the income and job oriented opportunities by uniting the members to improve the socio-economic situation.
- * To bring the positive change in socio-economic and educational status of the members.

Box. 3

"Support of man is essential in women's life".

Name: Pabitra Ghimire

Age: 39

Marriage: With Yog Bahadur Ghimire in 2045 B.S.

Education: I.A

Occupation: Service

Family type: Nuclear

I consider myself as a educated women. I was born in normal family in Dharan. I completed SLC from Sikshya Niketan Secondary School of Dharan. I was married to

5.2 Activities Related to Social Development

Social Development may be seen as a process of ushering in a new order of existence. The quality of life and the quality of social relations which exist would indicate the level of the order of existence.

The activities of MGs are implemented for community development. Mothers Group of Hanshposha has contributed as much in social development, literatures have shown that MGs have completed large projects like constructing roads, temples, resting places, plantation of trees in public place and managing literacy classes for needy children and education for aged people, MGs also tried to change male behavior of drinking alcohol, playing card and eradication of domestic violence and cleaning roads etc.

Box. 4

"Helping Hands of MG"

When Shyam Luitel's house situated in Hanshposha ward No. 1 caught fire, Mothers group helped them Rs. 501 and consoled the disaster-ridden family.

Mothers Group provided some clothes and Rs. 511 to bereaved families of Bhawanipur Dalit area when their five houses had caught fire.

Roni Devi Chaudhary, single women of Hansposha ward no. 7 was severely beaten and injured by her own brother. Mother group had helped her in treatment and given the justice to her.

Parbati B.K was economically poor and thus, she was not able to do the treatment

Mothers group of Hanshposha has been launching programs against gambling, drinking alcohol, road construction, sanitation, public awareness, physical and financial help in construction of temple and public school, programs for forestations and controlling deforestation, established of child development center, celebration of programs like. "Red clothes for widow" As a result of this program, 60 percent widow, wearing red color clothes and ending of caste discrimination MG celebration of "Group Vai Tika" on Tihar, 100 brothers were involved from different caste. Program of respecting old people and program for developing technical skill for women, lunching different program for the development of self-independence of women. Similarly, mothers group had initiated door-to-door campaign on making local people (especially Mushar and Tharu community) aware of good sanitation around home and building toilet, as a result, nearly 90 percent of the toilet less family built temporary toilets supporting the good sanitation program initiated by Hanshposha mothers' group. The community has also realized and highly regarded their contribution on those areas and awareness rising on women on above mentioned themes.

Box. 5

"Diaster- ridden people should be helped"

The flood in Koshi in 2065/5/2 B.S over flooded the scores of house nearby the river. Almost all Nepalese citizens of home and abroad readily helped those disaster-ridden people, right after the calamities. The mothers group of the VDC, collected some amount of money to offer the help to those people. They formulated a group of seventy members to have the observation to provide the help to those people and they provided the things and food staffs that are listed below:

Cash amount	-	Rs. 8, 000
Beaten Rice	-	50 Kg
Dishes	-	20 Pcs
Bhuja	-	50 Kg
Biscuits	-	15 C/S
Slipper and shoes	-	20 pairs

Box. 6

"Women can contribute in public spheres"

Due to the lack of mother's creative thought, proper guidance from the social leaders, internal disputes among MG members, lack of organizational skills, management skills, support from other organizations, group consensus among members and limited sources of fund etc. have been found as the main constraints to MG for their social activities. However, besides social awareness raising, MG has carried out social activities like cleaning trails, plantation of tree in public area, financial support to local school and local temple for constructing new building, helping poor and helpless people, maintaining peace and harmony in the community.

Box. 7

"The world of consolation: Death is inevitable"

Phul Maya Khatri was physically disabled and poor as well. Her husband had already passed away. She had two children; Devraj khatri of 9 years and Muna Khatri of 4 years who were deprived of education and other needs. With the support and initiatives of mother group they were admitted to the S.O.S school, Itahari.

Specially, with internalizing the fact that death is inevitable after birth, mother group has been playing a significant role to provide physical as well as financial help along with the consolation to those bereaved families. So, that those families have the sigh of relief. The group has set the rule to inform to mother group about any of the cases related to female in local administration and the cases later on, to be investigated by both local administration and the mothers group.

Altogether seven fathers and three male social leaders were interviewed to find out their attitude towards mothers group operating in their community. MG was guided by the social leaders of the society though their guidance was not regular and sufficient. In response to how they regarded the mothers' effort to empower themselves through MG, they said that it was positive change in the attitude of mothers, the MG was self initiated. Fathers were found to have seen some noticeable changes in their wives after being members of MG. Those changes as follows:

- * They have been able to express their feelings and ideas in groups, and have developed their capacity, to make logical decisions on household level.
- * They have developed social feeling and fully involved in social activities.

- * They have gained the knowledge and skills learnt from training and regular meeting.
- * They have improved sanitation around home and whole society.
- * They have participated in social activities like constructing road, school management, community forest etc.

The social leaders said that the representations of women in social institution have been raised since the emergence of mothers groups. Mothers were representing social organization like school management committee, community forestry committee, temple construction committee, drinking water supply committee. After their involvement in MG, they have started presenting themselves consciously in the programs like parents' day in schools, annual anniversary programs and open discussion programs on public issues etc. All of the social leaders who were working together with women representatives opined that they have developed self-confidence while making decisions on public matters. The social leaders of the society admitted the fact that the representation of women in social institution have been raised since the emergence of MG. However, they said that the increment of female representative in such institutions in recent years was not the result of emergence of MG alone, but MG was the platform from where women developed their capabilities to hold social responsibilities because of their constant work through organization in MG.

Box. 8

"Opinion provided by Mr. Yog Bahadur Ghimire, husband of MG
Treasure Pabitra Ghimire"

"I had realized much more differences in my wife's behavior after her involvement in MG. Before getting involved in MG, she was also limited within household activities although she had some probability of doing something if she got an opportunity. Later, her desires were fulfilled through MG. She fostered her inner capability to speak out clearly and with confidence in front of mass. She developed social feelings. She makes decision on sole household activities that are not only reasonable but also rigid. Now she has also represented 'many social institutions like community forest user's group, Aama Saving and Credit Group, school management committee etc. She has established her own prestigious position in the society as a result of her involvement in MG.

All of the male respondent opined that female also should be given the right of equality as both male and female are two parts of the same coin. More than 30 percent of total male interviewee argued that the women lagged behind men mainly because they gave the first priority to household activities than participated in social activities if they could manage their time. 50 percent male regarded illiteracy of the mothers and discriminatory social structure against them as the main causes behind their backwardness in the society and 20 percent male said that mothers were more enthusiastic to participate in social activities and social organization but the lack of their interest in attending knowledgeable programs. More than out of interviewed 70 percent of the male satisfied with MG social activities and social reform regarding drinking and gambling and social evils.

5.6 Attitude of Non-member Mothers Towards Mothers Group

Altogether 15 non-member mother were interviewed to find out their attitude toward MG operating in their community. It was found that 33 percent mothers were involved in Government Job, so they were busy their situation was good, because they have already educated and have no restriction in doing some extra activity outside their household. 33 percent mothers were involved in various small women related organization, such as women empowerment programme, income generating programme and saving and credit programme, which initiated by different organization. They also had some training on livestock (goat keeping, pig keeping) accountancy, institutional development, gender equality, sanitation, nutrition, human right etc. As a result, they seemed to have been more enthusiastic to get involved in such groups rather than MG. And 33 percent mothers were involved in only their household activities like collecting and cooking meals, cleaning house, washing clothes, caring children, so they werenot involved in MG because of maximum busy in household activities, lack of family support, lack conveying message regarding benefit by participation in MG and lack of education. This problem was found mainly in Joint family. This is a main defect of our social structure and its foundation of religious culture and tradition.

In response to the question how they perceived the activities carried out by the MG operating in their community. 40 percent non-members mothers were found dissatisfied with the existing MG in their community and 60 percent non-member mothers were satisfied with the social activities carried out by MG in their community.

Incase of Jobholder, non-member mothers were found to know about MG and some of them had keen interest to get involved in MG. According to them, MG in their village had been gaining existence as a women's force for change. They emphasized MG's influencing role in developing self-confidence of its members, social awareness rising, participation in social activities and focused on women empowerment programme etc. It was playing a significant role in maintaining a neat and clean environment in their village, MG had been successful in uniting mothers for social work and keeping peace and harmony in the community.

Out of interviewed non-member 33 percent of the mother gave more priority to other women related organizations rather than MG. According to them, social services provided by the MG were not specific they informed that they had been involved in other groups which were more effective and helpful from both economic betterment and empowerment of women. And MG size were very big so they cannot manage it. The response of interviewed non-member 33 percent of the mother gave priority to their household work like cooking meals, washing clothes caring to their children, and spend their other time for agriculture. But their perception about MG were positive.

Box. 9

"Education is a step towards self dependence"

Name: Kamal Kumari Rai

Age: 53

Marriage: With Ram Bahadur Rai in 2028 B.S.

Occupation: Small Business

Family type: Joint

We have been able to establish the Mother Group with the joint effort of 17 women including myself to control the violence and domination to women, the excessive alcoholism of male, gambling that is found in Hanshposha VDC. Though I was illiterate in the past, I have now become literate with the help of adult education provided by the mother Group. The education I got has really helped me to run the grocery shop that I have opened and I also don't get cheated by others. Due to the support and advice, my husband's habit of alcoholism has decreased and I feel that the consciousness has been developed within me after I have started to involve in the group actively. Now, I can raise any issues in front of the group easily and my husband has been supporting to run my business. I can, now, take the loan from the group easily whenever it is felt necessary in my business.

Mothers Group formation in Hanshposha, itself is a big task by getting a like minded people. Mothers groups members encouragingly perform their activity. As the group activities pick up the struggle for existence among the members sometimes mothers in the Group violate the rules and regulations of the group. Few members in a group are non-co-operative. The study is made deeper in to the problems faced by the Hanshposha mothers group presented in the table.

Table No. 13
Problems Faced by MG Members

S.N	Item	Total	Percentage
1.	Lack of Training	35	39
2.	Problem in getting the loan released in time	20	22
3.	Lack of common workshed	15	17
4.	Non-co-operation among the group members	12	13
5.	Non-availability of the group member	5	6
6.	Amount sanctioned for group is insufficient	3	3
7.	Lack of interest among the group members	-	-
8.	No problems	-	-
Total		90	100

Source: Field Survey 2011.

The table no. 13 shows the problems faced by MG in Hanshposha. According to the interviewed mothers, nearly 39 percent mothers are not provided with training facilities and 22 percent mothers suffering with a problem of getting the loan released in time 17 percent mothers are not having common workshed, 12 percent mothers are not co-operating among the group members and 6 percent mothers are not available to groups. And for 3 percent mothers the amount sanctioned is not sufficient. The information indicates that women members are not having sufficient training facilities earlier and slowly they are getting trained.

5.5.1 The problems faced by Mothers Group Members While Working in MG

5.5.1.1 Lack of Sufficient Guidance from Social Leaders

According to some of the members of the MG of Hanshposha, it has been found that the social leaders, have not given much attention to MG. They said that the social leaders regarded MG as exclusively women group; So they wanted mothers to handle

their groups themselves. They do not organize any programs for promoting mothers. Thus, mothers have limited themselves with in the own groups.

5.5.1.2 Lack of Networking with Other Formal Organization

The researcher has found that the mothers group operating in Hanshposha, were running by themselves. There is no formal link among MGs operating in Hanshposha. There are many women related organization working in Hanshposha but most of the mothers group do not have formal organizational link.

5.5.1.3 Internal Conflict

According to the interviewed MG members internal conflict was the main problem faced by MG in Hanshposha. It was found that due to internal conflict arises among MG members because of lack of transparency in financial accounting and unsystematic way of fund rotation system. The conflict is still going on between the chairperson and the secretary.

5.5.1.4 Limited Financial Sources

Researcher has found that the main source of fund of MG operating in Hanshposha was the monthly saving of the MG members. Now, they are feeling financial problem for conducting program.

5.5.1.5 Influence over the Group by few Dominant Mothers

The general members of MG of Hanshposha, were found dissatisfied from their group because of control over the group by a few dominant mothers.

5.5.1.6 Low Level of Educational Attainment

The educational background of the MG members has shown that most of mothers are were just literate, so they cannot actively participate in various social activities and income generating activities because of the lack of education. The illiterate mothers said that they regarded themselves inferior among other literate mothers so whatever the literate decided was acceptable for them.

5.6 External Support

When women are involved in a group functioning they are to be encouraged by their counterparts at home and also by the villagers. This type of moral support rendered to them would drive them ahead according to interviewed mothers.

Table No. 14
External Support Received by the MG Members

Item	Total	Percentage (%)
A: Nature Of Support From The Villages And Methods Of Support		
1. Discouraging	8	9
2. Neutral attitude	32	35
3. Encourage	50	56
Total	90	100
B: Men's Support		
1. Negative	8	9
2. Neutral	42	47
3. Encourage	40	44
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey 2011.

The table no. 14 shows the external support received by the MG members. It shows that 9 percent mothers are discouraged for mothers participation by the villages. 35 percent mothers are getting neutral attitude and 56 percent mothers are encouraged for group activity. We saw the men's support, 9 percent mothers are discouraged, 47 percents mothers are getting neutral support and 44 percent mothers are getting encouraged by men.

Box. 10

"Where there is interest we can do anything what we want".

Name: Urmila Shrestha

Age: 36

Marriage: With Hari Shrestha in 2054 B.S.

Occupation: Agriculture

Family type: Nuclear

I was born in a poor family and I'm 36 years old now. I have not taken any formal education. I have become literate after getting the adult education provided by the mother group. It was very difficult for me to involve in the group as my husband was a drunkard and he tortured me a lot physically. I had the desire to be the member of the group when I heard about it from the neighbor women and I had asked for the suggestion with my husband too. But, instead of suggestion I was beaten twice for this issue. Nevertheless, with my courage and the support of other women of the group. I was able to involve the group in 2059 B.S. I participated in various social activities and training of the group and I was able to develop my skills and abilities. I was able to buy a cow taking the loan of Rs. 10,000 from the group. Now, I have been managing the family by selling the milk, and it has been supporting for the education of my children. I have felt the positive change in my husband after seeing my success. Now, my husband has also run a biscuit factory. We take the every decision of the family together. Thus, the credit of my success goes to Mother Group.

CHAPTER - SIX
IMPACT ANALYSIS OF MOTHERS' GROUP

6.1 Change in Social Status

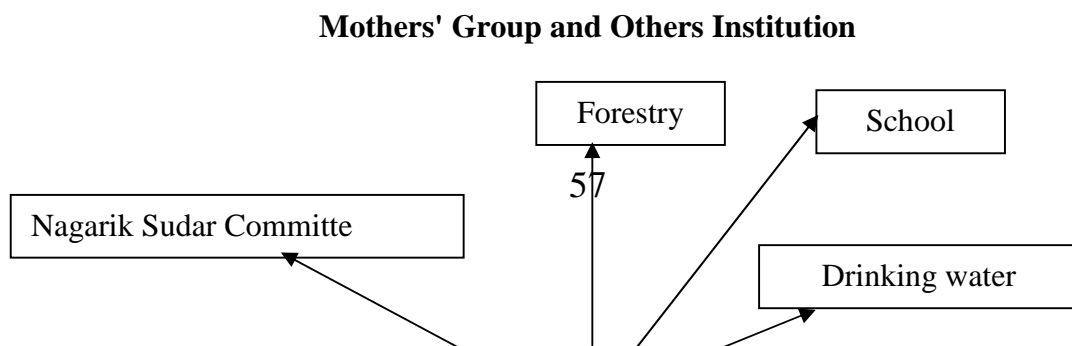
As the information gathered from mothers, before the formation of the MG, mothers were untouched and unaware with the outer world. They were found to be aware of their position and role in the society after its establishment. They are full of enthusiasm and always willing to do something for their families and society. They were preparing themselves to fight against obstacles. They got knowledge and skill development. According to them, they have been successful, to a greater extent, to change the traditional concept prevailing in the society that women can't do anything in social development. But that concept has been changed when mothers started performing social activities. Mothers have also cultivated social feeling.

Before involving in the MG, their social relationship and contacts were limited within household. But after getting involved in the MG, their social relationship, level of contact has extended. MG activities and training were able to fight against the traditional value, and they felt proud, confident and prestigious in the society. Mothers have increased social status and power, a source of empowerment.

6.2 Involvement in Social Activities

After getting involved in the MG, they were interested to join other social institutions and programs. In response to the question whether they got involved in social activities or not, 65 percent of mothers responded that they had been involved in social activities representing social institutions like, forest user's group, school management committee, temple management committee, road construction committee and drinking water supply management committee, Nagarik sudar committee etc. Mothers' group has a relationship with various agencies and institutions. The figure below shows the relationship between MG and other local institutions.

Figure No. 3



The above figure presents the relations between mothers group and local social institutions. Representing social institutions like forest user group, school management committee, temple management committee, road construction committee, drinking water supply committee, and other local institution like, local government, polices, NGO/INGO and health related organization etc.

6.3 Decision-Making Capabilities

Decision-making capabilities of members were found to be highly depended upon the family background of the members. The mothers from nuclear family were found to have much more opportunities to make decisions than the members from joint family 84 percent (76 mothers), of the members were from nuclear family. Among them, 55 percent (50 mothers) of the members made decisions jointly with their husbands except in kitchen maintenance like making decision on schooling of their children, buying clothes, etc. But the members from joint family, they were found to be hardly involved in decision-making process. Among 16 percent (14 mothers) members, only 20 percent (3 mothers) members said that they are also consulted making decisions on major issues like buying, selling house, land etc.

After getting involved in MG, they had felt significant changes in their decision-making. Nearly 70 percent (63 mothers) said that there has been change in the pattern to decision making. They said that before joining the groups, they used to limit their decision only in the kitchen maintenance but, after getting involved in MG, they analyzed the issue logically and sometimes they disagreed the decisions made by others and gave their own decision. They also said that there is change in their self-confidence, behavior, knowledge, communicating skill etc. after getting involved in MG. By getting the training and link with different people mother got more knowledge and increased the power of leadership, that helped them to make decision on their risk either that were on household or on public issues.

6.4 Change in Attitude of Family Members and Neighbors

Involvement in mothers group and in income generating activities and social activities had changed their attitude of family members and their neighbor. Their occupation, public life, saving, mobility knowledge and confidence had changed their family members and neighbor's concepts towards them. It was found that 70 percent (63 mothers) of the members have felt change in the attitude of family members towards them. They said that due to the organizational practice in MG, training, access to new knowledge and skill they have become more confident to talk on any issues. They started getting themselves involved in household decision making. Which has made the family members (especially husband) to realize their role in the family. Among them 33 percent (30 mothers) have felt change in the attitude of their neighbor because of the increment in their confidence level and involvement in social activities. But 20 percent (18 mothers) members didnot feel any changes of their family members and neighbors towards them because of their low access to the opportunities like training, social activities etc.

CHAPTER -SEVEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Summary

Mothers group is only the organization of women where 100 percent participants are women especially mother and they must run the organization themselves. Therefore, MG is the only place, where mothers make decisions themselves. Mothers group has played a vital role for empowerment of women and social development. Women empowerment program especially focuses on women issues, opportunities, responsibility, authority, value and equity in the social formation.

Hanshposha mothers group had launched programs such as literacy advocacy, organizational skill enhancement training, vocational training, tailoring, leadership training, beautician training etc focusing on mothers inner as well as their organizational capability enhancement, productivity, efficiency, social awareness and economic upliftment, which plays the vital role in their empowerment. The researcher has found various changes on mother's status and attitude after involvement in MG, MG programs change the mother's various aspect like decision making, skill development, economic independence, increase in mobility, change in social, political and psychological situation. MG has provided platform to mothers for exercising organizational norms, values and skills which has enhanced their level of confidence to deal with other people. As a result, 70 percent mothers have felt positive change in the attitude of family members towards them after their involvement in MG. And 33 percent mothers have felt positive change in the attitude of the neighbors towards them.

Mothers Group of Hanshposha has contributed much in social development like cleaning trails, making road, plantation on public area, financial support to local school, and construction of building for temples, financial support to helpless people and poor people and maintaining peace and harmony in the community. They have initiated door-to-door campaign for making local people aware of good sanitation around home and making toilet. As a result, nearly 90 percent of the toiletless family built temporary toilets. There is increment of self motivated women's participation in various social institution like school management committee, drinking water supply

management committee, forest users group, road construction committee, temple construction committee etc. Saving and credit groups were organized to increase the scope of income generating activities and help women gain access to family credit.

MG members are facing various problems like internal dispute among members, lack of creativity and innovative activities in the group, frequent influence over the group by the few dominant mothers, lack of sufficient guidance from social leaders, lack of networking with other women related organization, lack of sufficient financial resource, lack of education, inter-MG networking and low level of self encouragement of the mothers because of lack of family members encouragement to get involved in mothers group.

In response to how they regarded the mothers' effort to empower themselves through MG, males said that it was positive change in the attitude of mothers. 40 percent non-members mother were found dissatisfied with the existing MG in their community and 60 percent non member mothers were found satisfied with the social activities carried out by MG in their community.

7.2 Conclusion

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. MGs 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.

Mothers group members are actively involved in antiliqor campaign and fight against atrocities on women etc. MG members are interviewed about their group activities and changes in the living standards of the members. The various factors like income generated form group activity income from other sources, family assets, family size, savings and repayment of the loans are taken into consideration to find

out the changes in the living standards of the MG members. These factors are treated for the purpose of the study as indicators of economic empowerment. The social aspect of the group activities was taken for study. The social aspects of the MG activities like, training, management of group, functioning social activities and financial support etc. are studied by deriving the data about the number of group meeting attended and about the formation of the group etc for the purpose of the study as indicators of social empowerment.

After getting involved in MG, mothers were able to defend social evils and male domination against women. It was a great change in their perspective, attitude, authority, prestige, knowledge, ability and social relationship and training program had helped in building self-confidence among the members. The caste and ethnic group have equal participation in executive committee members and general members of mothers group of Hanshposha. However, all the mothers had not progressed at same level mothers from nuclear family were much empowered than the mothers' from joint families. One of the important conclusions of the study was that the MG activities have been helping the poor women in economic and social development. The capacity of women leaders to communicate with other women was seen as an important factor in helping the development of women. Conclusively, through the different activities of mothers group the involved members have gained confidence and this had led them to the path of empowerment.

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