EDUCATION AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY-BASED
ORGANIZATIONS: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY

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AN ABSTRACT

of dissertation of *Sumitra Ghimire* for the degree of *Master of philosophy in Education (Development Studies)* presented on 7 June 2023, entitled *Education and Women's Participation in Community-based Organizations: An Ethnographic Inquiry.*

ABSTRACT APPROVED BY

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Lina Gurung, PhD

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Women's participation is considered one of the influential aspects of women's dignity and rights for women's empowerment as an important dimension of good governance through community - based organizations. It is also one of the important efforts to make development sustainable. Women have an important role in handling their families and community. The study aims to explore the practice of women's participation in the role of education to uplift community-based organizations. In this process, I consolidated the problem statement based on the literature review and my experience participating in community-based organizations. I used ethnographic inquiry to explore the women's experiences, stories and narratives of their experience on women's participation in community-based organizations.

The study found that women participate in community-based organizations in various ways and forms. Women are engaged to provide caring, sharing and inspiring to women in their community - based organizations. Women have various learning and sharing opportunities in their women community-based organizations; however, the notion of learning is influenced by the values of education driven by the expectation of upward social mobility. Women are struggling for respect, equality and dignity. Further hurdles for the women were created by patriarchy, stigmatization of their identity and discriminating attitudes. Despite these hurdles, women who have actively participated in community-based organizations learnt and motivated other women to involve in it by overcoming the multiple obstacles they faced.

The research concludes that the participation of more women in community-based organizations could benefit the local area; challenges, including poor participation, transparency and accountability, are likely to be reduced through meaningful representation. The meaningful participation brought positive changes and has improved their life, making them happier and self- dependent. Women develop their interpersonal skills, taking leadership, making decisions, and have self-confidence through community-based organizations. The conflict could be observed between active women and neutral women regarding the support required for the learning of the children, so the understanding seems to be redefined.

…………………….   7 June2023

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This dissertation entitled *Education and Women's Participation in Community-based Organizations: An Ethnographic Inquiry* presented by *Sumitra Ghimire* on 7 June 2023.

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I understand that my dissertation will become a part of the permanent collection of Kathmandu University Library. My signature below authorizes the release of my dissertation to any reader upon request for scholarly purposes.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work, and it has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree at any other university.

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DEDICATION

Women who are always dedicated to participating in community-based organizations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ACRONYMS

BBS	Bachelor in Business Studies
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CEDAW	Convention on all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CLC	Community Learning Center
COE	Certificate of Eligibility
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
INGO	International Non-governmental Organizations
JICA	Japan International Co-operation Agency
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
RICOD	Rural Institution for Community Development
TSC	Teacher Service Commission
TU	Tribhuvan University
UDHAR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

My research aim is positioned in the chapter within the larger framework of education and women's participation in community-based organizations in Nepal. It has long been customary in Nepal for women to participate in local communities. However, the international conversation about women's rights and gender equality has permeated Nepal and been embraced by a number of institutions. I have discussed my personal experience in the context of my research on education and women's participation in community-based organizations. In addition to attentively observing my mother and mother-in-law and my involvement in community-based organizations, I have explored the understanding of and experiences of women. I have provided information about the problem statement in this context. I created research questions to see their education status and the participation of women in community-based organizations. I've provided this based on my participation in a community-based organization in my place and the significance of the study according to my experience.

My Mother's Experiences as a Woman

My mother was born in 1964 AD, and she had never got an opportunity to go to school and study in her growing days. It was 1981 AD, my mother got married and from that day she stayed with my father. From there onwards, she was supposed to follow special norms and values in the patriarchal society. Moreover, her residence identity had changed. She was supposed to follow her in-laws. Her in-laws forced her to do hard work from early morning to late evening. Every day, she used to wake up at three in the morning and care for cattle. She used to prepare Khole (liquid for drink) for cattle and feed, milk, and clean their surroundings. After finishing her regular schedule of work in the shed, she needs to go towards the house and sweep the floor in the side and yard of the house regularly. She used to finish her regular work, "lipne and potne,"(colouring and mobbing) before other family members woke up. She needs to clean and wash all the religious instruments to worship God for her mother-in-law. My mother needs to serve hot water and milk tea to every family member who wakes up in their time. Without rest and breakfast, she needs to prepare for the jungle to cut grass to feed cattle. Every day, from a faraway jungle with a

difficult, narrow, and slippery way, it's very hard to bring heavy, loaded cattle with an empty stomach. Every day, all the other members finish eating their lunch when she arrives home. She was scolded by her in-laws by saying, "Yeti jabo ghass layuna din bitauxe" (It takes whole days to bring a little grass). Her mother-in-law put Dhido (made with maize flour cooked in water) and a little curry on the side of the fire oven. She eats that cold food alone every day. She did not get to eat ghee and milk. However, other family members used to get it.

According to my mother, she had to face lots of struggles and challenges from their own family and society because I was born too late, after ten years of her marriage. My grandparents had planned for the second marriage of my father, but in the meantime, my birth took place and my mother was so happy and she felt lucky herself. Giving birth to a daughter, my grandparents were not happy with my mother because they needed a grandson thinking for the next generation. That's why my mother had to face so many hurdles to feed me and to raise me. She had to do lots of household activities such as looking after cattle, seasonal agricultural activities in the field, and taking care of all my family members, so it was very hard for her to do all the work regularly and alone as her in-laws were not supporting at all.

I've noticed in the past that men have always been in charge of development activities. In the past, men led many development initiatives, such as building roads, water tanks, and schools. I observed that all community development efforts were carried out by the male population. In my neighborhood, there were a number of male-led community-based organizations, including cooperatives, agriculture groups, drinking water groups, etc. Women were not able to join community-based organizations.

At present time, even after forty years, she is doing the same household stuff like cooking fooding, feeding family members and raising castles, seasonal agriculture, and so on. It has been continued since then, not only for my mother but also for many other women. However, their situation remains the same in the village. Mostly in rural areas, women wake up early and start to prepare feeds for castles and cook food for family members and they are busy during the whole day caring for everything. The routine continues for the next day, months, and years. They didn't have time to rest. Therefore, in the process of developing as a daughter my mother, my mother–in–law has also built in various behaviours. They expect me to develop behaviours like they possess today.

I had seen discrimination in my home: male members, i.e., father and uncles, were educated, but two sisters didn't get the chance to have formal education in their lives. Due to the patriarchal mindset in society, my mother, sisters, and other women didn't have access to formal education. When I was young, I observed that there were literacy classes for women from marginalized groups. Despite being busy with their work from morning to evening, they could not find time to join literacy classes. Those women who didn't send their daughters for formal education were attending literacy classes.

What changed in their minds that they were thinking of being literate? Various training and awareness programs had been run by several NGOs and governmental offices, which helped women become more empowered. They want to learn and grow more beyond their houses and have access to community-based organizations. Later on, various microfinance groups, agricultural groups, mother groups, etc. Why do women want to participate in community-based organizations? Why were women participating in various community-based organizations? What makes women change? Various questions had risen in my mind about women in my earlier days.

My Experience as a Daughter

I was born in a remote area of Southern Lalitpur in 2048 BS as the first child in my family; after ten years, my parents got married. My mother had a lot of struggles while growing up and sent me to school. It was not easy for me to go to school. Being the eldest child of the family, I had to take care of my younger brother and sister. Agriculture activities were the only source of income. Even I had to look after a few sets of cattle at an early age. I had to arrange grass every day for them before going to school and also had to graze them every day after coming from school. That was my regular work schedule before and after school.

I admire my parents for encouraging me to develop my independence by sending me to school, but I also feel that they used to treat the rest of the family differently since we had an infant in our home. I believe they developed in a way where the entire culture was that much more discriminator while dealing with females rather than their beliefs or feelings. Despite a lot of struggles when I was studying in grade 11, I got a chance to be a pre-primary teacher in my village and to work in a school near my house. During my pre-primary teaching time, I managed the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) volunteer in my school to work for two years. A volunteer team had worked with me in an Early Childhood Development

(ECD) class in school. That was the time when my family, relatives, and other villagers trusted me and my work.

After completing her voluntary work, my counterpart later travelled back to her native country. I was really uneasy leaving her during that time, so I made the decision to study in Japan and began learning the language. While I was studying Japanese, the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) posted a job opening for a permanent teacher. My family informed me to fill out the application, but I was more focused on learning Japanese at the time to go to Japan, so I took a six-month course from a language institution. Without any preparation, I went to take the TSC exam for permanent primary level; on the other hand, I proceeded to study in Japan, but due to a banking statement issue, I didn't get a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) to study there. Luckily, I was selected by TSC as a permanent primary teacher in open and women's quotas when I was twenty-two. Again, I started my teaching journey in my village, where I used to teach as a pre-primary teacher in earlier days. In that period, I experienced that my family members, villagers, school staff, etc., felt happiness and pride to have me in the same school where I could bring change through Japanese volunteerism. Thereafter, they started giving my example to other girls in the village. I became an idol to the young and aspiring girls. At the same time, the concept of cooperatives flourished, and many such organizations were introduced to our village, too. Villagers encouraged me to work as a member of the women's committee in a cooperative. I also got the opportunity to work with village women in their different CBOs. I was the coordinator of Sunaulo Bihani Sathi Samuha under the Rural Institution for Community Development (RICOD). As coordinator of our group, we organized several programs in the field of sanitation, education and health in the form of drama and poem competitions. I was learning and developing my leadership qualities as well as building my relationships.

In my village, I had engaged in a women's committee in a cooperative called Chandanpur Multipurpose Cooperative Limited, where I had experienced and observed that women were passive and nobody listened to their voices while discussing crucial agendas. Several men used to make the decision themselves. I was involved in other CBOs as a committee member of the Community Learning Center (CLC). There also I observed that mostly male members used to decide on crucial agendas. Women were supposed to have attended meetings and do their signatures only on minutes. Similarly, every month, from every house, women were gathered in

"Nagarik Sachetana Kendra" (Citizen Awareness Center). In my leisure time from work and study, I used to go there with my mother and listen to their rich experiences. A woman used to discuss several issues, such as discrimination, violence, and workload, during the meeting. I had seen that many women share their personal experiences and problems within the group. I was more curious to do research on women's participation in community-based organizations since then.

Exploring New CBOs as Daughter-In-Law

I got married six years ago in Tikavairab when I was studying in the 4th semester of my Master's in English Language Teaching at Kathmandu University. Being a daughter-in-law of a family, I realised everything was new for me. I had felt uncomfortable and uneasy doing certain household tasks. It felt difficult to manage time at home and my regular job and study. I need to complete my responsibilities at home, too. I felt satisfied that my in-laws were happy with me while I heard feedback from my in-laws' relatives.

Back then, in the village, I was introduced to several CBOs, but in this new place, I had no idea about the community-based organizations that were in that community. At first, I asked my husband about community-based organizations. He is not very interested and has not shared with me the names of cooperatives and schools. I was not happy with his answer and started to ask my father-in-law about community-based organizations. He shared his long experience as the head teacher of a government school and his participation in some community-based organizations. I asked my father-in-law because he was the head teacher more than two decades ago. Being as head teacher, I thought that he had participated in various community-based organizations. I further asked him about women's participation in community-based organizations. He is not satisfied with women's participation, where women are engaged with him in the same community-based organizations. Then I asked him again about women's groups. Then he replied, ask your mother. Then, after that, I used to ask my mother-in-law about her involvement in community-based organizations. She said that there is one women's group that used to have regular meetings twice a year. I was more interested to see how women handle their meetings and what they discuss in there. I went to a women's CBOs meeting with my mother-in-law. When I reached there, I saw their three men, who were counting money, keeping records in a file, and discussing the interest of money. I was so surprised to see that women were sitting in a chair, folding their arms, and men were handling and

discussing several agendas in their CBOs. Later, when we returned home, I raised this issue with my mother-in-law, and she replied that we were illiterate, so men came to handle the meeting. At that time, there were several questions in my mind regarding women's participation. It stroked my mind, and I have decided to feminist research this woman's participation in my MPhil study. I decided to work toward women's development and want to focus more on women's participation and engagement in the future.

Being a daughter-in-law, wife, mother of a daughter, and teacher at the school, I have to handle several duties and responsibilities on my own. I have multiple roles from morning to evening. Despite this, the purpose of feminist research is to challenge the methodology created by males and strengthen the position of women in society. It uses a particular subset of techniques to explore a particular selection of problems. It generated knowledge that is not influenced by unfair beliefs and related categories like class, race, or religion, among others. As a volunteer, I am engaged in a few CBOs, such as the board committee of Godawari Sahitya Parishad and the women's committee of the Teacher Welfare Saving and Credit Cooperative. Recently, this year, we established a sister group in our community where we used to discuss several issues and save a little money on a monthly basis.

Statement of Problem

Being a teacher, I have had several opportunities to participate in community-based organizations and learn how to take leadership and how to handle meetings as consequences have developed my confidence. I am blessed to have participated in several organizations from the age of 17, which my other friends and relatives did not have. As a woman, I observed that women are getting engaged in several community-based organizations, but they hardly have active participation. I, as a woman, have faced many struggles and challenges in participating actively in community-based organizations where I am engaged. The struggle of women to create space for themselves through such CBOs has yet been less researched.

Women's access to and participation in CBOs has been impacted by a variety of factors, including political influence, caste, discrimination, dominance, and educational pathways that result in inequality. "Although numerous groups support women, violence against them persists and even worsens in our culture. There is a need to initiate programs to address discrimination and stop violence (Poudel, 2020). Women are the key to sustainable development and to ensure the quality of life in the

family; however, after getting married, they are overwhelmed with family responsibilities and work and are also affected by multiple forms. According to the constitution of Nepal 2015, Article 38, there are six rights for women. Every woman shall have equal rights to lineage without any gender discrimination. Every woman shall have the right relating to safe motherhood and reproductive health. There shall not be any physical, mental, sexual, psychological or any other kind of violence against women or any kind of oppression based on religious, social and cultural traditions and other practices. Such an act shall be punishable by law and the victim shall have the right to be compensated as provided for in law. Women shall have the right to access and participate in all state structures and bodies on the basis of the principle of proportional inclusion. Women shall have the right to special opportunity in the spheres of education, health, employment and social security on the basis of positive discrimination. Both the spouses shall have equal rights in property and family affairs.

There are several rights of women, but it is on paper only; those who are in higher-level position, politicians, leaders, policymakers, bureaucrats and ordinary people do not follow the rules and regulations, so women did not get equal opportunity getting land ownership and less participation in the community-based organization so there is less participation in decision making. Women and girls represent half of the world's population and, therefore, also half of its potential. But today, gender inequality persists everywhere and stagnates social progress (United Nations, 2018). If we look at global perspectives, women are dominated by males. In Nepal, there is no meaningful participation of women in the politics, economics, and social sectors of the nation (Dahal, 2021). Meaningful participation is a strategy for bringing about social change that relies on the active involvement of beneficiaries, significant stakeholders, and the community in order to better understand a problem and take appropriate, efficient, and long-lasting action. Having the chance to engage, discuss, learn, and make decisions that will benefit them all is what is meant by meaningful involvement. Everyone is entitled to take part in public life. In community-based organizations, women must actively participate in decision-making.

In women's community-based organizations, meaningful participation refers to the active and effective participation of women in which they may exercise sound judgment and leadership, discuss various agendas, and put decisions for the advancement of women in the community through CBOs into action. Numerous

studies on Nepalese women have been conducted, and numerous plans and programs have been developed. However, what is needed now is to put these concepts, know-how, and abilities into effect at the grassroots level.

In the social, educational, and political spheres of our culture, patriarchal behaviours are evident. Women today participate in many community-based organizations, such as women's cooperatives and women's groups, yet even they are unable to sign documents or express their true demands. In this regard, a lot of questions arise. How do the women understand community-based organizations? What are their practices in community-based organizations? Why do women participate in community-based organizations? Do women come to participate, or are they brought? Are they involved in engaging in meaningful decision-making or fulfilling gender quotas? Do they come to do signatures, or are they making a meaningful decision? So, the overlapping of women's participation in various community-based organizations has increased. It is necessary to find out the interests, context, and power of key stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of organizations' decisions, especially related to the involvement of women in CBOs.

Women have an important place in society and play a crucial role in the advancement of humanity. Women's roles are primarily acknowledged in the social, political, economic, cultural, and religious spheres, among others. The success of sustainable development and happier family life depends on women's status. Rural women, on the other hand, typically marry at a young age and have a lot of work and family obligations on their plates. Most Nepali rural women do not have access to formal schooling. Women put in a lot of effort in the fields, enduring hunger, and thirst, but their labour is not sufficiently rewarded. How do they participate in formal organization in such a situation? How do they interpret their principles? As a result, women's meaningful participation in numerous community-based organizations has increased.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the meaningful participation of women's participation in community-based organizations.

Research Question

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. How do women perceive their participation in community–based organizations?

2. How does their educational background (formal and non-formal) contribute to their participation in community–based organizations?

Significance of the Study

I consider women's participation in CBOs to be an empowering factor for women who are deprived at the household level and in society. I have not lived in a culture that values women's equality, where women are not equally represented in all spheres of human activity. As a participant in this study, I have made an effort to find out the socio-cultural practices of Nepali society and the experiences of Nepalese women. This study would inspire women who are having difficulty to join community-based organizations. This study would aid in the development of policies relating to women's participation in the organizational, sociological, educational, and economic spheres of human existence. More importantly, it would aid in exposing societal concerns surrounding women's participation in community-based organizations.

By accessing the participation of women in CBOs, the study would be advantageous and helpful to the federal, provincial, and local governments in terms of gender equality and non-discrimination. Women who actively participate in CBOs have strong leadership qualities, high levels of self-confidence, and the ability to manage a variety of circumstances. Participation of women in local government in many ways can be beneficial. It played a role in the development of women's decision-making abilities and participation in economic activities.

My discussion on women's participation and education is not only beneficial to educated women. It is equally useful for women who are far from formal education and far from being involved in CBOs. These regards explore the existing socio-cultural setting and the aspirations of women in Nepal. Undoubtedly, this kind of feminist research is beneficial to raise women's issues in the discussion. This research is also fruitful for my professional career, which would provide me with some insight into women's development. This research would empower me at present to pave the way for the future. Participation in this type of research would push me forward to explore other aspects regarding women. This research would raise the discriminatory practice that is prevalent in our society. By participating in this type of research, I wish to develop and discuss women's development.

Similarly, this study would be beneficial to look at the inequality in terms of gender, class, caste, and geography seen among women to have access and

participation in community-based organizations where they explore their interests and face several challenges of discrimination, violence, inequality, and domination. So, the study would be beneficial for education researchers to provide insights into women's current practice. This research would be beneficial for women policymakers, organizations, and women regarding equity, inclusion, and access to a community-based organization. It would be important for me to explore the current practice of women's participation and ideas for my professional development as well.

Delimitations

Community-based organizations seem to be too vast to cover in a single thesis. Therefore, this study mostly deals with women's participation in community-based organizations. I have looked into the participation of women and their roles, especially in community-based organizations for women. The study was focused only on women's participation in community-based organizations in the Godawari Municipality of Lalitpur District in Nepal.

Organization of the Study

The thesis is presented in seven chapters. The first chapter presents the research context, my reflections and observations, my participation with community-based organizations, the concept of research, and the significance of the study. The chapter also sets out the importance of the study. I reviewed the relevant past studies, research papers, and policies and presented them in the second chapter. It further includes different modalities of women's participation and theoretical references in line with my study. The third chapter includes the methodology of the study. It illustrated the adopted worldview, information about the research sites and research participants, my fieldwork and collection of stories, narratives, meaning-making processes, quality standards, and ethical considerations followed in this study.

The next two chapters discuss the data from the field regarding women's participation in community-based organizations. Chapter four presents the first research questions about the practices of women in community-based organizations. Chapter five presents a second research question about the contribution of education to CBOs. Based on the presentation and analysis of information collected from the field in those two chapters, findings are discussed in different themes in Chapter 6. Finally, I presented the conclusion and implications of the study.

Essence of the Chapter

This chapter starts with my participation in community-based organizations and my mother's experiences. I have come to a conclusion as to why I am doing this research. The chapter provides background information for the research on women's participation in community-based organizations. The story began with the struggle of my mother that I had heard and felt in my home. Then, I elaborate on my participation with a few local community-based organizations. I quickly reflected on my history and why I was interested in conducting research in this field. In that situation, I developed my research questions based on the statement of the problem. I created it with the aid of the literature and my personal experiences in the context of involvement and participation in community-based organizations. Similarly, the study's relevance is discussed and moved forward in the study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter includes an overview of the relevant literature, including theoretical perspectives and conceptual policies. The literature on women's engagement in community-based organizations has been reviewed at three stages: conceptual, empirical, and policy. I thoroughly reviewed the literature to help me better comprehend the following ideas: community-based organizations, participation and women, and education and women's engagement. I researched the gaps in women's participation in community-based organizations based on this information. In addition, I have talked about ideas of participation, feminist standpoint and social network theory. For the purpose of developing my understanding of research in an easy-to-understand field, I have also studied some relevant empirical papers. I have begun the chapter by presenting an overview of participation and women's participation in Nepal.

Participation and Women's Participation

A different way for the public to voice their opinions on managerial, economic, or other social decisions is through participation. In other words, participation can have a variety of meanings depending on the context. This is primarily due to the fact that several academics and development organizations have interpreted the idea differently. Despite the diversity of definitions, participation appears to have a common term in that all of them tend to boil down to terms like "people's involvement" or "people's engagement" (Mubita et al., 2017). People participate in community-based organizations in various ways. When there was a top-down strategy for development in the middle of the 1970s, participation in rural development became formally recognized. However, these strategies did not work to reduce poverty or promote rural development because there were few participants of local people in the development project (JICA, 2000).

Society must prioritize an inclusive and participative approach in order to ensure participation in organizations. Understanding what participation means at the grassroots level is essential to improving engagement in an organization. People do, however, participate in community-based organizations for their own gain, such as to speak out, build their leadership, and network in order to become more powerful and

grow themselves. Some contend that regional groups do not help the weaker sections of society (Mubita et al., 2017).

Figure 1.

Participation Theory

8	CITIZEN CONTROL	
7	DELEGATION	'REAL' PARTICIPATION
6	PARTNERSHIP	
5	PLACATION	
4	CONSULTATION	SYMBOLIC PARTICIPATION
3	INFORMING	
2	THERAPY	NON-PARTICIPATION
1	MANIPULATION	
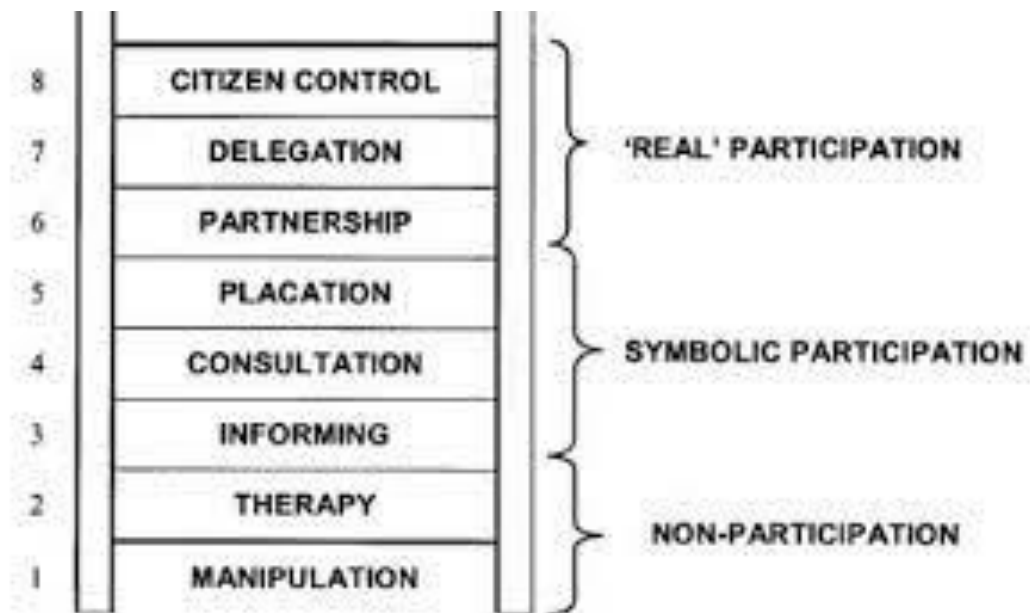
(Arnstein, 1969, p. 217)

The figure was introduced by Arnstein, which has eight participation levels representings a different level of participation. The bottom two rungs of the ladder are described as nonparticipation. 3, 4, and 5 rungs level of tokenism" that allow the have not to hear and to have a voice. 6, 7, 8 rungs, top one are taken as citizen power. Moving up the ladder are levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of decision-making influence (Hedstom & Smith, 2013, as cited in Dhakal, p. 51).

Without women, the group would not be able to advance toward civilization. Women are generally thought to make up about half of the population worldwide. Nepal, a nation where "Sati"(a tradition that required women to jump onto the funeral pyre of their dead husbands) was once prevalent, currently leads South Asia in terms of the participation of women in parliament (Adhikari, 2020). Women are elected to constitutionally mandated positions in Nepal, such as that of President Bidhya Devi Bhandari and Speaker of the Parliament Onsari Gharti Magar. Likewise, Sushila Karki served as Chief Justice and made notable achievements (Dahal, 2021). Women make up half (51.5%) of Nepal's population, but historically, they have had less power than men since they have less access to government services and the ability to vote (Bhattarai, 2017, as cited in Dhakal, 2020, p. 43).

Dangol (2021) states that the greater representation and participation of women in local governance is due only to the democratization, liberalization, and modernization process around the world but is rather a matter of human development for the eradication of poverty and sustainable governance. Women's representation in local government varies according to local social norms and power dynamics. Women tend to be more severely underrepresented in less urbanized areas with more traditional gender norms and in political offices or positions with more power, particularly expenditure power. (UN Women, 2021).

Women's Participation in Community-based Organizations

In early development approaches, the role of women in their communities was ignored. Everyone has the right to participate. Participation is an essential part of developing a sustainable future. CBOs are such organizations and institutions of people who have local area, village-based presence, maturity and structural arrangements. These are owned and managed by community members. They are formal, legal entities or informal registered organizations maintaining separate books of accounts, systems & ways of working. They have group identity membership. They should not be affiliated with any religious, political or separatist parties/ groups. A community-based Organization is defined as a public or private nonprofit that is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community and is engaged in meeting human, educational, environmental, or public safety community needs.

Globally, women make up half of the human population in most countries. They play a key role in the socialization process in their societies as mothers. When we see the individual, we always analyze his/ her behaviour. There is always a socialization process that always plays an important role in individual development. Women's space in society is led by the gender construction that constrains development. The civic space the women occupy influences their educational opportunities. There exists a wider gap between men and women in all development aspects, such as social, economic, and political sectors, in lower-level to higher-level positions in the context of Nepal. The participation of females is lower in the decision-making process on social, economic, and political grounds Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2012). The situation of women's participation is not encouraging in the development sector. Discrimination between males and females can be observed in government organizations, non–governmental

organizations, and also in private institutions (European Commission, 2012; UNESCO, 2010). Historically, men have dominated management, leadership, and administrative and policy formulation positions. The government introduced the policy of quota systems for females to reserve thirty-three percent of positions in all bodies. However, the result reveals that female occupies less than one percent of high-level decision-making position (ADB, 2010). Women's voice in the country has risen in strength due to the number of women's organizations increasing. Many changes have taken when organizations have shifted their emphasis from welfare to development, stressing the importance of enabling poor women to obtain access to credit literacy, employment, income, healthcare, and family planning (Starbird, Norton, & Marcus 2016).

Community-based organization (CBOs) have highly affected the rural woman who lives in poverty and survive their lives in too much pitiable condition. Nowadays, CBOs has appeared as a tonic in curing diseases in rural area. Nepal is one of the poorest country in the world, where approximately 60% of its population is below the poverty line, and half of the population is women. If women are neglected, then how can this country develop? The government and non-government sectors have realized in their speeches that without women, development is not possible, and the output is diminutive. Now, life has come for the CBOs and private organizations to create a sound environment for equal participation of men and women and provide equal opportunities to contribute to the betterment of the nation and their own community.

The community-based organizations play a key role in sustainable development and continuing development initiatives. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen their capacity on a regular basis so that they remain active and effective in their respective locations.

Education and Women Participation

Education plays one of the key roles in contributing to Community-based organizations. Besides, women are playing an important role in the participation of the women in community-based organizations in the village. Women are participating in women's CBOs, which improve their capabilities and capacities. In rural areas, household women have very low participation in providing support to the family and decision-making. Their level of education is also low (Gurung, 2016). Women's space in society is led by gender construction that constrains their development. The involvement of women in community-based organizations influences their education

opportunities. The space that women occupy in family and society has a direct linkage with their education.

The space that women occupy in family and society has a direct linkage with their education societies, where women have comparatively less space than men and have fewer educational opportunities. They are more involved in household work. The learning environment is not created for them. Parents have a strong desire to educate boys as well as girls. Education was available only for men because men were the only ones who earned for a household who would get a job with an education. Women go to their husbands' houses when they get married. After marriage, women are supposed to be a housewife. Elderly people thought that to become a housewife, there was no need for education results in women being discriminated against from when they were born (Cerrato & Cirfe, 2018). Time spent in everyday educational activities has been increasing over the years, although in most rural areas, boys spend much more time engaged in education than girls. Girls are being engaged in household work far more than boys.

Conversely, educated women have social approval for a lifelong and prestigious career. Women who have studied and received education are also breaking traditional housekeeping rules and caring for the family and are engaged in business, service, wage-earning, etc. Similarly, they can better take care of their health and participate in community interaction.

Understanding Women in Social Context

In most societies, a few years ago, the activities of men and women were divided outside and inside of the home. Therefore, the social mobility of women is restricted and controlled. It is observed that men are given better education to compete. Women have become dependent on men due to a lack of resources outside the house, and hence, in the social, economic, and political areas, men become the basis of power. Women's role in forming economic and social policies is negligible. Due to being away from women's decision-making bodies, they do not get any chance to raise their concerns or promote their participation in politics. However, now the day period of the time is not the same as earlier, so women are doing lots of progressive developmental work for family, society, and the nation as well.

Figure 2.

Political Representation of Men and Women at Federal, Provincial and Local Level Legislatures
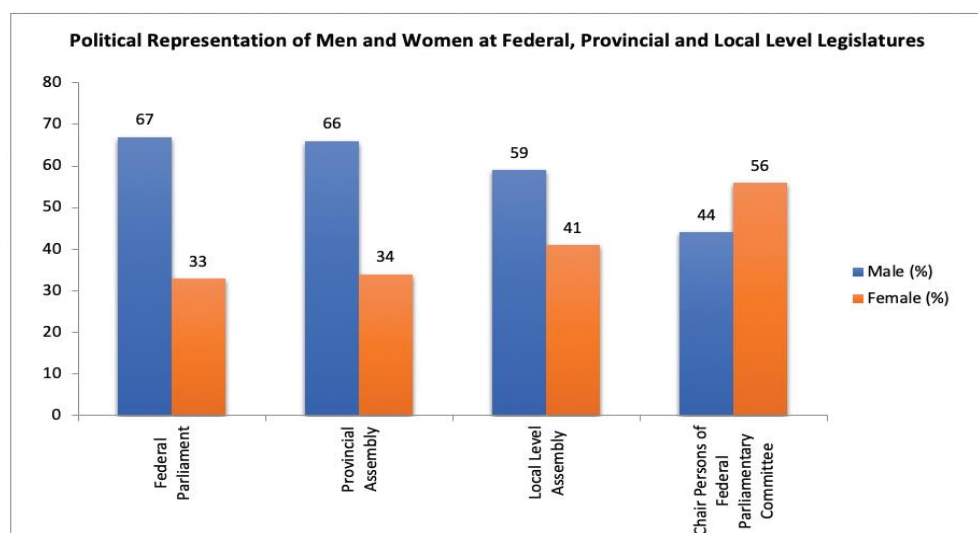
(USAID, 2020)

  The bar graph indicates the Federal Parliament, Provincial Assemblies, and Local Assemblies of Nepal are ideal examples of inclusivity. According to MoWCSC (2020), the increasing level of inclusion is widely recognized as a quiet revolution that is permanently altering the distribution of power and authority in society. More than 33% of women are represented in each of the three levels of government. This is another sign of how the social order is changing. The recent shift in women's employment, sectoral leadership, and representation shows Nepal's progress toward real gender equality. Federalism is a novel idea in Nepal; therefore, the only way to achieve substantive equality is through the combined efforts of all three levels of government, i.e., Federal, Provincial, and Local. In light of this, the Government of Nepal (GoN) has established a framework with three basic pillars, namely, gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment and rescue, social protection and rehabilitation, and the foundation of collaboration, coordination, and networking among the three tiers of government and civil society.

  Nepali women are among the worst, with exclusion practices embedded in society from the very beginning. Women and girls are discriminated against in all facts of life. They are victimized by norms, values, and caste and lack access to cultural, economic, and political opportunities more than men. Women's and men's roles are classified and determined by the socio-cultural plus economic practices of society. Women were forced to do household jobs and agriculture jobs, which were unpaid. At that time, they did not know about discrimination, violence, and the

importance of education (Cerrato & Cirfe, 2018). In most Nepalese families, women have considerably less access to earn money. Household and childcare activities are unpaid and are carried out almost exclusively by women. They are considered to be without monetary value. Most household women are devoting their time to remunerative work such as washing clothes, cooking, cleaning, and rearing and up-bearing children, who are not merely considered as duties of women. Besides that, the number of women involved in agriculture work is higher than men. Women's social and economic conditions are miserable.

My mother always raises cattle and has grown seasonal framings. She is always busy with her work from early morning to late evening. However, she is participating in some community-based organizations such as women's groups, women's cooperatives, agriculture women's groups, CLC, etc. She has been engaging in this type of CBO for more than a decade when I have free time, and I sometimes go together with her to learn about community-based organizations in which she has been participating somehow. Sometimes, I found that she is involved as an active participant, sometimes as a passive participant, and a neutral participant. The Government of Nepal (2015), under the directive principles and policies of the state, states that the state shall pursue a policy of making the female population participate, to a greater extent, in the task of national development by making special provisions for their education, health, and employment. Compulsory representation of females in each sector with a certain quota is in practice as its date. So, we can see that there is the involvement of women in various organizations.

Theoretical Review

In qualitative research, theory functions as a guide to the knowledge production process and provides a complex and comprehensive conceptual understanding of the things that pin down how societies work, how the organization operates, and why people interact in certain ways. I have outlined some major theoretical constructs guiding this study.

Participation Theory

The study's goal is to research how women perceive, comprehend, and experience participation in community-based organizations. This includes using one's power to raise women's status in the community. According to Garber (2019), participation is the redistribution of citizen power that enables the weak, without representation and left behind, to gain control and achieve their desired outcomes in

the community and institutions. Through participation in various frameworks, knowledge and capacity are practised. Committees, groups, associations, networks, etc. According to Arnstein (1969), participation is a strategy for integrating the underprivileged by sharing information, developing plans and strategies, and gaining access to and exercising control over resources.

In order to examine women's knowledge, involvement, and level of participation in their community-based organizations for my research, this idea provided a theory of participation. According to Quick and Bryson (2016), the Sherry Arnstein paper is still one of the most widely read and mentioned works of literature on the subject. Manipulation, treatment, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control are the eight stages of participation that Arnstein (1969) outlines, going from lower to higher ones. According to her explanation, the bottom two levels are non-participation levels, the third, fourth, and fifth are token involvement, and the top is meaningful citizen participation.

Although she communicates in the form of steps or ladder rungs, this does not mean that everyone must ascend the ladder in this manner; some people may reach any rung at any moment, depending on who they are and where they are. In addition, the ladder ignores the obstacles that must be overcome to advance to the next level (Ghulam, 2014). As a result, the ladder may be interpreted as suggestive, showing that women may encounter many more rungs at the bottom of the ladder and that, given their intersecting social positions, certain people may find it easier and others more difficult to climb the ladder. A person may also be at the top of the ladder in one instance of time and space and at the bottom in another instance of time and space at the same time.

According to Arnstein (1969), the lowest two rungs represent various levels of "non-participation." The marginalized are given a voice in Rungs 3, 4, and 5, but this stage does not guarantee that their voices will be truly heard by the more powerful members. Amounts of citizen power rise up the ladder with increasing amounts of influence on decision-making (Hedström & Smith, 2013). At rung 6, we may see a scenario where men and women work together to make decisions about gender reforms that allow women to make trade-offs with males. The highest positions (7 & 8) allow women, people of other gender minorities, and other oppressed groups to exercise full management power and hence have a significant impact on the majority of choices (Hedström & Smith, 2013).

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Strong reflexivity, as defined by Sandra Harding, is related to feminist perspective theory. The feminist perspective emphasizes underrepresented and often invisible women. In relation to various feminist theorists, such as Dorothy Smith, Nacy Hurtsock, Donna Haraway, Sandra Harding, Alison Wyle, and Patricia Hill Collings, it further defines the feminist perspective (Pandey, 2016). The main tenet of Standpoint Feminism is that women's voices are distinct from men's voices, and as a result, they must be at the centre of knowledge, culture, and politics in order to challenge hegemonic values. They contend that whoever determines the direction of scientific inquiry, determines the subject matter of education, and determines the symbols that pass through cultural production has hegemonic power. The epistemology of the feminist perspective offers a way to name the oppression of women that is based on reality. The masculine concept of truth and methodology challenges it in the context of women's experiences (Litherby, 2010).

Feminist standpoint theory generates it as a widespread analytical tool by accepting popularity as an inherent characteristic of the human condition and especially to the collective identity and yet multiple standpoints of women (Gurung, 2020, p. 113). Harding (1997) suggests that standpoint feminism uses a kind of natural experiment that could be observed in everyday life and accounted for from the specific locations of the people who experience them (as cited in Kokushin, 2014). Similarly, the perspective of women in different social locations can be better understood with the help of feminist standpoint theory because it places the lived experiences of the marginalized group at the centre of the research (Huirem et al., 2020, as cited in Gurung, 2020).

Pandey (2016) states that feminist standpoint theorists believe in diversity among women, their experience and knowledge that varies due to unique social, political, and economic background. They stress gender mainstreaming in all sectors of social structure and recognition of women's leadership and knowledge. This can be a driving vehicle toward social transformation. This idea corroborates the third-wave feminism that emerged in the mid-1990s, which advocates the need to accommodate diversity within the ambient of mainstreaming gender equality and the changing nature of society (Swirsky & Angelore, 2016).

Malla (2011) states that in a patriarchal and male-dominated society, inadequate and unfair representation in politics is a historically hard reality because

the principle of inequality exerts its influence on society and the socialization process. Consequently, women are found in a marginal position in the political and public spheres. Their access to knowledge, skill, and independent political activity is limited.

The feminist theory argues that gender is a central organizing component of social life. Gender is socially constructed, and expectations about the attitudes and behaviours of women and men. Among feminist theories, Standpoint theory is appropriate, and it helps me to guide this research in a way. Create the circumstances, from the point of view of my research, that will allow me to express systematically overlooked knowledge that cannot be acknowledged within the dominant knowledge system of women in participating local organizations. It helped me understand how women have led the way in my community's organizations working for social change. Every woman, in my opinion, is unique and has a variety of identities, each of which could conceivably offer a perspective on knowledge. Theorists of perspectives hold that everyone in the social world is equally entitled to the advantages. Women deal with a variety of issues from their families and employment (Verniers &Vala, 2018). Women attempted to participate in a number of local organizations since these circumstances encouraged them to stand independently and stand strongly in several areas.

This theoretical idea of participation and its ladder encouraged me to include this idea in the research to build the method of data gathering and analysis. Similarly, this idea advises that I assess the degree of engagement and participation of various actors and that I examine the research findings to assess the real participation of women in community-based organizations. The study expresses the women's actual life circumstances in regard to their participation in community-based organizations and access to education. This study will aid in examining women's actual circumstances as seen through their own lenses. Among others, Dorothy Smith created "Standpoint Theory as a sophisticated analytical instrument that takes into consideration the experiences, context, and location of women's lives, including their daily and especially nighttime environments (Hawthorne, 2008, p. 50). I have also heard of women's experiences in this area.

Social Network Theory

I used a qualitative research methodology to look at how often women participate in community-based organizations during my study. Our identity is deeply rooted in our social, political, historical, and cultural contexts, in addition to our personal and societal identities (Carrim & Nkomo, 2016). Consequently, the study's theoretical foundation is provided by social network theory.

The social network theory looks at many networks of relationships between people and the variables that connect them. The phrase "social network theory" is used to refer to a variety of theories that concentrate on people, groups, and organizations, as well as the web of interpersonal connections that both limit and facilitate human action in these social systems. According to Borgatti and Halgin (2011), the word "social network" has come to mean network as a collection of participants, or nodes, connected by a collection of relationships of a particular kind for women in community-based groups. One can locate women's networks using social network theory and access the effects these networks have on them. Social network influences a focal person's perceptions of peers in an organization.

Networks consist of actors who build relationships with one another and those relationships create overall social structures. The theoretical interest is not based on so-called classical attributes of individuals, like gender, race, age, or characteristics of institutions, but on relationships and their structures and the embedding of the actors within a network (Gamper, 2022). These structures have an impact on social network behaviour, and social capital rewards good behaviour. Cooperative individuals gather in networks supported by link cooperation, providing them with new connections while simultaneously excluding non-cooperative or bad actors. An actor's access to information, and therefore their power and influence, depend on how well they are integrated into the network. All of this is social capital that people gain from their roles and actions within the network, which may then be transformed into economic or human capital when those advantages are seen in their business activities.

Because it can be exchanged due to the advantages it provides within a social network, social capital can thus serve as an alternative for other types of capital. As a result, it can be used to reward people while also serving as a kind of discipline by suggesting withdrawal.

In a social network's structure, bridge relationships are typically weak ties that provide access to new knowledge and ways of thinking. Strong links, on the other

hand, enable people to complete tasks efficiently and enjoy higher trust since they are more likely to return the favours in the long run. As a result, the best social structure for accessing new ideas and acting on them to produce earnings is created by a combination of strong relationships and weak ties. Individuals need complicated roles and status sets in order to thrive in this complex social environment, connect with those who are unlike them, and communicate their views to a wide range of other actors.

Policy Review

The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is a global policy document that envisions equality between women, girls, and men, boys, based on agreements among State governments worldwide. In this regard, CEDAW rules encourage the adoption of suitable measures to guarantee equal participation of women in governmental and non-governmental structures (Article 7 of each State's constitution), formal and non-formal educational institutions, self-help groups, and community activities (Article 14).

Similarly, the Nepal Constitution, Article 10, guarantees all women the same rights as males, including the right to health, to education, and to the enjoyment of services and opportunities. This treaty emphasizes women's equal participation and prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender or any other factor, which the relevant government is required to uphold.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948, another significant international policy text, affirms women's right to participation in governmental and non-governmental structures. All citizens have equal access to public services and the right to directly or indirectly engage in governance through representatives, according to Article 21 of the Constitution, which supports this.

According to these internal norms, Nepal's Constitution 2015 grants women the fundamental rights to education and equal treatment with males. According to the Constitution's Article 31, every citizen has the right to receive from the state free education up to the secondary level and obligatory education up to the basic level. On the basis of the principle of proportional inclusion, every woman should have the right to participate in every aspect of government (article 38). Based on positive discrimination, they have equal rights to work, property, and access to healthcare and education.

Girls' education in Nepal has improved since the country's formal education system was established. There has been a comparative improvement in girls' access to education and formal education. Additionally, through the Chelibeti Program (A specific literacy program for females who drop out while studying in formal education in school)for out-of-school girls, government-sponsored educational initiatives like the Seti Education for Rural Development Project, which was implemented in the nation's Far Western Development Region from 1881 to 1991 (Ministry of Education [MoE]/UNICEF, 1998), significantly improved girls' education. To improve the status of girls and women, several NGOs and INGOs engage in gender sensitization, legal advocacy, and literacy (MoE/UNICEF, 1998). They also work along with local, regional, and global groups like Save the Children.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Welfare was founded to promote girls' involvement in schooling. The sixth five-year plan, which covered the years 1980 to 1985, provided the nation's first actual initiatives to boost women's participation in development. Successive plans have focused on improving their status through initiatives to mainstream and empower women (UNDP, 2004). The ninth plan (1997-2002) and the tenth plan (2002-2007) both placed a high priority on eradicating gender inequality, with gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment acting as its two principal policies on women and girls, respectively.

Why are there more women in institutions now than there were in the past? The creation of a quota system is the final response to this query. The quota strategy has been adopted by numerous nations. Affirmative action to promote women within the party, women's political mobilization, the enlargement of electoral districts, and the limitation of electoral terms to ensure higher turnover can all help to overcome the constraints of the electoral system, according to Tripp and Kang (2008), who were among the first to write about quotas as solutions and institutional barriers to women representation (p. 495).

The use of quotas is thought to empower women. A quota system wasn't in use previously. Women representatives were scarce. We now have women represented in every field thanks to proportionate division. Women's quotas require that they make up a certain number or percentage of the membership of that organization, whether it is a candidate list, parliamentary assembly, committee, or government (Danlerup, 2006, as cited in Dhakal, 2021, p. 47). A quota might serve as a platform for change. A temporary quota system can be used to bring about significant change. Quotas by

themselves, however, are inadequate to change a system. They must be accompanied by laws, budgets, and policies that are gender-sensitive and inclusive. Quota should be considered a minimum standard instead of just a goal (Committee on Equality & Non-discrimination, 2021). Quotas for women's participation in CBOs made it difficult for women to challenge established beliefs about their roles in politics and decision-making. However, quotas by themselves were insufficient for a long time and significant participation. It is still questionable whether the quota system has been implemented in a way that is both inclusive and representative.

According to the Constitution of Nepal (2015), the government must follow a strategy to increase the population's participation in the effort to achieve national development by establishing particular provisions for their employment, education, and health. At this time, a specific quota for the mandatory representation of women in each industry is also devised.

In every committed development of a community-based organization, women are underrepresented. A modest amount of women are represented in CBOs as well. There are occasionally no women present when decisions on various occupations are being made in community organizations. Despite the legal requirements, the problem of women's participation in community-based organizations is not addressed. They only occasionally participate in processes involving representation and do not hold positions of leadership that would allow them to affect both the creation and implementation of decisions. Cultural and structural support for women's participation rights in community-based organizations is lacking.

Women Participation in Community-based Organizations: A Cultural Aspects

Most women are raised according to social roles and responsibilities to prepare for their domestic duties. They are equipped to serve the entire family, cook, carry, raise, and care for the children. There may be more exposure to interactions between people in the social setting created for boys and girls since all genders are members of the same society. Development shouldn't be restricted to males alone. Such information is used in a culture where it is widely believed that men and women belong to different social classes (Thapa, 2012, p. 34).

The patriarchal culture and gender norms not only denied girls the chance to pursue an education but also caused them to suffer and be suppressed while still very young. Lack of education also prevented women from having access to the most up-to-date information and problem-solving abilities, which reduced their influence even

after they married men. Such a socialization process usually kept women inside the four walls of the home. Through patriarchal social norms, values, and history, this practice has been preserved and upheld (Tanye, 2008).

Similarly, those behaviours simply limited women's knowledge and perception of their rights, obligations, and personal development because they had very little knowledge that they could experience and pull into their minds from their constrained household environments. This is why there should be more opportunities for women to pursue education and join community-based groups. According to the sociological perspective on women's status, women are oppressed because of society's discriminating norms and behaviours. Because of the various positions, women's values and potential have been dormant.

Religion has sparked the widespread nature of discrimination against women. The concepts, norms, and beliefs of Buddhism and Hinduism have positioned males in hierarchical positions as superior and women as inferior. This inequity, which is deeply rooted in norms and attitudes, has held down the advancement of women in many spheres of life, including education.

Women are not allowed to read the Vedas according to Hinduism. The Gayatri mantra cannot be chanted by them. Nevertheless, the Gayatri mantra is recited and listened to by many people today, including women. Despite having a smaller role in Hinduism, it has been discovered that women were once revered as Goddesses. According to Duwadi (2009), the goddess-like Shakti possesses the divine feminine ability to subdue evil. The knowledge that Manusmriti tries to give is also gender–biased. The Hindu law has downgraded women. Manusmriti has set the status of women basically as a form of property, having no rights of their own. It has defined women as dependent on others from childhood to old age. According to Manusmriti, Women are also fixed, restricted and minimized in some areas. Independence of women/girls is restricted in doing anything, even in their own house (5.147), where they must be controlled by the father in childhood, husband in youth and son after the death of their husband (5.148) and they must not seek to separate themselves from her father, husband, or sons (5.149). Women have to be so devoted to their husbands that until a few centuries back, they had to go for sati (self-immolation) in their husbands' deaths (Duwadi, 2009), whereas we do not have to do so in their wives' deaths.

Women are not considered capable of salvation due to their menstruation cycle (Duwadi, 2009). According to Majupuria (1982) and Luitel (1996), Goddess

Saraswati is regarded as the source of wisdom, whereas Goddess Lakshmi is the source of prosperity, despite the fact that a female holding such a position in religious texts, prevalent conventional wisdom and behaviours that devalue women's roles don't seem to support what is found in these texts.

In some districts of Nepal's far- and mid-western regions, where menstruation is known as Chhaupadi, they are treated like animals during this time. During their period, they must spend a week at the cowshed. When women are menstruating, it's said that doing so will enrage the gods and goddesses and render men, children, crops, and cattle filthy. (Kafle, 2010).

Women's space was a little bit higher during the Buddhist era since understanding and behaviour regarding women's space were a little bit more open (Thapa, 2012, p.36). They are free to spend their married lives with anyone they choose (Luitel, 1996). But Buddhism also emphasizes how low women's status is in society. The conclusion is that religion, as well as social circumstances, has degraded women to the point of discriminating practices. In Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism, women's dignity is mostly ignored.

Linkage between CBOs and Women Participation

In Nepal's traditional, mainly male society, biases against women are found on the social, cultural, and political levels. Women have less access to educational and employment possibilities than their male counterparts. Even when they have the least authority to act on their own initiative, they have less power and competence than their male counterparts. In the past, women were financially dependent on men (father, husband, or brother), who were viewed as the family's aggressive breadwinners (Gomden, 2011). They are concentrated on achieving financial security. Women are largely restricted to domestic or passionate farmyard duties. The majority of families and society still actively and implicitly discourage women from making decisions. Women must perform all traditional duties.

In addition to their traditional responsibilities, women also have the extra burden of managing the household and production. Policymakers in government and mainstream development around the world are now paying attention to the link between poverty and women's lack of access to resources. In addition to government initiatives, community-based organizations in Nepal are putting several types of programs for women's empowerment into action. These programs include safe motherhood initiatives, rehabilitation and job placement for rescued women, and

livelihood assistance initiatives. The status of women in Nepal is still unsatisfactory, as different official as well as unofficial reports suggest, and the results fall short of the state objectives of the CBOs. This is true even though a number of CBOs participate in programs that aim to empower women through the creation of income and the development of skills. Women empowerment programs are often questioned.

Empirical Review

In this section, I have presented some insights based on past studies on women's participation and women's education. As I have mentioned in some relevant literature, one very close theme of women's participation in local organizations was one by Weinberger and Jutting (2001), who conducted a research study on the issue of women's participation in local organizations: conditions and constraints. Their study found that women play traditional roles such as cooking, serving, and following; these roles do not push women to the position where they fully participate in local organizations. Previous studies showed that women are affected by social norms not favouring women participating in groups. They did not present such data; women had been involved in local organizations, however, going through very limited resources in previous studies. I come to realize that there is a lack of qualitative research studies on the perception of involving women in community-based organizations.

Another study did research on women's participation in community development projects. Their main concern was to find different factors which affect women's participation in community-based development projects. The study further explained that women were not involved in the decision-making process. The study also recommends that women should be empowered through education and training. There is a need to sensitize women through civic education to participate in the project cycle (Kisimbi & Nairobi 2021).

Regarding women's participation in household decision-making, Bartula (2018), studied in MPhil, concluded that Nepali women have been facing lots of challenges in the major decision-making process. Their education and their confidence help them to develop their capability, education of the kind needed to help the women get access to resources and opportunities to the available privileges through which they can bring their meaningful participation in decision making.

Regarding women's participation in school governance, Adhikari (2021), studied in MPhil, has explored the status of women's participation and its contribution to school governance along with the socio-economic context and institution capacity.

The meaningful participation of women in school governance contributes to improving its governance situation.

Similarly, Dhakal (2019) explain women in school governance in Nepal had studied PhD and explored Perceptions of male members on women's participation in school governance is still largely shaped by a patriarchal mindset which views women as being limited to kitchen work and that they do not know about school governance that is not their territory (this is men's game, you (women) do not know the rules of the game). This silences women's voices and represses their agency. This not only rings out women right at the beginning of coming to the School Management Committee (SMC) but also reduces the scope of women's participation and contribution. This, however, may gradually fade away with women's impactful performance despite them having been given any specific 'formal' roles.

Mutongu (2012) studied women's participation in community-based organizations' development as a strategy for poverty reduction in Kenya and highlighted to achieve empowerment; transformative gender training should integrate an analysis of the issue of power, privilege, culture, and tradition with access and control over resources as well as project-oriented gender training. In finding there is a limit on women's participation in CBOs, more participation would be realized, resulting in balanced community development and a step forward in the poverty reduction community. The study's key finding was that women can actively participate in local organizations if they are educated or if they have training. The study highlights that much research has been done regarding women's education and participation in areas, but their participation is low level.

Poudel (2020) studied "Domestic Violence against Married Women in Kaski district, Nepal, which highlights most the reproductive-age women were suffering from any form of domestic violence globally. Among them, most of the women are suffering from their husbands. The majority of the respondent's husbands are alcoholics, use vulgar words, behave roughly and don't trust their wives.

Similarly, women are less represented in local government bodies across all tiers of government. Women are better represented in age groups from 40 -59 years than in older age groups. So, women's representation is also more pronounced in the younger reproductive age groups, when women tend to spend more time caring for their children. We can see that younger women are not trustful of local government bodies. They are busy with their personal and professional work. We have habits of

engaging mature women in their local government, and young women are also busy with their personal and professional work (U.N Women, 2021).

Further, Saud (2020) has studied "Barriers of Rural Women's Representation and Participation in Local Governance in SudurPachhim Province of Nepal". Here, the finding of the study revealed that the level of confidence and capacity-building needs of female members vary according to their political background and their exposure to public life. The research findings indicated that rural women in Nepal faced two problems, particularly under representative and low participation, compared to women in urban councils and men in formal political and economic institutions.

Huq (2016) highlights that women's participation in local government has positive effects on the quality of local government, without taking women's needs and interests into account and the opportunity for them to participate in and influence decision-making, development interventions and planning.

Lean et al. (2021) studied women's civic and political participation in the developing world: Obstacles and Opportunities focused on women's civic and political participation in the developing world. Various individual and contextual correlates of the gender gap highlight four main areas of study related to strategies to increase women's participation. These include two main institution strategies: the adaption of gender quotas and the design of woman-targeted social programs, and the main activist strategies, the use of social media and online platforms and mobilizing intersecting identities.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) (2014), women's participation and voice in community-based organizations also focus on creating an enabling environment for women to express their voice and agency in CBOs requires employing different strategies to facilitate their meaningful participation through quotas for women's participation and capacity development to support female quotas and economics opportunities and empowerment.

From the above studies, we can conclude that women participate in community-based organizations in various ways. Women are also contributing to local organizations, but there is still a gap in exploring their meaningful engagement in participation in various spheres of organizational decision-making, etc. Women's participation is important in the socio-cultural context of Nepal. Women have been facing lots of challenges in making decisions; however, education and their confidence help them to develop their capacity.

Research Gap

Various types of research show the importance of women's participation in their community-based organizations. There is still a gap between theory and practice. Much research and studies have already been done in the area regarding women's empowerment in different areas around the world. Very little research has been done in the field of women's participation in community-based organizations. There is still a gap between theory and practice. There is still a gap to understand in what is understood as women's participation and how they are contributing to community-based organizations. Dahal (2021) argues that women are suffering and struggling for empowerment. In Nepal, there is no meaningful participation in politics, economics, and social sectors, but constitutional and legal rights are theoretically provided for women's participation. In practice, women are suffering in society and at the household level. The need seems to explore how women create their participation in local organizations. This study will attempt to bridge that gap.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The approach utilized in this research was described in depth in this chapter. The chapter has provided guidance throughout the research process, from important information gathering to the creation of the research paradigm. The chapter discussed philosophical ideas that helped me position myself as an ethnographic enquirer throughout the study. In a similar vein, my research's quality standards, ethical consideration, field engagement strategies and meaning-making process are all elaborated here. This chapter is mostly given in three sections. Philosophical approaches are covered in the first section, methodological approaches in the second, and procedural approaches in the third.

Research Paradigm: Interpretive

Researchers generally have their own set of views when conducting research and a paradigm is a worldview that directs the course of action for a study. The phrase "comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practices in the field" is how Will (2007) specifically described paradigms (p. 8). Research paradigm refers to the collection of assumptions that direct a researcher's actions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).In my understanding, each person has unique experiences that influence the researcher's decision on the research approach and methods.

I have chosen an interpretive research paradigm for my research. A paradigm is a set of ideas with basic assumptions, ways of thinking and methodology commonly accepted. I have chosen the interpretive research method for my study. It helped me interpret and understand women's subjective reality and their involvement in community-based organizations. The interpretive tries to get into the head of the studied subjects, thinking or the meaning s/he is making the context (Kivujja & Kuyini, 2017).

Moreover, these paradigms help me observe and interact with my participant's views, backgrounds, and experiences to help further interpretation and generalization. I have discussed ethnography as an interpretive research paradigm as a qualitative researcher. The interpretive paradigm and qualitative methods would enable researchers to gain further depth by seeking experiences and perceptions of a

particular social context (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). The interpretative paradigm helped me to explore several subjective experiences, interpretations, and experiences of women's participation in community-based organizations. For this, I listened to their words and responses and observed their feeling, emotions, and expressions. I have interpreted those experiences and their ways of seeing things.

I explored how women's interests and behaviours towards their participation in community-based organizations are understood and experienced. Both the interpretive paradigm and the qualitative research strategy were suitable choices. In order to analyze their practices and understand how they have been engaged in community-based organizations, I chatted with specific women, watched them at work, and took notes on their actions. I also interpreted their experiences, which I perceived as the origin of many different realities. The practices of women's participation in CBOs were observed through my interpretive lens. I have listened to their tales and experiences and have observed how they express their emotions.

Philosophical Understanding

In this part of my research, I discuss philosophical considerations which shaped my journey as a researcher to explore women's participation in community-based organizations. I have chosen ethnography inquiry for the study to obtain knowledge from an ontological and epistemological position with multiple realities and subjectivity. Under philosophical considerations, ontological assumptions concern the way of being and becoming multiple realities. Epistemological assumptions concern the ways of knowing and further axiology has to deal with ways of value, which I have discussed in this section.

Philosophical approaches help a researcher search for the answer to fundamental questions about the nature of knowledge and the nature of reality. As such, the research philosophy should contain important assumptions about how we view the world (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Philosophical stands guide the existence of knowledge, the value of knowledge, and ways to generate knowledge. It deals with the researcher's existence as well. In this research endeavour, I believe that women's participation in a community-based organization has individual perspectives. It is possible to document individuals' philosophies based on their context. I believe that every research is interpretative as it is also guided by researchers' feelings and ways to understand it. In this relation, I am guided by the interpretive paradigm.

Ontology

My ontology is mainly concerned with the study of realities. In this regard, it mentions that the ontological belief system informs both our sense of the social world and, correspondingly, what we have learned about it and how we can do so. As an interpretive researcher, my ontological position is relativism, which views reality as subjective and differs from person to person. As such, my ontological understanding of this study is to get deeper into the meaning of women's participation in terms of perception and understanding of women (Leavy, 2017).

Women are expressing many social identities at different levels, discrimination, a domain of power, and violence that overlaps with their path to joining community-based organizations. People perceive, engage with, and perceive subjective reality in different ways. They are aware of their numerous social identities, the influence of historically widespread inequality, and their access to and involvement with community-based organizations. I investigated women's experiences as a qualitative researcher, heard their tales, and tracked their ongoing participation in community-based organizations.

Epistemology

As per my understanding, epistemology is mainly concerned with the study of knowledge. Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, the philosophical study of nature, origin, and scope of knowledge (Moser, 2010). In this case of an epistemological concern, I have established the knowledge of and practices about women and their involvement in community-based organizations through the discourse of my research participants, their perceptions, observations, and interpretations.

My understanding of the research is set forth by constructivist epistemology, where I believe that knowledge and the meaning of women's participation in a community-based organization do not exist independently of the learner (Mensah, 2015). It is rather constructed. Meaning is the result of the interpretative process, and it depends on the knower's experience and understanding. It means that knowing is continuous, which could not be perfect. Therefore, based on their experiences and the current situation, people develop their knowledge. Based on this philosophy, I gathered the women's experiences, opinions, and information on their involvement in community-based organizations. They discussed their techniques in various circumstances, which helped me produce a variety of knowledge in numerous

contexts. The participants expressed varied patterns of practice during their interactions, interviews, and observations with them. I thought there were many other sources of knowledge.

Axiology

Access and participation of women in community-based organizations are influenced by social identities such as caste, class, gender, ethnicity, religion, etc. Women's access to community-based organizations is not only because of gender but due to multiple inequalities, so I valued my participant's voice and presented it as it is. Axiology refers to values and ethics' role in the research process (Saunders, 2009). Our understanding of knowledge is not value-free. People experience, understand and make the meaning more valuable, which is affected by individual women's perceptions and realization of the things around them. I have respected my participant's values, norms, and belief systems. I acknowledged that my socio-cultural and participant values were respected, represented, and reported. Socio-cultural practice influences women's participation in community-based organizations. I have tried to see the deals of women in their involvement in their organizations.

Ethnographic Research Design

My interest in doing research was to see how women perceive their participation in community-based organizations. I needed such a methodology with close interaction observation and bringing out the women's subjective perspective in the natural setting. I used ethnographic inquiry to carry out research, as I have mentioned, exploring the participation of women in community-based organizations. Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter; it attempts to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). I have explored how things go in women's everyday lives. I intend to examine the qualitative research experience of women's participation in a community-based organization. I need to explore women's lived experiences by observing their day-to-day work in this field from broad, historical and textual approaches, including the use of the ethnographic method.

Ethnography is a method of social science inquiry in which the researcher embeds herself in the ongoing interactions of a particular social setting or set of relations to understand and explain members' lived experiences (Jerolmack & Khan, 2018). I, as a researcher, participated in concern in women's daily lives for an

extended period, observing what happened and listening to what was said by participants.

I believe that ethnography helps to observe what people do rather than what people say. This research explores the meanings of the groups, cultures, values, behaviours, and beliefs and the role of values and ethics within the research process (Saunders, 2009). I was involved in the participant's daily life for an extended period, observing what happened, listening to what they said or asking questions formally and informally. Then, I am expected to describe and interpret participants' shared patterns of behaviour, beliefs, and understanding that develop over time(Creswell, 2012), which could be the inter-subjective meaning of women's participation in local organizations. As an ethnographic inquirer, I started my fieldwork as an outsider and gradually shifted to an insider to bring a localized perspective. The prolonged relations allowed me to explore the inner realities of women and their participation in community-based organizations.

Selection of the Study Site

My Lalitpur district was purposely selected as an area for study. There is no set of rules that can be devised which produce good relations in ethnography study (Hamersley & Atkinson, 2007). My initial plan was to conduct the study in Mahankal Rural Municipality, where I grew up there. The COVID-19 Pandemic and continuous lockdown made it difficult for me to carry the field trip. I waited for one year, considering theCOVID–19 pandemic and the possibility of worsening the situation, and at the same time, being a mother of a child, it was hard to travel. At the same time, my father–in–law was hospitalized for a long duration. So, I wanted to shift the research site to Godawari Municipality, where I used to work in the same site which is closer to me. At the same time, it was a familiar location, one of my working areas for the last six years under my professional responsibility. Then I discussed it with my supervisor and department head to change the location to Godawari Municipality rural area with their approval.

After selecting Godawari Municipality, I consulted with my coworkers, who used to be involved in various local organizations, to select the study site. I explained her research agenda and discussed possible sites with her. After discussing, she suggested a few community-based organizations and cooperatives of Godawari Municipality where women used to be involved. I visited four different CBOs and finally selected two Community-based organizations where women are only involved

and participating. I have chosen women's community-based organizations to see their understanding and knowledge from the grassroots level between women and women. Sister's groups (Pseudonym) since most of my participants were from my locality and a woman cooperative from Godawari municipality where women are members. Moreover, a few members are from my residential area of organizations where I am also a member, which could be supportive of my study.

Godawari in Lalitpur

Lalitpur is one of the districts of Bagmati province where six local governments are; among them, Godawari Municipality is one. It takes 15 kilometres from its headquarters in Patan. The total population of the Municipality is 100,972; among them, 51,265 are women. While analyzing the total population, there are Newar, Brahman, Chetri, Tamang, Pahari, etc., people who used to live there. (Godawari Municipality, 2022). There are altogether 14 wards. Most people do agricultural work. Tikavairab is a small village in Godawari Municipality located at a walking distance of around 45 minutes from the Godawari Municipality office.

Research Participants

I was familiar with several women who used to be involved in local organizations as women groups from the same community. That connection helped me to reach women. I wanted to meet all the women from the same locality in one place. So, I met the chair of the Sisters group and went to their meeting, which became helpful to identify the participants who I was looking for in my study.

Participant: Chitra Kumari (Pseudo name) is a woman who is now 59 years woman was grew up in Bukhel Lalitpur, which is about 60 km from Patan headquarters. She got married at the age of 14 and now it's been more than 40 years she is with her husband. She had never gotten the opportunity of formal education. She became a member of her mother's group, sister's group, and two cooperative members.

Apsara (Pseudo name) is a woman who is 35 years old and was born and raised in Tikavairab. She got married at the age of 22. She has one son, who is 13 years old. She had the opportunity to study for higher secondary school education. She was very busy with her work from morning to evening. Her husband did second marriage and her laws didn't care. She needs to work for herself to survive. To become financially strong and to solve the problems, she started to engage in

community-based organizations such as the sister group, Puspanjali Saving and Credit Cooperative, Women Laghubitta, etc.

Goma (Pseudo name) is a woman who was born in 2029BS and is now 50 years old and grew up in Shankhu Laitpur. She got married at the age of 22 at Malta Lalitpur. Her family had migrated at the age of 22 from Malta to Tikavairab. It has been 22 years since I have been here in Tikavairab. I have never had the opportunity of formal education. She is very busy with her household chores and used to do animal husbandry. Goma is involved in two women's cooperatives and is also a member of mother groups and sister groups.

Rita (Pseudo name) is a married lady who is young, which I found in a group. She is twenty-five and from her birth, she was familiar with this periphery. She also gets involved in local organizations in her community. I got a chance to be involved in local organizations more than five years ago. I am engaging in a sister group, an agricultural group, and I also work as a member of a women's committee in a cooperative in my community.

Maiya (pseudonym) is a very active woman of 58 who used to work as a teacher and do the insurance of people from Nepal. She is a very active member of various community-based organizations. She is actively participating in her mother's groups and women's cooperatives, and she was also a board committee member of the other two cooperatives. She has completed her bachelor's level education.

Nisha (pseudonym) is a young girl who is 30 years and she is unmarried. She used to take care of her old mother. Her brother's family members are in London. She is the coordinator of Sister Group, and she is also a member of their community, Guthi. When I went to their sister's group meeting

Prakriti (pseudonym) is 29 an old lady who came here to this locality three years after her marriage. In FGD of the sister group, I have seen her there with her small daughter. She was the treasure of their sister's group. I found her to be gentle, positive and have a good smile lady during the meeting time. She is also a jobholder in a cooperative.

Sushma (pseudonym) was born in 2039 in Remachhap district. She is now 40 years old and engages in various local organizations. She has five years of experience participating in local organizations. She got married after her SLC in the southern part of Lalitpur in Shankhu, and now she has migrated to our municipality for four years from the rural area of Lalitpur. My research participant Maiya requested me to

interview with her. Sushma is also a permanent government teacher in Godawari Municipality. They both were co-workers. One day, Maiya requested me to meet Sushma, and I met her. I gave a brief introduction of myself and my purpose in visiting her. Maiya had already explained my research agenda to her during their work time. So, she was familiar with my topic, and she was ready for the interview.

In-Depth-Interview

In my research, I also utilized interviews, another crucial technique for gathering data for an ethnographic study. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), interviews in ethnographic research can take many different forms, from casual, unplanned chats that occur during other activities to formally scheduled meetings that take place in private, enclosed spaces away from other people. Additionally, I have informal conversations with my audience. I carried on a casual conversation with them about their day-to-day activities in the ever-changing atmosphere of a flexible, natural setting. The adaptability, the natural setting, and the casual chat reduced the hesitation.

I made meaningful engagements with frequent visits to the families, participated in their informal conversations, spent time with women and their family members who were ever available at home and presented myself in an informal and friendly way suitable for the meaningful engagement that helped build rapport and establish a trustworthy environment (Hamal, 2020). I focused on listening to them record their voice through a mobile recorder but did not judge them or tell them that these ideas were right or wrong. I accepted their invitation to their family function in the community and had lunch and tea with them. I chatted with local people of the community on the way, at shops and in the temple. My closeness with them helped me enter their personal experiences and uncover their practices.

For this research, I chose two community-based organizations, a sister's group and a women's co-operative from Godawari Municipality, where women are involved. Then, I mentioned the purpose of the study with women. To take them as voluntary participants, I gave more priority to the women who were near my place so that I could visit them easily and observe their activities. I hope that it helped me to explore the depth of information and knowledge of ongoing learning and practices of involving women in local-level organizations.

I was familiar with many people from the local organizations from the same locality who are inherent to this place. This connection helped me to get to know the

women who participate in local organizations and who have diverse educational backgrounds. I selected five members initially. I took data from five research participants, those who have the same background and those who are fifty-plus years of age. When I talked with them, I didn't get enough data, but I found that I could ask others. I wanted to increase research participants who have various backgrounds and diversity, so I selected eight women who have diverse educational backgrounds, and I chose those participants who have participated in local-level organizations for the last three years in any way. I followed Schensul and Le Comple (2013), who suggested that a convincing number of cases are selected in ethnography to understand the process and meanings better. Qualitative research does not have a fixed rule regarding the number of participants since the research purpose is to describe, not to generalize (Leung, 2015). In this sense, my research participants were selected purposely (Crossman, 2020).

Field Engagement

My field visit started at the beginning of September 2022, right before the Dashain Festival. It continued till January 2023. I visited four meetings of sister groups and visited all 8 participants in various and several times in their surroundings.

Bhagwati Tole: A Main Place of My Study

Bhagwati Tole was a small village located in the south of the Godawari Municipality office, which is a neighbouring place of Takhel and Lele. The village has around 30 families. The mostly mixed community was followed by Chettri. The village was opposite Kanti Lokpath. It's near there is Tikavaiarb temple. There is a big market near it, but it is separated by the Nakhu River. In the middle of the village, there is one big canal called "Rajkulo" (royal canal), which people use to irrigate their fields, and on the side of the canal, there is a small way. People used to walk and ride two-wheelers as a means of transportation. The starting point of Rajkulo is from the Nakhu River near Bhagwati tole(community). It was located at a walking distance of around 15 minutes from the bus station near Anandanban Hospital. I was walking along the canal, a small passing way through the middle of the village and field. I could see Paddy was getting ready to harvest. Women are in their fields as busy as they are cleaning their fields, weeds and maize plants to make ready for another seasonal plantation such as mustard, wheat, barley, etc. I could see the houses were locked. In the middle of their fields and side of the way, wires are hanging in wooden poles. It indicates that people are using electricity and cable channels, and in some

houses, they are using the internet as well. I could also see some families had dishome facility which was hanging on the roof of their houses. I usually stopped in one relative's house and observed moments of women in the village. Near there are some shops where we can get the necessary things. Near my relative house, I saw some males of the community playing cards inside the small cottage. Some women regularly sit in groups and ask about my job and daughter. That place was like a public discussion place where people used to take rest, have sun baths, and discuss their sorrows and happiness.

On the other side of that place, nearly 50 feet away, I usually saw people used to buy necessary family consumables items, and it's opposite therein one small shop, where I mostly saw male members of the community who are marginalized having rakshi (local alcohol). During my fieldwork, I just hung around there and observed people from early morning, too. Along with this, I also observed that women were carrying heavily loaded grasses; some were going to the field, some were going to sell vegetable products and milk, etc.

I frequently heard the voice "Aaunu vayo nani aaunu basau" from amma (Oh! You arrived, come let's have a seat by village mother). Moreover, sometimes, I used to sit there in the house of a women's group leader. I also get a chance to observe her activities unknowingly. During the visit women, I talked with their family members and their stories of several ups and downs. I visited their vegetable farm and field and joined them in picking vegetables. It helped me to be close to women and have a good rapport, and they trusted me.

My Background Supportive of Fieldwork

I filled some aspects of my experience as a woman and became helpful during my fieldwork time for study, being a government school teacher in the same locality for six years. I was working with parents from various ethnic groups. Mostly, women's parents came to know about their children's progress in school. This experience helped me further understand women's psychology and attitude towards the school system, which will help me to build rapport and socialize with the people in the community. Being a daughter-in-law, I have already been to the same community for six years, so it is a familiar location.

Moreover, I was born and grew and studied up to a bachelor's level in the rural context of southern Lalitpur, where women used to be involved in various local

organizations. I can observe and talk to them about their participation in organizations of women.

Collecting the Stories

I collected the narratives, stories, and field notes that can be termed collectively as field materials through observations and interviews. Observation and interview are two major methods in ethnography study (Descartes, 2007). I mostly used these two methods for my study. I recorded my observations of the interactions, experiences, and events on my field notes near the field (Polit & Beck, 2010). It included women's descriptions, conversations, scenes and settings, activities, and my reflection on them. I maintained field notes, which are commonly associated with diaries, where I used them to write observations and record interviews immediately while collecting data to understand phenomena encountered in the field. It helped me to develop the stories and generate meaning with theoretical understanding. I hope all these engagements helped me to explore women's participation there, practices, experiences, and stories in local organizations.

For this purpose of the study, data collection is identifying and selecting individuals for a study by obtaining their permission and gathering information by question or observation (Creswell, 2012). So, researchers can employ various approaches like interviews and observation for collecting information from the field. The ethnographer engages in the field to collect in-depth information, spending time at participants' sites where they live and work. Because of my philosophical understanding, I believe that individual participant is very active and dynamic, so they might change their perspectives over time and context.

Observation and interviews are the most commonly used methods to gather information in ethnography (Kawabata, 2009, p. 66). I also believe that people's interactions in their everyday lives are also important and should be considered while examining their cultural knowledge. I did not use any structural formats to generate field information. I employed some guiding strategies like themes of an interview to ensure all the relevant topics and used observation as the main tool to gather information.

Observation

One of my primary methods for gathering data for this study is observation. It's all about conducting field research in the local environment, which is typically accomplished by meticulously observing the surrounding environment. According to

Marshall & Rossman (1989), observation is the methodical description of events, behaviour, and artefacts in the social environment selected for study (p.79). Ethnography is the study of people's actions rather than their words.

To provide the insider perspective, I began with non-participatory observation before gradually transitioning to participatory observation. Researchers participate in fieldwork either as participants or observers. Taking part in the daily activities of other participants or acting as an observer who is not a participant in any activity, viewing the world of participation from the outside without taking part (Rai, 2020).

I started the visit by performing non-participatory observation while positioning myself at the canal and a temple close to my relative's home. There is a method for participants to go to the market, bus stop, etc., from there, and I can see several of my members' homes and a field. I concentrated on studying the women's interactions, activities, and working methods while also observing how they interacted with and behaved around other women in the neighbourhood. I remained silent during their discussion and assumed a neutral demeanour during the casual conversation. I gradually began to interact with women in their groups and on their terms, occasionally answering their questions or assisting them with their jobs. I listened to their debate as I joined their group meeting.

I uphold the four basic elements of participant observation that Shah (2017) covers. These included preserving the dialectical relationship between closeness and alienation, understanding social interactions, studying all social aspects of life, and sustained fieldwork (as cited in Shrestha, p. 66).

I kept up regular contact with my participants. Accepting their invitation and taking part in their cultural festival celebration was enjoyable. I watched their daily routines, relationships with family members, cultural customs and neighbourhood customs, as well as the local context for men and women. It aided in my exploration and comprehension of the general state of affairs for women. I studied their daily routines, modes of communication, and customs in their homes and communities that affected their way of life. I concentrated on hearing what was said as well as what was silent. I considered how they expressed their emotions, judged by their facial expressions, body language, etc.

Interview

Interviews, another essential method for acquiring information for a social study, were also used in my research. In ethnographic research, interviews can occur

in a variety of ways, from informal, unplanned conversations that happen during other activities to deliberately arranged encounters that take place in private, enclosed settings away from other people, according to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007). I also engage my audience in casual interactions. I talked to them casually about their daily affairs in the ever-evolving environment of a flexible, natural setting. The flexibility, the outdoor environment, and the friendly conversation lessened the hesitation.

I established trusting relationships by focusing on frequent visits to the families, engaging in their casual conversations, spending time with the women and their family members who were always present at home, and presenting myself in a casual and accessible manner appropriate for the meaningful engagement (Hamal, 2020). Instead of judging them or telling them if their ideas were good or bad, I concentrated on listening to them. I accepted their offer to a family gathering in the neighbourhood, and we had tea and lunch together. I had conversations with residents in the neighbourhood while walking, at shops and at a temple. Being close to them allowed me to enter their worlds and learn about their traditions.

I used ethnographic fiction to conduct my interviews (Discrates, 2007). I was curious to find out more about how women participated in community-based organizations and how their actions reflected their perceptions of their roles as participants. I was able to comprehend the behaviour I had observed more easily as a result.

I asked open-ended questions during the interview to make it simple for the participants to share their thoughts and experiences. I talked to women who were active in neighbourhood organizations. It helped me to increase the scope of my knowledge.

I recorded the women's interview and played it back numerous times with their express permission. I also made notes on significant concepts that helped me focus my examination of the problems. I paid attention to the interviewer's face and emotions as I tried to make sense of the conversation. The information I had previously acquired was enhanced by the follow-up interviews I did.

Meaning Making Process

The analysis started with data management, highlighting the relevant words, sentences, and sections just after the data collection (Austin& Sutton, 2015). While I sat for the meaning-making of the field materials, I found it to be a very difficult task.

I frequently look back at the field notes, listen to the audio recording, read the transcribed text, and cross-check to ensure the quality of those materials. I focused on reflecting, elaborating, and discussing the women's participation and ideas, connecting my observations and reflection as the central aspect of ethnographic meaning-making in my study.

When I felt that the data were adequate for my research, I started to transcribe, label, categorize and mark as the important theme. After preparing the theme, I prepared the story from the data generated from observation, interview, discussion, and interaction. I re-wrote the stories with my reflection and blended the theme with the stories. Interviews were recorded in a voice recorder and notebook. Observation and discussion notes were taken very briefly. Braun and Clarke (2008) state that "Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data." (p.4). I looked for the connection in my field, collected interviews, and followed the thematic analysis to see different patterns of women in local organizations

Regarding the data analysis process, Creswell (2009) suggested collecting the information, transcribing the interview, organizing the information, coding the data, and interpreting the meaning (p.185). Following the literature, I went several times through my filed materials and identified some patterns by coding. I had to look back at field materials, observations, and interview recorders for the linkage with each other and one after another. I categorized the information, came up with themes and looked for further exploration with additional fieldwork. Accordingly, the themes were developed and further analyzed. I tried to make sense of the text with the help of my theoretical understanding. I developed five themes for my first research question. They are to become financially strong, help each other, and get opportunities for self and community development and social participation. Similarly, for my second research question, I have developed four themes. They are handling CBOs, building confidence, and taking leadership and searching for social identities.

Quality Standards

I attempt to maintain the quality of research. As a researcher, I performed each and every step based on the set of standards of qualitative research. All the activities assure its trustworthiness and applicability. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) present credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability as the criteria for

maintaining the quality of research. Keeping those aspects in mind, I went through the following courses to maintain the quality of my inquiry.

Use of Multiple Sources

To improve the quality of the study, I gathered information from a variety of sources. I agreed with Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), who claim that the various roles that ethnographers create in a setting are, of course, based on data descriptions of people's actions, what they say and do in various situations, as well as on their own participation in the setting (p. 26). I gathered the data at various points throughout the day from a variety of sources, including participants, family members, and local women. In a similar vein, I gathered the data through participant and non-participant observation, as well as interviews and focus group discussions. To gather information sources, I brought a voice recorder and filed notes. The data gathered using various informants and techniques were aggregated, compared, and then confirmed using the methods that were compiled, compared and further verified with the informants. I shared my understanding of their responses and reconfirmed with the participants.

Spending Time in the Field

Initially, I took my time getting to know my participants, and I made the women numerous visits to their homes. I have visited them several times throughout the investigation and have had direct conversations with them. I frequently attended their meetings and discussions five times a month, which allowed me to get to know my study subjects well and become familiar with the local background as well as specific family culture and traditions. I was able to learn more about my study subjects' tales because we stayed in the same community during my fieldwork, spent time together, took part in social and family events, and developed a strong relationship.

I made repeated remarks while concentrating on the topics that were most pertinent to my research, such as how the women perceive their participation in community-based organizations and I further observed their behaviour and interaction with their women and explored many details with them.

Thick Description

Through extended fieldwork, observation, and in-depth interviews, I gathered the details. The detailed account was then delivered with supporting information. I discuss the research in great detail, including every aspect of the context and methodology, in order to retain my credibility. I give the experience of women

participating as an example, complete with the background, setting, and moments when they acted in that way.

As an interpretative researcher, I used the idea of "Trustworthiness" to make sure the data I obtained from participant knowledge was of high quality. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), which is a generally accepted method to establish the reliability and accuracy of data in qualitative research, the trustworthiness of a research study is essential in assessing its worth. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, 2005, as cited in Dahal, 2014), the idea of trustworthiness is one of the greatest and most widely utilized approaches to maintaining the quality level of qualitative research.

Through analyzing the information and data needed for the research, I (as a researcher) attempted to ensure "credibility" (Shenton, 2004). Credibility is the belief in the accuracy of the interpretation provided by the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By continuing to work in the field for a long time, observing participants at relevant community-based organizations, conducting interviews with participants, and relying on my own experience, I have managed to preserve my standing. Additionally, I mentioned the trustworthiness of observing community-based organizations at work, such as when they are having discussions, growing vegetables, or working on development. To further ensure the validity of the research's conclusions, I reviewed relevant documents.

The following aspect to consider is transferability, which shows if the research's conclusions are useful in different circumstances (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For the purpose of assessing transferability, I wrote down descriptions of meaning based on information and data collected from the information source that may be used in a different context (Brayman, 2008). It appears that I have combined several research participants with different perspectives to describe how women participate in community-based organizations. In addition, I have kept the right numbers and a variety of participant types as needed (Dahal, 2014), such as members of sister groups, mother groups, cooperatives, working women and housewives, etc. The research's findings can be used by similar community-based organizations, local government, provincial government, federal government and different stakeholders for preparing policies and plans to enhance women's participation in community-based organizations.

Ethical Standards

Because I am aware of the ethical problems with research, I have included this as a crucial part of my research. Throughout every phase of my research project, I have taken ethics into account (Tabatabaei, 2016). In the context of my research, my ethical principles for ethnography were founded on my socio-cultural ideals of Hindu culture, which were expressed as Satyam, Shivam, and Sundaram, or truth, goodness, and beauty. I adhered to the principles of goodness (do no harm), truth (honesty in my investigation), and beauty (complete respect for each and every individual idea).

These ethical values have been upheld, according to this research, without harming any particular people, groups of people, or ideologies. All research participants' safety and dignity have been upheld, demonstrating transparency and openness (Bos, 2020).

At the start of my study, I verbally obtained the participant's informed consent. In order to obtain their agreement, I stated in basic and understandable terms to my participants. For informed consent, Powell and Smith (2006) emphasized the need to communicate information in terms that participants can understand. I had a discussion with my research subjects regarding the goal of my study and the procedure that will be used.

As a family-based ethnography," Family ethnographies reveal that families embody their own truths on multiple levels (including an individual and family level) effectively capturing the lived experience of family (Nash et al., 2020). Women are also part of the family while collecting data from their homes with the permission of their family members. It was very important to me not to interfere with their personal affairs. When there was disagreement and conflict in the past, I occasionally maintained my neutrality. I spend the time talking about topics pertaining to their education on women's participation. I took into account their leisure time when conducting the interviews. Sometimes, I kept talking while they might be doing anything else, like cooking, mowing the lawn, planting flowers for the wedding, or watering their crops. I talked to women who were a part of community-based organizations before or after meetings. I made an effort to be amiable and courteous while respecting their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. I didn't employ my sources for any private gain. My research has not brought up any issues that might lead to future disputes.

My Positionality

For the purpose of bringing emic and etic perspectives, I play the insider and outsider roles. As a researcher, I played the position of an outsider with an interest in the area of women's participation. Understanding and interpreting the practices of women's participation in community-based organizations was my main duty as a researcher for this study. I tried not to be judgmental as I concentrated on watching, comprehending, and interpreting the meaning through the eyes of my participants.

However, I discovered during the research process that I was also an insider. I have a sense of insider status thanks to my involvement in community-based groups and my work with women there over the past few years. I was aware of neighbourhood events, community-based organizations, and women's lifestyles. The few women in the area already knew who I was and what I did. At first, I thought their reply was more formal. I repeatedly clarified how my visit related to my research and my motivation for doing the study. I came out as approachable and casual. I never disagreed with their expressions; instead, I focused on the situations in which they were expressed, which helped them become more open with me.

As an ethical consideration for this research, I upheld confidentiality. I established solid working relationships with my co-researchers without disclosing the names or other private details of the participants. Participants' names and suggestions were kept confidential.

Essence of Chapter

The chapter presented the qualitative research methodology to explore women's participation in community-based organizations. I discussed my philosophical standpoint as an Interpretive, my ontology of multiple realities, and epistemology as subjective reality. Further, the research paradigms, ethnographic methods, and tools used to generate the data are described. Moreover, the chapter included the research's quality standard and ethical aspects. Before closing the chapter, I made an effort to clarify my position as a qualitative researcher in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

In this chapter, I have articulated how women perceive their participation in community-based organizations, how they participate in community-based organizations, and what they do in community-based organizations. Women's perception and their meaningful participation in Community-based Organizations can be observed in their CBOs. The chapter includes five themes: becoming financially strong, helping each other, getting an opportunity for self-development and community development and social participation.

To Become Financially Strong

It was around 7:30 on 22 September 2022 in the morning. I went to observe and talk withCBOs near my house in Tikavairab. There was a meeting of Sister's group. As soon as I reached, my sisters were discussing with each other about their savings and credit. When their coordinator saw me, she greeted and welcomed me to their meeting. I introduced myself to all the group members who were there and mentioned my objectives to visit them. I started explaining my research process, its purposes, and my research processes to all. I shared my experiences and observations of my journey of participating in various CBOs, my academic journey and my observation of my attending several meetings in CBOs and their meeting. After the discussion, they agreed to allow me to observe and interview them.

I saw only a few members who were attending the meeting, and when I saw their minutes, there were altogether 24 members. I wanted to meet all 24 members of the sister group, but some of the members of the group had just come and immediately moved towards their work and I found that some members forwarded money for monthly savings to other members due to their busyness. They didn't have enough time to sit and discuss in their meeting.

I listened to their discussion attentively that women in groups were just discussing their saving money. One member who was left by my side said, *I do not have even a hundred rupees money for meeting for monthly savings.* She started to borrow a hundred rupees as well. Two members said why don't you ask for money with your husband? We don't have it right now, they replied. Can anyone help me?

Then, another group member said *I will give, but in the next meeting, you need to give here in the meeting for monthly savings.*

She agreed with a smile. Then I realized that she was working hard from morning to evening without caring about her thirst and hunger, but she could barely save money to pay for the group meetings. Another member of the group wanted to take a loan from a sister group to pay the bills of her children. Similarly, the next member also needed a loan and asked for a twenty thousand rupees loan to start cauliflower farming inside the tunnel.

I spent nearly one hour observing and talking with them in the group. In that period, I came to know that those who were there were always discussing several agendas in their meeting, but those who did not come to attend a meeting on time did neither ask what they discussed in the meeting nor did they follow the rules of the meeting. In that, they mostly focused on financial saving and credit. They were also aware of the benefit to the municipality and other organizations if they registered it. They have opened three members' joint accounts in one cooperative and in Lumbini Bank to protect the collected money if they did not need it.

The next week 28 September 2022, It was 5 p.m., and I visited my participant, Chitra Kumari,

House, which is located near my house, I found that she was playing with her granddaughter. It was raining outside. When she saw me, she immediately greeted and welcomed me into her house with her beautiful smile and offered tea. In earlier days in the meeting, I had shared my purpose and she was clear with my research agenda. I asked her some questions related to local organizations. She was ready to share her experiences and her participation in community-based organizations. Chitra Kumari narrated,

> *In my opinion, community-based organizations are those organizations where we can gather in a group and, save a small amount of money, and use it as a loan if the group members need it. I am involved in two local organizations as a member of a group. I participated in the Bhagwati women's group for 20 years, and there are 18 members of the women's group "mothers group". Recently, I became a member of Didi Bahini Samuha (Sister's Group) in my community. In this group, there are 24 members. This group also uses to save 100 rupees in a month. Mostly, we have the practice of collecting and saving money in our group; if anybody needs money, they use it for a certain*

time period, pay the interest and return later after the need is met. Those who take a loan from local organizations use that money to buy goats to plant new seasonal vegetables for sale. It shows that community women took money to generate income.

In my earlier days, I didn't have any idea about the group. One female said, you need to be involved in local groups, and you could have ideas of knowledge. You can learn several things in groups. Then, I got involved in a community-based organization called Aama Samuha as a member. I just go there to attend the meeting and save a little amount of money for local organizations.

In earlier days, in my Aama Samuha, male people whose wives were members of the group came to handle their meetings. If their wife is busy with their household work, they come to handle meetings and calculate the amount of savings and credit. They used to teach and share information with local organizations.

Similarly, another participant, Goma, when I visited her house on 23 September 2022, the door was locked, and at the same time, inside her house, I heard the sound of buffalo. Nobody was there. Again, I went the next day in the morning. She was cutting grass in the backyard of her house. That was her daily routine to feed her buffalo. She was alone in her house. I asked her about other family members, and she replied that her husband works as a salesman and comes home once a week only on Fridays. Her daughter had gotten married, and her son was also doing intern and he was not at home. I introduced myself to her because I wasn't very familiar with her. I mentioned the purpose of my visit to her house. She was very happy and offered me hariyo poleko makai (green fresh roasted corn). She was ready to share about her engagement in local groups. She describes,

I am now involved in two community-based organizations name as "Yekrikrit mahila Sahakari" and Yekikri tmahila laghubitta"both were women's cooperatives in Godawari municipality. It has been more than 15 years. I save monthly300 rupees in both organizations. My economic condition was not good back then. I used to go on the field for others to get money. I used to engage in co-operative for myself because in urgent I could borrow money from there. Other women from my community are also engaged in

cooperatives; that's why I am interested in becoming a member of a cooperative, so I became a member there.

Many male members used to manage several necessary things in a cooperative. We need to ask permission if we need to borrow or lend money. They need to take the decision first and only we can get it. I have not learned anything by engaging in cooperation, and I have not had the opportunity to train and learn new things. I just saved and took a loan from a cooperative. Our mother's groups also man came to handle the meeting, which we used to do quarterly.

After listening to participants, the locally run groups and organizations' major work is to make their members financially strong. Participation in community savings and loan management committees led to women's increased physical mobility beyond the household and village environment, new opportunities for meeting women from outside their communities and learning from a wider set of experiences. Women's enhanced public role gave them a newfound confidence. (ADB, 2014)

Women are involved in community-based organizations to save and take loans for needy women to develop their economic status. Women are taking importance for their community-based organizations because they themselves have established to improve their life standards in various ways. They are taking loans from their groups, which seems that they are not depending on their family members. They have the confidence to pay the loan by doing various works such as vegetable farming, goat farming, poultry farming, animal husbandry, etc and borrow money. With the help of community-based organizations, women are becoming financially strong and improving their lifestyles through community-based organizations. At the same time, there is still the existence of male hegemony in women's cooperatives. Similarly, men are controlling women, and they make the decision to lend money to women, which makes clear that men still have narrow thinking towards women. Women promoters are mostly housewives, and they do not need any money to invest in business. Even if they require for other purposes, their husbands take the loan". It apparently reveals that urban cooperatives are still dominated by male members' interests. (Kanel, 2015)

As in the above story, some women accept that women need to perceive their participation to become financially strong. However, having an interview with another woman, I realized that women must participate in CBOs to take or receive opportunities, as mentioned in the below section.

Helping Each Other

On 27 September 2022, I went to my participant's house for the interview for Maiya (Pseudonym). It was not possible to meet her during the monthly meeting of the group. When I went to her home, Maiya was managing all the papers and documents of several members of the cooperatives. She left her work and took me into her living room and offered me milk tea. I dined it because I had taken my breakfast, she was busy with several household works and officials' work, and she was also engaged in managing various work for her son's marriage, which was coming soon next month. Her busyness also gave me time for an interview.

While I was interviewing her, two women called her to save their money in finance. I was curious and asked her about the women, and she responded that they want to save money in finance. They did not have enough time to go there. They trust me and they thought I regularly go to cooperatives and come here to my house. She thinks that women did not have an idea to save their money and use it when they needed it. She shared with me that *I am an agent of Nepal Life Insurance. I have done insurance for several women also.* She finds herself a "helpful and motivational person". From her expression and observing her room, there were lots of papers, receipts of cooperatives, and forms of cooperatives to become a member and original citizens; photos, etc., also indicate that she is a very hardworking person and helpful person. She said,

> *Nobody gave me ideas in my earlier days of saving and credit; when I got involved in a local organization, I learned from them there, and it's important. So, I used to share with others what I learned from there. That's why I suggested people to be involved in local organizations*, she said.

While I was discussing with Maiya, her mobile rang and she cut it with the intention of not trying to disturb our conversation. The phone rang again and she picked it up and replied that she would call after 15 minutes. Later, after the interview, she called back and said, "I will come after 5 minutes". I noticed then that she was a very busy woman. Outside her house, there was a woman who used to live near her house. I listened to their discourse. She needed money because her husband was in the hospital and needed to have surgery on her leg. She requested help from her. Then, after Maiya suggests she go to a cooperative and you take your money from there, if you need more, I will help you. She moves from there. I was standing watching Maiya's activity there outside her house. She took out the mobile from her

pocket and called in cooperative and said, *I have sent a lady called Rita. She is coming there. Please give her savings, and if she needs more amount, you can give it from my account as well*. Furthermore, I realized that she is not only involved in community-based organizations, but she is also helping and doing social work equally.

Through her participation in various CBOs, she became more mature and developed several interpersonal skills such as leadership, communication skills, etc. In Maiya's life, there were several ups and downs, but she never looked backwards; she always thinks ways in front of her. She is self-empowered and encourages others to be involved in several community-based organizations.

In community-based organizations, not only is the physical presence influential in becoming a member but also several skills matter to shape women to perform well and learn better. Hence, I have observed that an opportunity from community-based organizations by women is perceived and analyzed.

To Get Opportunity

Apsara is another participant; she is 35 years old and was born and grew up in Tikavairab. She got married at the age of 20 in Hindu culture. When I went to her house on Saturday [24 September 2022], she was washing clothes in her front yard. She took a mat to sit there near her. She was washing one full bucket of clothes. It was a sunny day. She didn't have free time the other day. She offered me tea, but I refused it. She was a member of Puspanjali Saving and Credit Limited and also a member of the Sister group, where I did not get a chance to meet her in their meeting. I asked her about work and I made clear my research agenda and she agreed with me in a telephone call. Then I started to interview her. I arrived a little bit later than the planned time because I didn't have an exact idea of her house.

When I entered her house, it was nearly 9 a.m. I had seen her in earlier days but never spoke with her. I sat with her and we started to discuss our personal life. I asked about her son and other family members. She said that nobody is there in her house. My father-in-law and mother-in-law used to live there in earlier days, but they shifted that house when her brother-in-law made another new house. I asked Apsara, "Where is your husband? She said that he had a second marriage, and then after, he used to live with her in Satodobato. Then again, I asked her, "Where is your son?" She responded that from his childhood, he used to live with his grandparents and brother-in-law. My brother-in-law put him in a hostel because I didn't have enough

money to take care of him and fulfil his needs with watering eyes. Her facial expression said that it was very hard to struggle herself and felt uneasy. She became sad, and she felt unlucky. It seems somehow difficult for her to manage and survive. After finishing washing clothes, she took me inside her room upstairs. It was her house, but she needed to adjust to one room. All the rooms were rented. Her in-laws come to take rent of the house monthly. My eyes were glancing inside her room; there she had adjusted her bed, cupboard, Kitchen table, and sofa and hanging marriage photographs on the wall. I observed her situation for a couple of minutes. She gave me hot water and sat on the sofa.

Later, she was ready to interview.

I got involved in community-based organizations to get rid of various problems, become financially independent, and make a success of the plan. In my earlier days, in my house, nobody listened to my voice; neither they sent me for further education, nor they sent me for a job. They used to dominate me in every aspect. I become alone and I can't share my feelings with my in-laws. I had heard that there was a women's program in the community; I went there, and many women were there from our community. One of my neighbour's aunts suggested I be involved in women's groups and said it would be helpful for me. Then, I started to become a member of the women's laghu biatta.

We grew up in a patriarchal society; people are saying women and men are equal on all sides, but also I can see vary in theory and practice. In my groups, many members used to be involved in community-based organizations for their advantage. I am also involved in local organizations myself to take advantage and to get the opportunity from organizations.

I thought she was involved in community-based organizations to get the opportunity from it. She does not have family members, but they listen to her voice, nor do they help her. To get rid of loneliness and to solve her family issue, she wants to learn and get the opportunity from local organizations.

During the interaction with participants, I knew that women were aware of opportunities in community-based organizations. Women are getting several opportunities through gender quotas. It helps to create opportunities to participate. The implementation of gender quotas unquestionably boosts the number of women holding national and local elected office and may even inspire more widespread participation among women. However, quotas by themselves do not ensure an

increase in women's participation. There is a need for studies to assess how well implementation went after quota acceptance. What major achievements women will make after they are elected to office under quotas are still unclear. (Lean et al., 2021). Women are facing several ups and downs. To get rid of them, women participate in community-based organizations. Women are taking CBOs as helping hands in their obstacles. Women are participating in community-based organizations to expand their knowledge through community-based organizations.

For Self-development and Community Development

Nisha is a young woman, 30 years old and is unmarried. She takes care of her old mother, who is 76 years old. Her brother's family is in London. She is the coordinator of Sister Group and she is also a member of their community Guthi. (The term "Guthi" refers to all members of the community participating in one local group where they can support one another, hear their neighbours' opinions, and actively participate. If a member of the community passes away, all members are required to participate in their funeral by carrying a firehood and expressing their condolences. When I went to their sister's group meeting, she agreed to interview.

It was October 19, 2022; I went to her house for an interview and to observe the 5-minute distance from my house. The door was locked. I sat in her yard and looked at the surroundings. I waited for 10 minutes, but she did not arrive. Later, I thought I would come the next day, and I decided to visit her again the next day. On the way, returning to my home, I met her and said I went to your house, but you were not there. She responded that she went to the market to buy the necessary things. She also offered me to go to her house with her smile. It was 5 p.m. Then again, I went to Nisha's house. She opened the door and called me inside her house. I found that she had made ready to prepare vegetables to cook for the evening. She requested to drink tea. I felt cold and I agreed with her. This was my second time visiting her with my research agenda, so there was no need for any explanation of my objective to visit her house.

> *I got involved in three community-based organizations. They are*
> *Guthi, the Sister's group and the mother group. I am a member of our Guthi,*
> *a coordinator of sister groups, and also a member of the mother group in*
> *replace of my mother. I have 12 years of experience as a member of*
> *community-based organizations. In my opinion, In a group, there is unity, so*
> *we community members need to find out what, where, and how we can get*

facility and development. We need to work for that matter and help community people to make development known as community-based organizations.

Community members are unified, and they work to upgrade themselves. In a meeting of my sister's group, I also found she is an active member. She has suggested other members be on time, and she also took initiation to register their group in their ward. I become a member myself in groups. I used to attend regular meetings and have some discussions with other members. Then I asked her about their sister group meeting. "When do you have another meeting? She replied *Now we are in the mood for the Tihar festival; we need to go to our relative's house for tika and blessing. After Tihar, We will have a meeting.* Then, I requested that I will also observe a second time once. Then she said our meeting will be held on every first day of the month, so you can come on Kartik 1 at seven o'clock in that house by pointing her finger.

After the Tihar festival, this was the second time they met, so there was no need for more explanation of my objective to visit their community-based organizations. After chatting with members of the sister group, the sister group vice chairman, Nisha, requested me to sit in on the discussion. I sit on the mat with members and observe their discussion. On that day, I could see only eleven participants among twenty-four. The secretary was writing in the minute and collecting monthly savings. Chairman Maya counted the money and told the secretary to register the monthly savings of Sarita and Shanti and say that they would not attend today's meeting. Similarly, one member's husband also came there to save their monthly saving. Later, after finishing their money, there was a discussion about their members. They made rules that from the next meeting *if the participants did not attend a meeting, they needed to pay 10 rupees fine and a signature in a minute.* Another member, Rita, looks young and she asks to register their organization inward. She also shared that *if we register it inward, we will get benefits, and we can also write a proposal for our enhancement and get the budget to enhance our skills.* Another participant, Goma, added that other groups have already benefited in various ways. *"Yo thaau nai yesto ,yaha kailekhei karayama audaina hamro lagi" (*This place will remain the same. No program will be conducted for our upliftment*).* In Kaphal Dada, women are doing various programs themselves through their community-based organizations. Here is our group some women are highly educated also, they need to work for us to grow self etc.

Then immediately, Rita said, "Khoi darta garnne kk kam garne vaner samuha ma basseko khei gardainna"(they said that we would register that's why I participated in CBOs, but they didn't do anything)Then the secretary of the sister group said, *we didn't have time, it's already late to go for a job, in our free time first we need to know the procedures to register and then only we can register with her gestures*. I found she was more confident and could take leadership than others in the group. Three members of the group sat silently and listened to other members.

During my observation, some of the participants were moving their homes during discussion time. Some were discussing their problems. Prikriti and Rita stood up and said *it was late for the office. We need to go and they move from there.*

During the FGD, after their regular meeting, I discussed with six women in the sister's group and I came to know that women wanted to learn and work for themselves. They wanted to become independent. They wanted to be involved in the group and try to bring a program for themselves by requesting with several other organizations. The Chairman of the sister group, Maya, said, "*We will take initiation to maintain the canal; we will go to the ward and ask for help to maintain the canal.*" She became very sad, her face was full of angriness and her voice was loud. She continued, "*Nobody focuses on the way either; transportation is a very necessary thing for us. We are here in Godawari municipality, but we do not have access to the road; where are the politicians? Where are male community members? What do they think about it? After a while, she replied no?*" We need to imitate small roads. If someone gets sick, we have a problem. After a while, she stops saying. And other members also agree with her view. According to Acharya and Pandey (2019), Women have started businesses in a variety of sectors, including agro-based, food processing, manufacturing, travel & tourism, handicrafts, retail, and service industries. Through a number of programs, the government has encouraged the growth of female entrepreneurs. Cooperatives encourage entrepreneurship, livelihood, and social mobilization in addition to generating money and jobs. The movement has benefited greatly from the participation of women. Women discussed with each other how to increase their knowledge and want to enhance themselves and also they have thinking and feeling of community development.

For Social Participation

Then, I interviewed the woman, Maya, who is the chair of the sister's group. She is around 40 years old and has four children. She completed her higher secondary

education before having children. Maya has taken the initiative to make a sister group in her community. In earlier days, to form a group, I went to all neighbouring houses and shared my plan.

> *I gathered the villager's women for meeting at first and then after, they started to involve regular meetings and save a small amount of money monthly. Before the election, I went to several communities with political leaders and I learned to be involved in the group. Then I found myself changed and I knew that with the help of a network of people, we could do several works. Later on, I learned that there is a certain percentage budget for women in the Municipality, so to get that and to enhance women, I thought it would be better if we could have groups. That's why I took this step.*

During the focus group discussion, I also heard that she said we need to take the initiative to clean the canal for watering our crops in the field. We need to go to the ward and ask for the budget for it. When she was saying this, I noticed other members sitting silently. She requested all the members to make a plan and to go for a picnic for that also she raised her voice. The same members used to laugh at her. I did not understand why they were laughing, but I thought that Maya was joking with other members. Similarly, Rita added to her conversation like this.

> *In my view, a community-based organization is different from other official organizations. It works for their self-enhancement. Nowadays, women can go out from home; in earlier days, they need to face various problems in their homes. They need to quarrel with their husband as well to be involved in groups. Now, women can share their pain and sorrows; they can solve their problems themselves and save a small amount of money. In my case, my sister always suggested I go out of the home to learn new things. Later on, I slowly started to become a member of a cooperative and also became a member of local organizations. I got a chance to learn various things from my community-based organizations.*

> *I work to volunteer at the Nepal Red Cross Society. There, I also got the opportunity to develop my internal personal skills. One day, sir said to me you had developed confidence; there are lots of programs and budgets for women. It freezes every year. He suggested that I form a committee and do work for women's enhancement. She said, "I will give you one example near my house; there is one marginalized woman who used to work as a mason.*

She got thirty-two thousand five hundred money from the subsidy, and from that money, she bought goats and started to rear them for business purposes. Now, from that goat, she is taking care of her three children and becoming independent.

In other community-based organizations in the same community, there is a different practice. While discussing social participation, Goma further narrated,

There are many male members they used to manage several necessary things in a cooperative. We need to ask permission if we need to borrow or lend money. They need to take the decision first and only we can get it. I have not learned anything by engaging in cooperation. I did not have the opportunity to train or learn new things. I just saved and took a loan from a cooperative. Our mothers' groups also man came to handle the meeting, which we used to do quarterly.

During interaction with Nisha in their sister's group meeting, she said,

I have experienced that caste discrimination is decreasing nowadays in comparison to earlier years. Community members are unified and they work to upgrade themselves. In a meeting of her sister's group, I also found she is an active member. She has suggested other members be on time and she also took initiation to register their group in their ward. I become a member myself in groups. I used to attend regular meetings and have some discussions with other members.

In the same line, Bullerworth (2015) stated that the main focus of women's groups, such as "Mothers Group," "Community Group," and "Women Cooperative Group," was to strengthen their social, economic, and political position. Today, a large number of Nepali women participate in a variety of groups where they may talk about their issues, do work, and speak out against discrimination. Women who were previously illiterate can now read and write. They are able to talk in front of large groups. They currently participate in both municipal and federal politics. During a conversation with my participants, I came to know that there is a different level of participation for women. Some learned themselves and became aware of social participation in their community. On the other hand, we can see the hegemony of male members during their participation in community-based organizations.

Summary of the Chapter

Community-based organizations which are run at the community level to uplift people are being progressive in communities. But they are not free of community influences. Women and men represent their whole communities. Men are involved in community-based organizations from earlier than female, so nowadays, they are also helping their women to participate in community-based organizations. After observation, interview, and focus group discussion with the sister group and its members, I realized that women know how to participate in community-based organizations. It can be concluded that women are being empowered gradually and developing themselves. Some of them regret not trying to go out of the house for new knowledge and skills. While interviewing participants and observing their discussions in a meeting, I found that their priority is to become financially strong. In every interview, my participants focused on becoming capable financially. They used to save a small amount of money and if they needed it, they got a loan with a certain interest and focused more on income-generating activities. Similarly, women are participating in community-based organizations to help each other while necessary. Through their involvement, women have found a secure place to share their problems and get rid of them. They got a chance to help each other by enhancing their skills, sharing their knowledge in their meeting, and developing their communication skill.

Moreover, I found that women are engaging in community-based organizations to get the opportunity. Women are aware of various programs and they have an idea about their rights. They knew that without their involvement in CBOs, it did not make sense. Nepal's Government has also conducted various programs for women and to get access to them, they need to have an idea and they are involved in CBOs. Not only are women also aware of their self-learning and development. They want to learn and develop first, and they also want to develop their community themselves.

CHAPTER V

ROLE OF EDUCATION FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

This chapter discusses the role of education and its contribution to the participation of women in community-based organizations in their communities. Apart from participation in community-based organizations' education, the contribution is one important key to fostering women's participation in community-based organizations. There might be multiple other aspects to uplift women in community-based organizations. But, in this chapter, handling community-based organizations, building confidence, taking leadership, and making meetings of identities are enough taken as education contributions. These aspects are presented in the form of stories in the chapter.

Handle Community-based Organizations

As I was going to observe the meeting of the sister's group on December 16, 2022, Friday, on the way, I met one woman who was carrying Doko (Doko are especially used by porters to carry goods which are hand woven and made of bamboo) and Hasiya (Sickle) in her hand and started to greet me; she recognized my face and said to me, you have come to our meeting last time. Today also there is a meeting so I am going there. I said I was also going to join your group's meeting and asked her why she was carrying Doko for a meeting. She replied, "I need to cut grass for the cow. In the time, I also need to go to the field to plant wheat." It was early in the morning, at 7 o'clock. It was colder than my house. I felt colder there, so I put my hand inside my pocket and walked together with her. One dog started to bark when we were near our place. It made me fear. I slowly walked and the woman said no need to worry. This dog always did the same when it saw strangers near its house. When we reached the meeting place, no one was there. Then, Laxmi started to call Rita Rita in a loud voice, then from the balcony, Rita said, "Wait, I am coming." Laxmi again said there were other group members. It's already become late. I did not have enough time. Rita said, *"I have already prepared a minute for the meeting, but nobody comes on time. Let's wait for a few minutes."* I was watching Rita's vegetable field during their conversation. Rita has planted various vegetables such as cauliflower, garlic,

onion, cabbage, green leafy vegetables, horse gram, etc, which attracts me in the early morning with fresh air as well.

After a few minutes, there was the arrival of the group coordinator and there were other 3 group members as well. The other four members of the group came from another side when Rita called them. There are all together now 13 members. They gave me a Chakati (It is in flat or circular shape made of straw or cover of maize in rural areas used for sit).to sit on. All the members sat together on the mat and started to discuss the first financial agenda and Rita started to verify their collecting money and told other members to do signatures. This time, I did not speak with them; I observed their activities. Few members have hoped that I am going to do any work for them and they gossip themselves. After doing all the signatures, Coordinator Maya suggested all the members be on time for the next meeting. Immediately, they finished their meeting within 20 minutes. All sister members who were in the earlier meeting know me and my purpose to visit them. Then, I started to ask informal questions in a group for their discussion. Some members sit silently; they do not speak, nor do they go home.

Nisha is a young Hindu woman who used to be involved in community-based organizations meeting regularly. When I asked about her education, she said that I had completed her study up to grade Nine. I thought she had regret of not studying further. On that day, I found Nisha felt a little bit hesitant and started sharing details as;

> *If I had higher education, I could do a job, and maybe I already got married by making dark faces. My family members had sent me to school, but I didn't want to study higher education, so I stopped it. To run community-based organizations, education also has a great role. If members are educated, their organizations are also active and easy to handle. Educated people have an idea of managing and making more systematic in community-based organizations. Educated people can teach others and can give an idea of the positive and negative effects of a community-based organization. In my home, my mother used to send me to attend a meeting of community-based organizations. I did not find any discrimination in our groups. Nowadays, male also sends their counterparts to their meeting. They said you need to learn several issues. In my community, other neighbours shared about community-based organizations and encouraged me to participate in the meeting. Then, I started to get involved in community-based organizations.*

While the conversation was going on, I was also observing other members of the group, and they were also listening to our conversation. Few members looked serious. All members are from the same community with different ages and various educational backgrounds. I indicate Goma shared her view on the educational role in community-based organizations. Goma further shared:

In my earlier days, I did not have any idea about the group. One madam who came to my house, who is a coworker of my husband in school, said you need to be involved in local groups, and you could have ideas of knowledge you can learn several things in groups. Then, I used to get involved in local groups called aama samuha (mother group) as a member. I just go there to attend the meeting and save a little amount of money for local organizations. In earlier days, In my aama samuha, male people whose wives are members of the group come to handle their meeting. If their wife is busy with their household work, they come to participate in meetings in replace of their wife and calculate the amount of savings and credit. They used to teach and share information with community-based organizations. Being an uneducated person in the group, I have a fear of speaking about several agendas. If I was educated, nobody would tell me a lie about me; I couldn't depend on others. Perhaps I would be a job holder like my husband.

While interaction was going on, another member, Apsara, interrupted and also shared her background with us. Apsara is a Hindu woman born and grew up in Tikavairab. She has one son who is studying in grade 8. She had to get the opportunity to study for higher secondary school education. She got married after completion of higher secondary level. After marriage, her in-laws and even her husband did not give her the opportunity to continue her education. She was very busy with her work from morning to evening. Her husband had a second marriage and in-laws didn't care about her. She needs to work for herself to survive. During our conversation, she shared;

I started to become a member of Women's Microfinance. We need to sit in groups. In groups, they made us become independent, so they supported us in various ways, such as providing a loan in several sectors such as running small-scale businesses, vegetable farming, goat rearing, beekeeping, poultry farming, etc.

> *Mostly, they focused on women because they needed to handle several works, but they did not have money. In my case, I did not have a supportive hand from my family members. I did not have money to do work, so I thought it was the right place for me to uplift myself, so I became a member there and started to attend regular meetings. Mostly in groups, we discuss our development.*

Apsara further states that women must be independent themselves. To become independent, there are several community-based organizations which are helping hand and supporting organizations for disadvantaged, marginalized women in their real need. They could provide support on information sharing, social and cultural practices, and financial support, which helps women to work and increase their level of status.

> *We grew up in a patriarchal society; nowadays, people are saying women and men are equal on all sides, but also I can see variations in theory and practice. In my groups, many members used to be involved in local organizations for their advantage. I am also involved in local organizations for myself to take advantage of and to get opportunities from organizations. Later, before one year, I started to work in the press, and I couldn't focus more time. I became myself changed after participating in local organizations. I felt my confidence level and communication skills increased when I used to be involved in local organizations. I have developed my leadership skills also. I have an idea of saving and credit.*

> *I completed my higher secondary education before marriage. My parents always encouraged me to study further, but I could not continue my studies. After marriage, I was not free like in my earlier days; I was not allowed to go to study. Education is the most powerful organ to develop ourselves. If I got a chance to study at university, maybe I could get a better job than this. With the help of education, women can handle their meetings themselves. Similarly, they write their minuet, calculate their amount, save and provide loans for needy people in their groups, etc. Without education, we need to call other people to run the meeting.*

The above-mentioned story of participants indicates to handle local organizations, and we need to have formal, informal and non-formal education. Only having a degree with a good grade couldn't indicate that a person can handle local

organizations. Women who have proper education, also need to have knowledge and experience about various parts of local organizations to upgrade women in their levels. We properly handle local organizations.

Build Confidence

The empowerment of women in every corner of the earth is crucial for a brilliant nation and stable future. Girls are the future mothers of any nation. The education every girl receives is more likely to make education a prominent priority for her offspring. That has a ripple effect

of constructive change in society as well as the country (Farzana, 2018). After discussing education contributions in local organizations, I came to know that education has a great role in building confidence. In several ways, my research participants have gained knowledge of various subject matters. In the initial phase, they were curious to learn new things; they did not have any idea about community-based organizations. When they start to be involved and participate in community-based organizations, they gradually develop knowledge by being involved in community-based organizations.

After being informed the day before, on the afternoon of 19th October 2022, Wednesday, about the Tihar festival celebrated in school, I decided to watch cultural programs of the Tihar festival and have the opportunity to talk with Sushma and Maiya. I woke up early and prepared breakfast, managed food for my small daughter and collected the required tools: notebook, camera, recorder, etc for field purposes and put them inside my bag. I had a problem with my scooter. I walked for 10 minutes to reach the bus stop to get the bus. After waiting more than fifteen minutes, the bus arrives. The bus was crowded, and I did not have space to stand properly, but I also managed to hardly stand near the door on the side of the helper. I felt very difficult and had some interaction with a helper. After 20 minutes, I took out from the bus and went to Maiya's house, which is between the bus stop and her school. Maiya's daughter said that her mother had already gone to school. Then, I went towards her workplace on foot, which is a minute's distance.

As soon as I reached their school, Students and teachers were decorating the stage. I sat on the chair and observed Sushma's and Maiya's activities. They were giving ideas to students to make it more decorative and colourful with papers, ribbons, and balloons. I looked at my mobile watch, it was nearly 10 a.m. I also observed that teachers were handing their students according to their class. Similarly,

at the same time, the sound system had been hired, and the manager was fixing the sound system in the proper place and checking the sound. He called some students to sing in mike to test the voice of sound for the program. Some of the students were wearing a cultural dress with makeup. I found Maiya and Sushma were both busy with their program. Later, after half an hour, I went towards them and they were very surprised to see me there. They welcomed me in their school with laughing and greeting. They took me to their office and introduced me to their friends. They were also happy to see me there because some friends were familiar with having the same profession. They also explained my research agenda to them and told them that we are also research participants of hers. Now, Sushma and I need to give time to her. Please call us in urgent said Maiya to her colleagues. They agreed with her voice. Then after, Sushma and Maiya requested to go with them. They took me to the canteen. While entering inside, I smelled good of samosa, sail, and curry. Sushma ordered three milk teas. Then I opened my bag, took out my field notes and started to discuss education roles in local organizations. Maiya got ready to share her stories at first. She shared;

In my earlier days, I didn't have any idea about community-based organizations. I used to sit inside the house and study. There was no time for us to go outside. We, females, are not allowed to go out of the house. After certain years, I became a job holder as a teacher in a government school, and then after, I was allowed to go out of my house. There were some friends in school, and they suggested I participate in community-based organizations. In my earlier days, I did not have an idea of community-based organizations, so I rejected them, saying that as I am a woman, I have to multi-task and need to handle several responsibilities in the house, such as caring for children, cooking food, taking care of family members and farming as well. Besides that, I needed to come for a job as well and I did not have any idea about community-based organizations, so I replied to them.

It was very hard for Maiya to go out for a job; in her community, people used to gossip with each other when they saw her beautiful, clean dress. Maiya did not have any idea of being involved in community-based organizations and she did not have confidence in past when she came out for the job.

Then after, Uddhav and Sushil's sir encouraged me to build my confidence and they said you are capable, you can handle and we are here to

help you. These types of motivational words from my staff made me get
involved in community-based organizations.

My father always motivated me to study at that time. He sent me to
school to become as capable as my brothers. When I used to go to higher
secondary school in Padma Kanya Campus, my neighbours came outside from
their homes to see my college uniform. They used to gossip about me. After
completing higher secondary school, I got married and after two years, I had
a son. Then after, I couldn't continue my studies. But when my son and
daughter grew up and started to go to school, I joined my bachelor's degree
and made it complete.

Maiya got the opportunity to formal higher education from an early age. At that time, girls were not allowed to go to school in the community. Community people had patricidal thinking to send their female children to school. Maiya is one whose father was educated and sends her to school. In her school days, she had completed School Level Certificate (SLC) with male classmates in her school. By having certain qualifications, Maiya got a chance to serve in teaching and only she got a chance to expand her knowledge in outsider horizons. She further added as

Education helps me to develop confidence but it did not work in my
life. When I was studying for a bachelor's degree, people did not send their
female members to study and work. There was very conservation thinking. I
did not get the opportunity to talk with my neighbours and my neighbouring
friends. Later, when I started to teach in school, it helped me to boost my
confidence level and my leadership skills. I felt that work is our confidence.
We could learn various skills through our work. Book knowledge is nothing to
me. What I learned and gained is all from my work.

Maiya further said that she was one who got educated while the rest of the female did not get the opportunity to get an education in their time. She found herself lucky to get a formal education, but she thought it did not work in her life. She has never had the opportunity to talk and work with her neighbours. She further added,

Now, time is changing, but there is still the existence of a patriarchal
mindset. In my workplace, there are four in charge of running the school, but
they all are male. More than half of the school's teacher is female. They did
not give us the opportunity for our leadership. Several times, I faced
domination from school leaders when I talked about this matter. Similarly,

they thought that females could not teach higher-level students in schools. Likewise, in cooperatives, men's decision is more powerful than women's, which is a bitter truth I faced in my life.

When I participated in various community-based organizations in my community, I found that I increased my confidence level. I can manage time to get engaged in community-based organizations. Economically, I am strong and handling my children and house myself. I developed my leadership and communication skills. Now I am fifty-eight; at this age, I learned to ride a scooter and had a license; I learned to use the computer. I need to prepare for the job, handle my family members, and have various responsibilities for several community-based organizations. I never said I could not do this task.

While she was sharing, I also observed her face; she shared so nicely in a motivating style. Maybe she was more familiar with me to share her stories. It was the second time I met her for my research purpose. At the same time, I was also observing Sushma, my research participant. She was also listening very attentively and waiting for other stories from Maiya. Maiya loved me very much, saying that my son and you are the same age and you are like my daughter. After having tea, Maiya said I would be back after a few minutes and went towards the office to find out what was going on there for the program. Now it was Sushma's turn to share her stories;

I completed my master's degree this year in Master in education. I have experienced several ups and downs in my life. In my schooling days when I was small, My mother did not think I should go to school, she said that I needed to help myself and I needed to go to another house after marriage so I needed to learn every work but my father is good for me, he had opposite views than mothers. He tried and forcefully sent me to school to study. He always inspires me to study. After completing My School Living Certificate (SLC), I got married and then after, nobody inspired me to be an educated person. I push myself to learn self that education is helpful.

While talking about education, Formal education helps to have a better idea of a given subject matter and helps to become a capable person in society. Similarly, our experience in several ways teaches us to learn new things in life. For certificates, we must have formal education, but to learn new things and develop skills, informal and non-formal education also have an equal role. If we are educated, we can think, synthesis and we are aware of

speaking necessary things in the right place. We can easily find out educated and uneducated people by their speaking style. If we educate people involved in local organizations, it will also benefit them. Community-based organizations will become mature, but being women, we have multiple roles in the house, and we cannot go out of the home to gain opportunities.

Sushma was a Buddhist and the elder daughter of a family who got a chance to get a formal education and have knowledge of various subject matters. She had done lots of struggle to go for formal education in school in her time. Her mother focused on helping her work and take care of her younger sisters, but her father encouraged and inspired her to study. When she was involved in community-based organizations, she found differences between women by getting ways of education and their role, ways of speaking and easily finding out the benefits of education in community-based organizations.

By participating in community-based organizations, I felt myself change in every aspect. I have developed my communication skills. I can take leadership with full confidence. Not only that, I get the opportunity to learn several things by being involved in a community-based organization free of cost. I did not go back to learn; I always wanted to learn new things with full of energy. I can coordinate members in groups and handle their meetings as well. This is what I learned from participating in community-based organizations.

Mahat (2003) further states that, In the case of Nepal, there are several aspects to the process of women's empowerment, including enhanced access to economic resources and opportunities, increased political influence because of women's organizations, solidarity and collective effort, and enhanced women's self-confidence. After discussing education contributions in community-based organizations, I came to know that education has a great role in building confidence. In several ways, my research participants have gained knowledge of various subject matter. In the initial phase, they were curious to learn new things; they did not have any idea.

Take Leadership

Indeed, women are learning different approaches and techniques and participating in community-based organizations. Education helps to change the behaviour of people. Moreover, taking leadership plays a very important role in local organizations. Samjhauta Nepal (2018) states that women's participation in groups

would have strengthened their capacity for leadership. Many of the elected women politicians stated that their involvement in the community and the support of individuals who believe in what they are capable of helped to their election to their position. Therefore, it is essential to keep supporting the various ways that women can participate in public life. These groups will produce more leaders, and as the research revealed, younger women are actively participating.

Education is an important element in boosting knowledge and ideas for several reasons. Education role has a direct contribution to empowering women in community-based organizations. They could have an idea of the subject matter; they will have a clear idea and vision to upgrade their community-based organizations. After having confidence, a clear vision, and a clear subject matter, women can handle community-based organizations, and they can take leadership themselves.

Prakriti is a 29-year-old lady who came here to this locality three years after her marriage. In FGD of the sister group, I have seen her there with her small daughter. She was a treasure of their sister's group. I found her to be gentle, positive, and have a good smile lady during meeting time. I requested an interview during the meeting time for an interview.

The next day, 26 September 2022, I went to her house, and when I reached there, she was feeding her daughter. She called me inside and requested I sit for a while. Later on, she comes with black tea and biscuits in her hand and serves me. I felt uneasy, but her humble request made me drink tea. Then after, I focused on research and told her to be ready for the interview. When I said, I will record your voice for evidence; she denied it and was in fear. I did not force her later. Prakriti herself agreed to record her voice as well.

> *While talking about my education, I am studying for my master's degree. My family members always encourage me to study. Education has a great role and its importance is necessary for us. Without education, we cannot learn anything and we can't develop several skills. It is needed in every sector to foster and update several subject matters.*

> *Males also have a great responsibility towards women. In earlier days, they did not send their life partner outside their house, but now the time has changed. Women are also going out of the house for a job, to learn new things, for better education, etc. If male members of the house didn't send us outside, we did not get the opportunity to get an education and we did not*

have an idea of various subject matter. We need to depend on them. It is not possible to go outside of the house to go to generating programs. While working with community-based organizations, I can learn various things by participating in community-based organizations. I can find out the problems. Being the mother of a 1-year-old daughter, I came to know about the breastfeeding program and have knowledge of breast cancer. There was an awareness program for women and I also got a chance to learn various things. I know practical life. I found myself a stronger, confident builder and have developed leadership skills through community-based organizations. She further said that I could speak more without hesitation. While she was sharing, I noticed that she was using gestures while speaking with full confidence. Now, I have developed time management skills, mental development, etc, which helps me to think more widely.

During the interview period, she was more focused on using gestures and had good communication skills as well. She has high leadership skills and the knowledge to work with various women groups. She also has a good knowledge of English, and I found she has mixed various English words during the conversation period. Her expression said that she can solve various women's problems through community-based organizations.

Similarly, another participant, Rita, also shared in her second visit ,

I have completed her higher secondary education and am now studying for a Bachelor in Business Studies BBS degree from Tribhuvan University (TU). My family members have supported me to study. Being an educated man, it will be easy to learn new things and transform knowledge for others as well. Education helps to take leadership, and it helps to develop a positive attitude to work further. Similarly, education helps people to manage their work more systematically, motivate others, and help to change their behaviour of a person. In organizations, if the member is not educated, they need to search for people to write in a minute.

Being an educated person involved in community-based organizations, I have learned various things. The major thing is that I have learnt to go out from home to learn new things. If we go out from home, then only we get a chance to learn new things and get opportunities as well. I found that my confidence level has increased and I learned several practical things which we

do in our community-based organizations. Now, I can take leadership to handle programs. I am aware of and strong in economic condition. Not only that, while working with community members in the group, I can make plans, write a proposal, and work to uplift women's lives further by bringing various programs from organizations such as a municipality, NGOs, etc.

Listening to their stories and during a conversation, I found that they are more than others in groups. During the conversation, I observed that they were fully confident, and they were using gestures to make me clear on the subject matter. They also made eye contact during the interview. They have a bold and courageous voice, which helps to inspire other members of their community-based organizations. Not only in organizations have I observed that they are taking leadership in their home. They encourage their family members to plant vegetables in the field, do new work, etc. I found that having good leadership will help and promote them, and they can get more opportunities in the upcoming days.

Searching Social Identities

Talking with my participants and observing their activities in the community-based organization, I came to realize that women are participating in community-based organizations to search for their identities. On November 19, 2022, after having lunch, I went to observe and discuss Rita as I phoned her earlier day. It was hot at the time. Most of the community members are in their field. They were busy with agricultural work. It was the time to plough fields and plant mustard, millet barley, etc. I walk fifteen minutes to reach her house from my house. When I reached, there was no one in Rita's home. I sat inside the yard and watched the periphery of the surroundings. Marigold and Godavari flowers were still blooming in her yard. I feel peace and, meditate myself, and get energized by the pleasant smell of flowers. After some minutes, I checked my cell phone and rang Rita. She said I am coming home; you need to wait for me for 5 minutes. After some time, she arrived at the house with kodalo (Spade) and Baltin (bucket). She put them in the side of the yard and greeted me with her muddy hand. She got wet with sweat. Her face was red, and she looked very tired. She requested me to go inside her house, but I dined and sat outside. She washed her face, hands, and legs with soap. She gave me Chakati to sit on. After some while, she took a glass of water and sat by my side. Then, she started to share her experiences about searching for the meaning of identities in community-based organizations.

Being an active member of community-based organizations, I have had some opportunities as well. If we actively work and want to learn new things, opportunities don't knock on the door, and we need to create for them. I got a chance to attend training on group saving. Similarly, I got a chance to go on an agricultural visit and saw various modal agricultural work in several districts. By observing that, I felt that we could do all the work. If we do hard work, then nothing is impossible. Everything is possible to do.

My family members always support me in my work. My mother-in-law said you need to do something you as just being mature, you are educated, etc. But sometimes she also said being a daughter-in-law, you need to look for a home and help agriculture workers. What did you get from there? However, I manage time for all and want to learn new things and actively participate in community-based organizations.

It indicates that women are going out of the house to search for their existence, want to know their capacity and develop some interpersonal skills as well. Rita's expression also made it clear that they want to have their own identities. Similarly, Apsara has also mentioned,

"We grew up in a patriarchal society, people are saying women and men are equal on all sides, but also I can see they vary in theory and practice. In my groups, many members used to be involved in community-based organizations for their advantage. I am also involved in local organizations for myself to know my identities where I can fit and can work."

After meeting time in a local organization with a sister group, Nisa, one of my research participants, called me into her house and shared her reflection on women participating in local organizations.

In my home, my mother used to send me to attend the meetings of community-based organizations. I did not find any discrimination in our groups. Nowadays, male also sends their counterparts to their meeting. They said you need to learn several issues. In my community, other neighbours shared about community-based organizations and encouraged me to participate in a meeting. Then, I started to participate in community-based organizations. I have several opportunities after being involved in community-based organizations. I attended training and an awareness program, and I also got a chance to knit the Dhaka basic course for three months, which is

free of cost. Now, I have the idea to knit Dhaka. If I can buy the instruments
for it, I can make Dhaka and start to run a business of it. Now, I have one skill
in my hand.

In Nepal, there are no meaningful women participation in politics, economics, and social sectors of the nation. However, constitutional and legal rights are theoretically provided for women's participation. In fact, in practice, women are suffering in society. There is vast discrimination between males and females, and society does not provide equal opportunities to women (Dahal, 2021). During the interview and observation with my participants, I came to know that women desire to learn new things, and they are aware of their self-identities. To become independent, they need to have proper guidance, suggestions, and good education, which can be seen in different forms. Women are searching for the meaning of their life and existence through community-based organizations in their communities.

Essence of Chapter

Having observed and heard multi-dimensional stories regarding the contribution of education in community-based organizations, seeing in the social context, women are getting educated in several ways, such as attending their formal classes and learning in community-based organizations by sharing with members. Their experience taught women to get an education in various moods. Women are trying to learn from other members in groups. They are asking their family members and have queries to know better in their confusion. They wanted to update and upgrade themselves and did not want to miss any chance in community-based organizations. However, they have multiple roles in their society. Further, they have to face multiple threats and challenges to participate and become aware of community-based organizations.

CHAPTER VI

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

In this chapter, I have analyzed the information presented in Chapter IV and Chapter v. Interview, field observation, and discussion in the group to provide me with enough information. I have discussed why women participate in community-based organizations. Further, I have also discussed their education role and contributions. In this chapter, I am presenting and reflecting on what I observed during women's participation in their community-based organizations.

In the previous chapter, I analyzed and interpreted the information collected from the field. In this chapter, I discuss how my research participants are engaged in their community-based organizations. A well-built and successful local government is one of the elemental preconditions for ensuring good governance in recent times, and it can be achieved by strengthening local government by ensuring women's participation (Huq, 2016). Women are pillars of the community. Without their participation, any community-based organizations are incomplete. Involving women in community-based has a great role to enhance themselves. Considering those settings, the following section presents how women are participating and what are the contributions of education for them to engage in community-based organizations in Godawari Municipality.

Women Participation: Learning, Sharing, and Involving

Women are engaged in CBOs for learning, sharing, and involvement, which has created new knowledge, shared their ideas in a group and helped to involve actively in community-based organizations. Organizations should provide customized incentive systems to specific target groups to align motivation and knowledge sharing (Nguyen et al., 2019). Women are participating in CBOs to learn new knowledge from other group members. They practice sharing their problems and difficulties in the group without incentive. In the group, women discussed their agenda and helped to overcome the solutions. They take care of their members and provide the necessary support from the group. Women take care of other members by calling them to attend meetings, reminding their duties and responsibilities, and taking priority to provide loans according to their needs, which are practices of caring in CBOs. CBOs and women themselves encourage other community members to spend their little time in

community-based organizations. It indicates that women care to uplift their community-based organizations, and they are learning several things in their organizations. Sushma said,

> Our community-based organizations were established by male members in earlier days, but in later days, women also got engaged and participated in community-based organizations because they were becoming active and they do good work and learned from community-based organizations. In my opinion, if women want to learn and become active, they need to foster and participate in community-based l organizations. Similarly, if we want to develop our community, we need to become skilful and to increase economic strength, we local people must concentrate and participate in community-based organizations.

It is essential to look at women working for CBOs in an environment where politics, economics, and other elements influence how they see themselves and those around them. Women appear to have varied viewpoints when it comes to how women appear in women's community-based groups. As a result, women's knowledge does not concentrate as much on actual decision-making and is more focused on representation (participation at the level of tokenism in Arnstein's Ladder). Women who are involved in CBOs demand a strong feminist perspective for them to understand women's viewpoints and life experiences. According to the feminist standpoint, women's knowledge and experience are various due to their various social, political, and economic backgrounds (Pandey, 2016). This shows the need to educate and motivate women to understand their power and the necessity of overcoming gender stereotyping in CBOs in order to promote peace and balance in society

Despite the economic hardship for women, they are involved and engaging in CBOs. All of their household work is unpaid. In earlier days, they could not go out from home. They need to look after several works from morning to evening. Now people are aware and women also realise several socioeconomic factors, and they want to work and learn new things. Women are participating in CBOs to be aware of their participation, to learn and engage there. Community-based organizations help women to empower themselves. They have little access to mobility. Women are still struggling for their space in society and in their families. Women are struggling for their position through informal learning through Community-based organizations. Education has become a major element for women because it provides various

learning opportunities for the women. Through education from community-based organizations, women get economic, social and political access. In the absence of CBOs, women cannot get those skills and opportunities. Active participation in community-based organizations helps women to develop their confidence and encourages them to participate in several learning and sharing opportunities.

Women's participation is important in the socio-cultural context of Nepal. If their participation in community-based organizations is ignored, it increases inequality and discrimination in families and in the community. This would affect the overall development of family, community and national development in general. While encouraging women's participation in CBOs, we need to consider their perceptions towards it. Informal ways of learning help women to get access and opportunities to the available privileges through which they can bring their meaningful participation in community-based organizations.

Contribution to Household Economics and Livelihoods

Women in Nepal are generally perceived as an economically unproductive group in society. Women are placed and represented to be in an economically weaker position than the men in their families (Adhikari & Sharma, 2022). However, women are working from early morning to late evening without hunger and thirst. They are engaged in several household chores and economically productive work such as animal husbandry, vegetable farming, etc. This is evidence that women are working for long hours in several sectors while, at the same time, they are managing their children's households and looking after their senior members in their families. Besides this, also women have the motivation to join their groups. They join mother groups and sister groups, become cooperative members to save their money, and want to become financially independent. Similarly, some of the women have financial challenges, so they want to take a loan from community-based organizations.

Rita said,

> "I will give you one example near my house; there is one marginalized woman who used to work as a mason. She got thirty-two thousand five hundred money and, from that money, she bought goats and started to rear them for business purposes. Now, from that goat, she is taking care of her three children and becoming independent."

"Rural women cannot access loans from commercial banks as they may not have the collateral to get a loan from a bank (Chilongozi, 2022). Women who want to

become independent are facing social and economic problems in their daily lives. For women who are involved in community-based organizations group, their problem is reduced through the little they save. Similarly, in their groups, they act as guarantors to each other and can have easy access to a loan at any time without collateral in low interest.

This is illustrated in the following responses. Goma viewed,

Mostly, we have the practice of collecting and saving money in our community-based organizations; if anybody needs money, they use it to pay certain interest and need to return later on settlement. Those who take a loan from community-based organizations use that money to buy goats to plant new seasonal vegetables for sale. It shows that they took money to generate income.

Sushma -*I actively participate in community-based organizations. I regularly attend a meeting of cooperatives, mothers' groups, etc. I have seen that women are involved in community-based organizations to go a step forward, develop their capacity, and enhance their skills as well. Mostly, our community-based organizations give priority to producing agricultural goods. It focuses on skill-oriented training and work for the farmer. It provides several facilities for the farmer. Our community-based organizations distribute seeds and loans for agricultural work such as animal husbandry and also provide modern technology which is needed for farmers, such as chap cutters, tractors to plug fields, etc.*

Women find it difficult to engage in self-employment or income-generation activities due to a lack of savings and capital (Chirwa 2002, as cited in Chilongozi, 2022). Generally, there is no saving culture in most communities. When women join sister groups and mother groups, they can save money for festivals and rituals. Even their family members' husbands could not afford money to save. This is not possible that women are not engaged in the group.

Montey (2020) argues that women are considered second-class citizens in Nepalese society, where we can see patriarchal practices. We have experienced that women are limited, and they are always treated as the lowest in the family. They need to depend on their financial status, or we can see in our community that they are in lower-paid jobs such as labourers, helpers, and field workers.

The agenda, interests, and agency of women who attended the CBO meeting were neglected. Even in a meeting where they had nothing to say, they began to discuss their individual lives. In addition to belonging to a particular gender group, women come from a variety of financial, cultural, educational, and familial backgrounds. On the other hand, there are others who speak out in public, like Maiya (who is a woman as well but has more socio-capital because she is a teacher). She speaks clearly for CBOs to hear. Similar to this, Prakriti, a co-operative officer and mother of a 2-year-old daughter, supervises several women's group meetings each month. From a feminist standpoint, power practices and knowledge development are related. The study of feminist standpoints encourages diversity as essential to the human situation and uses multiple, differing points of view as a tool for developing knowledge (Hawkesworth, 2006). Through learning, sharing, and participation in CBOs, women share their thoughts and expertise in order to improve the household's resources and their standard of living.

Women who are educated and have access to jobs their status is different than other women. They can easily contribute to household economics and livelihood and maintain their living standard. On the other hand, women who are at home also want to work and want to uplift their status. They are getting loans and support from organizations and doing income generation programs. Mostly, women are unable to access good jobs because of their low education level and inequality. Thus, the economic condition of women is dependent upon their husbands or their wage work conditions, which sometimes is not enough for what is required in their daily needs.

Creating Space for Empowerment

According to Hossain (2015), gender equality and women empowerment have been two of the most pervasive themes in development. Unless women are involved in the decision-making and policy-making process at all levels of the state, changes in women's political and, to some extent, social and economic status will continue to be marginal (as cited in Huq, 2016). With the help of education and involvement in community-based organizations, women are getting several opportunities, and they also have knowledge of various programs and sharpen their knowledge and empower themselves. Huis et al. (2017) mention there is a three-dimensional model of women's empowerment. By being involved in community-based organizations, women can empower themselves personally. Women who have active participation in a community-based organization: I can see that they have developed several skills in

life, such as developing self-confidence, a learning attitude, leadership skills, etc. Women can ask a question about self-esteem. They feel stronger and have more respect from their families and community. Similarly, women empowerment has focused on relational empowerment in their community-based organizations.

Women who are a member of community-based organizations have good relations with other CBOs. They get several facilities from CBOs. Women who engage in the group can share their problems and solve them through their CBOs, with a good network and active participation that is called with other CBOs in various roles. They get leadership opportunities as well. Moreover, women are developing societal empowerment. They are developing their skills and sharpening their knowledge in CBOs. Strengthening and sharpening their ideas, they gradually get involved in local government programs and have access to politics. Women who have a good relationship with the community can give time to their organizations and have a chance to work and learn in a broader societal dimension. This three-dimensional model helps women to better understand themselves and develop personal control and relational and societal empowerment. Despite there being lots of boundaries and struggles, women have to engage in CBOs and empower themselves.

The patriarchal perspective that confines women to "Ghar dhanda garne" (household chores) and believes they are unfamiliar with CBOs continues to influence how CBOs approach the participation of women. If we look at society, we can see that different types of women have varying degrees of advantages and difficulties as members of both society and CBOs. Women in CBOs, therefore, have a variety of perspectives on the position of knowledge in society. Standpoints respect the diversity of women's knowledge and experiences because of their varied social, political, and economic backgrounds (Pandey, 2016).

Adhikari (2021) further states that women's participation in any groups, organizations, and networks helps to develop their capacity. It contributes to enhancing the socio-economic and political status of women and helps to balance gender relations in the context of Nepal. Participation is a key driver to empowerment and a tool for reshaping life (Saud, 2020). At the beginning of participation in community-based organizations, women wouldn't have the power to influence the decisions and to lead the group organizations and networks. However, they got the opportunities to educate themselves in is informed in new learning in several ways.

If women's participation is strong, they can negotiate for equal remuneration as compared to males. It is said that they are capable of raising voices against discrimination in wages based on gender. Hence, they should participate in each sector, e.g. socio-economic, political, and cultural fair and equitable development. With the help of participation, women are empowered so that they have the capacity for their rights, services, and social justice.

Education for Better Opportunities

Education is one of the fundamental tools to upgrade and learn new things in every sector. Education is a weapon for everyone. With the help of education, we can change our lives. It starts from birth to death. It is a continuous and lifelong process. It can bring a great change in our life. Life becomes prosperous and meaningful. It is the foundation of every human being. Women are engaged in community-based organizations to learn new things. They realized that they are backward with formal education and now they are getting ready to learn non-formal. Moreover, they learn various informal ways to improve their learning by involving community-based organizations.

Further, community-based organizations women have supported the women to prepare and get several opportunities from their local level offices, which are situated in their communities. They remind and instruct them to prepare a proposal for women's programs with the help of community-based organizations.

Formal Education

The education which has a certain subject matter, time duration, and target groups and which is given through any institution is called formal education. It has its own structure. It starts from the primary level and pretends up to the university level and has its own structure.

Women get several opportunities to empower themselves from community-based organizations. They can uplift themselves with the help of highly educated women and with the help of their family members. Such an environment helps women to learn and develop themselves. Education has a vital role to play in developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that enable people to contribute to and benefit from an inclusive and sustainable future. Learning from clear, purposeful goals, working with other different perspectives, finding untapped opportunities, and identifying multiple solutions to big problems will be essential (OECD, 2018).

Women who are formally educated have strong decision-making skills and are aware of their members in groups.

A properly educated person is also needed in community-based organizations. To get on track, they suggest to their members their role is important. According to John (2017), the chances of women contributing to the development of their community are affected by the lack of formal education when compared to men. Education for All (EFA) findings showed that education is only available to males in some African and Asian countries. The widespread operation of the patriarchal system, early marriage, early pregnancy, heavier domestic and several duties of females generally lower regard for the value of female life, which affects participation in education and has influenced community-based organizations. Participation in social institutions has powered the women participants to understand and utilize their potential for the betterment of societies (Adhikari & Adhikari, 2021). Women in the community participate in local organizations to engage in learning sharing and try to grab opportunities.

Non Formal Education

The education which is opposite to formal and need-oriented, which focuses on emphasis on the needs of the learner, is called non-formal education. Example – adult education skilled-oriented training. The major aim of non-formal education is to develop skills to increase the functional capacity of individuals in different areas of society.

Women get access to the learning platform. Most women are busy with unpaid work. Their work isn't valued. Nowadays, their family members also give an idea to them. Though women did not get the opportunity of formal education, they are sending their children to school. They are realizing the importance of education and sending their children to get an education in schools and colleges. Nowadays, women are learning with their children and discussing issues in their homes and community. These environments make women develop their confidence level, communication skills, etc. Women are exposed to their community-based organization's tasks and environment, creating learning opportunities for them. Women are learning various ideas and skills in their community. Women are learning several skills-orientated productive training and implementing the training skills in their lives, which helps them to create job opportunities and keep themselves busy. Women are learning beauticians, sewing and cutting, knitting, computer skills, farming training, cake

making, etc, which helped them to become entrepreneurs themselves and provide jobs for others. Women are slowly raising their social and economic status. I have seen that my participant is busy from morning to evening with her household chores, farming and rearing.

In community-based organizations, women need to care for themselves and help their members create new learning opportunities. Educated women are helping the women who are ready to learn. "Women are less literate than men, and female illiteracy has far-reaching implications for development because illiteracy further marginalizes women in the public sphere. Women are often simply unable to participate in non-formal educational programs, as household duties keep women busy at home all day long, preventing them from participation (Ismagilona, 2002). Women in my research area have shared the culture of their learning with the members of CBOs. Those women who had not gotten a better opportunity of formal education are now learning, listening to educated young women, following suggestions, and getting better opportunities there. They are each other. If they have free time after completing all the household chores, they sit in small groups near their house in a canal, way, field, etc, and talk about their family matters and social matters and discuss their possible opportunities in their community. Such practices have created learning opportunities, have good relations among them, and have an attachment to each other.

In formal Education

The education which we go through everywhere and get education in every time is called informal education. It is truly a long life process of education. Informal education is when you are not studying in a school and do not use any particular learning method. In this type of education, conscious efforts are not involved. It is neither pre-planned nor deliberate. It may be learned in various places, such as markets, home institutions, etc, for anyone. Unlike formal education, informal education is not imparted by an institution such as a school or college. Informal education is not given according to any fixed timetable. There is no set curriculum required. Informal education consists of experiences and actually living in the family or community. In community-based organizations, women are also learning from their women members in an informal way. They are learning to speak, taking leadership, and writing minutes, handling their community-based organizations by learning and sharing their ideas with each other.

As I compared women's engagement in CBOs to Arnstein's(1969) ladder of citizen participation, I came to the conclusion that women in CBOs are steadily climbing the ladder and moving from tokenism to citizen power.

Similarly, I observed that women participate in community-based organizations with social network theory. I came to the conclusion that women in CBOs participate by having social networks with them. According to the field data, women members have recently felt more in control of their lives, appreciated, and included in decision-making. Looking at the wider context, I realized that this is not just a problem for women's empowerment. They already felt empowered, so they want to learn new things, participate in society, develop leadership skills, and gain more confidence through various forms of education provided by community-based organizations. Community-based organizations are platforms for women where they can connect with each other and learn unknowingly. Women are learning interpersonal skills, decision-making skills, and leadership skills through community-based organizations. Women feel more confident, ready to share their problems, get ready to help each other, learn and have meaningful participation in community-based organizations. There is the hegemony of educated women, which has been an obstacle to the joint effort of their member's participation in community-based organizations. Both literate and illiterate women need support in their own way.

Nepalese women are still involved in domestic and household work. Both literate and illiterate women need much struggle for their basic rights in our context. Education depends upon time, society and change. It emphasises making a person civilized and intelligent. After getting an education, every person should make a contribution to society and the nation, which are functions of education. Likewise, women's participation in various community programs supports them in their learning and developing opportunities for them. Women are engaged in supporting community-based organizations in discussion, planning, and development. They raise their voice in front of the mass.

Education has come as the empowering factor which helps women to be the resource generator of the house. Moreover, they make the major decisions in the household in the absence of their male counterpart. Those women who did not get formal education are excluded in various ways. They actively participate in the income-generating activities. In the past, women were assigned to reproductive work and male to income-generating activities. Basically, women are not recognized in the

productive sector, and they are only in the household work. It especially affects their empowerment and their ways of learning. As a result, women themselves are conscious of their education and empowerment.

Essence of Chapter

This chapter presented how women are participating in community-based organizations. From the information shared by the participants and my observation, I have found that there are positive changes and messages in women's participation in community-based organizations in their community. The study found that women are participating in different reasons in community-based organizations in their community. That participation creates an opportunity for them to empower and develop. However, there are different circumstances for the contribution of women's participation in their groups. This is because each participant has various socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, exposure, and levels of participation in different sectors of community-based organizations.

CHAPTER VII

REFLECTION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATION

In this chapter, I have presented the conclusion, abstracting the essence of the study. This chapter is the conclusion of the whole research. This chapter is a standpoint for where we can get the researcher's reflection, conclusion, lesson learned, and implications. Further, it focuses on the exploration of women's understanding and experiences of their participation in community-based organizations. This research concluded that meaningful and active participation of women in community-based organizations brings tremendous change. This is to say, the higher level of participation of women and their higher education level in community-based organizations create support for other backwards women to empower them.

My Reflection on a Research Journey

In my opinion, it was a bold step to decide on this research. Being a mother of a daughter with all household responsibilities. I was nervous to step in. Further, I am a government teacher by profession. It was very hard to manage time to get out of a regular and busy schedule to conduct research. However, I made a move to conduct this research and started with the topic "Education and Women's Participation in Community-based Organizations". I took it as a mission to research it. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I could not go on the field. At the same time, my mother's responsibilities have added, and my father-in-law became sick for a long duration, so I couldn't do it earlier. Behind several ups and downs, I sometimes thought to quit it. Through my family members, my supervisor always encourages me to keep on writing. I got energized and started my study in women's participation with a keen interest in the perhaps in my earlier days. I have experience in participating in community-based organizations. I explore women's participation in the Godawari Municipality.

Participation is engaging or involving in everyday actions in a social context. Participating in community-based organizations in several environments plays an important role in women's participation. Participation might be influenced by the absence of regular presence and support. On those beliefs, my research questions explored how women perceive their participation in community-based organizations

and how their educational background contributes to their participation in community-based organizations.

I reviewed some literature related to women's participation, their engagement in CBOs, and their education to get insights for my study. The involvement practices might be reflected differently following the various women's backgrounds, including education, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, etc. I took support from standpoint theory to generate meaning from the stories collected from the fieldwork.

The study was taken in community-based organizations of the remote village in Godawari Municipality in Lalitpur district. The study followed the qualitative research design to explore women's participation in community-based organizations. I used ethnographic methodology while collecting the information, considering the importance of data collection in a natural setting. Data were collected using in-depth - interviews and, observation and discussion methods. An interpretive paradigm was used while analyzing the data.

The study revealed that women participating in community-based organizations created various opportunities in the community. Women participate in CBOs to build their self-confidence, become independent and raise their voices. Though they are very busy with household chores, in their professional work, they have given priority to their local organizations. Women are participating in community-based organizations even though they are carrying their tools for their work, which provides a chance to observe their lifestyle and their work. Moreover, by participating in community-based organizations, women are learning new knowledge and get opportunities to increase their living standards. At the same time, women are also developing their interpersonal skills by sharing and interacting with each other in their community-based organizations.

The data shows that women are participating in community-based organizations in their community to become self-dependent. Those who have active participation get several opportunities to develop their skills, such as leadership and communication, and build their confidence level. Members who are not actively participating in community-based organizations do not attend regular meetings, and discussions are being backwards with several things. Inside their organizations, there is also no good relationship between members. Similarly, there is the hegemony of educated women, which has been an obstacle to the joint effort of their member's

participation in community-based organizations. Both literate and illiterate women need support in their own way.

Theoretical Insight

I used the participation, feminist standpoint and social network theory as my research theory. Participation theory talks about eight different rungs of participation and is categorized into three layers, which are applied in groups and institutions to show the level of participation. I felt the theory would have helped me in my study to find out various layers of participation. Similarly, I used feminist standpoint theory, which focused on marginalized and relatively invisible women. Similarly, the perspective of women in different social locations can be better understood with the help of feminists. It guides me through how women have been at the forefront of community-based organizations. Additionally, I used social network theory, which helped women learn from each other in community-based organizations in informal ways. Social Network theory guides women to learn and share their experiences and upgrade their learning. Through social network theory, women have a good network of community women, and they discuss several agendas for their rights, skills, and empowerment and, get access to resources and grab opportunities. Thought these theories were more appropriate for my research as I was carrying on women's participation in community-based organizations.

The position of the women based on the historical context of Nepal gave the years of suppression and oppression they faced. The participation theory is a supportive tool to analyse knowledge, engagement and level of participation of women in their community-based organizations. To Arsterin (1969), the first level is referred to as the participation level, which is based on the first two rungs: manipulation and therapy. Women have different social categories, such as gender, class, ethnicity, and geographical location. Women's educational experiences also showed that they are different from groups. Moving on to the second level of tokenism, I look for three rungs, which are informing, consultation and placation, which allow the marginalized to have a voice, yet this stage doesn't ensure that their voices are really heard by the more powerful members in community-based organizations. Moving up the ladder, a level of citizen power with increased degrees of making skill.

The techniques for supporting women's engagement in community-based organizations were also something I looked at. Participation theory and feminist

standpoint theory were the two theories I employed. Through in-depth interviews, observation, and document reviews, I engaged eight members in two community-based organizations. I discovered that women's meaningful involvement in community-based organizations helps to strengthen the community by raising participation rates and enhancing accountability and transparency. Women are also willing to participate and play an active role in community-based organizations of women despite socio-cultural impediments to participation in decision-making positions. The ability and potential of women to contribute to, enhance, and grow communities seem to be greatly underrated. Their voices are not fully heard, and they lack enough awareness about women's engagement.

Another important finding of my research is that, despite the legal requirements pushing for women's equal participation in community-based organizations, the socio-cultural atmosphere still does not support this. This suggests that there is a contradiction between the policies that are in place and the ways that women actively participate in community-based organizations. According to the study, women's effective engagement helps community-based organizations thrive.

Thus, I came to the conclusion that the inclusion of more women in community-based organizations could benefit the local area. Challenges, including poor participation, transparency, and accountability, are likely to be reduced through meaningful representation. To understand how greater female leadership participation works, more research is required.

Conclusion of the Study

Women are participating in community-based organizations to search for self-help upliftment and want to have more progress in their lives and for their identity to learn new things and to generate income to raise their livelihood. To come out from the four walls to become independent, they are participating in community-based organizations. They have multiple roles and responsibilities towards their house, family members, and society as well. In Nepal, women's participation can be improved by increasing the number of participants in community-based organizations. The meaningful participation brought positive changes and improved their life, making them happier and self-dependent. Among the participants, few have better ideas and knowledge and they actively participate, whereas few have no idea at all about women's participation and could not do anything in their community-based organizations.

Women participating in their groups and organizations have increased in number. Due to their participation, women got a chance to be involved in groups, learn new ideas and knowledge, share their problems, and solve them through women's groups. They are involved in various tasks, interactions, and observation of the women in their community, which helps them to engage in several income generation activities besides their work in the home. Women are learning from female members in their groups to increase their knowledge and sharpen their minds. Likewise, sharing and bonding among members in groups and communities is a positive aspect of women. They have exposure to going out from home and experience saving, and if necessary, they have access to taking a loan. Now, their family members also support them because they are also getting various opportunities from community-based organizations, which help to increase their income generation in their homes. Women get various chances they participate in the meetings of community-based organizations, such as developing their interpersonal skills, changing their skills, taking leadership, making a decision, having self-confidence, etc, which can gradually develop themselves through their participation in a community-based organization. Women are thinking differently than earlier. They have different skills in their hands, which help to increase their economic status. I have seen that they have positive hopes, and there are helping hands for them; women now actively have their presence in socio-cultural activities in their community. They are now moving and handling several social roles, such as attending marriage ceremonies and festivals, going and buying necessary items for the house, etc.

Those who are weak and do not have access to formal education in their earlier days

The socioeconomic and cultural status of women who represent local organizations get opportunities to take loans and do animal husbandry and vegetable farming to uplift their living standards by selling their products in the market. They used to pay the loans in instalments in community-based organizations, which created opportunities for them to look after their family members, pay bills for children in their school, etc. On the other hand, some young women have completed their school-level education, and the working house also engages in developing their vocational skills such as knitting, sewing, cutting, paroling, etc.

However, their engagement and learning skills are not valued. Women went for several vocational skills training to enhance their skills, but after completing their

courses, they went back to their household chores and put aside what they had learned in training.

Implication of the Study

The findings of the study can be implicated in the following ways.

Women and Their Family Members

The findings of the study can be helpful and useful for women who participate in similar community-based organizations and for their family members. A family has a great role in motivating women to participate in community-based organizations. The women are usually exposed to sharing, caring, and learning in their families and their communities. They are getting several benefits from community-based organizations which help their family members to create income generations. The study depicts that women get learning opportunities in their community-based organizations. Their home environment and family members have the roles to create such learning opportunities for women.

Community-based Organizations

Community-based organizations are an institution that helps to support several areas. The study found it needs to work on bridging the family members and women who participate in community-based organizations. Strengthening women and their family relationships might contribute to connecting local knowledge and learning practices in their organizations. People in the community, including women, have lots of knowledge and skills which are not acknowledged by community-based organizations. The CBOs can work to recognize those untapped women resources and mobilize them in their CBOs.

Policy Provision in Community-based Organizations

The study gives an idea of how women in ethnic communities and marginalized rural women are engaged in supporting community-based organizations such as mother groups, sister groups, self-help groups, CLC, ward committees, Guthi, Cooperatives, etc, where women participate in their community. It highlights the policy gaps in recognizing the women's available resources and connecting them to CBO practices. The study could be useful for local-level organizations and institutions to develop appropriate policies for women to participate in CBOs.

Local, Provincial and Federal Government

The study's findings may be beneficial to women working in municipal, provincial, and federal government. Through community-based organizations, which

provide a platform for networking and mobilizing action, women can speak out and increase their level of empowerment. By strengthening their voice in community-based organizations, women can participate in local, provincial, and federal government. The study may be helpful for obtaining resources for skill development, expanding knowledge and expertise, and improving community perceptions.

Future Researcher

The study represents the context of women's participation in Godawari municipality for their community-based organizations. The study opens an avenue for further research in officially registered community-based organizations.

The study showed the need for strong collaboration between family, community, and community-based organizations such as agricultural groups, women's groups, sister groups, etc. Future research could explore women's participation: How have women been experiencing their participation in several other local governments in the community? How do they get access to the organization; what is their status in policy level of educational background? These can be the pertinent issues of research related to women's participation in the upcoming days for researchers.

The study showed the need for stronger collaboration between women, family members, and local government. Future research could explore the perception of male members and local government officials regarding women's participation. Moreover, the constitution of Nepal 2015 has provisioned to include women at least 33 per cent in each sector. The future study can answer the question of how women can contribute to their participation in their institutions.

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