Diaconal Work for Women Empowerment by the Christian Organization; HimalPartner in Nepal

**Master`s Thesis in Diakonia and Christian Social Practice.
Diakonhjemmet University College,
Oslo, Norway.**

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**June 2015
Oslo, Norway**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, my deepest gratitude goes to my supervisor, Associate professor Kari Jordheim at Diakonjhemmet University College. Her encouragement, guidance and support from the beginning to final level enabled me to complete this research.

My heartily thankful goes to all my lectures in the Master program in Diakonia and Christian Social Practice at Diakonjhemmet University College, who provided me with enriching insight throughout my studies.

I would like to express my profound thanks to project advisor Silje Gunlaug Yun Eng from HimalPartner and Balkumari Gurung from United Mission in Nepal for their support and help during collecting the data for the research.

I am grateful to all the informants from Nepal and Norway who actively participated in this research for your support, openness, corporations and trust on me.

I would like to thank my friend Dhiran Sharma for your support and encouragement during my thesis writing.

I am very obliged to my parents who have supported and encouraged me in every step of my life.

I would like to give my special appreciation to my beloved wife who always gave me support in each and every step. Thanks for being part of my life.

At last but not the least, I would like to thank all of my friends, relatives and well wishers to your direct, indirect and moral supports.

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Oslo, Norway

June, 2015

Abstract

This has discussed and analyzed the diaconal activities for women empowerment in Nepalese societies by Christian organization HimalPartner. Large numbers of women are discriminated and marginalized by gender discriminations and domestic violence in rural areas of Nepalese societies. HimalParner have been working with local and international partners to empower discriminated and marginalized women with different diaconal activities.

This thesis gives the background information about women status and impact of discrimination inherited in Nepalese societies. The main focus on women socio-economic status in rural areas of Nepalese societies has given by this thesis to explore the actual women situation in Nepalese societies. Qualitative method was used in this thesis. Semi-structure interview with open ended questions was used to collect the primary data. Diaconal theories have used as theoretical frame work in this thesis.

Analysis of thesis indicates HimalPartner is using different diaconal activities to empower women according to the context of societies. HimalParner is committed towards the root cause of women discrimination to give them dignified life.

Furthermore, this thesis concluded that HimalPartner's diaconal activities with local and international partners have been able empower discriminated and marginalized women with their dignified life in rural areas of Nepalese societies.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Interest for the topic

Nepal is a country with different cultures, religions, ethnic groups, beliefs, rituals and geographical varieties. However, it is surrounded by two economically powerful countries; India and China. According to Human Development Report of National Planning Commission (NPC) it has 0.458 HDI score (NPC, 2014) Nepal is most economically struggling country in the world. Majority of the population of Nepal are living in the rural areas where getting access to education, health, communications, electricity, road and other things are somehow difficult. Different religious beliefs and cultures are making Nepalese societies multi-cultural, multi religious. However, fundamental thinking on religious beliefs and cultures have been manipulated by different types of social problems in most of Nepalese societies. Along with religious beliefs and cultures, poor economic conditions, lack of proper education, poverty are some of the reasons for those problems. Discriminations on caste and gender are major social problems in Nepalese societies, under the perspective of caste and gender discrimination of women are the most vulnerable group in the Nepalese society.

I grew up in rural are of Nepal where religious belief and traditions plays vital role on individual's life. I have seen different types of women discriminations in my own society and even from my own family.. When I was child, I always thought about why my mother does not help me to do my homework. And why my sister do not get chance to play with me? Why my mother does not go to market? Lots of those types of questions were stroked me at that time. With the increasing in my age I got answer to those questions in my way. My mother was uneducated so she could not be able to help me for my homework. My sister had kitchen works to do so she didn't play with me. And only male were allowed to go market or for financial activities therefore my mother did not go to the marker. My sister got married when she passed 10th standard, and my family decided whom she has to get married. Unlike her I got married when I passed my master degree in Nepal. These types of discriminations on education, decision-making, and opportunities, I have encountered in my family and society from the very beginning

of my life. Therefore, these types of situations forced me to think quite critically why this is happening in my family and around my societies.

Discriminations over women are in most of societies in Nepal which enable them to rise their voice for getting opportunities in health, education, rights and justice. However, there are laws and rights for women in the constitution but those are not being good enough for them. Ten years of civil war had brought some consciousness over people about types of discriminations and means to quality. However, some of societies have been changed and women are getting opportunities where as many remains unaffected and discriminations persists mostly to widows, Dalit women and even to girls.

There are different non-governmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations, who are working for women and women rights from a long time. They are empowering women for their own rights, opportunities and equality in societies. Being a master student in Diaconal and Christian Social Practice, I became interested to find the diaconal work for women who are oppressed in Nepalese societies. There are many faiths-based organizations in Nepal who are dealing with women problems. But I choose HimalPartner as an organization who is dealing with different types of diaconal work in Nepal from last 60 years. HimalPartner is not new organization for me because when I was in Nepal I knew HimalPartner was helping people in different sectors. However, I did not know what HimalPartner is doing for women.

One the one hand, my own experiences from my societies and family forced me to look over women discrimination and women where as on the other hand study on Diakonia helped me to think, look and analyze from diaconal perspective how one can help them. And what might be done from diaconal perspective to help discriminated women. How one can empower them. Therefore I have chosen *Diaconal Work for Women Empowerment by the Christian Organization HimalPartner In Nepal* as my research topic.

Being a master student of Diakonia and Christian Social Practice I am interested to know more about different Christian social work from different organizations and missions in my Country and I become interested to look on work and challenging of Christian organizations and missions in Women empowerment.

1.2 Research Overview

There are lots of researches have been done about women discrimination and violence, women empowerments in Nepal. Most of the researches are orientated in reason, type, change and other aspects. There are some of the researches related to diaconal work in Nepalese societies like " *Exploring the Diaconal Working Approaches of One Norwegian mission organization: HimalPartner in Nepal"* by Sanu Maiya Bhandari, *" The United Mission to Nepal change Process 2001-8"* by Anthony Ho-Yen have given contribution to research on diaconal approaches and work of faith based organizations in Nepal. However, those researches focused on the totality of diaconal work of faith based organization.

So, this research has a different purpose than other. This research explores the diaconal work only for gender and women empowerment. And focusing on how women in discriminated Nepalese societies are empowered by faith based organization. This research is only concentrating on diaconal work through HimalPartner and its project partners on women empowerment.

1.3 Research Question

HimalPartner is a Christian faith based organization. It is working in different development, health and social field of Nepal from 1955(HimalPartner, 2015). As a diaconal organization this organization is struggle for people who are marginalized and excluded from societies. Its different diaconal activities are uplifting people from their condition to better life and hope. So, discrimination over women is social problem in Nepal and there are a lot of women who are oppressed from different societies. "Women in our societies are taught to be what they 'ought to be' rather than to develop their own unique selves. Consequently, they lose their spontaneity and even their identity" (Subedi 1993:5) Therefore the main concern of this research is to find activities of HimalPartner for women. So, research question for this study are following;

♦ What diaconal activities are HimalPartner doing though three different projects to empower women in Nepalese Societies?

♦ What does it mean to empower women in Nepalese Societies?

1.4 Scope and limitation of study

Diaconal activities of HimalPartner cover different sectors in Nepal. Among many, one is diaconal activities related to women. It works with different local, national and international partners in Nepal. To look over all projects of HimalPartner might be difficult because of time limited and areas of those sectors. Therefore, I have chosen three diaconal activities of HimalPartner which are running with local and international partners in Nepal. These project deals with women and gender issues. This research constitutes with data collection from interviews, project report, project strategies and analysis of those findings. This study has not any aspiration for cultural practice and rituals debate. However, I expected to recommend some.

1.5 Organization of Thesis

In this research writing the main propose is to know the diaconal activities on women empowerment by one faith based organization. This research will be total of seven chapters. Background information about country and society, gender discrimination and women status in Nepal will be in chapter two. History, vision and goal of HimalPartner and brief information about its project partner will be included in same chapter. Third chapter will cover methodological framework of the writing. Theories on diaconal work and gender will be covered in chapter four. Presentation of findings and discussion will be in chapter five and six respectively. The conclusion will be in last chapter.

Chapter 2: Background

2.0 Introduction

This chapter gives background information about population monograph of Nepal, gender discriminations and women status in Nepalese societies. Furthermore, It gives vision, goal of HimalPartner and brief introduction about HimalPartner's three project partners who are working for women empowerment in Nepal.

2.1 Population

Nepal is an underdeveloped country with different cultural and ethnic diversity. It is bordered by Republic of China in the Northern and India in South, West and East. There are three ecological diverse zones; the mountains, the hills and the terai (Regmi 1999). Eighty three percentage of area is covered by hills and mountains and rest are plan areas(ibid). Nepal has diversities in climate and topography from plain areas to hilly areas and end in mountains with lots of natural and biodiversity. Nepal owns only 0.1 % of land on the global and it is second largest country in water resources in the world (Sherpa 2005).

Nepal has 26.49 million of population (CBS2011). There are people with different religious belief. Among them Hinduism is practiced by majority of population. According to Central Bureau of Statistics National Census 2011, 81.3 % of total populations are Hindus, 9.0 % are Buddhists where as Muslims and Christians are 4.2 and 0.9 % respectively." Christianity has seen a substantial increase in the number of its followers in the last ten years although the numbers is still small compared to other religion"(CBS 2014). With different religious belief there is variations in cultures, castes and language too. Census 2011 identified 125 castes and 123 languages in Nepal 59 indigenous groups (Adivasi Janajati) and 37.9 % of total population reside in Nepal (CBS 2011).

2.2 Nepalese Society

The constitution of Nepal has declared all citizen of Nepal are equal, irrespective to caste, class, sex and color. However, patriarchal society of Nepal still treating women inferior to men. Nepalese society also holds discrimination on the base of caste and gender (UNESCO 2006).

Lack of education, stereotypical belief in religion and patriarchal practice are some of the reasons behind these discriminations.

Caste discrimination referred to discrimination on the basis of decent and work because each caste is restricted to one kind of work (ibid). Caste system mainly find in the Hindu religious society in Nepal." Caste discrimination is a chronic human rights condition, which involves massive violation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights"(IDSN 2015). "Despite the anti-discrimination provision contained in the Constitution of 1990, caste discrimination remains ingrained in Hindu-dominated society in Nepal"(Niraula 2007). Caste discrimination constitutes a form of racism in which people are categorically relegated to subordinate social positions and are denied equal access to social, economic, political and legal resources(ibid). Wealth and power are disproportionately distributed to favor higher castes, restricting social mobility and possibility of intergenerational change, because caste is based on lines of descent(ibid). Culture attitudes that perpetuate the caste system are inculcated at a young age in Nepal, and are often reinforced within the education system. Adult teach children to maintain the stratified society, and continual reinforcement of the system cement it into an unquestionable reality.

Discrimination through the differences in touchable and untouchable status is one of the forms of cast-discrimination in Nepal. According to National Dalit Commission caste-based untouchability refers to "the discrimination practiced toward the communities whose touch is believed to polluted and needs to be purified to the extent of sprinklings water; or any form of discrimination against any community"(NDC). So called higher caste people do not touch to the lower caste people. People of higher caste perceive that they or their objects become polluted if touched by member of lower caste people (Bhattachen et al 2009). Lower castes also known as 'Dalit' under the stratified Hindu caste system (DWO, 2015). National Dalit Commission defines Dalit as "those communities who, by virtue of atrocities of caste based discrimination and untouchability, are most backward in social, economic, educational, political and religious fields, and are deprived of human dignity and social justice"(NDC). 13 % of total population is covered by Dalit communities in Nepal (ibid). Caste based discrimination as untouchability is exercised not only in the case of relationship between members of Dalits and non-Dalit caste groups but also internally among the Dalits castes themselves. Dalit castes are also ranked in a hierarchical

order and those in the upper rank do not allow their lower ranked neighbors to share their kitchen (ibid).

In the Business sector, untouchability is manifested in different ways depending on the status of the entrepreneurs and clients. Dalits bearing an untouchable status are not permitted to work in grocery shops, tea stalls, restaurant or hotels (ibid). Non-Dalits in most of society in Nepal do not buy milk from their Dalit neighbor. Such a practice has discouraged the Dalit people of that society being involved in business related to the production and sale of milk and milk based products (ibid).

The Dalits are also less advanced with regard to education. Lack of adequate income in the family, perception about lack of employment opportunities for the educated people in society and lack of a literary tradition are some of the reasons that explain the low level education among Dalits. Non Dalits, higher caste, people mainly get opportunities in education, occupation and other high level of income generating sectors.

In the same way, gender discrimination is also the social problem in Nepalese society. It is said that men and women are the equal part of every society. According to the constitution of Nepal, men and women have equal rights and opportunities, which is different in practice. The rights and opportunities are not equal in accorded to men of the societies. Inequality and lack of opportunities between men and women have forced women in subordinate position in society. There can be seen differences between men and women in different sectors of society like social, political and cultural life (Acharya 2007).

So, in Nepalese society there are problem related to women discriminations. Which are originated with caste discrimination, gender discriminations and stereotypical Hindu religious belief and so on. I would like to discuss more about the gender discriminations and women status in Nepalese society in coming chapters.

2.3 Gender Discriminations and Women Status in Nepalese Societies

"In Nepal, socio-cultural norms dictate the social behavior towards women. Gender based discrimination is widespread which limits women's access to resources, mobility, educational

opportunities and overall cultural status"(Bhandari, 2013). It looks people are more aware about gender equality from past few years. However, women are discriminated from different violence in the ground of gender discriminations. Male dominated society takes women in second position and women are far from the equal opportunities and rights in different level of the country. Hombergh idea in Subedi (2010), " along with factors such as caste, age, race and ethnicity, gender is a fundamental concepts in understanding human behavior and the social process"(p.3), helps to know more about the discrimination on social level in Nepal. Patriarchal society in Nepal women consider as a household and men as a head of the family. Some stereotypical thinking, culture and costumes are playing unconstructive role in women life (ibid). Women are facing lots of domestic and other types of violence because of gender discriminations. Women are not getting opportunities to participate in social lives, economical level, political participation and decision-making level. They have not their one decision on their own lives. A girl cannot make her own decision even to choose her own life partner in Nepalese societies where as boys are free to choose their own life. There is being some of socialization and changing in concepts about the gender discrimination in some of the educated societies. Which is positive symbol. However this is not good enough to change the life of women in present day. "Many girl children are stigmatized within families and by society: discouraged from going to school, fed last, not taken to hospitals immediately if they fall sick, married off young, denied citizenship, abused or trafficked" (Chettri 2014). Women are always control by their father in childhood, by husband after marriage and by son at old age (Niraula 2007). So, gender discrimination is creating Nepalese women status low than many other women in the world.

Women status in Nepalese society is poor in economic, educational, decisions making, opportunities and social participations aspect. Women seem to be second category compared to men in almost societies of Nepal. According to CBS census 2011 there are 51% of female of total population in Nepal, which is 94 (94 male for 100 female) in sex ration. Because of social, cultural and religious belief women status is low than male. Lack of opportunities and rights, social exclusions, education level are some of the reasons behind this situation of women in societies. Women in Nepalese societies cannot get equal opportunities to take education like men. In almost all family boy can go to school at least for minimum level of education where girl hardly get opportunities to get education. CBS report shows literacy rate of Nepal 65.9 % where

male has 71.6.4 % and female 44.5 %. From this report we can easily identify female are still aloof from education opportunities in Nepalese societies. So, lack of education is one of the reasons for female to become backward from the male in the societies.

Because of the religious belief and social customs female are treated unequal to men. Female are consider only to serve for men in societies (Subedi, 1997). Most of the female are controlled by male in the societies. Patriarchal practice in Nepalese societies helps to take control over female in those societies. This practice is bringing domestic violence and discrimination to female. Most of the female are victim of domestic violence in different forms. Female are excluded from the social opportunities as well (Niraula 2007). They cannot participate and raise their voice in societies in most of the communities. Property ownership and economic activities are aloof from them because men always involve in ownership and economic activities in most of the societies. Female can only get involve in agricultural job or house work they cannot get opportunities to go outside to find job which forced female to depend on male for economy and to run the house. Low level of education, lack of ownership in resources, involvement in only agricultural and domestic work have contributed to having limited number of women in decision making level in public domain and domestic domain (UNESCO, 2006).

Similarly, early marriage of girl in societies is also the reason behind status of women in societies. Family member can decide marriage of girl even if she is not ready or agree to marriage. If she is studying she cannot get opportunities to continue her study after marriage in most of the case. Minimum 18 years is in rules to get married for girl in Nepal but this is not strictly followed in every families or societies. In accordance with early marriage, dowry problem and domestic violence are also some of the problems for Nepalese women. Social exclusion for widow women is also the serious problem facing by Nepalese women. According to INSEC report 910 incidents have been recorded violence against women in 2012. Domestic violence, violence faced in the nature of witchcraft, polygamy, lack of pre and post partum service, rape, rape attempt, sexual abuse and women trafficking are the form of violence against women recorded by INSEC (INSEC Report, 2013).

2.4 HimalPartner (History, Vision and Goals) and its project partners

HimalPartner is the Norwegian Mission Organization founded in 1938 and worked from beginning in Tibet (HimalPartner, 2015). Involvement of Norway in Second World War in 1940s, the Civil war in China and subsequent Communist revolution made hard to continue to work in Tibetan region to HimalPartner (ibid). In 1955 HimalPartner started to work with other mission organization, United Mission to Nepal, in countryside of Nepal. Where HimalPartner gave more emphasis in building hydropower and training nationals in technical and industrial skill (ibid). There are some big hydropower project build by HimalPartner in Nepal, where Norwegian Government Aid was supporting financially. HimalPartner is still working in different field to help for community development and peace building.

Being a missionary organization HimalPartner contribute to the development of local communities and help to build the capacity of local leaders and organizations with respecting local culture and customs (ibid). HimalPartner is working for need of people therefore Himal Partner is supporting Nepali community in health, education, business entrepreneurships, hydropower, community development. And now it is focusing on Mental Health together with national and international organizations in Nepal. HimalPartner has financial support from individuals, churches and government aid grant for specific project (ibid). Every year, HimalPartner sends voluntary people to support in the field of education, health and community development in Nepal.

Improvement of own living conditions of people in community is the main goal for HimalPatner. HimalPartner always seeks to work closely with people from other agencies and national as well as with the national church (ibid). Some of the values of HimalPartner are;

- Belief in Jesus Christ as a savior and Lord, want to relate closely
- We want to relate closely to local partners, to our members and partners at home.
- We want to be flexible, creative and innovative.
- We want to be inclusive – in partnering with Christians from various backgrounds, co-operating with local groups, and benefiting people independent of gender, race or religion.

♦ We want to respect people from different faiths and walks of life.

♦ We want to maintain high quality and integrity in our projects and our organization.

♦ We want to be wise stewards of our funds and our staff

♦ We want to communicate joy in our work both abroad and at home.

(HimalPartner 2015).

Those values emphasis on the diaconal work with cooperating with different groups of people and bring them together without any boundaries in gender, race and religion. HimalPartner is working out for needy and marginalize groups with respecting other religious belief and culture. Many of the projects of HimalPartner are aimed to helping marginalized ensuring their dignity and creating care society. Recently, HimalPartner is giving emphasis on Mental Health in Nepal. With the support of Digni, HimalPartner has established a group of professionals focused on mental health issues in Norway and, together with the United Mission to Nepal (UMN), has initiated a multidisciplinary network for mental health in Nepal (HimalPartner 2015). *The Right to Dignified Life, Women at Risk, Peace and Reconciliation, Counseling in the Churches, Day center for Disabled* are projects related to Mental Health and gender by HimalPartner in Nepal (ibid). **UMN**, **Higher Grounds** and **Koshish** are some of the project partners from Nepal who are working together with HimalPartner in Mental Health and Gender. Brief introduction of HiamlPartner's project partners are as follow;

United Mission to Nepal(UMN)

United Mission to Nepal (UMN) is a Christian faith based mission organization established in 1954 (UMN 2015). In the name and spirit of Jesus Christ it serve people of Nepal with addressing root cause of poverty (ibid). The main missions of UMN is "to pursue peace and justice for all, to address the root cause of poverty and to make Christ known by words and life" (ibid). It has cooperative support from people of Nepal and Christian organizations from different twenty countries. UMN works in less development areas of the country with national and international volunteers (ibid). Local and international working partners help UMN to work in health, peace, development, empowerment, educational sectors.

UMN has given special emphasis on gender issues like; gender discrimination, empowerment, trafficking, trauma healing, domestic violence. "UMNs values of special concern for the poor and marginalized, and equity and social justice clearly indicate the need to work on issues of injustice and discrimination on the basis of gender" (UMN Gender Policy 2012).

Higher Ground Nepal

Higher Ground Nepal is an organization with vision of "to see a just and transformed society where all people can live in dignity"(Higher Ground 2015). It is gives vocational training for women/ girls and marginalized people in the field of bakery, cafe and jewelry. It has tree branch, Higher Ground Craft, Higher Ground Bakery and Cafe, and Higher Ground Community development (it is an NGO). Through our Community Development organization " it advocate, promote awareness, and give formal and non-formal training on health, parenting and life skills" (ibid). It also provides counseling for trafficked, abused and traumatized victims. A safe home for women in abusive situation and widows is developing by Higher Ground (ibid).

Koshish

Koshish is an NGO, working for mental health issues in Nepal from 2004 (Koshish 2015). It is working to support and advocacy for mental illness to give them dignified life. It has mission to "facilitate the implementation and updating of mental health policies.facilitate the formulation of the Mental Health Act in-line with International, Regional, and National Human Rights Laws"(ibid). It has 'Trasit Home' programme for women with mental illness who are in street. The purpose of Transit Home is " to provide holistic service which includes clinical, psychotherapies, counseling and social support" (ibid) for women with mental illness.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

"A methodology involves presenting rules of procedure about matters such as collection of data and their analysis"(Clive 2012:13). This chapter gives information about the research design, research site, data collection method, and comparison of qualitative and quantitative research method in interview. Moreover, this chapter explains briefly about validity and reliability of data as well.

3.1 Research Design

"Research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data"(Bryman 2008:46). Which helps to develop relevant structure related to the research issues. Research design can play the role as a gridline for the researcher to collect and analyze the data.

The objective of this study is to explore the diaconal work for women empowerment in Nepal through the Christian missionary organization HimalPartner. To find the answer to the research question I have taken primary and secondary data. Qualitative research method has been used as a fundamental tool for primary data collection. Which is appropriate for descriptive and exploration in one side and which helps to find the social world with real experiences. Semi-structured interview have taken as a main source of primary data.

3.2 Why Qualitative Method?

Qualitative and quantitative methods are equally important and useful to conduct the research in social research. Where qualitative method helps to researcher to go on deeper understanding of human experience, quantitative method goes to verify hypothesis true or false though the statistics. Both of them concerned with data reduction, answering research questions, data analysis to research literature (Bryman, 2008, p. 407-8). However, researcher needs to select

appropriate methods according to researcher questions and research planning to reach to the findings.

Quantitative methods mostly suitable for determining the size, extent and duration certain phenomena or to find out pre-specified effects or causes (Berg, 2003). In this methods variables become more important than thoughts and experiences of participants. Mostly this method is used for experiments and survey with close answers where data collections and open-end questions are evaluated statistically (Robson, 2002).

On contrast to quantitative research method participants experiences and meanings are more important in qualitative methods rather than the views and understanding of researcher. So qualitative researcher do research in natural setting which helps to learn about some aspects of social world and to generate new understandings which becomes a part of process, marking choice, reshaping questions and testing assumptions (Rossman and Rallis 2003:4-5). Data collection in qualitative methods goes with less pre-specifications and design develops and unfolds with the research proceed. So this method can be taken as a flexible design (Robson, 2002). Similarly, through this method researcher can use open-ended questionnaires which becomes more effective to know expressions, experiences, feelings and thoughts of participants to the researcher.

Considering the insinuations of qualitative method, I choose qualitative methods on this research. The nature of qualitative method is an approach to find the meaning of social phenomena (Creswell, 2009). The chief propose of this research is to find the process, expressions, experiences and feelings through the diaconal work for women empowerment. So those things are related with the social world where qualitative methods is right choice to answer my research questions.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods are important to analyze and interpret to construct the social reality in qualitative methods. I have used various tools and techniques in ordered to collect the primary and secondary data in according to demands of the research. The empirical data for this research

was collected during February 2015 to April 2015 from HimalPartner Office in Oslo, Norway, UMN office in Nepal, Higher Grounds office in Kathmandu Nepal and Koshish Office in Kathmandu, Nepal. I have collected secondary data from different books, articles, internet sources, reports and interviews from different participants.

3.3.1. Primary source of data; Semi-structured interview

Semi-structure interviews are the primary sources of data collection in this research. "Semi-structured interview generally beneficial for interviews to have an interview guide prepared, which is an informal grouping of topics and questions that the interviewer can ask in different ways for different participants" (Lindlof and Taylar 2002:195). Semi-structured interviews are conducted with open, fairly and informal framework which allow both participants and researchers involve two-ways conversations. Semi-structured interview also allows participants to convey their experiences and thoughts from their own perspectives and with their own words. "Qualitative interview is an uniquely sensitive and powerful method for capturing the experiences and lived meaning of the subject's every day world " (Kvale 1996: 70).The purposes of interviews were to understand the real life experiences, expressions and thoughts in diconal work for women empowerment. In the same-way understanding of challenges for diconal work in women empowerment were also important in this interview. Mainly 'why' and 'how' questions were used in ordered to explore deeper insight to meet the above purpose of interviews.

In this research six informants were interviewed in Oslo, Norway and Kathmandu, Nepal. Skype interviews were taken from Nepal and face-to-face interviews were taken in HimalPartner's Office in Oslo, Norway. Most of participants have long experiences in social work related to gender and women. Some of them are working in HimalPartner and its project partners. Information officer and project advisor of Himalpartner helped me to get contact with all participants. Four female and two male interviewers were participated. Selection of participants was strategic. During the time of interview, I began with more general questions and later questions focused specific to experiences, challenges and thought on diaconal work for women empowerment. Some of the interviews were in English language and some in Nepali language. One of the Norwegian interviewer provided interview in Nepali language. The duration of interviews was approximately 35 to 65 minutes with each. It was easy to take interviews in Oslo, Norway because I could be able to see participants' reactions and was easier to make

following-up questions. In Skype interview this was quite difficult but participants give me time to ask me following-up questions. Most of the interviews were recorded in tape recorder and I have written some important points in note as well. Which will help me to transcribe interviews. I got problem with tape recorder in one interview so I told participant to give answer slowly and I note down this on my note.

3.3.2 Presentation of informants

Informants	Gender/ Nationality	Position
1) Informant A	F/ Norwegian	Project Advisor, Himalpartner
2) Informant B	M/ Norwegian	Information Manager, Himalpartner
3) Informant C	F/ Nepalese	Team Leader-Peace building, UMN
4) Informant D	F/ Nepalese	Team Leader-Women Rehabilitation Programme, Koshish Nepal
5) Informant E	M/Nepalese	Communication Officer, Koshish Nepal
6) Informant F	F/ Norwegian	Counseling Officer, Higher Ground

3.3.3 Secondary data collection

Secondary data is important to conceptualize and confirm finding to the issue of the research which is useful both in qualitative and quantitative research. Generally, newspapers, magazines, report, thesis reports, journals, book etc. can be taken as a secondary source of data in research. I have taken secondary data from different newspapers, published and unpublished journals,

books, project-reports. I have used governmental websites, home page of Himal Partner, UMN, Higher Ground Nepal, Koshish and reports for most of the statistical reports. LWF's magazines and different book related to theological and diaconal concepts were useful for conceptual and theoretical frameworks for this research. Different books and previous studies on different case regarding the issue of gender, caste, traditions, belief and the way of life in Nepal have been reviewed to gain insight for both theoretical and methodological purposes.

3.4 Research Sites

The research sites for this study were HimalPartner's Office in Oslo, Norway and its local project partner's office in Kathmandu, Nepal. Out of six interviews two were conducted in Oslo and rest in Kathmandu, Nepal. Different project report and project strategies were collected from both Oslo, Norway and Kathmandu, Nepal. It was quite difficult to collect data from Nepal because of earthquake on April. However, I became able to collect all data which I needed.

3.5 Reliability and Validity of data

Reliability and validity of data are important in qualitative research."We can never be absolutely sure that we understand all the idiosyncratic culture implications of anything, but good theoretical orientation and good rapport over a long period of time is the best check we can make"(Krik and Miler1986:32). Consistency and trustworthiness in data is an important in research which is related to reliability of data. Truthfulness and accuracy of data also plays an important role in validity of data for researchers. "Reliability means the degree to which a measurement remains the same in the repeated actions; the stability of a measurement over time and the similarity of measurement within a given time period" (ibid: 41-42). It is important for researcher that research should not repeated which was done before.

"Validity refers to the truth; the correctness and strength of the statements"(Kvale and Brinkman 2009:241). So, research should be aware of authenticity of data from his/her resource. Sources are important to meet the proper and trustworthy finding to the research. Joppe (2002) explains validity in qualitative research in this way;

Validity determines whether the research truly measured that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. In other words, do the research instruments allow you to hit "the bull's eye" of your research subject? Researchers generally determine validity by asking a series and will often look for the answer in the research of others (p. 1).

Research writing can get trustworthy analysis when researcher gives emphasis to the elements like credibility, validity and reliability of the data which he/she collects from different sources.

In this research writing, as a researcher I have applied the elements of validity and reliability to minimize unreliable and invalid data. In this research qualitative data collection through interviews are done. In the same manner, government's and other authentic websites have been used to support and check one another statistic validities. I am fully aware of the transparency, authenticity, accuracy and consistency of data collection. I have noted down the same what informants said during the interviews and in the time of analyzing the data, I have logically examined and interpreted whether the sense and meanings are accurate or not.

3.5 Data Analysis

"Qualitative research is research that involves analyzing and interpreting texts and interview in order to discover meaningful pattern descriptive of particular phenomenon"(Auebach and Silverstein 2003: 4). So data analysis plays important role to get the correct and proper conclusion in qualitative research. In this research, I have identified important and common theme from interviews and fundamental parts of interviews which were directly related to research questions.

3.6 Ethical Reflection

Research ethic helps to build the moral standard to conduct research. Research ethics aware researchers to explore truth in research, respect social responsibility, build supports, care of human rights and values, and avoid errors in the process of research. Sometime there may come tension between the research target and participants in the process of research. So it is important to the researcher to become careful with the inform consent, privacy and rights of participants in this process (Hammersley and Alkinson 2007:209).

In this research I have aware of all the ethical responsibilities where one researcher need to follow in research process. I have informed about privacy and consent to the participants. I have used fictional name to take the privacy of informants in the research. And assured all participants about destroyed of all data after completion of this research.

CHAPTER IV: THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEWS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the theoretical framework of this research. Theories on diakonia and gender are used to evaluate and analyze the empirical findings of studies. This theoretical framework will be useful to look into the diaconal work and women empowerments of Nepalese women from HimalPartner.

4.1 What does diakonia mean?

Diakonia comes from Greek word which is faith based action by Christian people like in Gospel with focusing on the need of people. According to Church of Norway, Plan for diakonia " diakonia is the Gospel in action and is expressed through loving your neighbor, creating inclusive communities, caring for creation and struggling for justice" (2008). Diakonai is good intension and responsible service for needy people who are marginalized and suffered in our communities. It gives emphasis on the service done by the Jesus Christ to all of the creations according to their need .Diakonia can be taken as "the responsible service of the gospel by deeds and words performed by Christians in response to the need of people" (Lossky at al. 2002:305). So, diakonia is a word and an action in itself where Christians can use words and actions according to situation or context which express participations in God's missions."In the book and articles which deacons read, such activity is often presented as Diakonia, and for deacons to participate in it is presented as sharing in the Diakonia of Jesus" (Collins 2002:27).

It is important to understand social context for diakonia and do right work in right place according to the biblical foundations. We can use different expressions of diakonia according to need of people. Sometime only preaching and counseling may become better and other time direct action in the field may be batter. So it is essential to know the situations and use of appropriate approaches according to need of marginalized and suffered groups in societies. Diakonia is the visible expression and action that expresses God's love which should be generous and unconditional (Nordstokke 2011:27). God has given love and take care of all creations without any conditions, in the same way diaconal work should be done. "…as faith-based action, Diakonia connects the reading of the context to the reading of the Holy Scripture, stories of

suffering and oppression in today's reality may be enlightened and informed by similar stories in the Bible "(LWF,2009: 13).

"In the long tradition of Church, diakonia has been linked to the situation of sick, poor, and marginalized people and has been carried out to accompany support and defend people who are vulnerable" (LWF 2009:40-41). Being a responsible service diakonia understands today's challenges in societies and "lifting up the dignity of the excluded, denouncing the poor that seek justice and life only for themselves, announcing ways of promoting human values and wellbeing for all" (Nordstakk, 2011, p. 27). So, diakonia respects all human dignity and fight for justice, peace and empower people to come up from their marginalized situations.

Diconal work can empower the marginalize people. "As a theological concept, empowerment refers to the biblical understanding of creations that every human being is created in the image of God, with capacities and abilities, independent of their apparent social situation" (LWF 2009: 45). So it is important for diaconal service to reduce dependence and support independence to activate the other person's won resources to cope on their own in the long run (Dietrich, 2014, p.16). "The concept of dignity, autonomy, communality and interdependency also play a profound role for the understanding of the theory and practice of empowerment within diakonia as Christian social service" (ibid).

4.1.1 .Role of the Bible in diakonia

The Bible has very important role in the life and growth of Christian community. It has important role in Christian Social work/Diakonia. The Bible is foundation to the church or Christian community to perform diaconal work. Biblical stories are the source which motivate believers to act for diaconal work. "In the eyes of the common people the word of God, the gospel message, is much broader than just the text itself. The gospel message is a bit of everything…for the common people the word of God is not just in the Bible" (Mesters 1983:127). So through the biblical foundation diaconal work can use different approaches according to the communities and real life situations. Real life situations of suffering and oppressed today's context can informed and enlightened by similar stories in the Bible (LWF 2009: 13).

"God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good (Genesis 1). This line from the Bible which confesses the faith on God as a creator. Theology of creation shows that every human being is created in God's image. Where everyone has "an intrinsic dignity, which forms the basis for humankind's call to treat one another human beings, with the same dignity, value and right for protection and a meaningful life as oneself" (Dietrich 2014:30). So, inclusiveness is also an important message by the God for diaconal worker where everyone needs to respect and accept other's dignity and presence in communities. Reading of different stories in Bible give direction to inclusiveness in societies which can be done though bringing marginalized, poor, suffered and exclude group in inclusive society . God calls us to be responsible and care for each other. No one is worthless in front of God, so, this should be in humankind's eyes (ibid). It also motivates Christians to work together with all people of good will and acknowledge that every human being is created in God's image and they are given a mandate to be God's partners in God's endless love and care for all creations (LWF 2009: 25).

As we know that diakonai is the God's mandate, where God has given priority to the love. "God loves all humanity. Because God loved us first, we ourselves are able to love and respect the dignity of any person" (Eurodiakonia 2000). God as a creator he created all things in the earth and he gave love for all equally. So it is important for diaconal work to give love for other and respect dignity of other as well. Love encourages us to do goods for other, help other as Jesus did. So, there are many texts from the Bible which talks about the love. If we go through the text from the Mark 12:31 and Luke 10:25-37 those provide us importance of love and how we need to love for other. Loving our neighbor involves our whole being. There are period in life where has ability and possibility to give and other time we need to receive. Loving and caring for one's neighbor is based on equality, reciprocity and respect for the integrity of the other (Church of Norway 2008).

"Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, please for the widow" (Isaiah 1:17). This sentence from the Bible suggests us to do good on favor of helpless people or who are excluded from justice and marginalized. Seeking or fight for justice is an important aspect for diakonia. "Diakonia in all its many authentic forms cannot be separated from the struggle for justice and peace, and it is directly linked to the empowerment, transformation, and liberation of marginalized and excluded people in every community" (WCC2005:1). Struggling

for justice involves standing alongside as active participants. Diaconal workers need to expose the cause of human suffering and exclusion, strive to change the circumstances that sustain exclusion and injustice in societies and show solidarity in struggle for justice and peace (Church of Norway Plan for Diakonia, 2000).

Biblical text in Mark 10:45, God came "not to be served, but serve and give his life as a ransom for many" gives highlight to confesses faith on Jesus Christ. The word 'serve' refers to the Jesus' messianic mission which makes proclamation and diakonai integral dimensions of his coming as the in-breaking of God's Kingdom. Jesus' diakonia acts for liberation and reconciliation of healing and lifting up all those who are suffering and marginalized. Through these diakonia human dignity is affirmed and defended where relationships are build and affirmed, even in the time of suffering and death (LWF, 2009, p. 25).

Similarly, text from Act 2, "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy... even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit (Act 2: 7-18)" illustrates faith in the Holy Spirit. Where special mention of young people, women and even slaves affirms the inclusion nature of the work of the spirit (ibid). The Holy Spirit takes inclusion a primary value in the life of the Church and in diaconal practice. In the life of the Church Baptism is a holy space which is the very moment of empowerment by the Holy Spirit for participation in God's mission (ibid).

4.2 Diakonia for Transformation, Reconciliation and Empowerment

Transformation, Reconciliation and Empowerment are three dimensions of diakonia. As we know diaconal work takes care and serve for people who are suffered and marginalized in societies. Similarly, diaconal work helps people to know their inherent power, which God has given all humankinds with their own dignity and ability to present themselves in societies. So this is possible when diakonia works for transformation, reconciliation and empowerment of societies. Transformation, reconciliation and empowerment are also the God's mission which church or Christian communities need to follow though empowering marginalized and excluded groups, reconciling them and changing their social status in inclusive communities. These mission dimensions bring proclamation, service, advocacy for justice, interfaith dialogue and

care of creation and provide criteria by which the church judges its faithfulness in mission before Christ, who has sent it into the world (LWF 2004:32).I like to discuss more about transformation, reconciliation and empowerment bellow.

4.2.1 Transformation

"Transformation is a continuous process of rejection of that which dehumanizes and desecrates life and adherence to that which affirms the sanctity of life, gifts in every one and promotes peace and justice in society"(LWF 2004: 33). It should play important role to change individual and communities as well. Church or Christian mission organizations need to find inequality, dehumanization in communities and though the diaconal work that should be transformed into equality and respect of human dignity. Transformation as a diaconal dimension which gives priority to human dignity and equal opportunities in same communities. Based on the faith on the God as a creator, which shows everyone has own respectful dignity and capacities in every society. So, no one has to be far from opportunities and justice in this beautiful world created by God. "Transformation is a reminder of God's constant renewal of creation, as every morning we experience that darkness of night is transformed into the light of new day" (LWF 2009:44). In the same way, exclusion, discriminations, injustice and inequality should be transformed into inclusion, equality and justice with act of diakonia within every individuals and societies.

Transformation is clearly a process, but at the same time, transformation envisions the achievement of certain goals, arriving at a new situation where human dignity is more respected with peace and justice for more people. Thus, transformation is closely related to what also may be defined as social change, progress or development (LWF 2009:44).

Above text from *Diakonia in Context* clearly states transformation is a process with goal of respecting human dignity and human development. Transformation needs to change the life of people and communities with social change and development. Transformation is also a process of change in human thinking and understanding in according to demand of time. Where traditional thinking and way of living may also change. "Transformation is happening in many

communities and organizations through active work in diaconal service and the struggle for justice" (Eurodiakonia 2005). Transformation is not only for those who are marginalized and suffered it is also for the organizations or who are working there. With the change in time and context of world Churches and Christians organizations also need to change, way of working and participation also need to transform. "The transformation in attitudes, beliefs and understanding of those who do diakonia are also at the heart of the ecumenical movement in seeking unity and justice (ibid). The church's mission as transformation encompasses individuals, structures and relations in societies" (LWF 2004: 33).

Different sectors of society have worked energetically for change and progress, based on the insatiable human need for self-improvement and gain. Such process of change, though laudable and at times useful, should not be confused with transformation, which from the perspective of the mission of the church, is primarily God' work in the midst of creation. Transformation, perceived in the light of Christ's resurrection, is the unfolding of the potential life-giving nature of all creation and an expression of the working of God's grace in nature. It is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit to effect transformation in and through the church to the whole world (ibid).

So, diaconal work through transformation has to bring newness or change in the life of people. Holy spirit empowered Church or diaconal worker as an agent for transformation. Diaconal organizations,-Churches need to identify context and bring groups ,who are excluded, discriminated , exploited and aloof from justice, in the main stream of societies. Diaconal work does not mean only help people, it is also to transform them from their present conditions to better one. In the mean time, transformation helps them to act as a 'helper' who were before 'receiver'. Diakonia as an action in God's love must struggle to transform people, system and culture. God declared judgment upon those who abuse power and deny justice to the marginalized and poor. Where Jesus also challenged unjust system and practice who benefit from such, to repent and be transformed by the values of love, sharing, truthfulness, and humanity (WCC 2012).

4.2.2 Reconciliation

Reconciliation is important to every human being. In every society human beings could have different culture, identity, belief, gender, race and capacity. However as a creation of God, all has to be equal rights and opportunities in every society. Through diakonia we can reconcile every human beings with equal opportunities, justice and rights. Churches and Christian organizations are participating in God's mission of reconciliations, which is also the God's mandate to them. "The church in mission participates in God's reconciling mission as God's ambassador, beseeching people on behalf of Christ to be reconciled with God" (LWF 2004 :34). I would like to take one text from the Bible which clearly states about the God's reconciliations mission.

God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not canting people's sin against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors as through God were marking his appeal through as we implore you on Christ's behalf :Be reconciled to God (II Corinthiens 5: 19-20).

Above text from the Bible gives message to all of us that we all are representative of Christ and we need to reconcile on God as Jesus did. So, through the reconciliation every human beings need to restore the relationship with God and other human beings." As an ambassador of reconciliation and a peacemaker, the church's missions include mediation, restoration of peaceful co-existence and building and sustaining of relations" (LWF, 2002, p. 34). Mission of Christian organization and Churches in the way of resurrection is to make liberation and reconciliation possible for both the oppressed and the oppressors (ibid).

It is important to tell and listen stories of suffered and oppressed group for reconciliation. However, it seems difficult in the situation of violence and oppressions when they reveal past

stories that helps them to change and bring good relation in societies. Peace and reconciliation is needed in the world today. Peaceful societies and restored relationship cannot be imagined without reconciliation.

4.2.3. Empowerment

The term 'empowerment' has different meanings in different political and socio-cultural context. Different organizations and social sciences have given different definitions of empowerment with their contexts and area of studies. There are various studies on empowerment in social works which are related with the context in diaconal work or Christian social practice. I would like to take some of those theories and practices from social work which are relevant to diaconal context in this study.

World Bank defines empowerment as " the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes" (World Bank 2015). Here empowerment is taken as a process which helps individuals and groups to make choice and to take them to their desire actions. However, individual and groups choice should not affect other's rights and opportunities of justice at all. Similarly, According to Julian Rappaport, "empowerment suggests a sense of control over one's life in personality, cognition, and motivation. It expresses itself at the level of feelings, at the level of ideas about self worth, at the level of being able to make a difference in the world around us" (Rappaport in Dietrich 2015:21). Rappaport has given emphasis to individual empowerment, where personal feeling, ideas and dignity are highlighted. Individual as well as group or community empowerment is important for one another. On the one hand, without individual empowerment community empowerment seems difficult. On the other hand, community empowerment is also empowerment of individuals. " Empowerment may be defined as a multi-dimensional process that helps people to gain control of various aspects of their lives and participate in the community with dignity" (ibid).

Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995, defines empowerment as;

an intentional ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources; or a process by which people gain control over their lives, democratic participation in the life of their community, and a critical understanding of their environment (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995:40).

This defines empowerment as a process which helps people to get their rights and resources and control over life. Perkins and Zimmerman also give emphasis on participation in community life, care and respect for each other which seems more related to diaconal aspects as well. If we sum up different views of empowerment there comes three different levels of empowerments. Individual level, small group level and community level empowerment can be taken from them (Dietrich, 2015:22). Where individual level of empowerment is experience of gaining increasing control, participation and influence in daily life group level empowerment goes with shared experience, analysis and influence of group on their own efforts and at the community level (ibid).

WHO gives definition for empowerment as "the process by which people gain control over the factors and decisions that shape their lives. It is the process by which they increase their assets and attributes and build capacities to gain access, partners, networks and/or a voice, in order to gain control" (WHO 2015). This definition gives emphasis on community empowerment. Community empowerment helps people to create common voice to take control over their life and identity.

So empowerment is important in the life of people who are excluded, discriminated, marginalized and unequal in justice and opportunities from societies. Different levels of empowerment help them to know and build capacity to get their rights, voices and authorities in societies. Therefore, women empowerment is also important in societies. K. Sethuraman in Pun, 2013, talks about women empower in this way;

Women's empowerment is regarded as the function of women's access to control over resources extending to their decision making capabilities like household decisions or income,

employment, education, expenditure, fertility, sexuality, and freedom to move and control over material and intangible resources like time and information; their position within the household and in the society (Pun 2013:30).

If we go through Nepalese societies, women who are more discriminated than men from different levels in societies. I have mentioned above in chapter II about women situation and discrimination in Nepalese societies. Thus women have to necessarily get access of resource and their position, power sharing in family, societies and state level, security and freedom for their life decision etc. in communities. Jatana and Crowther, (2007) views on women empowerment make clear on women empowerment. This is in following way;

The empowerment of women is the process by which unequal power relations between men and women become transformed and women gain greater equality with men: in other words it is the process to challenge social restrictions and social norms for women which are barriers in the way of their development so that their confidence level can increase and they can also contribute to nation's development and participate in political, social and economic life at the local, regional and national level. By social empowerment we mean a more equitable social status for women in society. Legal empowerment is the provision of an effective legal structure which is supportive of women's empowerment and political empowerment means a political system favoring the participation in, and control by women of, the political decision making process and its associated governance (Jatana and Crowther 2007:40).

Diaconal concepts of basic understanding of everyone's dignity and helping for progress of other who are marginalized and oppressed, looks relevant to the theories of empowerment. So it is important to know how diaconal concepts brings theories and practice together in Christian Social practice.

"Empowerment theories are based on a fundamental respect for the capacities and resource of all human beings which also serve as a basic principle within diakonai" (Dietrich, 2014:23).

Human capacity and dignity are important for both empowerment and diakonia. Through particular process empowerment use human capacity and dignity to rise voice for themselves. "As a theological concept, empowerment refers to the biblical understanding of creation that every human being is created in the image of God, with capacities and abilities, independent of their apparent social situation"(LWF 2009:45). So, diakonai empowers people with respect to human dignity and capacities. God has given every human being capacities and dignity which should be equally treated and respected by each other. "Empowerment is at the heart of diaconal and justice-seeking activities and can seen as an overarching characteristic or goal much of the churches and church-related organization"(WCC, 2005). Which address dignity and reveal individual and group's inherent gifts and ability, that may actively work towards transformation (ibid). According to Nordstokke, empowerment has "a God given goal *(telos)* of energizing people to participate in God's project and realigning God's good intention for creation and suman society: of mutual love and care, and of promoting human dignity and justice" (2013:195).

Empowerment refers here primarily to God sharing power (dynamis) with people for participation in God's mission. God empowers individual Christians and the whole church through the leading of the Holy Spirit and the bestowing of spiritual gifts necessary to carry out the holistic mission of the church (LWF 2004: 35).

Therefore, diakonia is empowered by Holy Spirit, with the aim of lifting up oppressed and empowering the excluded (Nordsttoke, 2011:50). Empowerment talks about power and power sharing between who have power and who have not. "In terms of empowerment, it is also natural to talk about power, and power switch. Unequal power structures must be addressed and redesigned. In this work, diakonia is a role as bridge builder" (LWF 2009:45). Power sharing issue should be rise not only between helper and those helped, but also between diaconal praxis and within church life and out of the church (ibid: 45).

4.3 Diaconal Perspective on Inclusion

" There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"(Galatians 3:28).

Above lines from the Bible says there is not any discrimination in God's eyes. Everyone is same with their own values and respects. Theology on God as a creator also gives emphasis on inclusion. Understanding of human nature in Genesis 1:27 tells about the God's image and likeness. "The fact that humanity is created in the image of God is widely regarded as established the original uprightness and dignity of human nature" (McGrath, 2011: 349). So, this suggests that every human beings are created by God and they have same values and rights irrespective of where they come from, which groups they belongs to or which gender they have. Diakonai as God's mandate can bring all people together. Christians understanding of humanity motivate diaconal praxis for inclusion. This mandate suggests us all have equal rights for freedom, peace, hope, power and reconciliations.

Prophetic aspect of diakonia deals with dismantling injustice and fighting for poor and marginalized people (Dietrich 2015:36) which is key aspect for inclusion in societies. Reason behind exclusion in Nepalese societies may be lack of justice and rights for marginalized where diaconal activities of HimalPartner and other Christian organization might be a method of work which could empower the powerless. This praxis may bring marginalized people in inclusive communities.

Nordstokke, 2011, underlines the contextual importance in diaconal and prophetic expression where prophetic expression of diakonia means to defend justice and diaconal praxis "should by its very nature includes the task of unmarking injustice and promoting justice" (ibid:52). Diaconal praxis should be the sign and instrument of inclusion (ibid). Nordstokke gives emphasis for liberating diakonia "which should stand up for solution that favor collective values, solidarity and responsibility" (ibid:61).

Chapter V: Findings

5.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the empirical finding from semi-structure interview in my research. I have taken seven interviews. Participants were worker at HimalPartner and its project partners in Nepal.

5.1 Opinion from Participants

I have started opinions of participants to answer the question related to women situation in Nepalese societies. After that questions related to diaconal work for women, challenges in Nepalese societies, outcome of projects have been answered from participants opinions. Answer to the question related to challenges for faith based organizations and importance of local and international partners for working together are at the last. Most of the answers are same. Therefore, I have put those answers together after each question. Some different opinion from participants are added as single answer to the questions which are helpful to know answer to the question in different ways.

I have given subdivision of title which are emerged from the questions asked in interviews.

5.1.1 What is the situation of women in Nepalese Societies?

Almost, women have half of total population in Nepal. However, they are not getting equal access in most of the level in societies. Large number of women are not treated equal to men in societies. Inequality in education, health, opportunities and rights are creating different types of problem in societies for Nepalese women. Different types of traditional and cultural beliefs are inherent in societies. Which play important role in women life. Women need to depend on men for economic activities, decision making and to run their life in most of societies in Nepal. However, some changes are being in the conception of equality and discrimination over women compare to years before. But, still there are different forms of discriminations in societies. Informant C said;

People are aware of discrimination now a day compared to before. But still there are discrimination most of the rural areas and somehow in city area as well. But form of discrimination in city and rural areas are quite different. Discriminations in rural areas for girl begins from their birth. People in most of the Hindu religious societies takes first girl in family as a 'Laxmi'(goddess of money) but second girl in this family considered as a burden for family. If they know pregnant women is having second girl child, they discriminate her and her unborn baby girl as well. Women cannot get nutritious food at that time, cannot get care of family at pregnant time. In contrary to this, if that women having boy , than she can treated good in family. She can get love and care of all family members and even that unborn boy get care and love of family before his birth.

In most of the rural areas positions of women are only for household. They are only allowed to do household work. In a one hand, lack of opportunities for education enable them to get employment. On the other hand family do not want to send them for any types of work in city areas. They are treated only for giving birth to the child and take care of family members. Informant "C" said that, " it is really shameful to know that same member of one family are not treated equally. Boys can get education but girls are not allow to go school". Informant "B" added to this, "most of the family in rural areas think that to send girl to school is waste of time and money. Because girls need to go other home after marriage and boy need to support family members afterwards. I think therefore they give more priority to boy than girl".

Informant "F" expressed some different way about women situation in Nepal. She said;

"There is discrimination over women in old generation in Nepalese societies. But new generation is more aware about this. Girl are getting opportunities to go school now a days. Women are in different position in government level as well. Which shows there are improvement in discrimination and women are getting opportunities now. But traditional cultures and beliefs in women are obstacles on women life still in rural areas."

Situation of women in city areas are good compared to women from rural areas. They have opportunities to go school. However, they are not still treated equal to male. Informant "C" said;

...mostly family members in city areas and educated family in rural areas are giving opportunities to female to take education. But they are still not treated equal to men. If they send girl to school, they send her to public school and boy to private school. Even if they give opportunities to take education, they do not give opportunities to take higher education. But they give opportunities to boy for further education and even they send him for abroad studies. There are very few numbers of girl who are getting education from abroad. This show there is still discrimination in educated level in city areas and within educated family.

Discrimination is not only in education for women. They are still aloof from making decision for themselves and participation in different level in societies. Female participation in societies and other level are very few. Voices of female have not taken as seriously in those societies. Nevertheless, some sits are reserved for women in different level of government and interim-constitution. Male dominated societies still thinks that women are week and they are not able to work as man can. Patriarchal society of Nepal has left women at high risk of mental disorder as well. Women have to face different kinds of violence, which has led to a rise in mental health problem. This condition of women has more vulnerable to further violence, exclusion and discrimination. This is serious issue in Nepalese societies.

Domestic violence is created from different level of women discrimination in societies. Through the domestic violence women are suffered from different conditions. Early marriage and dowry problem in family need to face for female in societies in rural areas and even in tarai areas of Nepal. Sexual abuse from family members are increasing in some of societies. Different rape case shows that female are also discriminated in security level. Informant "F" said; " female are force to do prostitution in some of the groups in Nepal. Like in Badhi community male force them to do prostitution to earn money. Because of lack of education and family support for women are some of the reasons behind women trafficking".

Informant "E" views on domestic violence is;

...domestic violence is the cause of women discrimination. It is creating different types of problem for women in most of societies. Most of them cannot rise voice against their family and they always want to be silence. Extreme points of violence cause mental illness for some of female in societies. So, in a one hand female already are discriminated from different levels and on the other hand, mental illness forced them to more discriminated from family. Family members do not want to go for treatment. But they think it is easy to take out her from family. So, there are lots of women with mental illness who are in street and not getting support from family and societies.

Women from Dalit and women related to indigenous groups are more discriminated than women belongs to higher caste. Dalit women are discriminated from two sides. One from caste discrimination and other from gender discriminations. However, discrimination is in higher caste women but numbers of women are educated and getting opportunities in compare to Dalit women. Lower caste women are mostly uneducated , therefore they are suffered from numbers of discrimination in health, education, job opportunities and status in societies. Informant "C" said;

" gender discrimination find more in western part of Nepal. In case of gender, people in eastern part are quite open. However, there are still discriminated women in societies. In western part of Nepal, I have find lower caste women are discriminated by upper caste people and male members of their won castes. I think main cause of this is lack of awareness and education."

5.1.2 What does organization do for women?

HimalPartner is an agency with a mission from God to share Jesus Christ's diakonia with the people in the Himalayan region. It was founded in 1938 and started to work in Nepal from 1955 with UMN in beginning days. HimalPartner helped people though different hydroelectric project, technical development, health care, education and micro enterprise initiatives in beginning. HimimalPartner is focusing on need of people from marginalized groups in Nepal. In present days, it is working with different local and international organizations in different development and advocacy sector. Most of the women groups in Nepal are vulnerable because of

discrimination from different levels and mental illness. Therefore, HimalPartner is prioritized to work for women. It has different projects which focus on women and women empowerment. There are some projects like; Right to a dignified life, Women at risk, Peace and Reconciliation, which are running with other partner organizations; Koshish Nepal, Higher Ground and UMN respectively. These projects generally deal with women and gender issues.

(a) Project with Koshish

Project, Right to a dignified life, is running with local partner Koshish. Koshish Nepal is non government organization in Nepal. It works for cause of person with mental health problems. Issue with mental health is neglected in Nepal. Koshish is playing a decisive role in promoting the rights of mental disables. It is working to raise awareness about situation and the opportunities for mental illness. Koshish is actively advocating for the mentally ill at all level of government as well. Thus, Himalpartner is supporting Koshish in this important work for mental illness and vulnerable groups, especially women, to give them dignified life. Specially, HimalPartner is supporting Koshish to struggle for rights of mental illness and advocacy on government levels.

Informant "E" explained mental illness of women/girl and work of Koshish for women in this way;

…there are large numbers of women and girl are being displaced in street of capital, Kathmandu, and all over Nepal. Person suffering from mental health problems, specially women and girl are abounded in street and face multiple types of abuse and discriminations. It seems direct co-relations between violence and mental health problems. Women and girl who are victim of such violence are at increasing risk of suicide, drug, alcohol abuse and depression along with psychiatric and physiological disorder. Therefore, we are focusing on women and girl (informant "E").

Koshish started 'Transit Home' in 2011 in order to support women and girls with mental health problems who have been victims of violence at home or in the streets, and have been abandoned

by their families. Koshish is providing rescue and emergency services and reintegration of women and girls with mental health problems into their family and community. Transit Home is a 'short term residential emergency relieve centre' which strives to provide women and girls with holistic treatment that includes psychotropic drugs, counseling, recreational activities and a range of therapies. In Transit Home, it ensures that the clients receive a caring and a supportive environment to enable them to enhance their skills and abilities. The Transit Home has a capacity of 20 women and girls at a time. Informant "D" told that, " We ensure that the women and girls receive every kind of support and care required for their recovery. And Koshish has provided rehabilitation services to 184 people with mental health conditions where 146 are women". Koshish is providing psycho-education to family and community of client and livelihood skill to reintegrated persons. Informant "D" explained in this way;

> *During the reintegration process, the family is provided with adequate knowledge and information with regard to the client's condition and the care and support that she requires through family counseling. Besides, the community people are also provided with psycho-education, where they are sensitized towards mental health issues. This strengthens the client's environment, which enables her to live a dignified life. Furthermore, for their independent life, the reintegrated women/girls get a livelihood support so that they can generate income living in the community for their basic living. An assessment is conducted on the women/girls abilities and interests. Accordingly they are provided with livelihood support (Informant "D").*

Informant "E" informed that, HimalPartner is supporting Koshish to promote advocacy programmers through different seminars and discussion programmers with ministry levels and stockholders. Furthermore, HimalPartner is supporting to create different types of radio programmer to make aware in grass root level as well. " Which is really appreciate support for Koshish" (Informant "E").

(b) Project with Higher Ground Nepal

Project, **Women at Risk**, is running with the local organization in Nepal, Higher Ground Nepal. Higher Ground Nepal is working for women who have been sold into the sex market and who have been vulnerable from different discrimination from family and society. Higher Ground Nepal is giving fresh start by helping them with work skills and opportunities as well as

counseling to overcome them from traumatic experiences. Counseling center was established in 2011. It gives counseling for those who are victims of trafficking, victim's family and societies to help victim to overcome from their situations and start new beginning in family and societies. One of HimalPartner's expatriate worker is leading this center.

Informant "F" told about Higher Ground's activities in this way;

Every years numbers of women and children are sold into prostitution in India from Nepal. Poverty, lack of awareness and high unemployment, discrimination towards women are some of reason behind this. Therefore we are working for girl/women who are victim in sex industry, having abuse from domestic violence and widows who are in disparate situation . And we are giving them different vocational training who are interested in to become cook, bakers, designers, tailor, beauticians and hair dressers. This training helps to empower them and give them their own dignified life in societies. We are also helping with small business development loans and grants to those women (informant "F").

(c) Project with UMN
HimalPartner is working with UMN from very beginning. UMN is successfully working in Nepal since 1954 (Informant" E"). It has good working result with grassroots level, local level and national level as well. HimalPartner did different projects with UMN in health, education and peace building programmers. Most of those programmers had gender as an component where women were empowered through different ways. HimalPartner has project related to Mental health and Peace and reconciliation with UMN. These projects also have gender and women components (Informant "A" and "B"). These project also trying to empower women though reconciliation, healing and advocacy (Informant "B"). Informant "C" informed, five years project, *Integrated Peace building Process* (IPP) has different seven theme; meditations and negotiations, peace and education, cross-cultural peace building, trauma healing, church based peace activities, supporting peace at national level and scholarship for peace officer to get quality training in conflict transformations. It is being implemented in six cluster from 2011. According to informant "C",

awareness-raising against discriminatory practices existing in the Nepali society (gender and caste-based discrimination); and cross border peace-building and social reconciliation initiatives among the divided people, groups and communities; are also part of the project within the scope of supporting peace at the national level (Informant "C").

Answer to my question about women programmer in different cluster in IPP project, informant "C" responded in this way;

We are using different technique in accordance with local context in our cluster. We have used Trauma Healing technique in Sunsari Cluster. Main propose of this cluster is to transform flood victim groups from trauma to normal life. But it has also women empowerment component in it. We have different groups in this cluster, some groups have only women, some have mix groups of men and women. We find in the period of trauma healing women are becoming more open and trying to share their problems with each other. And in the same way, in mix group women are starting to feel comfortable with their male members in family. And men members of family also starting to listen women's views and ideas. It seems gender empowerment in a way.

Informant "C" also informed that, IPP project has started empowering and awareness programmer for women in some Village Development Committees (VDC) in Rupandehi district. In Rupandehi district empowerment programmer is implemented through youth groups. This project is creating groups from school children and mobilizing them to talk about gender and gender behavior. So they can go to their home and implement what they know from that group about gender in family. So though those youth group it becomes easy to change gender behaviors in family and society. Furthermore, UMN and HimalPartner have some projects in Rukum, Bajhang and Dhading district for women and gender empowerment. In Rukum district projects is related to single women (Widows). And projects in Bajhang and Dhading are working for marginalized women and discriminated women from domestic violence.

In what ways the programs changed the socio-economical status of women ?

All of the informants argued that projects are being able to change women living condition. However, some informants told that some of projects could not able to change women conditions how they were expected before. Informant "A" and "B" argued, HimalPartner and its projects partner are always serious with their work. We have got many changes in women's living conditions. Those changes encourage us to continue our work with women empowerment and gender issues. It seems, people are more aware about discriminations and gender issues in many communities where we worked and working. Women started to talk about violence and discrimination. Many women have started new beginning of their life with their own dignity in communities. Many women with mental health illness are now rejoining their family and family are also more serious about them. In the same way, single women group in Rukum are active in advocacy on women discrimination themselves. Through small business some of women have started their own business and they are becoming independent.

Informant "F" gave answer to above question in this way;

It is not easy to change life condition of women in short time. Therefore we first give counseling to them, which helps them to overcome from trauma. And we try them to settle in their communities with their interest. If they want any training to become economically independent, we provide. So, in long run we find some changes in their living conditions. Some of trafficking girls in sex industries were depressed and they were afraid about their status in societies. When they got counseling and training from Higher Ground they become hopeful towards life and encourage to do something themselves economically. In the same way our group counseling to victim's family and communities also changed the behavior towards trafficking girls and they are more aware about this (Informant "F").

According to informant "C", many projects have been able to change status of women in communities. Nepalese society is quite aware about women and gender behavior now than before. She told that, they have found women friendly behavior in many clusters. One important change in many cluster is that women are aware about equality and rights. And they are starting to talk about discriminations now. Rising voice for justice is good starting of change in women groups in many clusters. She gave some examples about changing socio-economic status of women through projects in the following ways;

In Bajhang, where alcoholism is a big problem, we have found change in alcohol consumptions. Now there is decrease in alcoholism and correlated women bettering issues. Men are supporting women to go for meeting and they are caring their children when women go out. This is change in behavior about gender issues. Our evaluation report shows that women are more empowered in this cluster. Counseling in group, communities and individual level worked effectively in this cluster. In the same manner, training on gender based violence and awareness to mix group of family,has been able to empower women in Bajhang district. There are women groups, who meet and talk about violence and conflict in family. Now, women are regularly taking part in meeting and training about gender based violence. And they are supporting and counseling victims and perpetrator which is supporting to reduce gender based violence (Informant "C").

Furthermore, informant "C" explain about changes in Sunsari cluster in this way;

In Sunsari cluster we have started trauma healing techniques in different groups with the help of local authorities and leaders. We have created some groups with different marginalized groups and some mix groups from family and different indigenous groups. However, main concern of this project was trauma healing but we find changes in women behaviors, discriminations, caste discrimination in the period of healing. Women in mix groups become open to their family. They start to speak with their elder family members and male family members also start to care their female members. In the same way, we find women are more empowered. Group members start to respect each other without any hesitation to women and other caste people. Which also helps women and lower caste groups to empower (Informant "C").

Many of my informants argued that there is change in living conditions of women after the projects. But they told that those changes are not good enough. According to some of informant, monitoring and follow up is required for women after their empowerment in communities which helps women to get encouraged. And it is also important because empowered women can empower other marginalized women or not.

Informant "D" answered above question in this way;

...many of our clients have started new life after their treatment of mental illness. Most of women are being able to rejoin their family. We also give skill development training during their treatment if they become interested. From this training some women are able to start small business for livelihood after their recovery. Through psycho-education to family and communities women are being able to women are able to start their dignified life in communities.

What are the challenges Organization is facing during women empowerment in Nepalese societies?

All participants argued that, still there are traditional practice in some communities in Nepal which are obstacle for women empowerment in communities. It takes a long time to change people's wrong conceptions about women. Participant "C" told, "in some communities people know women discrimination is negative but they afraid to share power with women. So power sharing is challenging in some communities". Some participants told that generally women cannot be able to manage time to participant in groups or any awareness program because they need to spent their time on household and men member do not help them in household. So, sometime to bring women participation becomes problematic.

According to informant "A", one challenges for women empowerment is poverty in communities. Because of poverty women do not want to give their time other than income. And they accept where they are or what they are facing. So, encouraging women in participation and bring change in behavior on theme are also challenging task for organizations in this context. Informant "C" and "B" said that it becomes really hard to convince and bring change to old generation in communities. They added that some time we cannot ague about other's culture and faith even that is wrong practice.

Informant "E" answered above question in this way;

To bring mental illness women street to Transit Home is challenging in itself. Furthermore, we need to face more challenges. First, it becomes challenges to bring normal life for that client. And when they become normal, it is hard to find their family and relatives. Even, we recognize their relatives and family most of family do not want to accept that women. To convince family and communities becomes challenging job for us. Sometimes, because of sexual abuse in street

women get pregnant and family do not want to accept child of that women. In this condition it becomes hard to rejoin in family.

Participants informed, male member do not want to support female member in most of the cases. So, without male support it becomes more difficult to lift up for women from their current situations. According to informant "C", it is important to participate male member of society in gender empowerment. But in most of the cases male do not want to participate in women program/gender program. So to bring them in group is also a challenging part of work. Furthermore, she explained that we need to work in rural areas of societies because most of women are getting problem in these areas. So sometime working in this area becomes difficult because of access of primary things like transportation and communication. It becomes difficult in monitoring and follow up them.

What are the challenges to work as a faith based (Christian organization) in multi-religious societies in Nepal?

Nepal has multi-religious societies. Christian people are less in number compared to other religion in societies. However, it is easy to work for faith based organization to work in societies compared to before. It was not allowed to evangelization and preaching when UMN and HimalPartner started to work in Nepal. But now it has good conditions than before. Informant "A" and "B" informed, HiamalPartner works with the local organization in societies without any barrier of faith or belief. Therefore it is not such difficult to work in societies. But sometime, it becomes really difficult to agree and disagree on others belief. To tell what is wrong and what is right on other belief is not good. So, sometime we need to convince people in other way, not in religious way.

Informant "A" told that,

if we go in other faith based societies and tell this traditional culture is not good for women or this tradition is discriminating women. People may ask what you know about other religion and who are you to tell us about our religion. So we need to work with other local leaders or organization which helps us to aware them

According to informant "C" and "E", it is not too difficult to work as a faith based organization in societies. People are quite aware that we only want to help people who are suffered. It is necessary to built understanding with local organizations. So, if we go to work in co-operation with local and other faith based organizations that become easy to work in communities. However, sometime building understanding between other faith based organizations and local partners becomes challenging.

Chapter 6: Analysis

6.0 Introduction

The main propose of this research writing is to find the diaconal activities of HimalPartner on women empowerment in Nepalese societies. To answer the research questions six interviews were taken. So, this chapter will analyze the results in reference to primary and secondary data. To prove or refute HimalPartner's work as a diaconal work on women empowerment, theory on diakonia and empowerment will be taken from chapter 4.

6.1 Diakonia for marginalized and vulnerable

Diakonai has been linked with the marginalized and vulnerable groups from long tradition in Christian history (LWF 2009:40). This means diakonai as a responsible service for needy people or marginalized and vulnerable groups in communities. So, it is important to know, who are marginalized and vulnerable in communities? HimalPartner is being able to know marginalized and vulnerable groups in communities. Therefore it is performing its activities from last 60 years with Nepalese people in Nepal.

In the context of Nepalese societies, primary and secondary sources of data shows that women are more vulnerable group in societies compared to other. Different types of discriminations and violence over women are oppresses them in their socio-economic status in societies. On the one hand, due to the poverty in rural areas of Nepal many women are not able to fulfill their basic needs. One the other hand, patriarchal practice in societies do not give chance to get education and participations. From all interviews I see that women do not have such status in home or in societies which need to be there. Women are only allowed to serve their family and children which means they are excluded from social opportunities and participations (Niraula, 2007). They do not get any opportunities to take part on social activities. So, lack of fundamental rights on education, health, opportunities, decision making and participation in societies are some reasons to create vulnerable situation to women in Nepalese societies (Informant "C"). Traditional culture and some of religious beliefs are creating narrow space for women in societies. However, some of changes in concept about women status and awareness seems there

but the findings shows women are still marginalized and vulnerable in most of rural areas of Nepal. Women trafficking, sexual abuse and different kinds of domestic violence are forcing women to mental illness. And in Nepalese societies mental illness women are also excluded from family and even from communities. My empirical findings show women are discriminated and excluded from societies on the basis of caste and gender. So, women discrimination on the basis of different phenomenon is being social problems in Nepalese societies.

HimalPartner is working in remote areas of Nepal with the help of health, education, electricity, technical support in construction. Understanding of diakonia as a responsible service of Gospel by words and action in response to the need of people (WCC 2002:305), can be seen through the deeds of HimalPartner in Nepal. Hospitals in different rural areas of country, like Tansen Hospital in Palpa district and Okhaldhunga Hospital in Okhaldhunga district are good examples to show HimalPartner have commitment towards the need of people and it is working for marginalized and vulnerable from very beginning. Most of women along with other people are benefited from those hospitals. In the same way, through building hydropower in remote areas of Nepal HimalPartner is improving living conditions of poor people in societies. Establishment of different schools and educational programme are good starting to empower people and bring them able to understand their dignity. To empower oppressed and respect for human dignity comes under the component of diakonia. HimalPartner's above activities are concentrated on root cause of poverty ,which is the calling for diakonia today (LWF 2009).

Understanding of contexts is important for diaconal activities for church and mission organizations. "Context is a complex endeavor due to the fact that all contexts are multifaceted and require an interdisciplinary approach" (LWF 2009:12). It is important to know the stories of marginalized and vulnerable, excluded people, with attention to why things are the way they are and where can find hope and possible changes (ibid). The working way of HimalPartner is able to meet these contextual areas in Nepalese societies. Working with health, education and hydropower before, and peace, gender and mental health in present days HimalPartner shows it is working with to meet the new challenges in communities. HimalPartner's changing working approaches from starting to now shows that it is working with the changing challenges for marginalized and vulnerable. Different project related to peace and development work prove this.

Poverty, discriminations, health and education are seen as challenges for diaconal work in Nepalese societies where empirical findings and secondary sources present that women are offended more than other because of above challenges in most of societies in Nepal. The main reason behind women low socio-economic condition is gender and other types of discrimination in societies. This show humanity and dignity of women are not respected, which is unenthusiastic towards the "fact that humanity is created in the image of God" (McGrath 2011:349). So, those issues challenges diaconal organization, HimalPartner, to act boldly in favor of suffering and marginalized women and to be committed to the case of lifting up justice, peace and struggle for equality (LWF 2009:16). However, HimalPartner is being able to struggle for lifting up dignity of women through some of projects in Nepalese communities.

Lifting up dignity of oppressed people comes under the one aspect of Jesus's Diakonia (LWF 2009:26). In the context of Nepalese communities, struggling for the dignity of marginalized and vulnerable, especially women, is important for diakonia (ibid:41) and also for the development of communities (ibid:77). Dignity of every person is a " basic element in Christian understanding of human beings: that every person is created in God's image and given unrestricted dignity" (ibid:94). Information based on informant "A", those aspect can be seen in the projects of HimalPartner. Three projects; *Integrated Peace Building Project (IPP), Women at Risk and The Right to Dignified Life*, with local and international partners in Nepal are concentrated on human dignity in Nepalese societies. Gender awareness program in IPP project in Sunsari through the healing and reconciliation seems effective towards up-lifting human dignity, especially for women. It is not easy to change the concept of discrimination which is based on their traditional belief. This may be challenging for talk and uplift women dignity in those societies. But IPP through the trauma healing and reconciliation in mix groups and women groups is being able to bring awareness in women rights and equality, informant "C" agued this. According to IPP Evaluation Report, In Sunsari cluster "Women have increased mobility, and are speaking opening with men elders and vice versa. They can be open with outsiders, earlier they did not ever come to the forefront" (UMN 2014:14). This shows women are being able to understand their dignity and community also being change compared to before. However, it needs to go long for complete change in those communities. Working for human dignity as one of the basic value of diakonia (Church of Norway 2008:13), need to be continued for HimalPartner and its project partner in Nepalese communities.

In the same way, IPP's program in Bajhang district also gives good example to prove HimalPartner and its project partners are committed towards uplifting of women dignity. Evaluation report shows that there is change in discrimination in the name of caste and gender. And women are being supported by their family and husband to take part in group awareness program (UMN 2014: 10-12). Participation program in awareness building for women and men are able to make sense of equality in those communities. This helps to know the calling of God, all are created in God's images and have equal dignity. According to informant "C" HimalPartner and UMN are giving emphasis to the equal participant of women and men in gender awareness program. For an example, mix groups in Dhading and Sunsari cluster men are aware about women issues and they are supporting women, which was not before. Through this method of IPP project gives example to the respect of everybody's autonomy. And also this is a supportive answer for the diaconal theory on autonomy (Dietrich 2014:14).

To eradicate the root cause of gender discrimination, IPP's program in Rupandehi with youth club shows important role in communities. Group awareness about gender with youth groups in this cluster is being successful to bring gender equality in family and communities. According to informant "C" youth are respecting each other and they are being able to bring awareness about gender equality in their families. I believe, this is key activity of HimalPartner and UMN, this is essential in all communities to bring awareness about gender equality.

HimalPartner advocacy and awareness program with Koshish for mental illness defines Church of Norway's Plan for Diakonia's statement about diakonia, "struggle for justice" (2008). Mental illness is being excluded health sector in Nepal (Koshish 2015). Many family, societies and even government also do not have enough concern about mental illness. Women are being victims of this situation. So in this context, support on advocacy and awareness about this is an important step of HimalPartner as a diaconal activity according to present context in Nepal. HimalPartner and Koshish initiation of advocacy to the dignified life of mental illness is struggle for justice or rights of suffered people. Koshish's *'Transit Home',* which rescued for the mental ill women from street and give care and support to restart their lives with their family, has elements of diaconal activities of love, care and support on it.

In the same way, HimalPartner's project *Women at Risk* with Higher Ground Nepal also able to support for oppressed and marginalized women from different violence in societies. Counseling and supporting from different training for victims of trafficking in sex industries being able to encourage

victims to know their dignity and transform them from bad conditions to good in inclusive societies. According to informant "F", women who were victims before, now are being able to start their own small business with the counseling and financial support of organizations. This shows transformations in their lives. Transformation is also the important element of diakonia (LWF 2009). Higher Grounds Nepal's believe on " lead people to freedom, they will eventually lead the way for others"(HigherGround:2015) also clarify their commitment to Jesus diakonia.

In analyzing activities of HimalPartner in Nepalese societies together with local and international partners, it can be seen that this organization is committed towards the need of people. As a diaconal organization it has been giving priority to those who are need to be prioritize. To uplift and fight for the equality of women and other discriminated groups in communities it has been working with people themselves with respecting dignity of individuals and groups. In the context of Nepal it seems that it need to be given priority to women, which HimalPartner is doing. On the one hand, it is working for immediate need of oppressed people, for an example rescue of mental illness women from street and trafficking women. One the other hand it is working with the root cause of discrimination over women in long-term projects which is helping to affirm and defend dignity of women and uplift and promote rights of women. Furthermore, diaconal activities with different secular and faith based organization, for an example UMN and Higher Ground Nepal are faith based and Koshish is non faith based organization, proves its vision "we want to be inclusive"(HimalPartner, 2015). And working on multi-religious societies for marginalized and vulnerable without any dependent on religion also defines diaconal activities as a responsible service for needy.

6.2 Women empowerment

Empowerment is an important aspect for individual, groups and societies. It is a process which helps them to take choice to do their desire actions with understanding of own dignity. Through the process of empowerment marginalized and oppressed people can get respected life in their communities or societies. Empowerment is the process which encourage individual or group to take control over their life. It enhances to rise the voice of marginalized and vulnerable for their rights and injustice in societies. Additionally, empowerment gives strength to struggle for power which marginalized and vulnerable groups lost from their rights. In over all, empowerment is the

"central importance in the slow process of social, political, and economic change that is needed to turn the alternative vision they present in to reality" (Rowland, 1997:19).

In the context of Nepalese societies many women do not have equal opportunities for rights and participation in decision making process. They do not have their own choice to run their life in their desired way. Dignity of women on those societies is not respected and they are being powerless because of traditional patriarchal social practice in communities. Men are powerful and they do not want to share power with women in most of the cases. Not getting education, opportunities, unequal treatments in many levels of societies, poor economic conditions and dependency on men in family member are examples to clarify women status in most of Nepalese societies. Women are not able to rise their voice against those discrimination because of traditional belief and practice from long run in those societies. The belief on women as "they are weaker than male" is playing negative role on women's life. Because of that many women are unable to get chance like men in different sectors of societies. However, government has given equal rights and opportunities in every level. Dependency level on men is high in many of Nepalese societies which is being obstacle to improve women lives and independency. These situations are creating life of women vulnerable and marginalized. Although, the situation of women seem to be very miserable but it is possible to change. To struggle for those challenges to improve life of women in those societies and make changes in these traditional practice women themselves need to be struggle. That can be possible if they become empower. So, diakonia as an instrument of empowerment for women need to be used to create them able to struggle against discriminations and to get dignified life.

It is possible to support and facilitate women to their empowerment. Women need to be empowered by women. Diaconal organizations can support women's collective empowerment though they address the cause of gender subordination, promoting women participation in different social and national levels and advocating for rights and justice for women in different levels (Institute of Development studies 1997:6). "Empowerment cannot be defined in terms of specific activities or end results because it involves a process whereby women can freely analyze, develop and voice their needs and interests" (ibid). So, diaconal organization,

Himalpartner's, activities towards empowerment need to enable women themselves to critically examine their own situation and create and shape a transformation in societies.

Understanding of every individual's dignity based on 'every human beings are created on image of God' gives emphasis to diaconal work for empowerment of oppressed people (LWF 2009). In relation to this HimalPartner's activities for women through different projects from starting to today show that it is committed towards theme of human dignity. HimalPartner's most of the projects are taking women's participations most importantly which is also a process of women empowerment. Participation is an important factor that brings them able to understand their capacity and think critically about their situations in societies. Information based on all of the informants shows that HimalPartner and its project partners are working for the root cause of discrimination over women and they are going to the process to empower women as well.

According to informant "A" and "B", HimalPartner is facilitating and supporting women for awareness about discrimination based on societies. Some of small entrepreneurship program have been effective to participate women in economic activities. Support for Home Stay program in Kavre district is a good example of entrepreneurship program. This program is supporting women to start tourism business in village. From this program women are being able to engage in income generating activities. Through this activities women are able to use their capacity and are being independent for their living. So economic independency is also important for women's empowerment in Nepalese societies. Because of economic dependency on male member of family they need to bear discriminations and violence. In the same way, economic dependency also links with power. In many society male member grab the power in family. If women also start to engage in economic activities it makes easy to ask and rise voice for power sharing in family and societies. I believe, support for small business of HimalPartner is a good step towards the women empowerment in Nepalese societies.

Similarly, IPP project (HimalPartner's project with UMN) also taking women empowerment as an important component in it. According to the Evaluation Report of IPP, groups of women in Bajhang district have given training about the awareness rising on gender based violence. And after the three months of that training women made three different women groups with 100

women in each and they are now supporting and counseling for the victims from gender based violence and perpetrator. That results reduction on gender based violence in that community (UMN 2014).

I believe, above examples are defining the Nordstokke's statement on Empowering Diakonia which stated diakonia has the aim of "lifting up trodden, of dignifying the excluded and of empowering the excluded" (Nordstokke, 2011:50). Theory on participation on empowerment also has been used in those two activities of HimalPartner where victims are able to understand their dignity. These two activities have been emphasized on "diaconal act as a means of assisting the other to help herself without portioning her" (Dietrich 2014:23).

Empowerment also needs to talk about the power. Power relation is an important component in empowerment process. Discrimination on societies comes because of imbalance in power relation within its members in societies that may be within family or communities. "Everyone on the way to the *koinonia* would be empowered to play their part in community decision-making and action, and ready to realize power in the strength of the shared Sprit of power" (Roy Kearsley in Dietrich, 2014:19). So, diaconal activities should aware victims about imbalance of power through the empowerment process in communities. There should be adequate power relation in service provider and sufferer as well. Oppressed people should not be taken as a powerless and helper or diaconal organization as powerful. So, the balance of power needs to be within the service provider and receiver (LWF 2009:46). Moreover, equality in power should be in church or diaconal organizations as well (ibid).

In regards to Nepalese societies, diaconal organization needs to deal critically with the imbalance of power within men and women in societies which could be possible through the advocacy for rights and justice to women in those societies. HimalPatner's advocacy program with Koshish for mental health illness is taken as an example of this. According to informant "E" advocacy for mental illness in community and national level become able to bring behavioral changes on communities. That means not only women need to be empower about gender issues, there should be empowerment process within the communities where they live. Because of behavioral change towards the women issues men may become able to share their power with women. In the same

way, reconciliation through the UMN and HimalPartner in Rukum and Dhading districts for single women group (Widow women group) are being able to reconcile single women in communities. Additionally, single women are able to share and rise voice for discrimination in societies. This shows that empower process has been able to bring changes on their behavior and able to fight for their power in societies.

Furthermore, I have found consciousness of power relation of men and women within the diaconal organization as well. HimalPartner and its project partners put women in top level in administrative level as well. I have taken six interviews and where four are women. And all of them are in administrative level of organizations. The Gender policy of UMN clearly stated "Promote gender equity and equality within both the workplace and community"(UMN 2012:3). This also shows that diaconal practice for power relation has been started from diaconal organizations themselves first which Himalpartner and its project partners are doing. In the local context in grass root level these organizations are giving priority to the women in leadership positions, that means sharing of power relations has been started from grass root level to organization level. This can be taken as an important perspective of diaconal work for women empowerment.

6.3 Reflection of diaconal work on Inclusion

Diakonia as a God's mandate to Christians need to work for the inclusion. Church of Norway Plan for Diakonia is taking diakonia as "...creating inclusive community" (2008). Theology on God's creation gives massage all creations have equal values and dignity (LWF: 2009:25). So, diaconal organizations have to work for creating inclusive community. "Diakonia has special mandate to identify mechanism of inclusion" (Nordstokke and Collins in Korslien 2014:203). Therefore working for excluded people to bring them in inclusiveness is necessary to diaconal organizations in today's context. God shares his power with the people to enable them to participate in his mission (LWF 2009: 32). Inclusiveness in diaconal work is related to Holy Communion and the work of the Holy Spirit (LWF 2009:26).

In the context of Nepalese societies, many people are excluded from the societies because of different traditional practices. Those practices create discrimination in communities and people

have to exclude from societies. Caste and gender discrimination in many societies show that how people are excluded in Nepalese societies. Dalit women in Nepalese societies are excluded from the societies on the basis of caste in one hand and based on gender on the other hand. This is pessimistic situation for the human development in today's conditions. All informants argued that because of exclusion women are not able to get education, health, and opportunity in decision making process and lacking fundamental rights as well. So, these challenges need to meet by the diaconal organization to create inclusive communities in Nepalese societies. Creating opportunities for women to make space in their society is important. Inclusiveness can be build in the societies if women can get their rights and opportunities in societies equal to men.

HimalPartner and its project partner's activities for women are being one step to create inclusion in community. Different projects with counseling, healing and advocacy bring some changes. However, to create a completely inclusive community is still challenging job for diaconal organization. Exclusion is rooted on traditional belief so it may take long time to bring change in concept of people but HimalPartner's long project on women might change those concepts in Nepalese societies. HimalPartner's vision on inclusiveness also defines how it is committed towards the inclusiveness (see HimalPartner's vision chapter 2). Working together with local people in many project shows that HimalPartner has inclusive component in its work. According to informant "C" and "A" many projects have people from different background independent on gender, caste or community. They also told that when they are creating groups in communities for development work or for the awareness program they also concentrate on participation of people from different background and level which helps to create inclusive environment in development work and that effect on societies as well. IPP evaluation report shows that in Bajhang district there has been changes on caste discrimination and Dalit are working with other caste groups for development work (UMN 2014). This shows inclusiveness is in progress with the help of diaconal activities in those societies.

So, the projects from HimalPartner show that this organization and its diaconal activities towards the inclusion for the excluded groups in the communities. Creating inclusion space for women in community is also the process of empowering women which helps them to create confidence and eradicate dependency on other. I have discussed above about the empowering activities of

HimalPartner, it seems that all those activities are related with the component of inclusion and empowerment for women.

6.4 Towards the transformation

Transformation is an important element for diaconal work. Diaconal work need to struggle for justice and transform marginalized and oppressed groups towards the dignified life. Transformation is the process which can bring change in thinking, behavior and life of marginalized people. It also can be taken as a process to give alternative way of life to marginalized and oppressed people (LWF 2009:44).

Women in Nepalese societies need to transform from their miserable condition to the hope of life. Diaconal praxis of HimalPartner towards the mental illness women and victims of trafficking in sex industries looks able to transform them towards the hope in life. HimalPartner and Higher Ground's work for the trafficking women gives the good example of diaconal work as an instrument for transformation. Many women though the project 'Women at Risk' are being able to overcome dominated life to freedom. In Nepalese societies women who have been sold in sex market need to treat badly from the societies and family. They do not want to accept that women in family and societies. So, in this challenging situation this project help women with training and counseling to overcome from that situation and to start new dignified life in the societies. According to informant "F" many women have been able to start their own business in societies with the trainings of this project. And those women are living respected life in society now. So, this shows women are transformed in new dignified life.

If we look up on the HimalPartner's activities in Nepalese societies from its starting date to present day we can find this organization is trying to transform marginalized and poor people's life towards the hope. Different development work for poor people, educational program for women and child and health program for marginalized groups can be seen as a diaconal work for transformation of life in Nepalese societies. Over all information about women project in Nepal also gives glimpse of women life transformation from discrimination to freedom, injustice to justice and oppressed life to respected life.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis was to find diaconal activities of HimalPartner in Nepalese societies. I focused on the need of women from rural areas of Nepalese societies who are discriminated in different levels in societies. Diaconal theory on empowerment, transformation and inclusion were used to analyze the findings of research. Approach on gender study was used to support the analysis of this research.

Qualitative data collection method was employed to collect the primary data. Semi-structure interviews were conducted in Nepal and Norway with diaconal workers and other employees related to HimalPartner and its project partners. Open-ended questionnaires were asked to get answer for the research question. Similarly, secondary data from various research papers, journals, reports, books, website of organizations, and governmental websites were used to get information related to this research.

HimalPatrner has responded with the challenges related to the poor and marginalized people in rural areas of Nepalese societies. This response has been able to help to build hope in life of poor and marginalized people. As a diaconal organization, HimalPatrner's activities have proved this organization is always for poor and marginalized people with the message of love, care, and share. HimalPartner's helps in health, education, hydro and small entrepreneur program have change the socio-economic status of marginalized people in rural areas of Nepal. Its vision to work for root cause of poverty and partnership with local and international project partners is highly appreciated.

Importantly, this research has shown diaconal activities of HimalPartner for discriminated women in Nepalese societies are empowering women. Awareness program for gender equality and advocacy for women rights and opportunities are respected activities of HimalPartner. These program are initiating women to rise the voice for equality and rights. I think, this will bring change in discrimination and all women in Nepalese societies will get equal opportunities and rights. Now, it is possible to tell that HimalPartner as a diaconal organization have been conveying human dignity and participating both Christian as well as other believers to participate in its activities and empowering all oppressed people.

Recommendations

♦ HimalPartner has gain popularity and people's love in Nepalese societies with its work based on contextual change it will gain its high position in Nepalese societies forever. Still, there are lots of challenges in societies because of political instability for marginalized and discriminated people. So, HimalPartner needs to analyze them closely and work to give dignified life for those people.

♦ HimalPartner's work on women empowerment are relevant to context in Nepalese societies. But, changing the traditional practice on women is very hard. Therefore it should implement a long-term project in those areas and continue follow up and monitoring needed.

♦ Discrimination on women also affects many aspects of children's life. Therefore, if the program for women discrimination will also relate children issues that will help to change the life of women and children together.

♦ HimalPartner is taking Mental health issue as a main target program in its strategy which is appreciating work. It can be beneficial for oppressed one, if it will start to work from grass root level.

♦ Because of earthquake (on April 2015) many people have been going through the trauma and many women and children are in worst conditions. HimalPartner need to bring some new programs to trauma healing of those victims to overcome from that situation. And needs to give them hope to start their normal life again.

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Questionnaire guide

1.What is the situation of women in Nepalese societies?

2.What are the reason behind this in your thinking?

3. What activities is doing your organization for women?

4. How these activities are supporting women?

5. How women are empowered through these activities?

6. What are the challenges to work for women in Nepalese societies?

7. What is the situation of women after you project in you cluster?