

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

Rural development means the strategy that helps uplift the social and economic conditions of the people living in remote, backward villages. The rural development strategy basically engulfs the small and tenant farmers. The major areas that the rural development strategy focuses on are health, education, drinking water, sanitation, environment, irrigation, agriculture and small industries (Bhatta, 2060 B. S., p. 158).

The concept of rural development first came into existence in Tennessee Valley of America in the year 1920 immediately after the First World War. The concept developed in India in 1948 through the Ithawa Pilot Program. Though various efforts were made in the ancient times for the development of the rural areas in Nepal as well, the concept of rural development started formally only in 1953 through the Tribhuwan Gram Vikash Model.

The first five year plan that started in 1957 gave an utmost priority to the rural development that highlighted development of rural education. The plan aimed to construct schools, playgrounds, roads, health posts and bridges with the help of the local people. The tenth five year plan also emphasizes on rural development as well (NPC, 2059 B.S., p. 24).

Though poverty has always been an overriding concern of development efforts in Nepal, it was explicitly stated as an objective only from the Seventh Plan (1985/86-1989/90) onwards. The latter, however, was the first attempt to formulate a separate

plan with a long-term aim of poverty alleviation perspective. Towards the end of the Plan period, it was derailed by the Trade and Transit crisis with India and the resulting economic dislocation in the late eighties. The transition to democracy in 1990, by raising popular expectations and aspirations, gave a new impetus to poverty reduction. The development plans which were formulated subsequently- the Eighth Plan (1992/93-1996/97) and the Ninth Plan (1997/98-2001/02) - specifically had poverty reduction as their main objective. The Ninth Plan also established long-term targets and development indicators for all sectors based on their potential for alleviating poverty (IMF, 2003, p. 9).

To attain this goal, the Ninth Plan postulated a three-pronged strategy: (i) Achieving a high, sustainable and broad-based economic growth rate (a minimum of 6 percent per annum GDP) through liberal and market-oriented policies; (ii) Developing social and rural infrastructure; and (iii) Introducing targeted programs for those communities and areas left behind by the mainstream development process (IMF, 2003, p. 10).

Preliminary estimates made in the context of the mid-term review of the Ninth Plan suggest that the poverty ratio declined modestly from 42 percent at the beginning of the Plan to about 38 percent in 2000/01. This is not surprising, given the slow growth of per-capita incomes, especially in rural areas, in view of continued weak agricultural performance (IMF, 2003, p. 11).

The past experiences show that the objective of poverty alleviation might not be achieved even if the overall economic indicators remain positive. Based on this reality, the Tenth Plan divided poverty into mainly three categories – income poverty, human poverty and social exclusion. Analyzing all these categories, the overall poverty and human development indices have significantly improved during the past years.

According to Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS) 2003/04, during the last eight years, the people living below the absolute poverty line, has fallen to 31 percent from 42 percent. Reviewing the Tenth plan, the NPC (2007) has evaluated the reasons behind this poverty reduction are:

- Increased wage rate in both the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.
- Increasing urbanization.
- Increased proportion of active human resources in the population.
- Inflow of huge amount of remittances. (p. 2)

Analysis of the dynamics of poverty and poverty profile, by comparing NLSS I and II, shows the decline in poverty is higher in the urban areas than in the rural areas; poverty declined in all the regions except in the rural eastern hills; and inequality increased at the upper end of the income distribution. However, the decline in poverty in the mid and far-western hills and mountains was not enough to bring it at par with the national average (NPC, 2006, p. 4).

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach can be seen as one of a number of analytical frameworks which deal with the dynamic dimensions of poverty and well-being through establishing a typology of assets which poor individuals, households and communities deploy to maintain well-being under changing conditions. It has conceptual roots in various traditions, including applied social science, agro-eco systems/farming systems analysis and especially participatory approaches to rural development. The main distinguishing feature of the approach is the attempt to set the analysis of livelihoods within a comprehensive framework which encompasses policy and institutional processes at various levels, as well as micro-level conditions and determinants of livelihood.

The world has entered in the twenty first century with new millennium goals to reduce the poverty and other issues of livelihood. According to Norton and Foster (2001), some key messages of the livelihoods approach over the last twenty years, just entering before the new millennium have been the following:

That effective poverty reduction through public budgets is not simply a question of what are classically perceived as ‘social expenditures’ (health, education, and welfare). Poor men and women also need access to a range of other assets and services, including financial services, markets, and equitable justice systems...That poor people, especially in rural areas, manage a complex range of assets and activities to sustain themselves – and that development professionals and officials often fail to adequately see and understand this. The approach has been the main corrective to the tendency for professionals to assume that everyone survives primarily by being within a household that has a limited number of economically active adults who are each engaged in one main ‘job’ or occupation...That the poorest people are often disproportionately dependent on access to assets which are not privately owned – common property or open-access resources such as forests, common grazing land and fisheries. (p. 17)

Poverty eradication was one of the slogans of Nepal government since its first five years plan and up to this date. Nepal MDGs Progress Report 2013 shows significant development in this sector. According to this report, percentage of population below national poverty line has been reduced to 24 from 42 in 1990. Poverty eradication slogan is being a sweet dream of a long run in Nepali context as its target to reduce in 21 percent by 2015.

## 1.2 TRANSITION TO COMMUNICATION IN MEDIA

Nora Quebral (1975) defined development communication as the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth and makes possible greater economic and social equality and the larger fulfillment of human potential. (Narula, 2002, p. 18)

An understanding of the broadening role and practices of development communication is more relevant now than ever, since the old, widely criticized paradigm of modernization has been in part abandoned—and a new paradigm has yet to be fully embraced.

The very first concept of dominant paradigm, rooted in the concept of development as modernization, dates back to soon after World War II has pervasive impact on most aspects of development. (Mefalopulos, 2008, pp. 5-6)

The central idea of this old paradigm was to solve development problems by “modernizing” underdeveloped countries—advising them how to be effective in following in the footsteps of richer, more developed countries. Development was equated with economic growth, and communication was associated with the dissemination of information and messages aimed at modernizing “backward” countries and their people. (Mefalopulos, 2008, p. 6)

Because of the overestimated belief that they were extremely powerful in persuading audiences to change attitudes and behaviors, mass media were at the center of communication initiatives that relied heavily on the traditional vertical one-way model: Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver (SMCR). This has been the model of reference for the diffusion perspective, which has often been adopted to induce behavior changes through media-centric approaches and campaigns.

Earlier to this theory, propaganda model was in practice. In the middle of the World War I, in 1916, Woodrow Wilson was elected president in the US on the platform "Peace without victory." The population was extremely pacifistic and saw no reason to become involved in a European war. The Wilson administration was actually committed to war and had to do something about it. They established a government propaganda Commission, called Creel Commission, which succeeded, within six months, in turning a pacifist population in to a hysterical, war-mongering population. (Chomsky, 2002, p. 11)

In the 1960s strong opposition to the modernization paradigm led to the emergence of an alternative theoretical model rooted in a political-economic perspective: the dependency theory. The proponents of this school of thought criticized some of the core assumptions of the modernization paradigm mostly because it implicitly put the responsibility, and the blame, for the causes of underdevelopment exclusively upon the recipients, neglecting external social, historical, and economic factors. Mefalopulos (2008, p. 6) mentioned, "they also accused the dominant paradigm of being very Western-centric, refusing or neglecting any alternative route to development".

In the field of communication the basic conception remained rooted in the linear, one-way model, even though dependency theorists emphasized the importance of the link between communication and culture. They were instrumental in putting forward the agenda for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), which was at the center of a long and heated debate that took place mostly in the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the 1980s.

In a publication of The World Bank, both concepts of development communication are considered as the failure concept. Although the dependency theory had gained a significant impact in the 1970s, in the 1980s it started to lose relevance gradually in tandem

with the failure of the alternative economic models proposed by its proponents. When the promises of the modernization paradigm failed to materialize, and its methods came increasingly under fire, and the dependency theorists failed to provide a successful alternative model, a different approach focusing on people's participation began to emerge. This participatory model is less oriented to the political-economic dimension and more rooted in the cultural realities of development (Mefalopulos, 2008, pp. 6-7).

Development communication is described as the systematic use of communication in support of national development. This concept conceived in 1960s, believed that there should be better trained and informed economic specialists among the communicators to cover fully, impartially and simply the myriad problems of developing countries. (Narula, 2002, p. 19)

The development focus has shifted from economic growth to include other social dimensions needed to ensure meaningful results in the long run—as indicated by the consensus built in the definition of the Millennium Development Goals. Sustainability and people's participation became key elements of this new vision- "Internationally, emphasis is being placed on the challenge of sustainable development, and participation is increasingly recognized as a necessary part of sustainable development strategies" as acknowledged by the World Bank (1994, p. 3).

Meaningful participation cannot occur without communication. Unfortunately, too many development programs, including community-driven ones, seem to overlook this aspect and, while paying attention to participation, do not pay similar attention to communication, intended as the professional use of dialogic methods and tools to promote change. To be truly significant and meaningful, participation needs to be based on the application of genuine two-way communication principles and practices.

That is why communication is increasingly considered the essential in facilitating stakeholders' engagement in problem analysis and resolution. Similarly, there is an increasing recognition that the old, vertical, top-down model is no longer applicable and development communication has increasingly moved toward a horizontal, "two-way" model, which favors people's active and direct interaction through consultation and dialogue over the traditional one-way information dissemination through mass media.

The horizontal use of communication, which opens up dialogue, assesses risks, identifies solutions, and seeks consensus for action, came to be seen as a key to the success and sustainability of development efforts. The new paradigm is also changing the way communication is conceived and applied. It shifts the emphasis from information dissemination to situation analysis, from persuasion to participation. Rather than substituting for the old model, it is broadening its scope, maintaining the key functions of informing people and promoting change, yet emphasizing the importance of using communication to involve stakeholders in the development process.

In 1997, through Article 6 of General Assembly Resolution 51/172, the United Nations adopted the formal definition of Communication for Development (<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N97/765/67/PDF/N9776567>) as ... "Communication for development stresses the need to support two-way communication systems that enable dialogue and that allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns and participate in the decisions that relate to their development."

The second definition emerged at the First World Congress of Communication for Development, held in Rome in October 2006. It is included in the document known as the Rome Consensus, in which more than 900 participants of the Congress agreed to conceive it as:

A social process based on dialog using a broad range of tools and methods. It is also about seeking change at different levels, including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating, and learning for sustained and meaningful change. It is not public relations or corporate communications. (p. 3)

Today's world is the world of development and communication. The latest development of information technology and its byproduct have made this world a global village. The main aim of the various means of communication invented with the civilization of society is social development.

In the Nepali context, till the democratic revolution of 1951, the concept of development of communication was on the least priority by the state. Though the government had established the first newspaper *Gorkhapatra* in 1902, and with the success of democratic revolution, the first broadcasting media Nepal Radio (Now Radio Nepal) started in 1951. The *Gorkhapatra* became the daily newspaper in 1961. In 1985, Nepal's government owned third means of communication *Nepal Television* (NTV) successfully started its transmission. The slogan "Communication for Development" became popular with NTV as the National Communication Plan came into effect since 1972 immediately after King Birendra sworn in crown. Currently 6,997 (six thousand and nine hundred and ninety seven) private newspapers and magazines have been registered all over the country, whereas 610 (six hundred and ten) FM radio stations<sup>1</sup> and 88 (eighty eight)

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Information has record of 6997 number of newspaper and magazine registered till the end of 2071. Press Council Nepal Report of 2068 B. S. has categorized 715 newspapers and magazines are classified as regular print media.

television stations<sup>2</sup> are licensed in the government record. Similarly the facility of e-mail and internet caught speed after the popular peoples' movement for democracy in 1990.

Education is most needed for rural development. If we look into the history of educational development in Nepal, it was only after the historical political revolution of 1951, people started giving priority to education. Though some awareness for education was already there during the Rana regime and few schools and colleges were also established during their period, the common people however had no easy access on them. In 1864, the then Prime minister Junga Bahadur Rana built the Durbar High School and in 1888, Ranipokhari Sanskrit Pathsala was built by Prime Minister Ranodeep Shumsher, immediate successor of Junga Bahadur, during their rule.

Only two decade after the democratic revolution of 1951, National Education Plan came into effect from 1972, as the development of professional and technical education became prominent. The literacy rate of Nepal is gradually increasing since past 45 years. According to the report of national census done by Central Bureau of Statics, 2011 overall literacy rate (for population aged 5 years and above) has increased from 54.1 percent in 2001 to 65.9 percent in 2011. The latest total male literacy rate is 75.1 percent in comparison to female which is 57.4 percent.

Communication among human beings is the process of conveying and exchanging information, feelings and attitudes. It is an ongoing process, an ongoing stream of interac-

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<sup>2</sup> According to the record of Ministry of Information and Communication, Frequency Division, Singh Durbar, Kathmandu, up to the end of March 2015, there are 610 licenses for FM radio have been issued and about 500 are in operation. Similarly, the number of Television License is 88 up to same date.

tion to which both the initiator and receptor of the initial cue contribute. The process of human communication is circular, so ongoing, that it is sometimes difficult to perceive who initially set the activity into motion. We refer to the initiating stimulus as a message and to the receiver's response as feedback. It is a chain process. Initiator communicates the certain message to the receiver and the receiver after getting the message provides feedback to the initiator.

Media is a powerful tool in persuading audiences to change their attitudes and behaviors. The traditional vertical one-way model of communication: Sender-Message-Channels-Receivers (SMCR) could not be effective to get the expected result. It only helps for the diffusion of information to the mass. The sender must get feedback from the audience about the information provided to them, which increases the participation and support in information production process.

### **1.3 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Nepal's 1990 constitution enshrined rights to information, freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom of print and publication. The National Media Policy of 1992, which was recommended by Narahari Acharya, with the provision for private sector media in broadcasting, paved the way for the National Broadcasting Act of 1993 and the establishment of independent radio stations. The National Broadcasting Regulations of 1995 defined the processes and methods necessary for establishing FM (Frequency Modulation) stations in Nepal.

The first FM station in Nepal was FM Kathmandu, which went on air in 16 November 1994. The frequency was provided to the state-run Radio Nepal with programming provided by private broadcasters who leased blocks of time. Radio Nepal applied for and

received a FM license for FM Kathmandu in December 1994, after the service had already begun broadcasting.

Nepal has got a private radio in 1997, which was the beginning of community FM radio in the country as well. Radio Sagarmatha is the first independent community radio station not only of Nepal but of South Asia. There was already Kothmale radio as the community station in Sri Lanka but was owned by the government. Radio Sagarmatha is established by a NGO called Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ) in May 1997. This NGO is a forum of the journalists working on environment beat.

After the third successive movement<sup>3</sup> for democracy in 2006 May, the door has been opened to the private radio. Social change and social justice is the motto of community radio stations. They have played pivotal role to restore democracy and change Nepal as the republic country from the Kingdom. Rule of law, gender equality, education, health, civic education, anti-corruption, good governance, environment and day to day problem and issues are being treated in different format by the local community radio stations. Community radios have a good coverage in all over Nepal. News is one of the very popular program formats of Nepalese community radio stations.

Before May 2006 political movement, there were only 56 licenses for FM radio broadcasting. Latest record of FM licensing according to Ministry of Information and Communication (MoIC) Nepal, up to March 2015, there are 610 licenses all over the country. Among 75 administrative districts, 74 have FM radio station producing their programs on air. Only one district on the top of the Himalayan region of Nepal, Manang

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<sup>3</sup> First was in 1951, which over thrown the Rana regime, second in 1990 which replaced party-less Panchayat system to multi-party political system and active monarchy to constitutional monarchy, and third one was in 2006 May which pave the way to Republic Nepal.

has got license to operate FM radio station, but has not in operation up to this research. Among total licensing, 250 stations have got the membership of Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (ACORAB), Nepal up to September 2014, who have claimed themselves as Community Radio Stations.

Nepal has no specific policy or law for licensing the community radio differently. The existing policy and law is equally applied for both community and commercial radio stations. In other words, the licensing process does not legally distinguish the community or commercial radio station. But the umbrella organization of community radio stations, Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (ACORAB) Nepal has adopted certain standard in its statute to categorize the stations to be considered as Community Radio (ACORAB, 2009). It includes:

1. Ownership: Private Company having owned the station would not be eligible to be a member.
2. Program content: There must be local contents in the program not less than 60 percent of overall contents.
3. Participation: People's participation in program production and ownership is necessary. (p. 5)

Community radio has different understanding having commonalities of people or community centric radio station. In the Philippines, TAMBULI Community Radio Project–Philippines, 2001 ([www.amarc.org/?q=node/47](http://www.amarc.org/?q=node/47)) consider it as:

Community radio means... radio in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community. There is a wide participation from regular community members with respect to management and production of programs. This involvement of community members distinguishes it from the dominant commercial media in the Philippines that are operated for PPPP – profit, propaganda, power, politics, privilege, etc. Serving the big P (people or public) is a token gesture

mainly to justify existence in the government bureaucratic licensing procedures...stations collectively operated by the community. Stations dedicated to development, education and people empowerment. Stations adhere to the principles of democracy and participation. (para. 6)

Regarding the definition of Community Radio, it seems the definition of democracy by American President Abraham Lincoln by the people, to the people and for the people. Above mentioned The Philippines definition as 'in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community' is exactly similar to it. VOICES - India also has defined Community Radio ([www.amarc.org/?q=node/47](http://www.amarc.org/?q=node/47)) in the same spirit:

Firstly, community radio is characterized by the active participation of the community in the process of creating news, information, entertainment and culturally relevant material, with an emphasis on local issues and concerns. With training, local producers can create programs using local voices. The community can also actively participate in the management of the station and have a say in the scheduling and content of the programs.

Secondly, it is essentially a non-profit enterprise. In these days of highly commercialized broadcasting, the ethos of community radio remains independence and a responsibility to serve the community, not the advertiser. As the station is owned by the community, it also maintains some responsibility in the running of the station.

Thirdly, community radio programming is designed by the community, to improve social conditions and the quality of its cultural life. The community itself decides what its priorities and needs are in terms of information provision. (para. 8)

Even it is not needed to be conducted by the community to be a community radio. In Sri Lanka, *Kothmale FM* is one of community radio station operating under the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, a government entity. In Nepal also, Madan Pokhara VDC of

Palpa district own *Radio Madan Pokhara*. Similarly, *Metro FM* is run by Kathmandu Metropolitan City. Even Non-Government Organization (NGO) could not consider as community entity. But first private license holder in Nepal, *Radio Sagarmatha*, who claimed a first community radio in private sector in Asia operated by a NGO called Nepal Forum of Environment Journalists (NEFEJ). World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), an organization of world community radios has also paved the way to consolidate the radio station under its umbrella.

Sixth World Congress of Community Radio Broadcasters in Dakar, Senegal in January 1995 has defined community radio as:

Community radio, rural radio, cooperative radio, participatory radio, free radio, alternative, popular, educational radio. If the radio stations, networks and production groups that make up the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters refer to themselves by a variety of names, then their practices and profiles are even more varied. Some are musical, some militant and some mix music and militancy. They are located in isolated rural villages and in the heart of the largest cities in the world. Their signals may reach only a kilometer, cover a whole country or be carried via shortwave to other parts of the world. (p. 4)

Difference in the ownership of the radio station is only one basis (whether the operating company is registered according to private company act or public company act) to differentiate Private or Community radio. *Radio Today* of Janakpur had dual membership of community radio association ACORAB, and Broadcasters Association of Nepal (BAN), a private radio stations' association at a time. After controversy within the organization, ACORAB decided to cancel its membership. Though ACORAB has developed the criteria on program content and participation of community people, the study has not been done whether the member stations have maintained this policy or not. Be-

cause of lack of clear regulation, no monitoring mechanism exists in government level to check whether the station is community or of other types.

Community radios have a significant coverage all over Nepal. FM radios are more popular than any other means of information and entertainment in Nepal. By its topographic condition, it is very difficult to circulate any newspaper or provide television service all over the country. People have less purchasing power to subscribe newspaper/s. Cable service is not easily available and accessible in rural areas and about 30 percent households have TV set. According to report of Central Bureau of Statistics 2011, about only 65 percent people have got electricity facility. Power cut (Load-shedding) schedule hikes up to 18 hours a day in the dry season especially in March, April and May. Due to these reasons, FM radio is only an easy media to get information and entertainment in terms of their economy as well as access and the facility. So FM stations are really popular among the rural population.

FM radio station is the popular tool to get information as well as entertainment. It is easily accessible in the rural part of the country and is being a part of life of the people. In other words, it is a powerful medium to persuade people in the rural parts of the country. If such a medium covers the issues of development, it has a great impact in the society. Are they covering the rural development issues or not? It has not been researched. So, this research has a relevancy.

#### **1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The emergence of broadcasting media basically FM radio stations in Nepal in the late 1990s changed the media landscape in the nation. A very few systematic study of Nepalese community media has been done till the date. *Radio Sagarmatha* and *Radio Madan Pokhara* are eyed by most of the researchers as the model of community radio in

Nepal. It appears as a case study from Nepal in *Making Waves*, edited by Dagron (2001), and in some other studies (Koirala, 2002; Pringle, 1999).

Most of the studies, in general, are either overall program based analysis or the situation of Nepali FM stations and are not focused on the specific agenda. After a decade of FM radio operation in Nepal, Martin Chautari has published *Swatantra radioko Ek Dashak* (A Decade of Free Radio), a compilation of different writers (2008) covering the technicalities and legal provisions and diversity in language. Analysis of news and dialogues in FM production was covered in *Radio Patrakarita* (Radio Journalism) by the same publisher in 2005. Ethical problems in FM stations are synthesized focusing on certain stations by Subba, Chapagain and Mainali (2009). The management system of FM stations has been analyzed by the same team (2011). Having several efforts to research on FM stations, community radio has to be touched to identify their contents on development issues.

In Nepal, there are no specific provisions in laws and regulations that distinguished commercial and community broadcasters. However, there have been about two hundred and fifty self-declared community radio stations having membership of ACORAB Nepal. Some literatures have been published that tell about the nature and extent of ownership of radio sets and listening practices of FM stations in Nepal. The study conducted in 1997 (Maung & Ghimire) by Radio Nepal has not mentioned about the emerging community radio broadcasting from private sectors.

The liberal policy of government towards FM licensing, encouraged people to establish the radio station in each and every community which resulted in the mushroom growth of FM station in Nepal. Similarly, with availability of inexpensive radio receivers (with FM band) in the Nepalese markets and the growing number of independent radio sta-

tions, it is believed that there has been a rapid increase in the number of families owning radio sets. Village based FM stations have been providing entertainment and information and have been contributing to the increased level of awareness among community members. However, existing literature does not provide any information on the performance of community radio stations regarding its program and content on development agenda.

Before 1990, almost all sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing, public utilities, banking, trading and social services, were under government control as public enterprises. The Nepali Congress (NC) government in 1992 started economic liberalization policy in Nepal and that helped increase investment in the development of private media, and in community media initiatives. Commenting on the socio-political situation of Nepal, a scholar Banjade (2007) has written:

The political changes of 1990 affected every sector in the country, including the media. Newspaper publication, the only private media before 1990, no longer is a family business; rather it has developed into an industry. Investment from the private sector in media resulted in a few big media houses that functioned more to serve private business interests than to promote an independent fourth estate dedicated to the public interest. Access to the mainstream media remains limited to a small section of the population, and a huge gap exists between those with access to abundant information and the vast majority who have little access.  
(pp. 25-26)

Most of the rural parts of the country remain non-served or underserved by mainstream media basically the print and the television. The national newspapers are not accessible to the majority of people in rural areas, because of regular transportation facilities and

the purchasing power of the rural people. Critically analyzing the print media content, Koirala (2007) has expressed his view as:

Moreover, newspapers in Nepal deal predominantly with politics, are targeted at the urban elites, use difficult 'Sanskritized' language, and contain very little material of educational value for the masses of people and are, therefore, of little relevance to the bulk of the population. (p. 7)

Similarly, television in Nepal is not accessible to most people, because only 65 percent of population has access to electricity (CBS: 2011), and most people cannot afford television sets and dish antenna to receive it. The reception of Nepal Television, a state-owned television station's terrestrial service is either poor or not accessible in all part of the country.

State-owned broadcasting Radio Nepal reaches a large number of people in Nepal. Battery operated radio sets are relatively cheap in comparison to any other media. As the mobile set has radio facility, no more radio set is the need of this time. Even the production cost of the radio programs is not a big amount. But the programs at Radio Nepal are mostly centrally produced by professionals in Kathmandu, and have little relevance to the rural masses. Another scholar Koirala (2002) concludes:

There are many sectors, communities and minorities whose access to information and self-expression are not always guaranteed by the mainstream state-owned media and local and community media are crucial in filling this gap. The mainstream media in Nepal are, to a large extent, irrelevant to the concerns of the common people because they are controlled and run by the state, political parties and Kathmandu's ruling elite, who in reality have forged a hand-in-glove relationship instead of an adversarial one. Community media, therefore, could be effective, credible, cheap and accountable in Nepal. (p. 10)

Radio is only an appropriate medium of mass communication in underdeveloped countries like Nepal; where people are survive with very low literacy rates, very low purchasing power and poor transportation systems. If it is the community radio of small capacity that can serve the interest of local people by covering local issues and interest. Community radio stations in Nepal are slowly and steadily practicing to provide space for the marginalized people with greater access to information and opportunities to participate. Girard (1992) has own idea on community radio:

Community radio is a type of radio made to serve people; radio that encourages expression and participation and that values local culture. Its purpose is to give a voice to those without voices, to marginalized groups and to communities far from large urban centers, where the population is too small to attract commercial or large-scale radio station.

(p. ix)

Due to the lack of proper legal provision, most of the Nepali FM radios claim them as community station. Lewis & Booth (1990) distinguishes community radio from commercial and public service radio as:

Community radio emphasizes that it is not commercial and does not share what it would call the prescriptive and paternalistic attitude of public-service broadcasting... The key difference is that while the commercial and public service models both treat listeners as objects, to be captured for advertisers or to be improved and informed, community radio aspires to treat its listeners as subjects and participants. (p. 8)

Local media should familiar with the needs and desires of their community members, and are important for social and economic development of their community. John Vilanilam has argued the same kinds of information need to the local people on time that the fellow villagers who are familiar with their realities. He mentioned:

What the villages need is timely information given to them regularly by people who are part of the village scene- people who live with them, speak their language, follow their lifestyle and share in their hopes and dreams? Others who report the rural scene once in a while are news gatherers from a different world, and not participants in the village communication scene. Communication by local people at the grassroots is a must in order to achieve local group cohesion, to mobilize local resources and to solve problems with local initiative and local know-how to the furthest extent possible. (Cited in Maslog, 1985, p. x)

First ten years of Free Radio (FM) were historical in different sense. Government control and strong directives against free news were breakdown unknowingly but in planned way by the station. First private radio of Nepal, *Radio Sagarmatha* started "Halchal" without saying it the news. But it was the news in reality. Almost all other stations followed *Radio Sagarmatha* in the same way. (Guragain, 2008, p. 19)

In such a way community radio stations in Nepal have shown some degree of success. Their success is focused on the right of the stations and the coverage of political agendas. They are being unsuccessful in the sense that their effort to provide a voice to the marginalized sections of the population is still in vain. "Community radio provides the platform for debates in communities that formerly relied on media which seldom bothered to present their views or ask questions which plagued them" (Patel, 1998, pp. 3-4).

In the time of State of Emergency, the same political leaders who liberalize the airwaves to private sector tried to ban news broadcasts by FM radio stations. The government of Nepal issued a directive following the cabinet decision of January 16, 2001 that directly affected all private FM radio stations, whether they are community or commercial. Nepal's radio media champion Mainali (2002) has written:

The government directive prevented all privately-operated FM radio stations from collecting and broadcasting their own news programs. They were only allowed to broadcast secondhand news collected by state-owned media. The constitutionality of the directive was challenged at the Supreme Court of Nepal on January 26, 2001, arguing that the government's directive violated constitutional provisions and the 1995 National Broadcasting Regulations. On July 26, 2001, the special bench of the Supreme Court cancelled the government's directive, stating that it was against the constitutional provision related to "right to freedom" and "right to information. (p. 12)

The 'Royal Takeover' of February 1, 2005, Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) tagged it as 'Royal Coup'<sup>4</sup> by King Gyanendra resulted in a total ban on broadcasting news and current affairs forms. In the very beginning days of Royal takeover, Nepalese FM radio stations broadcasting were allowed anything other than entertainment programs. As a result, more than 1000 radio journalists including stringers from the districts for news programs across the country lost their jobs. (Dhungel, 2007, p. 122)

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), an international NGO working the community radio in more than 110 countries, appealed<sup>5</sup> to the government of Nepal to remove the restrictions imposed on community radio stations. It has stated: "Nepal has been among the countries in Asia where the community radio movement has been most successful and it played a vital role in disseminating information and promoting dialogue for peace."

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<sup>4</sup> A statement made by the then President of FNJ Taranath Dahal on 1st February 2005 which was not published due to declaration of state of emergency immediate after the royal takeover.

<sup>5</sup> "AMARC Appeals," an appeal made by World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) in February 2005 and send through the mail to the Nepal government.

Role of community radio could not undermine in Nepal as it is a most preferred media of Nepali people. The concept of community radio and its practices seem vast difference. For Nepal context UNESCO has developed (CSRC/NEFEJ, 2011) new standard of community radio. The suggested areas were:

1. Transmitter and effective radiated power,
2. Degree of remoteness of the licensee
3. Number and type of radio services in the local areas, including whether a station is the only FM or community service
4. Types of ownership: Cooperative, non-profit organization, local government, educational institution,
5. Approach to programming: proportion and priority of a) community access and volunteerism, b) local news, issue of community/public interest, c) local arts and culture, d) syndicated public interest programming, e) commercial entertainment, f) indigenous languages, and
6. Approach to revenue generation: proportion and priority of a) local voluntary contributions (membership, donation etc.), b) local services (announcements, equipment rental, multimedia services etc.), c) development contracts, d) commercial advertising and corporate underwriting, e) donor grants. (pp. 33-34)

Nepal is considered as the leader of community radio movement in South Asia, but little known to the community concept regarding community radio. Coordinator to Community Radio Support Center of Nepal, Mainali (2008) defines community radio as:

Community broadcasting is a community heritage that is owned, internalized and legitimized by the community with community stewardship of its operations, and where community members interact freely and actively with each other to achieve collective goals. (p. 34)

The major objectives of community radio are to encourage community participation in broadcasting, provide an opportunity for horizontal communication, encourage more

free and open debate of community issues and reflect the cultural and social diversity of the community (White, 1990, p. 4). When people get opportunity to involve in radio broadcasting, s/he can acquire the appropriate knowledge and gain the ability to determine the course of their own lives. It promotes the community peoples' sense of self-confidence and it empowers them automatically. Regarding the citizen empowerment, White (1994, p. 23) says, "It can be looked at as a positive, holistic outcome of self-discovery, successful human interaction, and the ability to have a dialogue with people different from one's self."

Community radio stations play an important role in providing the community members a platform for participation. Girard (1992) has explained it as:

Community radio ... aims not only to participate in the life of the community, but also to allow the community to participate in the life of the station. This participation can take place at the level of ownership, programming, management, direction and financing. (p. 13)

It is believed that media has significant effects to the citizen, society and the nation. We dress for the weather forecast, buy something because of the advertisement, go to the film mentioned in the newspaper, react in countless ways to media news, to film, to music on the radio, and so on. There are many reported cases of negative media publicity concerning, for instance, food contamination or adulteration, leading to significant changes in food consumption behavior, sometime large economic impact. McQuail (2001) has given the name 'media power' to it. When the media used in a planned way it has great influence in the community or the society. He further explains:

The expression 'media power' refers to a general potential on the part of the media to have effects, especially on the planned kind. 'Media effectiveness' is a statement about the efficiency of media in achieving a giv-

en aim and always implies intention or some planned communication goals. (p. 423)

In Nepal, as earlier mentioned, many radio stations have been emerged in the name of community radio though it is very difficult to recognize them as the community radio by its international standard and definition. So, this topic is chosen to identify whether or not they are community radio are providing development issues for the community development according to the international concept in their broadcasting. This study has tried to test the participation of community people in program production or the contents providing by the station are for the community and community peoples' involvement in the decision making process of the station.

The researchers and planners are agreed that the overall development of nation is impossible without the development in the rural sectors. Even the developed as well as the developing nations have emphasized upon the rural development programs. The priority of development differs country to country and village to village. Among various rural development programs, some have given education the top priority in the rural sectors. Though awareness for education in the rural sectors has increased through various means of communication and information, the desired result however is yet to be achieved.

A global awareness has been sparked for the overall development of nations after the two great world wars. The U.S. commenced its rural development program after the First World War. In the mean time the World Bank in the year 1990 intensified its slogan for poverty alleviation. Rural development, poverty alleviation and education for all have been the major issues in today's world. Eight goals of MDGs have given priority to the same agendas.

Currently, various rural development programs are being on aired in the valley as well as in different parts of the country with the assistance of different national and international donor agencies. However, most of the plans seem to have come to a halt owing to various reasons. The ongoing conflict has been considered to be a huge obstacle in rural development.

Poverty is a worldwide phenomenon. In the wake up of 21<sup>st</sup> century the UN developed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the world. It has given poverty the first and foremost priority with in aim to halving it by 2015. Considering poverty alleviation as a number one goal, the UN has given emphasis to provide full and productive employment to all youths so that they can earn at least a dollar a day. As the global economic crisis is slowly progressed with the new millennium era, the UN has claimed that prior to the crisis; the depth of poverty has diminished in almost every region.

Following the MDGs objectives, Nepal also has developed its targets on each and every goal. Regarding poverty and hunger alleviation, Nepal target is to half it by 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day. According to 1990's record, there were 38 percent people below the poverty line. Nepal has targeted it to reduce to 17 percent by 2015. The same target is set up for the hunger reduction as well. It was estimated that there were 47 percent people in hunger in 1990 and they will reduce to 24.5 percent by 2015.

No development program can be effective until and unless there is awareness among people. A considerable stronger influence of media has been seen in the rural development of Nepal especially through community FM radio stations. People of the rural communities nowadays listen FM station even if they are working in the field. It is be-

ing common phenomena all over the country where there is the access of FM radio waves.

The major problem of radio station is that they are still not institutionalized. They have neither proper infrastructures nor the proper management strategies. They have no paper plans to make it an independent station for the community and by the community. To get the license from the government, they create one cooperative, NGO or public company of like minded people or of family members or the activists of the political party for the legal formality. In the establishment phase, they manage the budget to purchase the hardware, basically the equipments and accessories to make the station possible for transmission. They do not manage the operating cost for the software of the station and look for the volunteers as their producer of the programs. No one can be life time volunteer for any station. When the workers ask for their remuneration then the crisis begins.

No station can see politically affiliated in a legal document. But the audience can feel it easily or the community members know which station belongs to whom, the party or other interest groups. For example, in Salyan district all three radio stations have made the identity with one political party Nepali Congress, Unified Marxist Leninist and Unified Maoist respectively. Mr. Dharmendra Jha, the then president of Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ), shared his experience from Salyan that they used to get money from the District Development Committee because the DDC has representatives of those parties on proportional basis. Even if there are more than three stations either they belong to next party or the faction among those three. In Surkhet, according to a journalist Moti Poudel of Kantipur daily, Radio Bheri is considered close to Mr. Hridayaram Thani whereas Radio Surkhet of Mr. Purna Bahadur Khadka. Both are the leaders

of Nepali Congress representing two factions of the party- Sushil Koirala and Sher Bahadur Deuba respectively.

The management side is very poor in most of the radio station. They did not know how much human resources they need to operate a station in a smooth way. An entrepreneur Mr. Gopi Hamal of Dhangadhi, Kailali has established Dinesh FM with 64 staffs in the beginning. After one year's management, he decided to cut off the staff to 26 after getting three million losses a year. In most of the station, the staffs were paid less than the minimum wage declared by the government Rs. 5200.00 per month.

The income resources are not targeted properly. Obviously FM station market is very small and limited and there are a few advertisers in the community. But the number of FM stations is highly competing for the same resources. There is a cut throat competition among the stations to get the commercial. Government advertising support has started from 2011 but it is very nominal as per their cost. There is a question of survival to the FM stations though they are the only means of information as well as entertainment in the community.

The big challenge to them is that the community itself is not considered as their stakeholder and major supporter of the stations. They are not represented in the board of station as community members or do the station ever requests them to produce the program. So, the feeling of ownership lacks among the community audience.

## **1.5 GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

The general objective of this research is to examine and establish the role of community radio in enhancing the peoples' participation in decision making process that helps the democratization process in the broadcast sector.

### **1.5.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of this research are as follows:

- To identify the role of media in the development of rural awareness;
- To find out the use of media in influencing local people in socio-economic development;
- To review the role of community radio to strengthen the local democratic practice in the community;

### **1.6 HYPOTHESIS**

Broadcasting media specially the FM stations have proliferated after 2006 April movement. Majority of the stations are owned and operated by local cooperatives. They have termed themselves as a community stations though they have somehow or indirect political alignments and religious interest. Do they know what community radio is? Or are they operating for the community as they claim? In a very small media market of the country, the question of survival has been seen among the stations. Why? Are not they being a station of community? Why self-declared community radios are unable to serve the respective community?

There are so many such questions among people and the policy makers about community radio. By nature of incorporation of intuition, of course, they are community radio. They are carrying the issue of localities and local interest. But who decide about the content would be and how, is in question among community radio stations. To make them community in the real sense, there must of some changes in these basics. The distinction of radio station as community or commercial should not be based on its owner-

ship on nonprofit basis, but the participation in policy regarding program and production are obviously needed to be a community station. Even audiences must have access to participate on program production procedure and practices. Community radios are lacking behind in this aspect so that rural development issues are not being carried properly.

## **1.7 LOCATION OF THE STUDY**

Nowadays, about 250 community radios are on air all over Nepal. The numbers of license for FM radio has been scaled up to 510. In the very remote area, these are the only means of entertainment as well as the information. Radio Saipal in Bhahang, Radio Karnali in Jumla or Solu FM in Solukhumbu are the examples of stations in such vulnerable areas.

Three radio stations from each five political development regions were selected for the study. Within each development region, attempts are made that those radio stations represent geographical diversity of mountain, hill and Terai region where applicable. Likewise stations run by and for women, Dalit, Indigenous people were selected for the study. Various transmitting capacities of the radios (from 100watts to 2000 watts) were also taken into consideration. (See details in Appendix A: List of the Radio Stations surveyed)

Keeping in mind the objectives of the research and characteristic of population, structured interview schedule was designed and developed. Moreover, almost all questions in the schedule were close ended. There were two separate set of questionnaires to the audience and the owners/producers to identify the priority given by the broadcasters and the received by the audience as well as the understanding on development. Except

the questionnaire survey, observation, case studies, focus group discussion (FGD) have been conducted. The Library consultation and the internet resources were also used as applicable.

Qualitative analysis for descriptive information and quantitative analysis for data are employed. The investigation questions are made clear by ordering, summarizing, categorizing and manipulating the obtained qualitative data. The data have also been tabulated, analyzed and presented in bars, charts, graphs and group charts for convenience.