

**Trust and Social Cohesion in Formal Associations: A Sociological  
Study in Kaski District**

**A Dissertation**

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**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION**

This is to certify that **Anesh Gurung** has completed this dissertation entitled **Trust and Social Cohesion in Formal Associations: A Sociological Study in Kaski District**, submitted for the award of the degree of Master in Philosophy in Sociology, Central Department of Sociology, Tribhuvan University, is a research work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance. This dissertation is an independent and an original work and I hereby recommend this dissertation for the final approval and acceptance by the MPhil Program in Sociology.

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**APPROVAL LETTER**

The dissertation entitled **Trust and Social Cohesion in Formal Associations: A Sociological Study in Kaski District** was submitted to the Central Department of Sociology, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal by Anesh Gurung has been accepted as the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Philosophy in Sociology.

We hereby, certify that the dissertation is good and accepted for the degree.

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## LETTER OF DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work which has been completed after registering for a Masters in Philosophy (MPhil) in Sociology at Tribhuvan University, and has not previously been included in a thesis or dissertation submitted to this or any other institution for a degree or other qualification.

I have attempted to identify any potential risks associated with this research, obtained relevant ethical and/or safety approval (where applicable), obtained consent, and acknowledged my obligations and the participants' rights.

.....

Anesh Gurung

Date: 2024

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## **ABSTRACT**

The idea of social capital and formal association have enjoyed a remarkable rise to prominence in both the theoretical and applied social science literature over the last decade. The clear rise in sheer numbers of formal social associations in Nepal in the past couple of decades should be evidences enough of their importance as a societal expression. This study will examine empirical work on the purported the link between social capital and formal association. We are witness to see that, in the present context, there has been a groundswell of interest in the application of community development principles to foster social capital at the micro level. This study aims to explore how the members capitalize on their social resources in coming together in an act of social formation within the scope of social capital theoretical paradigm.

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## ACRONYMS

FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal
HDI	Human Development Index
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PMC	Pokhara Metropolitan City
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RM	Rural Municipality
WB	World Bank

# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the study

Our societies are built on relationships. These relationships are determined by the power distribution among its members and are structured accordingly, through consensus or coercion. Societies change inevitably, sometimes resulting in unforeseen or unwanted outcomes. Individuals and social groups living within those societies adapt as they see fit for their own security and benefit according to those outcomes. Should they fail to adapt or accept those outcomes, then there will be contradictions and continuation of pre-existing conflict. Such adaptations usually take place in the form of a new relationship structure. Simply put, “organizations affect the communities they belong to and also are affected by those communities” (Freeman & Pino, 2006) in return.

## 1.2 Conceptualization of Social Capital

Earliest attempts at conceptualization of social capital can be traced to Alexis de Tocqueville’s observation of associational activity (1835) and Durkheim’s social density (1893) (Eberts and Scott, 1997). The concept of social capital came to the mainstream in recent decades, but the term has been used a century back by Lyda Hanifan in his book published in 1916 A.D (Hanifan, 1916). Hanifan referred to social capital as “those tangible assets that count for most in the daily lives of people: namely goodwill, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individual and families” who make up a social unit. In a network of interactions where “an individual comes into contact with his neighbor, and they with other neighbors, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community” (Hanifan, 1916). So we may look at social capital as a concept with tangible results.

For Bourdieu, social capital is based on the recognition that capital is not only economic and that social exchanges are not purely self-interested and need to encompass ‘capital and profit in all their forms’ (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu's conceptualization of social capital is based on social reproduction and symbolic power theories. Bourdieu's work highlights class, gender, and race-based structural restrictions and unequal access to

institutional resources. Bourdieu saw social capital as an individual asset rather than societal asset obtained primarily from one's social position and standing. A person's social capital allows them to exercise control over the group or individual that mobilizes resources. According to Bourdieu, social capital is not distributed evenly among members of a group or collective, but rather to those who make attempts to obtain it by obtaining positions of authority and status and building goodwill (Bourdieu, 1986).

On a more sociopolitical note, Robert D. Putnam sees social capital as a uniting factor within a successful democracy, relating it closer to civic virtue (Putnam, 2000). Putnam refers social capital to the connections among individuals built on 'social networking and the norm of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them'. This allowed for an open network of relationships, healthy interaction and increasing trust between individuals, which for Putnam are mostly settled through modern civic organizations and political institutions.

Karl Marx introduced his classical Theory of Capitalism in *Das Kapital* in 1867. He also ascribed social capital to formation from interaction of individuals with other individuals. Marx however describes social capital as an aggregate or totality of an individual capitals (Marx, 1885). Meaning it was a sum of the money-capital of an individual and not the labor-capital. The economic origin of 'capital' allows for both individual and collective perspectives, defining in market-oriented themes, which as some sociologists have argued can lead to losing the social of social capital (Fine, 2001).

**Table 1: Comparison of Theories of social capital**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Coleman</b>	<b>Bourdieu</b>	<b>Putnam</b>
Embedded	In people's social relationships (not in particular persons)	Network of membership group	Possessed by individuals or group of people, cities, and nations. It is a public good
Sources of Capital	Vague; includes voluntary organizations as one of them	Social values and culture	Specializes on trust based voluntary associations as the constituents of civil society and source of social capital
Value	Normatively neutral thing	Is not good to everyone	Has dark side, but the balance is positive
Purposes of defining	To secure human capital	To secure economic capital	To secure effective democracy and economy, and resolve dilemma of collective actions
Unit of Analysis	Individuals in family and community settings	Individuals in class competition	Regions in national settings (collective/ community level)

Source: Reproduced from Adhikari (2006), Adapted from Winter (2000)

From the above table, we can agree social capital is produced and maintained by the 'interacting members' of a network (Lin, 2001). Winter also concludes that various theories of social capital are more similar than we admit being rooted around collective action, and mostly differing on the scales of analyses (Winter, 2000).

That gives some idea of what social capital is, yet it would be difficult to come up with a single description that would clearly explain it. For the sake of simplicity, we might conceive of social capital as the societal connections, shared beliefs, and understandings that allow individuals and groups to trust one another and collaborate.

### **1.3 Conceptualization of Formal Associations**

Robert M. MacIver defines an association as “an organization of social beings for the pursuit of some common interest or interests” (MacIver, 1928). Human society grew from small familial communities to immensely complex and diverse civilizations. Such astounding growth and expansion are based on the associations we form on a daily basis, from kinship-based groups to the more formal organizations. Within a complex society, MacIver believes family functions more as an association, with even the state having associational characteristics.

Associations are not a new introduction in sociology. It has been practiced in societies with a system of coordinated and controlled activities that arise when work is embedded in complex network and exchange but in the contemporary society, such association are transforming into more formal association. Max Weber believed associations to be a forum for social relationships “restricted or closed to the outside” with some form of leadership and even a bureaucracy of its own (Swedberg & Agevall, 2016).

Formal associations arise in highly institutionalized contexts where they serve the needs of various professions and programs. Institutional policies in such contexts can also naturally allow for the popularity of formal associations. This permits many new organizations to spring up and forces existing ones to incorporate new practices and procedures (Meyer and Rowan 1977). As a result, “organizations are driven to incorporate the practices and procedures defined by prevailing rationalized concepts of organizational work and institutionalized in society. Organizations that do so increase their legitimacy and their survival prospect, independent of the immediate efficacy of the acquired practices and procedures” (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

Thus, it is fair to say that to form an association, there must be a group of people; there must be certain rules for their conduct in the groups, and they must have a common purpose of a specific nature to achieve. Associations may be formed for a variety of reasons for example, on the basis of duration- Disaster Relief Association; on the basis of power- political party association; on the basis of occupational association- Handicraft Association, Retailers Association; on the basis of function and rituals- Guthi, Samaj ghar; Vocational like Trade Union or Teachers’ Association; or civic societies like Rotary Club and Lions Club. These are similar to traditional civic

organizations typified by Robert D. Putnam in his *bowling leagues*. Putnam in his study of decline of social capital in USA bases his findings on the declining participation in formal associations such as workers unions, clubs, sporting leagues and more (Putnam, 2000).

In context of Nepal, formal associations have a long history set in socio-religious background. Some of the earliest examples of formal associations in 20<sup>th</sup> century Nepal were *Shree Teen Chandra Kamadhenu Charka Pracharak Mahaguthi* established in 1926 by Tulsi Meher, which was formed to spread cottage textile industry (Singh, 2013). A few but a growing number of associations were set up in this period, often with blessing of the state given the autocratic nature of their rule at that time. Since establishment of democracy in Nepal in 1951, there have been growing number of formal associations. A written constitution with a democratic character also provided the legal basis for formal associations to be established for many varieties of forms. In Nepal, there are 50,367 NGOs as of 2019 (SWC), 29,886 cooperatives registered with Department of Cooperatives as of 2019, 22,415 Community Forest Users Group as of 2021 according to FECOFUN, and 32,276 community organizations as of 2017. The data does not cover the even larger number of formal associations from largely private sectors and or business-oriented sectors. To reach such a large number of formal associations is in itself testament to their appeal to its members and to their popularity. We shall go into the history of socio-cultural community organizations which were the earliest forms of associations in Nepal later in the study.

For ease of conducting my research, I will focus only on formal associations which are organizations that are duly recognized by the state as lawfully registered entities. These are organizations which adhere to legal laws of the state, clearly identified membership and a legal charter which outlines its objectives and purpose. However, they are not subordinated to the state and are private in nature. As such, this will also limit the scope and impact the findings of my study.

#### **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

The concept of community organizations is a recent addition to the academic parlance of sociology. But its premise can be further traced to the concept of social associations as described by Tocqueville in early phases of scientific sociology. Social organization

can be understood as describing the general and overall social relationships that develops within a society. Social organizations stem from human activity, differing in personality and into types such as: political, religious, economic, etc.

Community organizations are formed to serve the collective needs of its members and act with consensus, pooling the social capital. Memberships to such organizations vary in demand according to the scale of needs they fulfill for its members. Present-day community organizations have certainly evolved from traditional organizations usually located in the rural village communities. Such traditional organizations still continue to exist, though have become much less popular. Increasing urbanization and money economy, along with other factors, has forced such organizations to become more secular and inclusive in nature. Local associations are structures that support collective action. Neighborhood associations are a dimension of civic society that is neither political nor economic, but one that interacts with both to promote the welfare of the people (Kromkowski, 1997).

Adopting the theory of rational action, Coleman writes “each actor has control over certain resources and interests in certain resources and events, then social capital constitutes a particular kind of resources available to an actor”. Similarly, actors within my scope of study have also utilized their social capital as resources through the medium of formal social associations. (Coleman, 1988)

My own experience with individuals and their interaction with formal associations encouraged me to further explore the factors driving them. Some of the cases are presented here. A graduate in his mid-thirties, and employed in a regular day job, was looking to recruit members for his club. So, he approached me with an offer to join the club. He was already engaged actively in 4 different formal associations including his new club which gave me the small impetus to understand the need within people to be part of such groups. What could possibly attract him to engage in so many associations at the same time given his already busy time table of a working life?

With a large increase in the number of formal associations in Nepal in the past half century as described previously, what factors could have led to such a huge spurt in popularity and growth of formal associations in the country. Formal associations have

largely supplanted traditional community organizations or have forced their evolution. Coming back to my focus on the increasing participation in formal associations, studies conducted in this particular subject is very much lacking. Most studies have been undertaken with the lens of development paradigm with focus on the output of the formal associations to contribute to the development of their communities. Additionally, these studies have been restricted to functionality of the formal associations based on their structure, governance, efficiency, and sustainability of those organizations (see Bhattachan, 2001; Paudel, 2023; Timilsina, 2000). Sociological considerations have not been the priority of the studies conducted yet so far. But studies conducted yet so far can be used for a basis for further research though their contribution in sociological terms remains limited.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal has gradually transformed in the past century from an autocratic, semi-feudal nation into its present form of a democratic and market economy, though not without critical shortfalls. Also developing alongside was an oligarchic political-business nexus, which replaced the monarchist and autocratic regimes of past, and holding incredible measure of influence in most matters of state. This state of changing political economy has indirectly affected the social and communal framework of our societies. Community organizations as formal social associations, has thrived since the repeal of laws that banned or suppressed their formation for most the past century. But the ‘New Nepal’ still restricts their political participation greatly, or manipulates them in the interests of the ruling oligarchy.

Nepal has undergone transformations that can be categorized as revolutionary. We have witnessed massive structural changes such as in the way we organize, the new dynamics in the network of relationships or how we question our state. There has been a significant rise in the number of formal social associations operating in Nepal since the 1990 democratic movement. This rise seems to have accelerated since the downfall of monarchy in Nepal in 2008. But such events in their singularity are incapable of bringing about such a trend. Other societal and institutional factors have played equal, if not greater, role in promoting the use of formal social associations among the individual actors in the society.

My study with attention to the social capital theoretical paradigm aims to contribute to the sociological understanding of social capital and its role in formal associations in the context of Nepal.

### **1.6 Research Objectives**

The clear rise in sheer numbers of formal social associations in Nepal in the past couple of decades should be evidences enough of their importance as a societal expression. Their myriad of purposes declared in the organization charters too clarifies their diverse range of intercourse with our lives and society. This alone calls for detailed analysis of the trends arising among community organizations. The traditional counterparts have mostly gone extinct (eg: Rodhi among Gurungs, Khel among Tharus) or are on the verge of extinction. Accordingly, I attempted to study how the members capitalize on their social resources in coming together in an act of social formation within the scope of social capital theoretical paradigm.

At a time when states are intervening more into microcosms of society, and with increasingly sophisticated tools of monitoring and regulating its citizens, one may even ask if such community organizations are truly independent of state direction and management. If not, they might as well be an extension of state apparatus and existentially cease to be a voluntary and free exercise. In a state of transition as Nepal is, with its lack of political stability and accountability, formal social associations are forced to play second fiddle with the state, constantly guided and hemmed in by its rules such as the Social Welfare Act of 2049. Thus, it was my intention to examine the social structural conditions under which these formal social associations arise.

### **1.7 Research Questions**

The following research questions was developed based on my research objectives to explore the role of formal association and social capital in the contemporary society.

1. How are individuals influenced in their decision to engage in associations?
2. How do trust and social cohesion within an association affect members experiences and sense of belonging?

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The highly charged political landscape of Nepal was certainly a major contributing factor for the rise in non-traditional community organizations in the country. Most organizations were assembled with a political agenda in mind hidden behind a social or ethnic curtain. In a repressive environment, such activist organization initially could operate only clandestinely. Now with freedom and legal right to form associations, community organizations have thrived. This growth in participation in formal associations and its relation to social capital will now be reviewed among the literature in this chapter.

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

Cooley (1909) in his work *Social Organization: A Study of the Larger Mind* defines the community organization as a larger extension of the individual 'social mind'. His beliefs primarily focuses on the Weberian democracies and libertarian societies as the ideal fertile ground for community organization to flourish and function to their potential. With human nature carving the social mind for Cooley, the ideals of a moral unity was also important. Though he accounts for the crookedness of reality, it is not difficult to understand community organization as voluntary creation by the individual members.

The network of formal associations has also transformed the way businesses are conducted. It is not a recent phenomenon historically, but a phenomena nonetheless growing in influence in Nepal. The scale of small enterprises and cooperatives in Nepal has risen exponentially. Traditional organizations in Nepal rarely engaged in economic or entrepreneurial activities. Some cases are there among the Newars and Thakalis associations promoting their trading interests, built on the collective 'social capital'. Bourdieu (1986) in his work "*The Forms of Capital*", distinguished between three form of capital: economic, cultural and social. It has become increasingly evident that "social capital at the community level influences various outcomes, such as economic performance" (Kwon, Heflin & Reuf, 2013). But social capital may also be used for negative purposes such as through criminal networks or violent extremist organizations.

Social capital as a resource emanating from the network or relations in a community has been adopted by micro-enterprises and cooperatives in Nepal. It definitely gives one the edge over competitors within the locality and in generating investments by providing self with the ‘credentials’. Social capital requires ‘trust and voluntary participation’ (Kwon, Heflin & Reuf 2013) to be of worth, though the capital is not necessarily distributed equally with some possessing more than others. The level of integration of members within the community will determine their access to and ability to put to use the social capital (Kwon, Heflin & Reuf 2013). Social capital as a concept has not been much researched in Nepal apart from limited studies by I/NGOs for their relative projects. Even then it seems to have been utilized without any institutional realization at the micro-level. But social capital being important as it is, by its very nature remains restricted in coverage because the more close-knit a community is, social capital will have corresponding stronger influence. As the organization grows in size, inefficiency and laws of diminishing returns will come into play.

The ongoing decentralization of the state has also opened a whole new space for formal associations to occupy. Sharing of state powers and authority with local governments has allowed opportunities for greater participation by formal associations. It does not mean literal sharing of power per se, but certainly a greater degree of voice than before. As Mapel (1990) has stated, rules of a formal associations “need not be approved, are not designed to persuade, and offer no reasons for obedience. They are simply authoritative declarations of what is lawful. Since their authority does not depend on approval, members are always free to disapprove of them”. Such unwritten freedom is inherent and allows for a diverse population to feasibly form an association. But this does not mean such formal associations are in competition with participatory democracy. It is argued they depend on the approval of its members for consensual authority, which leads to a fabricated foundation.

Coming together to pool their resources, to plan and decide course of action to maximize utility of the resources sounds progressive and sensible. But that alone is seldom enough. Such planning and utilization of resources require more concerted efforts at a national, provincial and even international stage (Blackwell, 1946). The urban amalgam of cultures and perspectives makes it challenging to find a common

path forward. The migrating nature of the urban also lends to it a sense of non-permanency.

Another important context for formal associations in Nepal has been to challenge gender-biased institutions in the society. The conservative and patriarchal nature of our society leaves a limited space for equal participation due to gender-based discrimination. It was only natural to see organizations such as Women's group and Mothers' group (Aama Samuha) to arise as an answer. To improve the conditions of women in a community or tackle incidences of violence against women, such groups have become the preferred social tool for the state as well as intervening welfare organizations. Such groups found initially for social and cultural purposes can also transfer their attention to economic efforts as well. With the large-scale foreign migration for employment of male members, families are increasingly being led by the women folk.

Operationalization of social capital is a challenging prospect and many have tried. Lin has followed the network centric approach and explains it in terms of 'investment in social relations' where the returns are intended to enhance the 'returns of instrumental or expressive actions' (Lin, 1999). Instrumental actions aim to achieve resources which are not in possession of the individual such as reputation, and Expressive actions look to maintain the resources already in possession such as physical health, mental health and life satisfaction (Lin, 1999).

Our research must be based on evidence, if possible, it should be empirical so it can be proven more reliably. But the very concept of formal associations as a social entity is an abstract idea; hence empiricist approach can be dubious at best. Also, my study will not be able to fulfill the first principle of a quantitative study which necessitates a large sample size. And it should also be kept in mind that there will not be a one size fit all methodology that allows us to "measure" formal associations. We may adopt indicators with numerical quotations to simplify our research problem, but it will leave its own theoretical problems in its wake. There are still the factors making for difficulty in research of community organization such as heterogeneity and complexity of the structure of the community. Blackwell (1954) suggests that the sociologists would be better off researching "the process, i.e., what happens as a result of specified action

taken by whom, why, and when”. But the perspective must cover the crucial issues as stated by Sampson (1991): First, “the macro social determinants of community social organization” and second, “the contextual effects of community structure on individual behavior”, thus advocating a more balanced approach with linking the two paths of the macro and the micro. Though studying the local community as a subject restricts the scale of macro ladder one can climb so as not to lose focus of the study

## **2.2 Knowledge Gap**

Human societies have always been based on formal associations as its building block. Such organization has evolved in its nature, structure, and methods with time and increasing complexity of our societies. Though the basic purposes have remained the same: to organize for the collective benefit of its members. Formal associations’ practices have become widespread in Nepal, but its academic study has remained questionable. It has remained somewhat bottled up as a tool of development guided by experts in rural and backward areas.

Grootaert (2004) believes that contemporary academic literature looks into social capital in two related but different ways. First approach looks into resources such as ideas and information which people acquire through their relationship and interaction with other people. These resources are ‘social’ in nature because they are produced and used in a social setting. This puts them in contrast to other forms of capital such as physical capital like tools and technology, or human capital like skills and education. Prominent sociologists such as Ronald Burt, Nan Lin, and Alejandro Portes are the main proponents of this view. According to Burt, interaction between people in a given network structure, the frequency and nature of relation all leave a mark on the flow of resources through that network. So those with more influence, strategic access and ties such as elites “can be said to have more social capital than their peers, precisely because their network position gives them heightened access to more and better resources” (Burt, 2000).

The second and more common approach to studying social capital is the one most closely associated with political scientist Robert Putnam. This approach refers to “the nature and extent of one’s involvement in various informal networks and formal civic organizations” (Grootaert, 2004). From the neighborhood *tol bikas samiti* to political

parties, social capital here is used as a conceptual term to describe the ways in which individuals interact within their society.

Organizations all over the country have been formed under the prevalent relationship patterns in the local social ecology. We must understand the relationship patterns in the society itself to accurately judge the nature of the organizations. The network of organizations could spill over into the macro realm with their scale of impact and outcome, but it is doubtful if such an overarching network practicably exists voluntarily. Nevertheless, the problem remains of analyzing our findings in comparable manner. Individual cases will do benefit if we can comparatively study them to reach an acceptable generalization. Cooley (1909) reaffirmed this view as we 'live in a system, and to reach the right end, we must understand the system' to begin with. Exceptions will always remain the norm in social sciences, but it does not mean generalized macro perspective is lost within an abstract society.

The trend of rising numbers of formal social associations in Nepal is well known, but lacking in academic coverage. Scholarship regarding social and community organizations, both formal and informal, has been overwhelmingly led by the development paradigm. Accordingly, the researches have followed progressive and development-oriented themes and methodologies in their approach. This empiricist and modernist approach have not been able to explain the underlying causal factors leading to rise in the numbers and the structural adaptations that allowed for them to gain in importance.

### **2.3 Conceptual Framework**

We form associations and organizations ideally to serve a consensual purpose as agreed by the members. Similarly, the purpose and desires of individual members of these associations themselves have also gone through the period of transformation with varying results. Formal social associations in Nepal should not be confused with the non-governmental organizations spread across the country. Nor should it be limited to the simplistic Women's Group or Village Support Group.

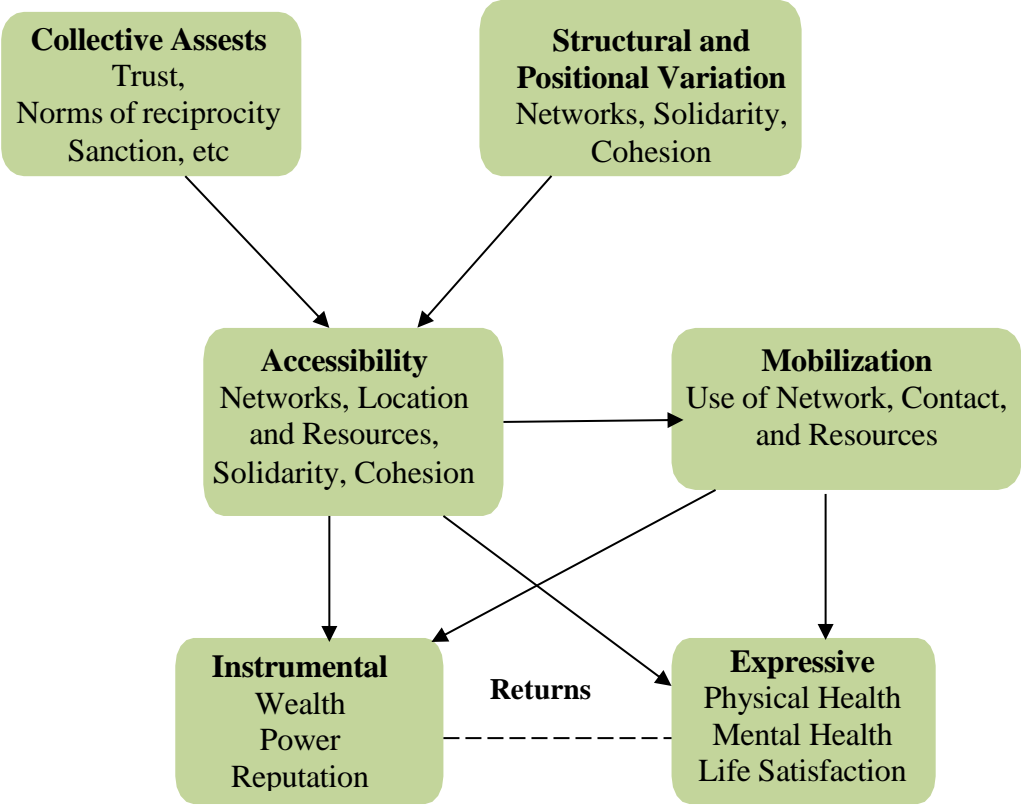
But if we are to delve into a deeper theoretical debate about community and associations/organizations, we must be prepared to enter a raging debate. If we were to

follow Parsons structural-functionalism with regard to community organizations, we may understand community organizations as a structural unit within a society serving a function for its members, i.e.: satisfying their needs. But the social differentiation and stratification can only be unearthed by “probing beneath the statistics to identify basic values and beliefs” (Blackwell, 1954). Though efforts to analyze the functional aspects of communities have not been impressive.

All such contextual changes in society do not act independently. It results with impact on many aspects of our social life. Similarly, the rise and growing importance of formal social associations will have definitely had an impact. This brings me to our last question: What influence does formal social associations have on society?, both as a single entity and as a collective network. We must look into essential characteristics of the rising trends to truly understand the impact and influence on society by studying relational dynamics between individuals, organizations and groups.

This section presents the conceptual framework for exploring relationship between social capital and formal association. Conceptual framework has guided to conduct this study. It essentially examines the following linkages among the variables such as individuals (i.e.: human capital), resources, personal networks, etc. in formal groups/associations. Research questions were formulated based on this model.

**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework**



Downside: Human Capital, Resources,  
Power and Inequalities

## **CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The trend of rising numbers of formal social associations in Nepal is well known, but lacking in academic coverage. Scholarship regarding social and community organizations, both formal and informal, has been overwhelmingly led by the development paradigm. Accordingly, the researches have followed progressive and development-oriented themes and methodologies in their approach. This empiricist and modernist approach has not been does not explain even adequately the underlying causal factors leading to rise in the numbers and the structural adaptations that allowed for them to gain in importance.

### **3.2 Methodological Approach**

With little information to work on anyhow, despite unit of analysis being a formal space within a democratic state, my research will be looking into qualitative variables. As historical research, it will be directed toward the description of an ongoing historical phenomenon. It will side on more non-empirical methods through philosophical and historical inquiries (Fawcett and Downs, 1986). The social reality can be deduced from a critical investigation of social capital as a mobilizing factor. The social capital theory may not present a single unified body of theories. But Robert D. Putnam and his social capital theory with government satisfaction and political engagement provide us with a research compass (Putnam, 2000). As my questions delve into political participation, Putnam's work will be of import, but within qualitative methodologies.

As I inquire into individuals and their reasoning for participation, this along with greater roles and influence of formal social associations, it may allow for a meso-level theorization and analysis covering organizations and trends over a time period since the advent of 1990 multi-party democracy. This allows for a historical comparison if need be but much light will be on qualitative approach.

### **3.3 Unit of Analysis**

My study adopts two units of analysis: individual and organizations. Individual interviews generate information both on the individual and organization attributes. In

addition, organization related information will be collected through observations and key informant interviews.

### **3.4 Area of Study and its Rationale**

Outside of the three Kathmandu valley districts, Kaski district has the highest number of formal associations in the country if we only look at the number of NGOs with 1279 (SWC 2019). The district is one of the top six across the country which have highest Human Development Index (HDI) and is in top five in labor productivity which can suggest a sufficient degree of social participation by its inhabitants. As a result of basing on the information available to me and the site being familiar to me, I have chosen Kaski district as my area of study.

Kaski district of Gandaki Province was selected for the study. It lies in the western part of Nepal and has a geographical coverage area of 2,017 kilometer square. According to the recent report of the National census conducted in 2021, the district has a population of 5,99,904 people, with 2,92,764 males and 3,06,740 females distributed in 1,63,498 households. Kaski district comprises of five political sub units: Pokhara Metropolitan City, Annapurna Rural Municipality, Machapuchare Municipality, Madi Municipality and Rupa Municipality. As a district with significant growing urban agglomeration and dynamic rural surroundings, it has the adequate presence of formal associations and the significant population required for my study.

Kaski district is one of the seventy-seven districts of Nepal. The district has one Metropolitan city (Pokhara Metropolitan City), 4 Rural municipalities (Annapurna Gaunpalika, Machhapuchhre Gaunpalika, Madi Gaunpalika and Rupa Gaunpalika) and three electoral sectors. The total land mass of Kaski district falls in the hilly and mountainous region.

My study is limited to 15 respondents who all are active in formal associations within the confines of Kaski district as a whole. The 15 selected respondents as a whole cover all five of the municipalities of Kaski district. As such the area of study may seem as a geographical misnomer. Though a more extensive coverage would have given a more complete picture, it was unviable given the time and resources I had at my disposal. Hailing from Kaski, it made it easier for me to conduct my study here. I also had to

follow the willingness of the people to share with me their time and sensitive information for my research. Therefore, I had limited my qualitative research but at the same time attempted at the widest possible geographical coverage. I had an interview with 15 individuals who are active within formal and informal associations during the time of study conducted.

**Figure 2. Map of Research Site: Kaski District**



### **3.5 Selection of Cases**

In this study, the respondents were selected through purposive sampling techniques. Since this study has been focused on the individual who have been actively involved in the formal association to examine social structural conditions under which these social associations arise. Fifteen respondents were thus purposively selected who are active in different categories of formal associations within the Kaski district. All 15 respondents have not been selected from the same formal association either but different organizations.

Selected individuals represent a plethora of formal associations. Selection is not based on membership in a particular category of formal association. The sole criteria for

selection of cases in my study is that the respondent must be involved with two or more formal associations at the time of participation in the study. Such an involved selection criteria will provide for a pool of respondent who are much more active in relation with formal association and thus enable me to generate more detailed data from a pool of a comparatively small size.

### **3.6 Tools and Techniques of Data Collection**

This study was organized and based both on qualitative and quantitative data collection with both exploratory and descriptive research design to fulfill the specific objectives of the study related to social capital and formal association. It was exploratory because it has endeavored to explore and investigate the push and pull factors of engaging in such formal association. It was descriptive, as it has attempted to describe the status of people, their age, education, caste-wise distribution, religion, occupation, income, etc. The methods of research design were interview through the list of open-ended and close-ended questionnaire and observation.

As per the need of the study, both primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data is both qualitative as well as quantitative though focus is made on qualitative because of low number of respondents. Primary data was collected through in-depth interview, and observation etc. Different people from different walks of life and caste/ethnicity were also selected and asked a number of related questions regarding their social capital and in the engagement of formal association.

On the other hand, secondary data were collected from various previous studies, published and unpublished documents, articles, scholarly journal, research report, journals, newspaper, library, documents, and the Internet etc. Secondary information was helpful in checking the validity and reliability of empirical field data.

#### **3.6.1 In-depth Interview**

The primary data for my study was generated from my In-depth Interviews with my respondents. Based on the consent and availability of the respondents, I conducted the interviews at their homes, workplace, and or in public spaces such as restaurants. Some respondents required multiple sittings to satisfactorily complete the interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted with all 15 respondents using a questionnaire to guide

me. In-depth interviews were chosen as it would allow me to gather not only the basic empirical data on their respective formal associations, but it would also allow me to gauge the experience and perspectives in a more detailed manner. With my focus on the particulars of social capital, especially trust, solidarity, social cohesion and conflict; In-depth interviews with open ended and close ended questions allowed for a more detailed data generation in relative to my focus on an abstract concept such as social capital.

### **3.6.2. Observation**

Observation is an important qualitative research tool. It is useful here to study the behaviors, attitudes and actions of the respondents in relative to the other members of their formal associations. I attempted to join the respondents during their interaction in events organized by their formal associations. This gave me the chance to observe their interaction with other members. This also provided with the opportunity to evaluate the data provided by the respondents in the context of their associations.

However, I could not reach all formal associations of which my 15 respondents were the member of due to its impracticability. I was able to join events at 6 formal associations of 5 respondents. In all 6 events I covertly observed the actions of my respondent and of the members present in those events. These observations allowed me to better understand the internal dynamics pertaining to the social cohesion and conflict in the organizations.

### **3.7 Method of Data Analysis**

Thematic Analysis was applied to the qualitative data generated from interviews and observations. This method of analysis allows for the flexibility to explore the theme of my research objectives and look for patterns in the data generated by my research. It also allows considerations for the respondents' own perceptions and experience, thus permitting for richer qualitative research.

Both quantitative as well as qualitative data were collected through In-depth Interviews and Observations. Structured questionnaire with both open and close ended questions were used as a guide. Collected data through the interviews and observation were presented in suitable tables according with the objectives of the study. Such tables were subjected to interpretation and explanation as necessary. Quantitative and qualitative

data were analyzed, categorized and tabulated according to the objectives of the research study. Simple statistical questions were applied for analyzing data such as ranks, figures, charts and diagrams etc.

### **3.8 Limitations of the Study**

Despite the efforts to improve the quality of this research, the study is not without its limitations. The study has the following limitations:

- 1) Social capital is an abstract concept that is difficult to quantify and analyze. This study has attempted to use questionnaire designed as an empirical tool to measure social capital. Social capital is multidimensional in nature and has been conceptualized at the micro, meso and macro levels. This study and the tools used may not be able to adequately capture and portray the theoretical in practical terms.
- 2) Social capital is a difficult concept to understand and even more difficult concept to explain in a short period of an interview. Social capital will have different meanings to different people all influenced by their socio-economic characteristics. This gap in mutual understanding will impact the findings of this study.
- 3) The study is centered in Kaski district, which is one of 77 districts in the country and so is limited to a small area. The study has also attempted to cover all five political sub units in the district: Pokhara Metropolitan City, Annapurna RM, Machapuchare RM, Madi RM, and Rupa RM. As such, the study may not provide a complete picture of the provincial or national trends. The study also does not cover the mountain or terai region of the country.
- 4) Population of Kaski district is concentrated in urban center of Pokhara city. 10 out of 15 (66.7%) respondents are from the city and may not reflect the rural characteristics of social capital. Hence the limited area of coverage does not give credibility for nationwide urban-rural based generalization on the trends. But since the study is primarily focused on social capital formation through participation in formal groups, it was natural to focus on urban centers which

have a higher concentration and active formal groups and organizations.

- 5) The study was based on purposive sampling survey. It was used to cover as much geographical area as possible within the district. But the sample size itself has been limited due to the purposive nature of the field study. Thus, the reliability of the study may be questioned, but every possible step was taken to ensure reliability.

## **CHAPTER IV: FACTORS INFLUENCING PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of the study is to explore the dynamics behind the respondents' participation in associations and how they interact with other members in their associations. This exploration of dynamics is further analyzed within the social capital theoretical paradigm within the context of our society. Given the conceptual debate about social capital and what it means, the differing views does not make our work easier. Empirical study of qualitative subject like social capital is difficult but that has not many from having an attempt. The growing number of empirical and qualitative studies on social capital is viewed by Grootaert and Bastlaer (2002) as evidence of its significance.

This chapter will present the findings of my survey along with the demographical characteristics of my respondents. The results obtained in the field are analyzed and presented in this chapter, with the help of tables and figures wherever necessary.

#### **4.1.1 Characteristics of the Respondents**

A total of 15 individuals were chosen as respondents for my study who consented to participate in my study and share their experience. The respondents all are engaged in a minimum of two formal groups or organizations each.

The respondents for my study were chosen through a purposive sampling approach as the study required identifying participants who were engaged in formal groups or organizations. Thus, my study may not provide any indicator on the rate of participation among people in general as a whole.

All of my respondents are residents of Kaski district and scattered across its five local constituent municipalities. 10 out of 15 respondents are residents of Pokhara Metropolitan City, 2 respondents are from Annapurna RM and 1 respondent each from Madi RM, Machapuchare RM and Rupa RM. Among the 15 respondents, 10 are male and 5 are female.

Based on caste/ ethnicity characteristics, 7 out of 15 respondents were of Janajati ethnicity, 4 respondents were of Chhettri caste, 2 respondents each were of Brahmin and Dalit community. The economic characteristics of the respondents is given further below in my study.

#### **4.1.2 Membership of Associations / Groups**

Each respondent was chosen based on their participation in a minimum of two formal groups or organizations. This purposive selection will limit the generalizations made based solely on this survey.

**Table 1. Membership of formal groups/ organizations**

<b>No. of Formal Groups/Organizations</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
Two	4
Three	1
Four	3
Five or more	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>

Each respondent was questioned on the number of formal groups they had joined. Based on their responses, it was found that 7 out of 15 respondents were engaged with five or more formal groups or organizations. 3 respondents were engaged with four formal groups, 1 respondent was engaged with three formal groups and 4 respondents were engaged in two formal groups at the time of this study.

This finding shows that most of the respondents were engaged with five or more formal groups, which indicates active partaking in such groups when available. Though this finding is also skewed by the purposive selection of the respondents also.

One of the respondents who is above sixty years of age, shared in her interview that all her children are now settled in another country. She claimed to be an active member in 12 different formal associations or organizations.

Based on rate of participation in formal groups, the mean average among respondents on their memberships in number of formal groups is 3.87. Additionally, the same data is also given in above figure in caste/ ethnic category as well. The highest participation rate is seen among Brahmin caste group at mean average of 4.5, followed by Chhettri caste group with mean average of 4.0, followed by Janajati ethnic group at mean average of 3.71 and followed by Dalit caste group with mean average of 3.5. This average participation by caste and ethnicity also reflects the historical and structural conformity with the dominant caste hierarchy in the society.

However, the low number of respondents covered in this study will also give us a significant standard deviation in our findings which can make it difficult to generalize assumptions. This can be remedied with a larger pool of respondent with scaling up of the survey.

**Table 2. Average membership in formal groups according to gender**

<b>Gender of the Respondents</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
Male	4.30	10
Female	3.00	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>15</b>

Similar to previous analysis, the rate of participation in formal groups of respondents based on their gender strengthens a known assumption. We can clearly see a higher rate of memberships in formal groups among Male with mean average membership of 4.3 groups and among Female with a lower mean average membership of 3.0 groups. Given the patriarchal nature of our society, it is well established that males are more than likely to be a member of a formal group than females. Our study has also showcased the gendered inequality in participation by women, who face more challenges to be accepted into formal groups or find it difficult to become an active or executive member of the groups.

Gender inequality again raises its head when we discuss causes for differences among group members. Gender issues or differences among men and women members as a

cause of conflict in groups is reported only by women respondents. The fact that male members do not even register this as an issue highlights the gap in understanding the rights and issues of women. Even though most formal groups are visibly working in social issues such as women’s rights, its practice is limited within.

#### **4.1.3 Factors influencing Participation in Formal Associations**

Each respondent was requested to identify two formal groups which were most important to them in order of significance with the more vital organization named in Group 1 and the less important in Group 2. In this way, all respondents have named a total of 30 formal groups or organizations in their order of significance to them. My survey has yielded a wide variety of types of formal groups and organizations with eight different types of groups/ organizations shared by the respondents.

**Table 3. Type of Formal Associations/ Organizations - Group 1**

<b>Type of Association</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
Business/traders’ association	2
Religious association	1
Political organization	2
NGOs	7
Civic group	1
Ethnic based community group	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>

As shown in above table, respondents shared their response in most important formal group for them. The survey yielded the highest preference for Non-government organizations as being most important to 7 out of 15 respondents. Two respondent each preferred their Business/traders’ association, Political organization, and Ethnic based community group as their choice. One respondent each selected Religious association and Civic group as their preferred choice of formal group.

**Table 4. Type of Formal groups/ organizations - Group 2**

<b>Type of Group</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
Professional association	1
Political organization	1
Finance, credit or saving	8
NGOs	4
Ethnic based community group	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>

Similarly, for group 2 preference of the respondents, most chose Finance, credit and saving cooperative with 8 respondents. This is a revelation since none of the respondent have chosen Finance, credit and saving cooperatives in Group 1. Respondent have placed more importance on non-financial capital in comparison to clear financial benefits which finance, credit or savings cooperative can provide. In second, 4 respondents selected NGOs as their choice for Group 2. One respondent each have selected Professional association, political organization and Ethnic based community group as their choice for Group 2.

Only NGOs, political organizations and Ethnic based community groups have appeared as choices in both Group 1 and Group 2. It is not surprising too as these groups are the most common formal groups that have been growing in numbers in Nepal. By simply looking at the two groups, we can understand that NGOs are relatively popular choice among the respondents.

**Table 5. Average annual income range of the respondent- Group 1**

Average annual income range of the Respondents	Type of Group in Group 1						Total
	Business/traders' association	Religious association	Political organization	NGOs	Civic group	Ethnic based community group	
0 to 100000	0	0	0	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
100001 to 500000	0	0	0	5	0	0	<b>5</b>
500001 to 1000000	0	0	1	1	0	0	<b>2</b>
1000001 to 1500000	2	0	1	0	1	0	<b>4</b>
above 2000001	0	1	0	1	0	1	<b>3</b>
Total	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>

Based on the economic characteristics of respondents, among types of the entities in Group 1 chosen, it can be seen that most of the respondents who had prioritized NGOs were among less economically affluent group. Five out of seven respondents reported average annual income of between Rs 1,00,000 to Rs 5,00,000. One respondent from the lowest economic category was a member of their ethnic based community group which allowed membership by birth and so did not account for their economic potential. As we move higher in the economic bracket of respondents, their preferences in group types also change in nature. Three respondents in the highest category have chosen one religious association, one NGO and one ethnic based community group.

**Table 6. Average annual income range of the respondent- Group 2**

Average annual income range of the respondent	Type of Group 2					Total
	Professional association	Political organization	Finance, credit or saving Cooperative	NGOs	Ethnic based community group	
0 to 100000	0	0	1	0	0	1
100001 to 500000	0	0	3	1	1	5
500001 to 1000000	1	0	1	0	0	2
1000001 to 1500000	0	1	3	0	0	4
Above 2000001	0	0	0	3	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>

In a lower preference in Group 2, four respondents in the two lowest economic categories have chosen finance, credit and savings cooperatives as their preferred formal group. It is surprising to note that respondents placed groups providing non-monetary benefits higher despite their own delicate financial situation. Another interesting note is that three respondents in the highest economic category with annual income of Rs 2,000,001 and above have all chosen NGOs as their preferred choice of group.

**Table 7. Degree of participation in the Group 1**

Type of Group 1	Degree of participation in the group1			Total
	Very active member	Active Member	Occasional participation	
Business/traders' Association	0	0	2	2
Religious association	1	0	0	1
Political organization	1	1	0	2
NGOs	2	2	3	7
Civic group	1	0	0	1
Ethnic based community group	0	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>

Social capital is dependent on the level of participation of the individual, their sociability and engagement with others to fully leverage the capital in question. It can be seen among the respondents that they have understood this need of participation in groups and organizations in the modern sense where one needs to be engaged or *be seen* engaged in group activities to gather or generate social capital amongst their peers.

Among our respondents, based on their choices in Group 1, 5 respondents have reported to be *very active member* and 4 respondents reported as *active member* of their respective organizations in Group 1. The other 6 respondents have reported *occasional participation* in their groups. No respondent chose *Inactive member* as a choice. This should be understandable since respondents were requested to select groups most important to them in Group 1, and it would be logical to see their high degree of participation in the nominated groups as well.

**Table 8: Degree of participation in the Group 2**

Type of Group 2	Degree of participation in Group 2				Total
	Very active member	Active Member	Occasional participation	Inactive member	
Professional Association	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Political Organization	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
Finance, credit or saving cooperative	3	1	4	0	<b>8</b>
NGOs	1	2	0	1	<b>4</b>
Ethnic based community group	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>

Among organizations nominated in Group 2, we can now have one respondent who reported as being an *inactive member* within his or her group. We have a surprisingly 6 respondent who report as being *very active member* and 3 respondents as *active members* of their respective organizations. Remaining 5 respondents reported as

*occasional participation* in their groups. In terms of their degree of participation, we do not see any large change among the respondents between their nominated two groups.

**Table 9. Nature of Membership of Group1**

Type of Group 1	Born into the group	Required to join	Invited	Voluntary Choice	Total
Business/traders' Association	0	1	0	1	2
Religious association	0	0	0	1	1
Political organization	0	0	0	2	2
NGOs	0	0	5	2	7
Civic group	0	0	1	0	1
Ethnic based community group	2	0	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>

In term of how membership was achieved, the respondents have given their answers as shown in the tables above. In Group 1 preference, respondent have shown diverse range of methods on how they received memberships. In cases of Ethnic based community groups, two respondents who preferred such organizations were *born into the group*, i.e.: they were included in the formal group due to their birth similar to the principle of *jus sanguine*.

One respondent was *required to join* the Business/ Traders Association as a requisite for operation of their business. While six respondents were *invited* join the formal group or organizations by already present members for various reasons. In further detail, five of the respondents were invited to join NGOs and one respondent was invited to join a civic group.

Six respondents joined their formal group through a *voluntary choice* of their own. Here the responses recorded are more diverse based on type of the organization. One respondent joined a Business/ Traders association, One respondent joined a Religious association, Two respondents joined political organizations and Two respondents joined NGOs on their own accord.

**Table 10. Nature of Membership of Group2**

<b>Type of Group 2</b>	<b>Born into the group</b>	<b>Required to join</b>	<b>Invited</b>	<b>Voluntary Choice</b>	<b>Total</b>
Professional Association	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
Political Organization	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
Finance, credit or saving cooperative	0	1	4	3	<b>8</b>
NGOs	0	0	2	2	<b>4</b>
Ethnic based community group	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>

Similarly in Group 2 preferred formal groups, the trend of how they gained membership gave a somewhat similar picture. One respondent was *born into the group* of their Ethnic based community group, three respondents were *required to join* their groups, six respondents were invited to join their groups and five respondents joined their group through *voluntary choice* of their own.

The path to membership in a group is largely determined by the type and nature of group in question. We can see that Ethnic based community groups largely have members born into the group, which was expected, but the very fact that such ethnic based community groups are transforming into formal organizations registered with the state highlights the adaptability of social bonds of family and kin groups where traditions are incorporated within a modern and more formal structure.

**Table 11. Main reasons for joining the Association**

<b>Types of formal groups</b>	<b>Business/ Traders association</b>	<b>Professional association</b>	<b>Religious association</b>	<b>Political organization</b>	<b>Finance, credit, savings cooperative</b>	<b>Non-government organization</b>	<b>Civic group</b>	<b>Ethnic- based community group</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Reasons</b>									
Improve my current livelihood and access to Services	2	-	-	1	7	1	-	-	11
Important in times of emergency/ in Future	1	-	-	1	4	2	1	2	11
Benefits the community/ Social work	-	-	1	2	2	9	1	3	18
Enjoyment/ Recreation	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Spiritual	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
Social status/ Self esteem	-	-	1	2	2	6	-	3	14
Networking	2	1	1	2	-	2	1	-	9

As given in table 11., we can analyze the main reasons given by respondents in joining the 30 formal groups surveyed of which they are a part of. In case of groups which respondents were born into, this is understood as reasons for their continued participation in the groups. The data is presented focusing on the reasons more than the nature of the formal groups to which they belong. Each surveyed formal group was allowed to have multiple choices as reasons for joining or continuing being a member of the group. The reasons are varied among respondents and even within the same type of a group.

Among the reasons, most have cited *benefiting the community or social work* as the motivating reason for their actions. This is followed by *social status and self-esteem*, which can be understood as an attempt to cultivate and elevate the social status and self-esteem of the respondent within their peers through participation in formal groups. But during interviews with the respondents, it became clear that most really valued social status and self-esteem higher despite their answers. The objective of engaging in social work to benefit community has in self become an extension of self-esteem with individuals involved in such tasks receiving praise in their community as a “samaj sewi” but ironically, and a behavior of hoarding rewards highlighting the achievements in social work is also quite prevalent.

One male respondent of Dalit community who is very actively engaged in formal groups shared his reasons as a strong desire to ensure that “no one can be contemptuous of me and must instead respect me now”. The respondent is engaged in well over 30 formal groups in Pokhara locally and nationally including holding leadership positions in many of them. The respondent is also economically well off and does not shy away from using his wealth when needed for his activities. The respondent was conscious of his caste and a strong motivation was towards elevating his social status and self-esteem through participation in formal groups and leveraging his social capital to challenge the caste hierarchy. As the leader of his local religious association, the respondent declared that he would ‘now let’s see what do they say’ to him, a Dalit, leading other higher castes in religious rituals.

Closely following are the reasons to *improve my current livelihood and access to services*, and the belief that it is *important in times of emergency/ in future* for the respondents. Another significant reason found was the benefit of *networking* provided by the membership in such formal groups. Within the limited scope of this survey, reasons of *spirituality* and *enjoyment or recreation* were found to be of lower importance. The reasonings given by respondents as their key motivations is certainly influenced by other factors such as their socio-economic standings, age, gender, and the type of formal group in question.

**Table 12. Benefits received in form of services from formal groups**

	<b>Education &amp; Training</b>	<b>Health services</b>	<b>Credit or savings</b>	<b>Agricultural input or technology</b>
NGOs	6	3	-	-
Business/ Traders Association	1	-	-	1
Ethnic based community	1	1	-	-
Political organization	1	-	-	-
Civic group	1	-	-	-
Professional association	1	-	-	-
Finance, credit or savings Cooperative	2	-	7	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>

Respondents have received direct benefit in forms of services as mentioned in table 12 above. The most common form of service which benefited its members were *Education & Training* provided by the groups. This service has been in form of educational tours and visits or through trainings and orientations organized by the group. This form of service is common among NGOs, which also is seen providing health services in form of health camps, free basic medicines, etc. Education and training services is common across all types of formal groups and offered by all groups covered in the study without exception.

Meanwhile services of *Credit or Savings* is seen solely provided by finance, credit or savings cooperatives. Such cooperatives have also been providing its members health services mostly in form of health camps which the group operated for general public. Similarly, Business/ Traders Association has also provided our respondent member with benefit of services in form of technology transfer to support their business. Remaining formal group types have also mostly benefited their members in form of education and trainings too.

However, 3 out of 15 respondents have reported receiving absolutely no benefit in form of direct services from their preferred two formal groups or organizations in any form. They may have received benefits from their other formal groups which is not covered by the study at this time.

**Table 13: Similarity in Political view**

S. N.	Type of Association	Similar Political View		Total
		Yes	No	
1	Business/Traders Association	-	2	2
2	Religious association	-	1	1
3	Political organization	3	-	3
4	NGOs	4	7	11
5	Civic group	-	1	1
6	Ethnic based community Group	-	3	3
7	Professional association	-	1	1
8	Finance, credit or saving Cooperative	1	7	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>

In any group, we will have similar and differentiating traits present within the group. I have here attempted to separately focus on political view as a factor in formal group formation or participation for the members. Among the 30 formal groups named by the respondents, I found that 8 groups comprised mostly of members with similar political views and the remaining 22 groups comprised mostly of members with mixed and differing political views.

If we overlook political organizations, we find that similar political views among members is present among NGOs and in Finance, credit and savings cooperative. And among NGOs, four out of 11 NGOs were found to be comprised of mostly members with similar political views. Among Finance, credit and savings cooperatives, this rate drops to one out of 8 groups.

**Table 14: Membership rate of change**

S. N.	Type of Association	Membership frequency in past 5 years		
		Declined	Remain the same	Increase
1	Business/Traders association	1	-	1
2	Religious association	-	-	1
3	Political organization	2	-	1
4	NGOs	4	4	3
5	Civic group	-	1	-
6	Ethnic based community group	-	-	3
7	Professional association	-	-	1
8	Finance, credit or saving cooperative	1	5	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>

In terms of rate of change in membership numbers in the past five-year period, among the 30 groups in the study, I have found that memberships numbers have actually declined in 8 out of 30 groups and increased in 12 out of 30 groups. The number of members is reported to have remained the same in 10 out of 30 groups.

The cause for decline in number of members were varied depending upon the type of organization in question. Decline and increase in memberships is seen most in NGOs. This is possible to explain through the fact that there has been a rise in popularity of specialized groups other than NGOs such as civic groups and clubs, professional associations and such which provides more flexibility than in an NGO which seems heavily regulated by the state. But NGOs still retains its popularity due to the well-established development sector which provides access to sizeable resources. This can be linked to the practice among leadership of NGOs who continue to boast of their success based on the number and scale of *development programs/ projects* they were able to secure during their tenure. It has become a common practice of measurement within groups when judging the success or efficiency of individual leaders where leaders who would score high retained influence and prestige in their groups even after leaving the position of a leader.

**Table 15: Selection process of leaders**

S. N.	Type of Association	Leader selection Process			
		By an outside group or entity	Leaders chooses his/her successor	By a small group of members	By decision/ vote of all members
1	Business/Traders association	-	-	-	2
2	Religious association	-	-	-	1
3	Political organization	-	-	-	3
4	NGOs	-	1	1	9
5	Civic group	-	-	-	1
6	Ethnic based community group	-	-	-	3
7	Professional association	-	-	-	1
8	Finance, credit or saving cooperative	-	-	1	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>27</b>

The process involved in selection of new leadership of any group can tell us much about the group or organization in question. In my study among the 30 groups, all respondents were asked to choose among the four choices given to them. Only one respondent took *Leaders choose his/ her successor* as a choice. This particular case was in a non-government organization that had an individual making all the decisions in the group and running the organization as a one-man show. This particular leader would rotate the leadership to circumvent the two-time term limit placed on the position of organization leader. The otherwise selected successor was usually chosen as a ceremonial puppet who was deemed not a threat to the leader in question.

Meanwhile in two groups, the selection of leadership was made *by a small group of members* making the decision and selecting among themselves. In both the cases, a core group of members were running the formal group with rest of the members either

not much bothered by the issue or simply unable to raise it for various reasons. One respondent reported his group had faced issues regarding leadership selection which at times became protracted and messy due to political differences among members. This was resolved somewhat by having all members in the executive body to serve one term in each position and then automatically promoted to the next senior position, thus the deputy leader would be the next leader and so on.

Women members also find it more difficult and challenging to stake their claims in leadership positions as commonly shared by women respondents. Male members are either not willing to support their claim, or attempt to relegate them to secondary roles or simply ignore their requests. Women members are not considered as serious challengers or effective leaders. It is also not surprising that none of the group had any other outside group or entity involved in this process. Though this result cannot be blindly generalized given the limited scope and scale of the study.

**Table 16: Similar traits within group members**

<b>S. N.</b>	<b>Type of Association</b>	<b>Village/ neighborhood</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Caste/ethnicity</b>	<b>Family/Kin</b>
1	Business/Traders association	-	-	1	2	-	-
2	Religious association	1	1	-	-	-	-
3	Political organization	-	-	-	1	-	-
4	NGOs	1	6	2	5	1	-
5	Civic group	1	-	1	1	-	-
6	Ethnic based community group	2	3	-	-	3	2
7	Professional association	-	-	-	1	-	-
8	Finance, credit or saving Cooperative	2	5	1	-	2	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>

Formal groups have members of varied interests and characteristics, but also of similar traits which can act as a uniting factor among members. As shown in Table 18, we can see that organizations have multiple factors of similarity among its members, which is not surprising since people tend to join or follow others with similar characteristics as them. Humans have always looked to shared characteristics for comfort.

In this context, among the 30 surveyed formal groups, the highest instance of similarity was found to be religion among 15 groups. However, we have to be careful in overestimating religion as the key factor because in most cases it may only reflect the dominant Hindu population of Nepal. Only in the case of religious association did the respondent actively consider religion as a factor, meanwhile respondents in other groups chose religion as a trait after considering other socio-cultural factors.

Group formation requires coming together of many people and agree on a common purpose or objective. However, it will be individuals of mostly similar characteristics and background who will also share common goals and objectives. Thus, respondents have also preferred joining or forming groups which included members with mostly similar background. One female respondent who joined an NGO did so because the group was formed by other women who had worked in similar occupation and so she felt would be more willing to induct her, understand her issues more closely, and support her when in need.

Another male respondent who is an insurance manager, joined a civic group where the members were mostly his *friends* from Pokhara city. The other members were all comparable to the respondent in that they were all middle-aged working male, all were engaged in self run businesses, economically middle class and had studied together at one point or the other. Though the members were diverse in caste, ethnicity and religion, their bonds attracted them to join the small civic group where they were engaged in social work activities and also in enjoyment and recreation.

But similarities were only as strong as the weakest cause of differences in the groups. When any cause for difference became stronger than the bonds of similarities, conflicts arose. In one professional association shared by a male respondent, the association was the national group for journalists in the country and the respondent shared significant

influence in his local chapter. But despite the group being clearly distinct for one particular occupation, the differences in political affiliations of its members resulted in significant conflict in the association.

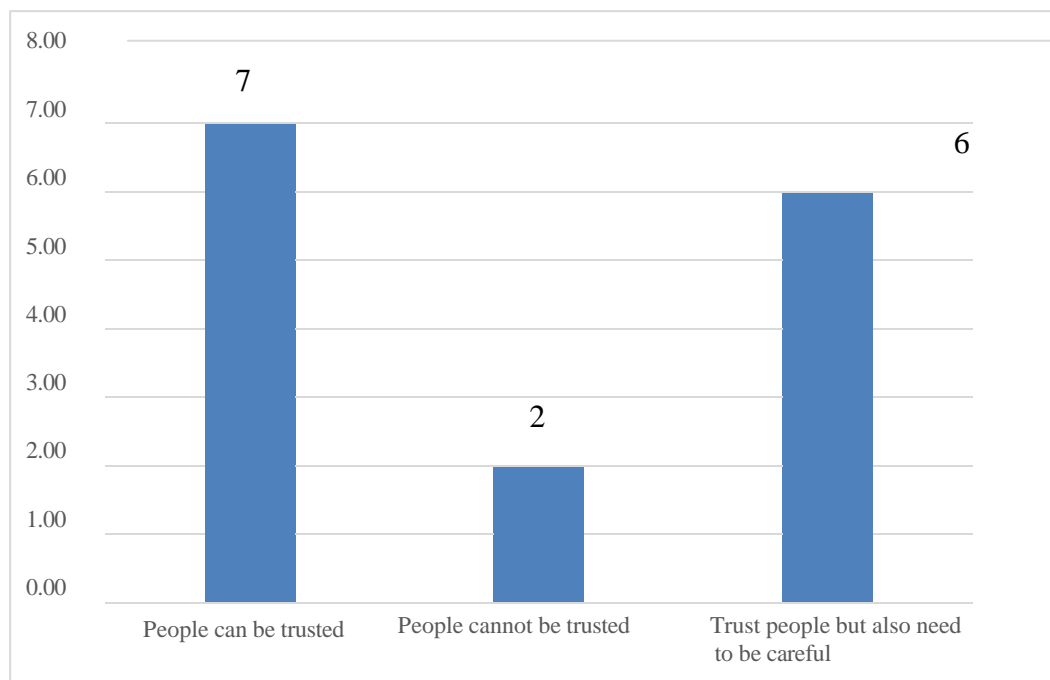
## CHAPTER V: TRUST AND CONFLICT

### 5.1 Introduction

Trust is an important social concept that defines our relationships within a group. It is a belief system that plays an important role in creation of social capital. In this section, the assumptions and objectives of the research has been revisited in reference to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two and with the research and findings of my own.

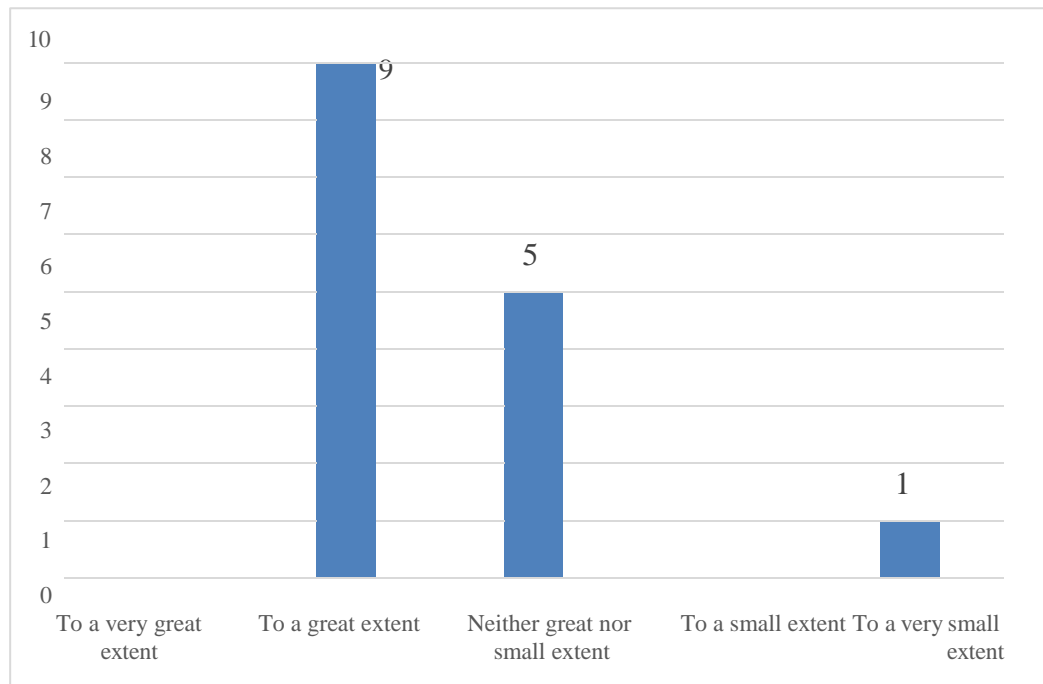
### 5.2 Trust and Solidarity

**Figure 3: Respondent trust upon people in association**



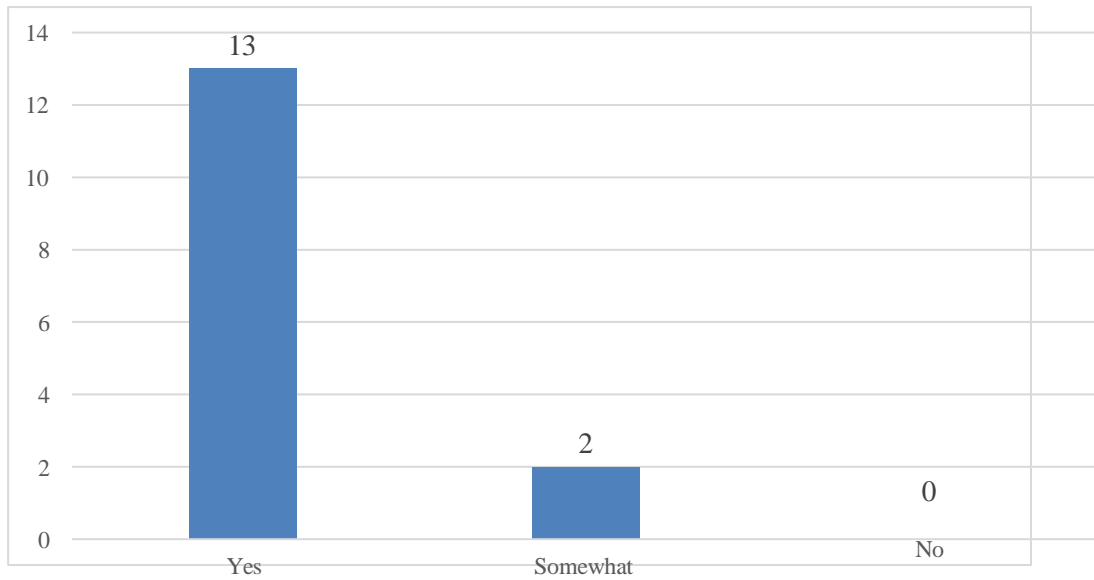
Among my respondents, I found that 7 respondents believed that *people can be trusted* general, 2 respondents felt that *people cannot be trusted*, and 6 respondents believed they could *trust people but also need to be careful* at the same time.

**Figure 4. Trust among group members**



Next the respondents were asked on their degree of trust towards members of their own groups. In the results, no respondent trusted their fellow group members *to a very great extent* while 9 respondents trusted *to a great extent*. Next, 5 respondents could trust their fellow members *to neither great nor small extent* while 1 respondent trusted fellow members *to a very small extent* only.

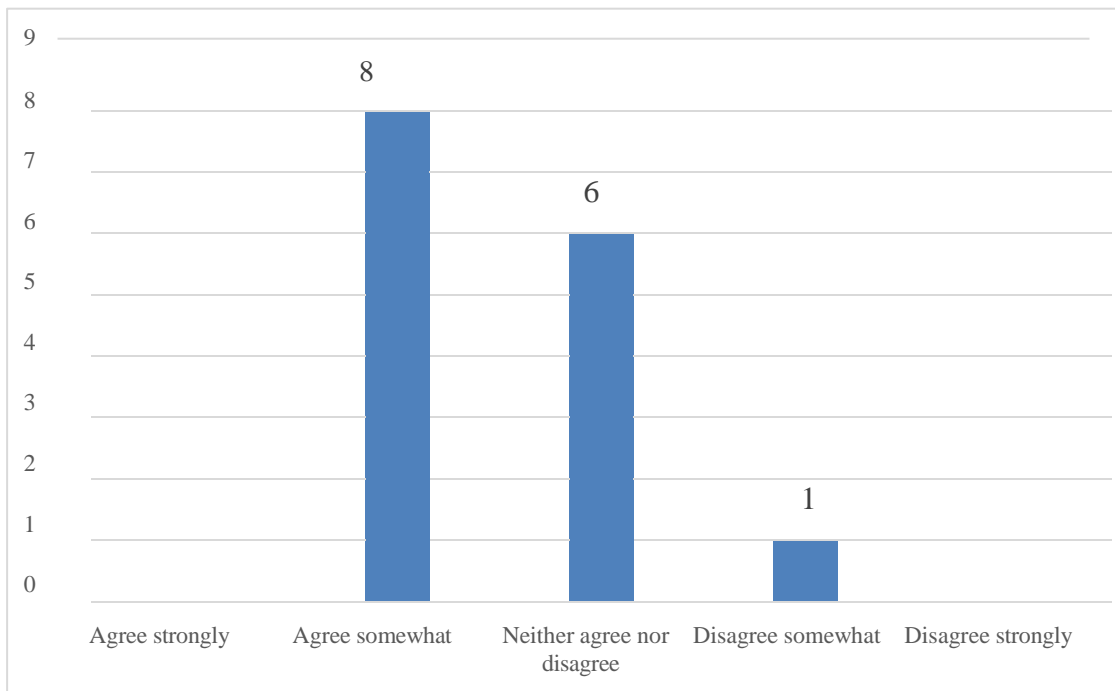
**Figure 5. Trust towards respondent**



But when the same respondents were asked about people trusting them, their answers gave us something to think about. 13 respondents said that other people in their groups trusted them well enough and only 2 respondents believed that other people in their groups trusted them somewhat and not completely.

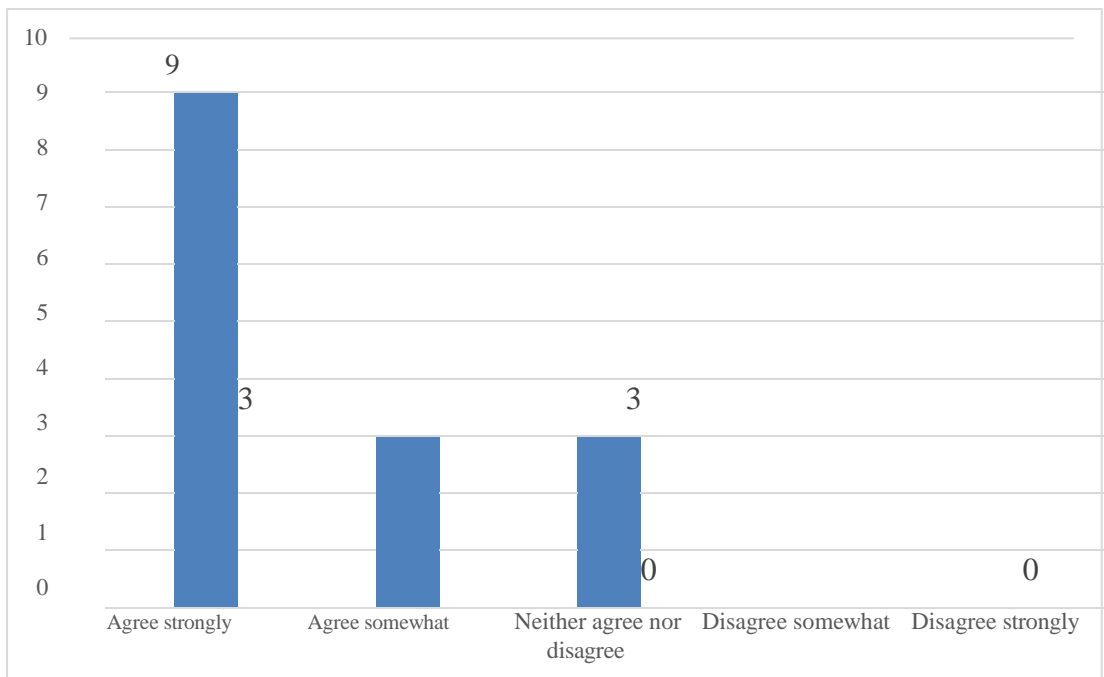
These answers do not reflect on the responses we got in the earlier question of our study which measured their trust on other people. It seems respondents all had a somewhat confident belief in themselves that they were trustworthy while they themselves did not trust others on a same scale. It does leave us wondering whether respondents do not expect others also to place them lower in the trust scale.

**Figure 6. Response to Statement 1**



Respondents were now shared two statements and their response measured on their degree of belief in the statement. Respondents were requested to judge on the first statement that they could expect their fellow group members to help them if they needed it, and in response 8 respondents felt they could *agree somewhat* with the statement, 6 respondents could *neither agree or disagree*, and only respondent was more negative in their trust towards fellow group members by *disagree somewhat* with the statement. It was clear that all respondents were reserved in their faith towards fellow members in expecting any help with most not expecting to such help materializing at all.

**Figure 7. Response to Statement 2**



In the second statement, respondents were asked to judge to what degree did they agree to the statement that within their groups, one has to be alert or else someone is likely to take advantage of you. In the results, 9 respondents *agree strongly* to the statement, 3 respondents *agree somewhat* and remaining 3 respondents could *neither agree nor disagree* with the statement.

### 5.3 Social Cohesion & Conflict

**Table 17. Feeling of togetherness in the group**

S. N.	Type of Association	Very distant	Somewhat distant	Neither distant nor close	Somewhat close	Very close
1	Business/Traders Association	-	-	2	-	-
2	Religious Association	-	-	-	1	-
3	Political organization	-	-	2	1	-
4	NGOs	-	-	4	5	2
5	Civic group	-	-	-	-	1
6	Ethnic based community group	-	-	-	1	2
7	Professional association	-	-	1	-	-
8	Finance, credit or saving cooperative	-	1	2	5	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>

Respondents were now asked to rate the degree of togetherness between members in the 30 groups surveyed. In the results, we can see in the Table above that no respondent believed their group members to be *very distant* among each other. In one group believed their group members to be *somewhat distant* in their feeling of togetherness, as in this particular case the respondent believed it due to most members being inactive and largely ignorant of the group.

Respondents believed in 11 groups that the feeling was of *neither distant nor close* and in 13 groups there was *somewhat close* sense of feeling. The remaining 5 groups had *very close* feeling among its members, which is what we would expect in a formal group when members can mostly join and leave voluntarily, but the overall picture is much more complicated.

**Table 18. Differences among people in groups**

S. N.	Type of Association	To a very great extent	To a great Extent	Neither great nor small extent	To a small extent	To a very small extent
1	Business/traders' Association	-	-	1	1	-
2	Religious Association	-	1	-	-	-
3	Political Organization	1	1	1	-	-
4	NGOs	-	1	8	2	-
5	Civic group	-	-	-	-	1
6	Ethnic based community Group	-	1	2	-	-
7	Professional Association	-	1	-	-	-
8	Finance, credit or saving cooperative	-	1	7	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

One thing we can be certain of is that in any group of people voluntarily formed, we can always expect a degree of differences based on any number of reasons. Such differences can vary in extent from very great to very small. Shown in the table above, respondents have shared the degree of differences within their group members. 1 group is reported to have difference among members *to a very great extent* and 6 groups reported difference *to a great extent* among members. In the middle, highest number with 19 groups reported having difference of neither great nor small extent among members. In a lower degree, 3 groups reported having differences to a small

extent and 1 group reported having differences to a very small extent.

The greatest extent of differences was found in political organization as the respondent was a member of one of the largest political organizations in the country, so it was inevitable to hear that there was such a high degree differences within the group given the extensive scale of background of its membership. The lowest degree of difference is present within a civic group (a local Lions Club chapter). The respondent from the group described the group as a collection of friends who have a lot in common. This group usually presented an ideal picture of a formal group where members got along and worked together well.

The respondent who chose political organization in Group 1 was very actively engaged in the organization spending nearly 300 days a year in group related activities. But the respondent had rated the environment in the group highly divisive and ruthless in nature, and the respondent did not trust group members. But the respondent shared that being linked to a large and powerful political organization had its uses and perks if one is able to leverage it properly. The respondent has clearly benefited using the vast network of the group in gaining advantages in difficult situations, and is also respected by the immediate society for the position within the group as well.

**Table 19. Causes for differences arising within groups**

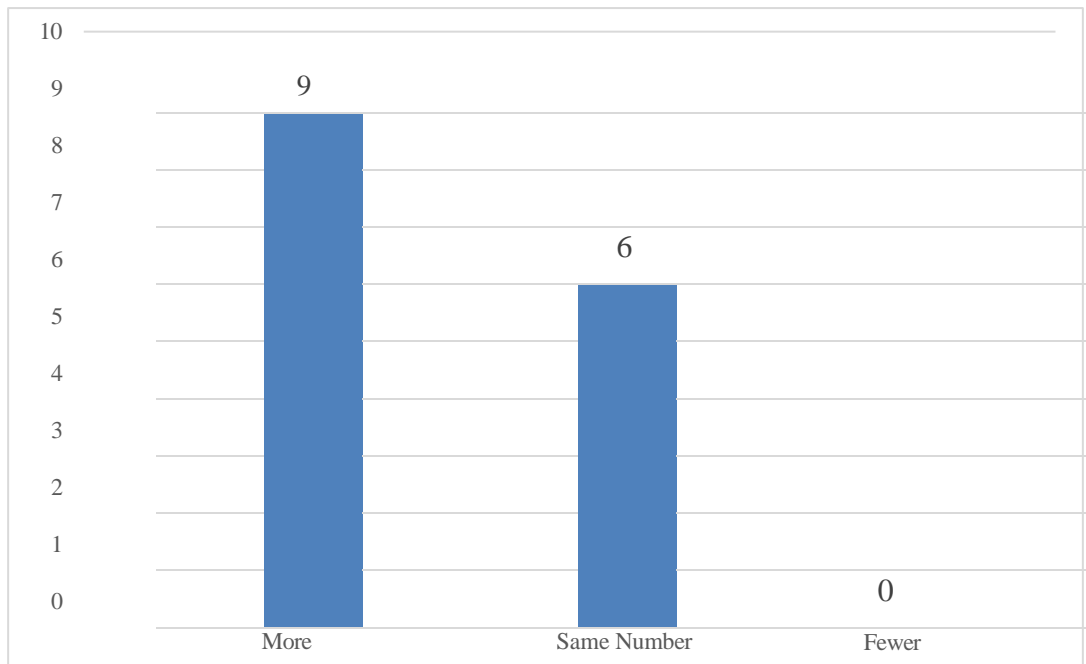
Type of Association	Education	Wealth	Social status	Younger & Older generation	Men & Women	Long- term and recent members	Political party affiliation	Ethnic/ caste/ linguistic background	Religious background
<b>Business/Traders Association</b>	-	1		-	-	2	1	-	-
<b>Professional Association</b>	1	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-
<b>Religious Association</b>	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	-
<b>Political Organization</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	1
<b>Finance, Credit or Savings Cooperative</b>	2	3	7	7	1	2	4	-	-
<b>NGOs</b>	3		10	5	2	3	6	1	-
<b>Ethnic-based community group</b>	1	2	2	3	-	2	2	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>

As described earlier, differences are seen present in all 30 groups to some degree, in some groups it has been a difficult issue to deal with. In analyzing the reasons or causes behind the differences was also conducted by asking the respondents to choose from multiple options. The most commonly occurring cause for differences to arise was the difference in social status of its members. This meant that group members with more power and prestige usually leveraged their high social status to control the decision-making process.

The second most common cause is differences between younger and older generation of members. One respondent who is member of a kin-based cooperative shared the reason with an interesting background. The group in question now has a growing number of young members who are now gaining influence as they grow in wealth and status themselves, while members of older generations who have traditionally enjoyed the influence and control of the group are unwilling to share the decision-making power by blocking entry of younger members into the decision-making bodies of the group. The older generation members also rely on a particular individual member who is a former cabinet minister and thus holding much prestige and influence in the community. When issues arise between the two groups, the older members tactfully refer the issue to the former cabinet minister in a manner portraying of ‘communal harmony’ where they emphasize the status and experience of the individual. The individual member will also diplomatically resolve the issue mostly in favor of the older group, leaving the younger members unable to challenge their collective strength outright with the older members declaring “*aba dai le vane pachi vayo aba tesari nai garne*” (elder brother has spoken so now should follow he has said).

Equally common is also political party affiliations as a cause for differences arising. This is followed by differences between long-term and recent members, with older members usually looking to maintain the status-quo to their benefits and recent members looking to improve their standing within the group. Religious difference has been cited the least, which can be understood given the high degree of similarities among group members according to their religion. Differences between men and women is also cited lowly but this seems to be mostly due to fewer women members in most groups and to their relatively weakened position in comparison to their male counterparts. Education and wealth as a cause for difference is at an equal rate.

**Figure 8. Household participate in the group/association**



Final question in the study involved asking the respondents on the change in degree of participation in formal groups or organizations by them or members of their households in the past 5-year period. In the results in the figure above, we see that 9 respondents shared that they have increased participation in formal settings as a household in the reporting period while 6 respondents shared that the rate of participation of their household at the same period had remained the same. No respondent reported a decline with fewer participation from members of their household in the reporting period.

Respondents were clearly motivated to join formal groups and associations for reasons influenced by their individual background, socio-economic characteristics such as education, wealth, gender and more. One young female respondent of Janajati caste and working a low-income job joined a cooperative to receive economic benefits while another male respondent who was highly educated and working a high paying office work had joined multiple NGOs in which he did not expect any material benefit at the time, but planned to leverage his relation with the group and its members in the future when he would vie for leadership role in the groups to create a name for himself.

## CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1 Introduction

In this section, the assumptions and objectives of the research has been revisited in reference to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two and with the research and findings of my own.

### 6.2 Revisiting Research Objectives

Social capital is a difficult concept to understand, but none the less we are witnessing a rise to more effectively measure it in action, especially within the development sector.

#### 6.2.1 Factors Influencing Participation in Associations

The first objective was to identify the factors leading to the participation in associations.

#### *Groups and Networks*

The study and analysis focused on the generation of social capital by respondents through their participation in formal groups and organizations. Our respondents are seen actively seeking memberships in formal groups and associations. The mean average number of groups a respondent is a member of is 3.87, indicating that respondents have recognized groups as channels for building relationship networks. The average number of groups to which respondents are a member of are also reflected in the socio-cultural indicators (income group, age and gender, education, religion, ethnic group) as well. Cross tabulating the membership data with caste/ ethnicity and sex, we see Brahmins at average of 4.50 groups and Dalits at average of 3.50. In terms of sex, males average 4.30 and females average 3.00. Though the size of the respondent population may skew the results, it still provides a lens into the many factors that can determine the access to formal channels. In other words, social capital will help in producing more social capital. This becomes more clearer when our respondents reported networking as one the main reasons of joining their respective groups.

However, social capital in a structural role has its effectiveness restricted by other factors. In a given association or a network, its role is governed by the nature of the organization, how it is formed, and how it works. A functional classification can begin

with the objective of the formal group or association at hand, e.g.: finance, social work, education, etc. If we are to only look at formal groups or associations respondents had joined voluntarily, we see a majority (over 58.0%) of them have chosen groups that has social work as their objective in Group 1 by rating it higher. Respondents are consciously building their relations with and within groups where they can create capital based on prestige and status. They have sustained this by continually maintaining the relationship with such groups through renewal of memberships and paying membership dues. The fiscal cost of such renewal is outweighed for respondents by the benefit of producing social capital. This is more so for respondents who have lower income level. But this notion is challenged later when we analyze trust and solidarity in the groups and members.

Our respondents have also joined their respective formal groups with aim of receiving certain tangible benefits. They are receiving benefits in form of educational trainings and visits, health services, financial services, and more. Only 3 respondents reported not receiving any form of benefit in form of services from their group. So it can be safe to assume that despite the objective of engaging in social work and benefit the community, our 'respondent' social actors are also receiving not only 'social' but also tangible benefits too. But such benefits are irregular and mostly basic in nature, so at the same time it cannot be given much weight. However, members through their network sharing such services with non-members are seen generating social capital. They are playing on their relationship with non-members who have now benefited due to their identification with the respondent.

The direct and indirect control of the state in Nepal over formal groups and associations in Nepal has required all groups to follow a democratic charter to be lawfully recognized. Perhaps this has been the strongest impact in popularizing such groups especially since the massive proliferation in their numbers since 2006. Groups with linkages also have better access to resources, especially from outside the community, such as from government. The democratic nature these groups ensures access of these benefits to all members, though there are attempts seen at maintaining control of decision-making powers by individuals or small group of members within the entire group. Respondents are looking to use this to position themselves in seats of authority or influence in their groups by forming coalitions of similar interests. If forms of control

and accountability are absent or weakened, social capital is also seen quickly becoming a mechanism for encouraging nepotism or political favoritism. This was clearly visible in one group where the individual leader in mentioned by the respondent made all decisions in the group, even to the extent of handpicking the successor to overcome the legal requirements to term limits.

### **6.2.2 Trust and Conflict**

The second objective of the research was to explore the relation between trust and social cohesion within the associations, which can be understood as the functioning of the group.

#### ***Trust and Solidarity***

Measurement of cognitive capital such as trust and solidarity are even more difficult, in part because it may mean different things to different people. Our respondents despite their varying degrees of participation in groups and association, show a relatively cautious outlook on trust among fellow members and other people in general. Respondents when rating trust among people in general, 7 respondents believed that *people can be trusted* general, 2 respondents felt that *people cannot be trusted*, and 6 respondents believed they could *trust people but also need to be careful* at the same time. And then when we asked them about their trust in their own group members, 9 respondents trusted *to a great extent*. Next, 5 respondents could trust their fellow members *to neither great nor small extent* while 1 respondent trusted fellow members *to a very small extent* only. No response was registered for trust at a very great extent and at a small extent scale. Being part of a same group showed a higher correlation of greater trust. This bears out to most theories on social capital which places trust as very important or the most important aspect for building of social capital.

But when we asked them on how other group members trusted them, unsurprisingly they rated themselves higher with 13 respondents believing others trusted them while 2 respondents believed others trusted them somewhat. No respondent believed that other members did not trust them. The respondents trusted others less while holding others as not trustworthy in comparable terms. Despite being in a group together and importance attached to trust, being in a group did not automatically generate the trust

between the members. Members did not seem to develop a strong bond among themselves particularly in non-kin-based groups.

Trust is also measured through the lens of certain exchanges between members, such as lending and borrowing (*sar sapati*). Material incentives are a powerful motivating factor and this may be the reason for trust ratings being higher among members in occupation or business-based associations.

Exploring the solidarity among respondents and fellow members, respondents gave a balanced review on their fellow members willingness to help them if in need. Out of 15, 7 respondents agreed somewhat to that statement, 6 respondents could neither agree or disagree, while 1 respondent disagreed somewhat to the thought that their fellow members would lend a helping hand. In another statement on members taking advantage of the respondent if not careful, 9 respondents agreed strongly with the statement, 3 respondents agreed somewhat and 3 respondents could neither agree or disagree. It is interesting to note how a group with such weak basis of solidarity among members can function at all without conflict. It is clear the respondents when delved deeply with question on trust and solidarity are clearer on their suspicions on fellow members.

By their very participation in the groups, respondents are looking to create the environment suitable to them to create social capital. This is despite the fact the environment in the groups may even pose barriers or prove outright hostile to respondents at their attempt to create social capital.

### ***Social Cohesion and Conflict***

Existence of conflict in a group or a community often points towards lack of trust between members, or the lack of appropriate structural mechanisms to resolve conflicts, or both. It is also quite likely that perceptions of such conflict as well as experience of it differ between members based on their varied characteristics. As described earlier, differences are seen present in all 30 groups to some degree, in some groups it has been a difficult issue to deal with. In analyzing the reasons or causes behind the differences was also conducted by asking the respondents to choose from multiple options. The most commonly occurring cause for differences to arise was the difference in social

status of its members. This meant that group members with more power and prestige usually leveraged their high social status to control the decision-making process. Generational differences between members and different political party affiliations also are seen as powerful pointers of differences for respondents.

Our respondents have shared the degree of differences within their group members. 1 group is reported to have difference among members *to a very great extent* and 6 groups reported difference *to a great extent* among members. In the middle, highest number with 19 groups reported having difference of neither great nor small extent among members. In a lower degree, 3 groups reported having differences to a small extent and 1 group reported having differences to a very small extent.

Despite the differences, our respondents are all actively seeking to create social capital within their own environment, though they have been purposively selected for their participation in groups, they are actively adopting formal groups and association to increase their creation of social capital. In the reasons for joining a group, respondents have clearly highlighted the significance of improving their own social status/ self-esteem and to build networking with potential relations to further improve their social capital. The motivation to contribute to society and social work has in itself transformed into a symbol of social status in society. Respondents may not be motivated by the objective of the group as much as by the opportunity the membership of the group provides at increasing their own social capital by positioning themselves in strategic spots in a given network.

When we look at social capital, it may be easy to find it comparable with other forms of capital in many aspects. But it has a fundamental difference in that its creation requires interaction between at least two people. Ample literature on social capital clearly warns us that social capital is a complex and abstract concept, its construction within groups and networks is much dependent on the many social, economic, political, and cultural factors. Any research into social capital making use of research tools with social capital as the dependent variable will therefore have to be much more complex as we cannot assess the relative contribution of social capital together with other determinants of well-being which will be an oversimplification of a complex concept.

### **6.3 Knowledge Contribution**

This study is an original study carried out in the local context of Kaski district. carried out in Pokhara Metropolitan City, Annapurna RM, Machapuchare RM, Madi RM and Rupa RM of Kaski district.

The study is an original attempt to understand social capital and its workings at a micro level in the context of Kaski district in Nepal. It will have contributed from its findings on the understanding of social capital, how trust and conflict are linked in formal associations. The study looks into the participation by individuals in formal associations, and so can help future research into social capital and its interaction within associations. Trust and Social Cohesion are interlinked, and the study has further contributed to that understanding.

Local studies and research on social capital have mostly followed a structural or institutional view of social capital. However, this study has attempted to examine both cognitive as well as structural views of social capital. It has explored the trust, norms, and networks

Methodologically, the study of social capital should be multi-disciplinary in approach. Future studies can use larger data sets in order to further see how individuals participate and how they differ in various associations. As any study of social capital is contextual, future studies in different localities can also further add to this study on the subject. The study can act as a basis for any such future endeavor.

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## ANNEX

### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### Key Informant Interview Questionnaire

##### A. *General Information*

1. Name of the Respondent: .....
2. Age: .....3. Sex: ..... 4. District: .....
5. Municipality: .....
6. Caste/Ethnicity .....7. Education: .....
8. In what major economic activity are you engaged with?  
Economic Activities:
  - i. Business
  - ii. Salaried Employment
  - iii. Agriculture
  - iv. Govt. Employment
  - v. Informal sector Employment
  - vi. Pensioner
  - vii. Unemployed
  - viii. Others (specify)
9. What is your Average Annual Income?.....

##### B. *Groups and Networks*

1. Of how many formal groups/ organizations are you a member?
  - i. One
  - ii. Two
  - iii. Three
  - iv. Four
  - v. Five or more
2. Of all these groups/ organizations to which you belong, which two is the most important to you? (*Mention the name*)

Group1:

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Group2:

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3. What type of groups are they?
  - i. Agriculture Cooperative
  - ii. Business/ Traders Association
  - iii. Professional Association
  - iv. Trade/ Labor Union
  - v. Village/ Neighborhood Committee
  - vi. Religious Association
  - vii. Political organization
  - viii. Cultural Association
  - ix. Finance, Credit or Savings cooperative
  - x. Sports club
  - xi. Youth club
  - xii. NGO
  - xiii. Civic group
  - xiv. Ethnic-based community group
  - xv. Other group (Specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Group 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2 \_\_\_\_\_

4. Within your group, what role or position do you occupy?
  - a. Leader
  - b. Executive member
  - c. General member

Group 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2 \_\_\_\_\_

5. Within your groups, what degree of participation do you have?
  - i.* Very active member
  - ii.* Active member
  - iii.* Occasional participation
  - iv.* Inactive member

Group 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2 \_\_\_\_\_

6. How do you become a member of these groups/ organizations?

- i. Born into the group
- ii. Required to join
- iii. Invited
- iv. Voluntary choice
- v. Others (specify) \_

Group 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2 \_\_\_\_\_

7. How much money or goods did you contribute to the groups/ organizations in the past 12 months?

Group 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2 \_\_\_\_\_

8. How many days of work did you contribute to the groups/ organizations in the past 12 months?

Group 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2 \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is the main reason of joining this groups/ organizations? (*You may give multiple choices*)

- i. Improves my household's current livelihood or access to services
- ii. Important in times of emergency/ in future
- iii. Benefits the community/ Social work
- iv. Enjoyment/ Recreation
- v. Spiritual
- vi. Social Status/ Self esteem
- vii. Networking
- viii. Other (Specify) \_\_

Group 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2 \_\_\_\_\_

10. Does the group help your household get access to any of the following services?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

	Group 1	Group 2
Education or Training		
Health services		
Water supply or sanitation		
Credit or savings		
Agricultural input or technology		
Irrigation		
Others (Specify)		

11. Thinking about the members of these groups, are most of them of the same:

- i. Yes
- ii. No

	Group 1	Group 2
Village/ Neighborhood		
Religion		
Gender		
Age		
Family/ kin group		
Caste/ Ethnicity		
Occupation		

12. Are members mostly of the same political viewpoint or belong to the same political party?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

Group 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2 \_\_\_\_\_

13. Are some members richer or poorer than others, or do they all have mostly the same income level?

1. Mostly same income level
2. Mixed rich/ poor

Group 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2 \_\_\_\_\_

14. In the past 5 years, have the membership in the group declined, remained the same, or increased?

1. Declined
2. Remained the same
3. Increased

Group 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2 \_\_\_\_\_

15. How are leaders in this groups selected?

1. By an outside group or entity
2. Leader chooses his/ her successor
3. By a small group of members
4. By decision/vote of all members
5. Others (Specify)\_

Group 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2 \_\_\_\_\_

***C. Trust and Solidarity***

1. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you cannot be too careful when dealing with people?

- i. People can be trusted
- ii. People cannot be trusted
- iii. You can trust people but also need to be careful

Why do you feel that way?

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2. Do you feel people trust you or listen to you more for being a member of these groups?

- i. Yes
- ii. Somewhat
- iii. No

i. Why do you feel that way?

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3. In general, do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Agree strongly</li><li>2. Agree somewhat</li><li>3. Neither agree or disagree</li><li>4. Disagree somewhat</li><li>5. Disagree strongly</li></ul>
Most people in my groups are willing to help if you need it	
In my groups, one has to be alert or else or someone is likely to take advantage of you	

4. How much do you trust members of your groups?
  - i. To a very great extent
  - ii. To a great extent
  - iii. Neither great or small extent
  - iv. To a small extent
  - v. To a very small extent

**D. Social Cohesion & Conflict**

1. How strong is the feeling of togetherness in the groups in which you are a member?
  - i. Very distant
  - ii. Somewhat distant
  - iii. Neither distant nor close
  - iv. Somewhat close
  - v. Very close

Group 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2 \_\_\_\_\_

2. There are often differences among people in groups for various reasons. To what extent do you feel are there differences within your groups?
  - i. To a very great extent
  - ii. To a great extent
  - iii. Neither great nor small extent
  - iv. To a small extent
  - v. To a very small extent

Group 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2 \_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you feel are the causes for the differences arising within your groups?  
(You may select multiple causes)
  - i. Differences in education
  - ii. Differences in wealth
  - iii. Differences in social status

- iv. Differences between younger and older generations
- v. Differences between men and women
- vi. Differences between long-term and recent members
- vii. Differences in political party affiliations
- viii. Differences in ethnic/ caste/ linguistic background
- ix. Difference in religious background
- x. Others (Specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Group 1\_\_\_\_\_

Group 2\_\_\_\_\_

4. Would you like add any other point on reasons for differences?

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5. Compared to 5 years ago from now, do members of your household participate in more or fewer formal groups or organizations?

- i. More
- ii. Same Number
- iii. Fewer

6. Would you like to share any other point?

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\*\*\* THANK YOU \*\*\*