
THE CLASS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL: A CASE STUDY IN BARPAK VILLAGE COPING AND RECOVERING PROCESS AFTER THE GORKHA EARTHQUAKE 2015

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Abstract

Social capital is one most important attribution of a resilient community. It is manifested in a human relationship or network between the community member such as family, friends, relatives, neighbourhood, membership on a formal and informal group of society, colleague and so on. This article is about the role of Social Capital to cope at the time of Gorkha Earthquake 2015 in Barpak Village. The article is based on the primary data, which is collected through the interview with 28 ordinary people and a leader of Barpak Village after the Gorkha Earthquake 2015.

In this article, I focused on a few key areas of social capital such as family, friendship and neighbourhood, people's involvement in the local level institution, job pattern or profession of a villager, social norm and value as responsibility for fellow community member, collective mobilization in the aftermath of the earthquake.

In the Course of my research I found the reality that social capital also closely tied with economic capital. In the rescue and relief time social capital work for all villagers or community members. But when villagers started to rebuild their house, economic capital became a core of social capital.

Key words: Social Capital, Earthquake, Community, Resilience

Background of the study

According to UNDP, Nepal is the 11th most earthquake-prone country in the world. Around every century, Nepal has faced earthquakes. In history, the first written recorded document was found of earthquake 1255 AD, in which one of the princes of Nepal had died. After that Nepalese have faced several earthquakes. Some old people still remembered the 1934's (which is famously known as '*nabbe saal ko bhuiichalo*' in Nepali) the major earthquake that hit Nepal with 8.4 magnitudes. From this earthquake, around ten thousand people lost their life in Kathmandu Valley alone.

On 25th April 2015, Nepal was struck by 7.6 magnitude earthquake with its epicenter at Barpak, Gorkha. According to Post Disaster Need, Assessment fourteen districts were severely affected by the quake. More than 8,790 people lost their lives and more than 22,300 got injured, 6,08,155

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residential buildings were completely damaged and 2,98,998 were partially damaged, many cultural heritages, schools, hospitals, governmental buildings, road, water supply systems, trekking route collapsed and were partially damaged. Millions of people lived under the open sky. The earthquake disrupted their daily life and made them fearful in the peak time of harvesting wheat and potato and planting maize.

This article is about the role of Social Capital in people's coping and recovering of epicenter village Barpak. Before writing the role of social capital in Barpak, I want to briefly add about Social Capital

Social capital is one most important attribution of it. In sociology, the views of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and American Sociologist James S. Coleman, and their collective edited book 'Social Theory for a Changing Society' which published in 1991 is highly cited. Bourdieu categorized the capital as Economic Capital, Cultural Capital, and Social Capital. Forgetting two economic and cultural capital I focused this article on social capital. Bourdieu, gave a short and meaningful example about social capital as 'It's not what you know, it's who you know'. This one sentence can give multiple sites of thinking and analysis. Leaving history like a who coined? from how long ?, the term "social capital" called used in vague social science after publication of *Making Democracy* of political scientist Robert Putnam in 1993. Which defined the social capital as 'the intangible benefits of living in a society with well-established 'trust, norm, and network' (Putnam 1993).

There are many differences between 'well-established trust, norm, and network' and 'Who know who'. This two different view of leading figures of academia shows the variance of thinking about social capital. For social capital, I still haven't found any solid definition, but we can say social capital is a relationship matter between the people. Australian young sociologist Tristan Claridge categorizes social capital from two perspectives: network perspective and Social structural perspective. From those two perspectives, he makes variance of social capital. Network perspective have three variance bonding social capital refers the relationship of by birth like families and relatives; bridging social capital refers the member of a social group as a member of any organization and linking social capital can manifest in professional relationships. In social structural perspective also he made three variances; one structural social capital refer that well-established network of society, cognitive social capital based on the norm, value, and attitude of people it' may like to be a party member, religion and relational social capital may manifest in social relation might be in professional, friendship and neighbourhood.

Here, I want to add some views of sociologists from their literature about social capital in disaster and resilient communities. In social resilience literature, Marrow (2008) wrote the importance of social connection and social network, families, friends can be an important source of information, they can give advice and assistance. Minorities, including recent immigrants who don't have a network they can be vulnerable to disaster. As a social capital, membership in social networks such as churches, social clubs, parent groups, and other community organizations provides connections that can be called upon when needed, whether for job opportunities, recommendations, guidance, or resources.

Lalone (2012) also writes 'social capital refers to the potential resources in goods, labor, and other forms of assistance, that are embedded in the local-level social network of family and neighbors, and other groups formed through place-based, work-based, and common interest-based bonds of

interaction, trust, reciprocity, and support, that people can mobilize individually and collectively to use for community resilience in the face disaster.'

The view of Marrow's as 'families, friends..' and Putnam's as 'society with well-established trust, norm, and network' I relate with value of stable rural community more than day to day changeable urban society for social capital. In Nepal, every person celebrates any type of relationship as an important part of life. To describe social relation there are many proverbs like a neighbor is most important for marriage and death ('*Chimeki, jundaako Janti Mardako malami*'), 'misunderstanding between brothers, can be profitable for an outsider (*Bhai fute gawar lute*)', Dog from the maternal village also becomes a dearest (*Maiti gauko Kukur pani pyaro*)' and words 'right being a neighbor (*Sanjhe bhaiko hak*)', 'relation of ox buying and selling (*Goru becheko saino*)', 'making a permanent friendship (*Mit lagaune*). It shows the importance of both relationships by birth and relationships that are made during social interactions. Relationships and their functions; trust and reciprocity are called social capital. And it's one of the most important attributions of a resilient community.

Methodology

Article is based in primary field based information which are collected fully qualitative form and analyze as the descriptive form. Data was generated from semi-structure interviews with 28 respondents, key informant interview with eleven formal and informal leader of village, three case studies; one with widow women, one landless single women and one teacher who didn't get governmental subsidies to build their house caused by his brother beautiful house.

Social Capital in Barpak

Family and relatives

Family is a basic unit of society. And kin-based relatives are a network of our basic unit (family). They know all about their family members and relatives' life due to the togetherness and close affinity. It will not be wrong to write familial unity shows the strong social capital. A joint family member is together to share their sorrow and happiness so that their life becomes easy than a nuclear family. This belief manifests in Barpak at the backdrop. Even in the age of globalization, Barpaki peoples have a unique familial relationship. For this uniqueness, here, I need to elaborate 'marriage system' of Ghale and Gurung. Usually people of Barpak gets marriage with their own community like Ghale with Ghale and Gurung with Gurung. Specially they get married with their cross cushion. That types of marriage become a system. So, their houses are between mother's brother house and father's sister house or their marred sibling's house can be next to their house. They have relative opposite of, next to and behind of their house. Usually, they get married out of love. But love is still unable to break the boundary of cushion and caste relationship. Very few people got married outside the village. All the 28 respondents except one, doesn't have relatives outside the village. This marriage system shows the strong ties of familial relationships.

All of their relatives except lahure male lived with their family or marital family members at the time of this catastrophe. Immediately after the earthquake 23 the respondent said they lived together with their relatives. Three of my respondent weren't in the village. And two respondent

(Suk Bahadur Gurung and Aaskumari Gurung) don't have relatives. Seventeen of my respondent lived under open sky for two to five days. Three respondents weren't in the village, so they had no idea. One respondent lived in a buffalo shed and another respondent lived in his wood mil. Six respondents live in tarpaulin with their relatives on the first day of the disaster. The first week they shared one tarpaulin with more than 10 households. At that time they became fearful due to the lack of knowledge of earthquakes. But they had their relatives alongside them if any trouble arises. Twenty-three of my respondent said older people consoled and supported them, 'if need to die, we will die altogether, please don't cry'. Children were sleeping in the lap of their parents or grandparent even under the open sky.

None of my respondents ate on the first day of the earthquake. They weren't conscious to eat or feed their children anything due to the unimaginable shock and after shock. They just want their life again not more than it. From the second day, local sellers start to sell biscuits and noodles at a high rate (in 25 to fifty rupees per packet normally it was 15 rupees per packet). Some of them bought and eat biscuits or noodles. From the same time (second day of backdrop) youth club started to cook rice adding salt and oil (normal rice cooked only with water) in one big pot. Boys of youth club served it in a leaf of common Fig or in the cover of noodles packet for a villager. On the same (second day) day Nepal and Indian armies helicopter leave some food like biscuit, noodles and bitten rice. Local youth and leaders share it for all available people.

Due cross cushion marriage practice the social network was not expanded from a marital relationship outside the village. Inside the village, all of their relatives were victims, looked the same as them. So, they get psychological support from their relatives. They become unable to get other support from their relatives. After the earthquake, they live together/under one shelter for months. Still, six of my respondent live in plastic-made shelters with their relatives or with the support of relatives.

Friendship and neighbour

Friendship and the neighborhood is another part of social capital. It manifests in their mutual trust and reciprocal relationship. Like other rural villages of Nepal, Barpaki people know their friends and neighbor from the time of their birth. As familial, friendship, and neighborhood they are closely tied up. Usually, friends and neighbors can be relatives too.

They usually, work together in reciprocity called Parma in their agricultural field at the time of planting and harvesting. 'Perma' a reciprocal work, usually people worked together with their friend and neighbor as reciprocal work with same ability: especially with same age, gender, skill, and capacity. Parma culture always shows the class of human capital. If they able as their friend they would be able to work Parma. Already mentioned in Barpak 2/3 of the young males are outside the village or nation to earn money.

They celebrate the happiness at the time of marriage, childbirth, coming home from foreign and they become together to share the sad environment in death, illness, injuries, and other problems. They know good and bad habits, good or bad economic conditions, sorrow and happiness, expectation, and limitation of each other. At the time of the earthquake, only some of them involved in the funeral ritual of a neighbor. Hari Bahadur Ghale, a coordinator of ward number 6 citizen forum, said that 'usually we all villager were to go to express our condolence to the dead and sympathy for the family member of the dead. At the time of earthquake many villagers weren't

able to come to express their sympathy and condolence in the funeral rituals due to the loss of their relative's lives. So, death of people become similar as the death of animal'.

In Barpak, people usually got help as free labor at the time of building their house. Even on the day of the earthquake one house was going to build and eight villagers lost their life in a spot of a house building in the earthquake. They had gone as help to villagers. After the earthquake people nearly broke the free labor practice for villagers (not family members and relatives) on house building. They start to work as daily wage labor or allotment (Thekka). Local leaders accept that social change positively. One respondent (Hari Ghale, a coordinator of six ward citizen forum) said 'Young boys were working as foreign laborers. They are earning money, here their wife and children are not in bad economic condition. Some boys are here and working social activity in the evening and morning for death and birth. They also have a family(parent and wife) and children too. They also need to sustain themselves. Free labor was not justice if one earning and not share their income for villager and why villager need to help their house building as free? So it's not a negative change of society'.

Villager share their food, kitchen material, and cloth each other forgetting their economic class. Nearly all peoples were in the same condition. They eat the same food which they get from a helping villagers as a relief

Local people's Involvement in social institutional

Involvement of local people in the social institution from local to the national level is another part of social capital that manifest in social connection, a network of people inside and outside the community. Social institutions unite the member in the community and outside it connect with a broader range. Barpaki people are highly connected to different types of organizations. From local informal caste-based organizations, local formal organizations like mother and youth groups, a national-level formal organization like the ex-army unions to national political parties.

Caste-based informal institution: Barpak is a village of two homogeneous communities Gurung /Ghale and Dalit (Bishwakarma and Pariyar). On the surface, they look like cohesion between these communities. Chet Prasad Amgain has been working as VDC secretary for six years said 'naturally Barpak is beautiful village, just opposite of Budhda Himalaya. Nature can become vulgar at times like earthquakes. Architecturally Barpak was a beauty too, but this architecture took the lives of human beings. Again socially people are beautiful and helpful too, but sometimes they become dangerous.' In Barpak, people have a strong belief in their own caste. Especially it manifest as decision-maker in marriage time of young people. Barpaki people get marriage by love but love rarely able to break cushion, caste, and village's boundary. Even if they get married they aren't allowed to touch ancestral deity.

After the earthquake caste base mechanism didn't work either positively or negatively. But after the earthquake Dalit settlements hardly destroyed and their land becomes risk-sensitive land from the landslide. Dalit settlement shift from to public open space. After a month VDC meeting declares to clear open space and allowed back to their homeland (which is still at risk of landslide). People of the Pariyar (Damait tol) settlement return back and start to build their houses, but the people of the Bishwakarma (Kami tol) settlement didn't leave open space. Until the 18th month of the earthquake, some organizations haven't stopped distributing relief material in a name of Dalit. When I was there in the morning to take an interview with Dalit women, an organization

sent material for building the houses. These types of support didn't get by Damai caste. One of the women belonging from the Damai caste asked with me in the evening 'Local leader and VDC tells us to go back to your land, which was listed in risk-sensitive land. We come back, but 'Kamis' didn't come back on their land, their land is comparatively low risk-sensitive and they are comparatively strong in the sense of economic. But has been getting support as relief in the name of poor and Dalit.'

Youth clubs: there are four youth clubs in Barpak village -Tintara Youth Club in ward four, -Ekata bikas samaj in ward five and six, -Mitrata samaj in ward seven and eight, -Dunge Dhara youth club in ward number nine. They collect money at the time of Tihar festival by playing Deusi and lottery completion. From that money, they usually organize the competitive game (especially volleyball competition). Member of youth clubs (four clubs collectively) started to work from the second day of the earthquake. Some of them involved in the search and rescue of people with Nepali and Indian army. Some of them involve cooking and serve the rice on the ground of government schools. They help local leaders like members of ward citizen forum to share relied material.

Ama samuh: was active in social issues before the earthquake. Their main task is to collect money and provide small (up to five hundred) loan to their members without collateral. They made a meeting once in a month and worked one program related to awareness on the social issue, especially in sanitation, hygiene, or maternity issue. Rosani Ghale, a chair of women organization said, 'We sweep our village once a month, show cultural program and collect money from Lahure and tourists.' They used collected money from the cultural programs to buy catering material. After the earthquake mothers' organizations become unable to work collectively as youth clubs. It shows the impact of gendered norms and the role of males and females. In the same evidence of earthquake, male counterparts were involved in search and rescue of other and female counterpart caring their old, sick, injured person and children of the family. Rosani Ghale, chair of the mother group said, 'Women doesn't time to work outside the house. But personally, they have worked as psychological support. The work of mother organization can't be seen as organized as they have personal responsibilities as a mother in the house.'

Political unity: as a youth and mother organization, there are various local units of national-level political parties. Barpaki people are highly affiliated with political parties and from the lance of politics, VDC meetings look like mini-parliament. All decision-making processes go through the political party's member's decision. As political party members, they had connections at the national level. Within a week of the earthquake three chairs of main political parties including prime minister (Sushil Koirala, prime minister and chair of Nepali Congress, K.P.Sharma Oli, chair of CPN (UML) and Puspakamal Dahal, chair CPN (Maoist)) went there to express their sympathy to villagers. After that various leader of different parties was inter in the village but local people think they just come to see an epicenter of the earthquake and share sympathy. Villager thought political leaders didn't especially support Barpak.

Job patterns or professional

Through job patterns or professional relations people can build connections with other person and community as linking social capital. To analyze the linking social capital of Barpaki people we need to know the main income source. Barpak has a strong connection with Lahure practice (Arm

personnel in foreign countries). Now it (Lahure practice) is highly dependent labor working in gulf countries. VDC secretary said 'two-third of 20-55 old male people are outside the country for becoming lahure. Lahure practice is deeply rooted in their social behavior and this practice. And they categories the youth (especially boys) in four class:- first, British Lahore, second, Indian Lahore, third, Gulf Lahore and lastly, dhakre. Women are not in enlisted these five categories.

British Lahore: They have a permanent job with a high salary and after retirement, they have a chance to get a high rate of pension. Due to the permanent job, they have a permanent network with their colleague. They have a good economic condition and some of them build their house outside the village places such as Gorkha Bazar, Pokhara and Kathmandu. And many British Lahore is living in the United Kingdom too. they migrated and build another connectivity outside the village. After earthquake British government builds 26 houses for their pensioner or widow of their arm personnel in the village.

Indian lahure: Like British Lahore they also have a permanent job but comparatively low salary with British Lahore. Yes, they have a chance to get some pension after retirement. As British Lahore, Indian Lahores also have permanent job and networks with their colleague. Even so they dosent have a good economic condition like British Lahore, but they are not as bad as Gulf Lahore or Dhakre's condition. They also have a house outside the village like Gorakha Bazar, Pokhara and Kathmandu. As epicenter as Lahure village, after a first earthquake, Indian army inter in village and help to search, rescue and relief. Khem Bahadur Ghale, a coordinator of 4 number ward citizen forum said 'our villager woman(Khem didn't know the exact name of women due to the multiple names of a villager) is a Captain in Indian arm force. He also was a member of the team of Indian Armies, who were come there on the second day of the earthquake. So he took the Indian Army team in the village.' Indian army builds some temporary house for the widow, disable and they clear the debris (especially stone) from pedestrian and make pedestrian wider as a road with collaboration with young boys. But especially any network hadn't worked to help them.

Gulf lahure: Gulf Lahore can earn lower than British Lahore and more than Indian Lahore. Due to the temporary job of two-three years, they are unable to have a permanent network with their colleague.

Dhakre: a young boy who is currently unemployed and doesn't earn on daily basis (especially monthly salary basis job) in the village and even has no intention or willingness to go abroad for earning they called Dhakre. They have no job and free time too. But in the time of every function of the village as death, marriage, birth, in a time of house building even mating time of buffalo or cow they work in free of cost. In comparison with Lahure, Dhakre represents the lower class. They haven't a permanent and strong social network from their profession.

Women: women aren't counted as earning people in the community. Inside the house, they cook, feed, and care for children, old and sick family member. Outside the house, they worked in the agricultural field. Barpaki people's second source of livelihood is agriculture and is used for the consumption of day-to-day food. Women are the main workers in this field. Sometimes they (especially wives Gulf Lahore and Dhakre) work as daily wages labor. Nearly all women produce local wine. Some women sell it for money and some women are just for their home consumption especially for the male counterpart. They also wave woolen blankets too. But as network building outside the village is considered as an area of to be explored by a man, not of

women in the village. Due to the boundary of agricultural land and neighborhood, they were unable to build their social network. In this condition, they haven't connectivity with wide society.

Conclusion

After the backdrop of Gorkha earthquake 2015, in Nepali society this research find out kinship and maternal house is most important attribution of social capital than social norm and value. Barpak was epicentre of earthquake, as epicentre they are lucky than another villages people. Within some hours (at 3-5 pm) of earthquake Nepal army's helicopter land in the village and leave some tarpaulin (these was with logo of red cross) and arm personnel to rescued the injured people. Some tarpaulin they get from army and one tarpaulin shared by more than ten household. They become able to manage tarpaulin for child, old and sick person. Barpaki people get hug support form unknowing person.

There are some different between 'who knows who' and 'Who is a relatives of whose'. "Knowing" and "Unknowing" wasn't big deal in earthquake. And Bourdieu's 'who knows who' become a is totally failed for rural community especially at Barpak. May Bourdieu's this phrase is important in professional relation of capitalist society. So, I leave it here. In social background we can add economic condition of families and social status too. I found who was a poor from their history, their social capital were weak. And who were rich as economically, their relatives were also rich, they get support from their relatives.

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