

The Role of Social Enterprises in Building Inclusive Social
Capital: Evidences from Multi-Case, Qualitative Field
Study

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral
Affairs in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

International Affairs

The Norman Patterson School of International Affairs
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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to understand how income generating activities of social enterprises build inclusive social capital. Specifically, I explore the impact of structuring decision, i.e. extent of coverage and degree of participatory implementation, of social enterprises on inclusive social capital. The concept of inclusive social capital, i.e. cross-cutting ties among the people from different socio-economic status, implies a breakdown of unequal social norms and thus provides a deeper understanding of ‘social’ to assess the social impact of social enterprises. Through this concept, I also bridge the gap between the communitarian and the critical approach to social capital in development literature. I argue that while the communitarian approach overemphasizes the social benefits of economic programs, the critical approach struggles to explain the transformative potential of development activities. Contrasting cases where social enterprises were able to build inclusive social capital with cases where these efforts were unsuccessful, I show a transformative understanding of Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* and thus, extend the scope of the critical perspective on social capital.

I used qualitative case study method to explore the research objectives. Four social enterprises that were involved in income generating activities were selected from the central province of India. Findings from this research suggest that social enterprises can build inclusive social capital if they implement their programs at village level and create discursive space to address individual as well as collective needs. Furthermore, this research also demonstrates that social enterprises that implement multiple programs to address the heterogeneity of interests, and have a long-term and deeper engagement with

the communities are relatively more successful in building inclusive social capital, compare to those social enterprises that focus on scalability and prioritized financial sustainability over social objectives.

Findings from this research make several contributions to the field of international development and management studies. It provides a conceptual framework to assess the social impact of social enterprises and offers insights in implementing development projects in hierarchical communities. This research supports that the potential of social enterprises in development can only be materialized if income generating activities of social enterprises are supported by the processes, activities, and incentives that are social in nature.

Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to many people who made this thesis possible. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Cristina Rojas for her guidance and for her unwavering support throughout the PhD program. I could not have asked for a better supervisor. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my committee members, Dr Tessa Hebb and Dr Anil Varughese. Thank you Tessa for providing me an opportunity to work in Carleton Center for Community Innovation and for introducing me to the world of impact investing and social impact measurement. Working with you have been the most pleasant learning experience and your guidance in improving this thesis has been invaluable. To Anil, thank you for all the help you have provided me to improve the quality of my work. I am very grateful for your encouragement, wisdom and mentorship.

A special thanks to the member of my examination committee, Dr Sean Geobey and Professor Edward Jackson for their time and their thoughtful questions and comments.

NPSIA has facilitated and provided institutional support for this research. I am particularly thankful for Professor Dane Rowlands for his help and encouragement in the formative year of my PhD program. I would also like to thank the PhD program office, especially Patricia Lacroix for her kind help in navigating the process. To my classmates and friends in NPSIA and around the world, thank you for your support and for making this journey fun.

Field work was the most exciting part of this research and I am thankful for International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada for their funding for this project. I would

also like to acknowledge the help and support that I have received from following individuals during my field work: Dr Ravi Gupta, Editor-in-Chief, Elets Technomedia, Dr. A Bhardwaj (Peepal), and Dr Sushant Mishra (IIM, Indore). In addition, I acknowledge support from Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal, and Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur. I am also grateful to Dr Christopher Sutter for his guidance at the pilot stage of the data collection in the field.

I would like to acknowledge and express my appreciation to the social enterprises who agreed to be part of this research and to every single person who participated in this study, I am indebted to you for sharing your knowledge, experience and making it the most learning experience of my life.

Finally, this dissertation wouldn't have been possible without the help and encouragement that I have received from my dear husband, Israr Qureshi. I would cherish those long walks, coffee breaks that led to many intellectually stimulating conversations. Words cannot express how deeply grateful I am to your love and support. I dedicate this thesis to you!

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1 Chapter: Introduction

In spite of many achievements of millennium development goals (MDGs) (United Nations, 2015), social, economic and environmental dimensions of development continue to be the greatest challenges of the 21st century (Agapitova & Linn, 2016; Bansal, Gao & Qureshi, 2014; UNDP, 2016; ILO, 2011; The World Bank, 2009). Gender inequality still persists, big gaps exist between rural and urban areas, and millions of poor people still live in poverty and hunger without access to basic resources (United Nations, 2015). This has been reflected in the adoption of sustainable development goals (SDGs), which highlights the progress needed to be made in addressing poverty, social inequality and rural-urban divide (Sachs, 2015). The adoption of the SDGs has also intensified the search for sustainable solutions to development problems (Gabriel et al, 2016; Lim & Chia, 2016; Rogerson et al, 2014; UNDP, 2016).

Increasingly, countries are facing a dilemma to find a development model that promises strong economic growth with a social vision to share the benefits of economic growth with their poor populations. There has been a growing consensus among development agencies that the traditional top-down, charity based approaches have achieved limited success in providing sustainable solutions to poverty. There is an urgent need to find local sustainable solutions to eradicate poverty (Lim & Chia, 2016; Agapitova & Linn, 2016; Sakarya et al, 2012; Nunnenkamp; 2010; Easterly, 2006).

Moreover, the 2008 financial crisis has highlighted the weaknesses of global financial systems and the free market system that depends on it, in addressing rising inequality and in creating sustainable and vibrant communities (Narotzky & Besnier, 2014;

Gibson-Graham, 2014). This led scholars and policy makers to look for development models that can create a “better balance between economic efficiency, ecological sustainability and social equity” (Amin, 2009, p. 30). In this context, social enterprises are gaining prominence in development literature.

In development discourse, the emergence of social enterprises can be linked to the post-Washington consensus that emerged in the late 1990s and recognized the disastrous effects of market on community harmony and solidarity (Bank & Hulme, 2014). It has been argued that increasing unemployment and rising inequalities resulted in an atomized society with increasing crime (Rankin, 2002) and created a “Hobbesian problem of public order as individuals fight for survival under the harsh conditions in which they find themselves” (Portes & Landolt, 2000). In such scenario, ‘strengthening civil society’ became an explicit policy objective of the development actors, under the framework of ‘good governance’ (Bank & Hulme, 2014). This development model prioritized the role of civil society organizations in creating balanced growth, equity and stability while enlarging the logic of community (Clavo & Morales, 2016; Babb & Chorev, 2016; Howell, 2006, Lewis, 2002). The promotion of social enterprises in addressing current development challenges is a part of this broad development framework (Venot, 2016; Blowfield & Dolan, 2014). The narrative of social enterprises in development discourse is also shaped by the management literature and thus social enterprises, in academic as well policy circle are seen as transcending the boundaries between civil society and the private sector (Scarlato, 2013)

Social enterprises are hybrid organizations that leverage market-based models to generate social value and create income opportunities for socio-economically excluded

populations (Doherty, Haugh, & Lyon, 2014; Santos, 2012; Alter, 2007; Mair & Marti, 2006; Dees, Anderson & Wei-Skillern, 2004). They are hybrid in the sense that they balance two (opposing) institutional logics: social logic, which is focused on solving entrenched social issues in the society, and market or earned income logic, which is focused on financial sustainability of the organization (Mair, Battilana & Cardenas, 2012; Pache & Santos, 2013a, 2013b).

Social enterprises are attracting increasing attention from philanthropists, donor organizations, international organizations, and academia at large (Lim & Chia, 2016; Agapitova & Linn, 2016; Bertotti et al, 2012; Defourny & Nyssens, 2010; Karnani, 2010; Galera & Borgaza, 2009). It is argued that in many parts of the world formal markets and traditional for-profit organizations have excluded the world's poor (Devinney, 2009; Yunus, 2009), who are estimated to be between 2 billion (Karnani, 2010) and 4 billion (Prahalad, 2010). Increasing constraints on governments' revenue in most of the countries are preventing the government from carrying out their responsibility of providing the required social services to poor and disadvantaged populations (Santos, 2012; Phillips & Hebb, 2010; Hall & Reed, 1998; Dees, 1998). Non-governmental organizations have borne a substantial burden with the withdrawal of the state from social sphere; however, their perpetual dependence on donations has resulted in the poor sustainability of their programs (Unerman & O'Dwyer, 2010; Nunnenkamp & Ohler, 2012). Therefore, due to their balance between social mission and sustainability, social enterprises are increasingly being acknowledged as the emerging organizational form to address social issues such as poverty

and social exclusion (Jackson, 2004; Vidal, 2005; Gonzales, 2007; Seelos & Mair, 2007; Rotherroe & Miller, 2008; Yunus, 2009).

Consequently, the increased attention on social enterprises as a vehicle to tackle social problems can be seen in international discourse of various organizations such as the Department for International Development (DfID, UK), the World Bank, the International Labor Organization (ILO), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). These institutions are actively encouraging social enterprises in their development policy (Gabriel et al, 2016; Rogerson et al, 2014; Scarlato, 2013). For example, DfID recently published a report summarizing strategies for supporting social enterprise in challenging context (Gabriel et al, 2016). The World Bank has initiated ‘The Development Marketplace (DM)¹’ program to fund innovative social enterprises working on projects with high potential for development impact. Furthermore, in 2015, the British Council, Social Enterprise UK, and the World Bank Group published a report, “*Think Global, Trade Social*” which makes a strong case for social enterprises in achieving sustainable and inclusive development by tackling inequality and addressing the current social and environmental challenges.

Interestingly, almost all practitioner and field based accounts of social enterprises tend to be positive (Huysentruyt, Mair, & Stephan, 2016; Lim & Chia, 2016; Agapitova & Linn, 2016; Battilana, Sengul, Pache, & Model, 2015; Bryce, 2014; Smith, Cronley & Barr, 2012) and the potential of social enterprises in addressing economic, social, and environmental challenges is rarely scrutinized. Furthermore, the majority of research on

¹ The World Bank <http://wbi.worldbank.org/developmentmarketplace/>

social enterprises has been preoccupied with the issues of scale, financial sustainability and funding models and the *social* in social enterprises remains to a higher degree underexplored and ambiguous (cf Qureshi, Kistruck & Bhatt, 2016). There is an increasing trend to understand the *social* in social enterprises through narrowly defined quantitative indicators where the social impact of social enterprises is being reduced to the traditional economic indicators such as the number of jobs created, marginal increase in income, and the quantity of products distributed (Arvidson & Lyon, 2014). Some scholars suggest the use of metrics similar to accounting measures such as Balanced Score Card (Kaplan & Norton, 1996; 2001), Social Return on Investment (Simon & Barmeier, 2010), Social Enterprise Balance Scorecard (Somers, 2005), and Social Impact for Local Economies (McLoughlin et al, 2009) to understand the social outcomes of social enterprises.

However, if social benefits are the aim and ethos of the social enterprises then the social impact of social enterprises cannot be judged by the narrowly defined quantitative indicators. The social outcomes of social enterprises must be conceptualized more comprehensively to capture the impact of social enterprises on the societies and communities. In this context, some scholars have proposed social capital (Evers, 2001) as a social value to assess the impact of social enterprises in the communities (Ansari et al, 2012, Evers & Syrett, 2007).

Social capital, i.e. social networks, trust, and norms of reciprocity, have been identified as the most important resources in community development² (Islam & Morgan,

² It is important to acknowledge that the efficacy of social capital in community development remains controversial and there are scholars who strongly argue that development would be better off without the concept (e.g. Fine 2001; Radcliffe, 2004; Cleaver, 2005). According to Rankin (2004) social capital has

2011; Bhuiyan, 2011; Woolcock, 2010; Evers & Syrett, 2007; the World Bank, 2002; Putnam, 1993, 2000;). For deprived communities in particular, where the private and public-sector are weak and where there is a lack of financial, physical and human capital, building local social capital is an increasingly favored strategy (Evers & Syrett, 2007). Given the importance of social capital in community development, it is argued that social enterprises are likely to be effective if they cultivate social capital in the communities (Ansari et al, 2012; Somerville & McElwee, 2011; Janssens, 2010; Birch & Whittam, 2008; Evers & Syrett, 2007; Kay, 2005).

In academic literature, however, the discourse on the benefits of social enterprises is mixed, and the role of social enterprises in creating social capital remains contested (Eversole et al, 2013; Bertotti et al, 2011; Somerville & McElwee, 2011; Evers & Syrett, 2007; Kay, 2005). On one side, social enterprises are seen as a policy tool to create social capital (Eversole et al. 2013, Bertotti et al., 2011; Somerville & McElwee, 2011;), and it has been argued that some income generating activities of social enterprises result in norms of reciprocity by increasing social interactions and by creating interdependence among community members (Bertotti et al., 2011; Somerville & McElwee, 2011; Evers & Syrett, 2007; Kay, 2005). However, these studies have been conducted in developed country contexts, mostly Western Europe. Moreover, they do not dwell into the processes and mechanisms of social capital building. In development literature, the potential of civil

played an ideological role in the neoliberal project where it offers ‘a “governmental strategy” for shifting the onus of development from the state to civil society and to third-sector agencies working on its behalf. However, within critical literature there are a growing number of scholars who believe that understanding social capital in terms of distributions of other resources would bring the structural and distributive bases of social power in to discussion (e.g. Portes, 2000; Bebbington, 2007; Adhikari and Goldey, 2009; Nixon, 2009).

society organizations in building social capital has been framed by two approaches: the communitarian approach to social capital and the critical approach to social capital.

The dominant literature on social capital, which stems from the communitarian perspective (e.g., Putnam, 1993, 2000), assumes a virtuous cycle of social capital, and suggests that social capital is a natural outcome of participating in civil society organizations and that social capital can be built in the communities by expanding the activities of social organizations (Abom, 2004; Fukuyama, 2001) such as social enterprises (Borzaga & Defourny, 2004).

On the other hand, the critical approach to social capital suggests that social capital has a ‘downside’, and that the social norms and networks that create social capital are themselves infused with issues of power and inequality (Nixon, 2009; Edwards, 2004; Molyneux, 2002). Networks, through their power dynamics, can include some members while excluding others. As a result, even if social capital is generated through the projects and programs initiated by the social enterprises, it may not be inherently good, and may disproportionately benefit the resource-rich within the community.

Based on the theoretical insights gained from the literature on social capital, I make a distinction between exclusive, i.e. social capital within the socio-economic groups and inclusive social capital, i.e. social capital that cuts across social ties and brings people from different socio-economic status together (Nixon, 2009). A focus on inclusive social capital recognizes the positive as well as the negative side of social capital and shifts the focus from social capital as an outcome, towards the processes and mechanisms through which social inequalities and hierarchies can be transformed and inclusive social capital can be

generated (Bebbington, 2007). Therefore, in this dissertation, I use the concept of inclusive social capital to assess the social impact of social enterprises and aim to identify the processes and mechanisms used by social enterprises to generate inclusive social capital. I define inclusive social capital as the cross-cutting ties between the people from different socio-economic status. I argue that the existence of inclusive social capital in the communities implies a breakdown of unequal norms and the transformation of social hierarchies. Thus, the concept provides a deeper understanding of ‘social’ and offers a broader framework to assess the social impact of social enterprises. However, the mechanisms and processes of building inclusive social capital, in the context of social enterprises, have not been discussed in the extant literature and represent an important research gap for my study.

Furthermore, some scholars surmise that involving beneficiaries in income generating activities, which is the focus of most of the social enterprises, will result in deterioration of social capital (Ansari et al, 2012; Karnani, 2010). It has been argued that the dual mission of social enterprises (Qureshi, Kistruck & Bhatt, 2016; Doherty, Haugh & Lyon, 2014; Bacq & Janssen, 2011) requires them to strike right balance between social transformation and financial self-sufficiency (Young & Kim, 2015; Ebrahim, Battilana & Mair, 2014) which many social enterprises find difficult to achieve (Cornforth, 2014; Madill, Brouard & Hebb, 2010). In this sense, social enterprises have inherent tension and conflict in their operation model (Mason & Doherty, 2015; Costanzo et al, 2014). Based on the theoretical and practical insights gained from the literature, in this dissertation, I explore following two inter-related research questions:

- Are the income-generating activities of social enterprises conducive to generating

inclusive social capital?

- How do social enterprises structure income generating programs and how does this structuring affect inclusive social capital?

I answer these questions through the following arguments: I argue that hybrid nature of social enterprises forces them to pay equal, if not more, attention to growth, and efficiency to generate revenue streams that sustain their social activities (Doherty, Haugh & Lyon, 2014; Bacq & Janssen, 2011). Such economic focus has the potential to diminish the focus on social aspects, resulting in the instrumentality of social relations amongst the beneficiaries or between beneficiaries and the other community members. Such instrumentality at best is not conducive to forming inclusive social capital.

Furthermore, I argue that the deterioration or generation of social capital is not a natural outcome of social enterprise activities but is determined by various factors. My literature review and earlier field experience indicate that the social enterprises can create inclusive social capital by involving beneficiaries in their activities and by providing opportunities for social interactions if they create mechanisms that take into account existing inequalities and power differentials in the society and are able to redress them. In the absence of such mechanisms, the income generating activities of social enterprises can generate social capital that might exacerbate inequality in the communities, where the resource-rich will disproportionately benefit from the programs, thereby reinforcing existing socio-economic inequalities. On the other hand, if there are mechanisms to address existing inequalities, then social enterprises may generate inclusive social capital. In extant literature, participation and group level implementation have been seen conducive to build social capital. Consequently, in this research, I propose to investigate the degree of participatory implementation and the extent of coverage chp(Group or village level

implementation) used by social enterprises in organizing their economic activities and their effect on inclusive social capital.

This research was conducted using qualitative case study of four social enterprises in India. These four social enterprises were working in the central province of India and were involved in income generating activities. However, there were differences in the extent of coverage (group vs. village level coverage) and relative degree of participatory approach adopted by the each social enterprise. I investigated how do different processes to structure decisions in communities affect the creation of inclusive social capital.

Data were collected through field observations and semi-structured interviews. The field observation and data collection were carried out in the four stages spread over 21 months (see Table 3.2 in Chapter 3) in which I spent 20 months in the field involving visits to 80 project related villages and 36 non-project related but similar villages in the vicinity of project related villages. Moreover, at the pilot stage, I also visited 29 villages that were in different provinces but employed similar projects by the same social enterprises. During the entire study, I conducted 278 interviews with social enterprises personnel at various levels and locations, 353 individual interviews with villagers (280 beneficiaries and 73 non-beneficiaries), and 62 group interviews. In addition, I observed 49 group meetings and 54 village meetings. The data were collected using semi-structured interviews, archival documents, and direct observation in the communities. The data were analyzed using NVIVO. Total 276 open nodes were identified from the data and were combined into six axial nodes: degree of participatory implementation; financial sustainability; inclusive social capital; plurality of programs; scaling speed; and social sustainability.

The findings of this research make several theoretical and policy level contributions. This research provides a theoretical framework to understand the social value outcome of social enterprises through the concept of inclusive social capital. The concept of inclusive social capital also contributes to the growing literature in development theory that bridges the divide between the communitarian approach and the critical approach to social capital. Using the concept of inclusive social capital, I show the limitation of communitarian understanding of development. I extend the scope of critical approach to social capital by applying a transformative understanding to *habitus*, a concept defined by Bourdieu as ‘system of durable, transposable dispositions’ (Bourdieu,1977) and was used to explain how power is reproduced and (can be) transformed in the society (Vikas et al, 2015). In my field work, I found that social enterprises that address the diversity of interests and create interdependence among various groups could change the ‘mode of practices’ across the *fields* compared to those that do not use these mechanisms. In addition, by creating new “cultural configurations” that give economically and socially disadvantaged groups access to a well-defined platform and new systems of knowledge, social enterprises can change the *habitus* and break down normative restrictions constitutive of the symbolic boundary of gender and caste.

Furthermore, my research demonstrates that extent of coverage matter and that village level implementation of the programs are more conducive to building inclusive social capital. In the current development model, it is generally assumed that the best way to implement any development program is through group formation (Burney & Naylor, 2012; Edwards, 1999; Rivera & Coming, 1990). The legitimacy of the group as an operational unit gained ground with the success of self-help and micro-credit groups.

Rooted in the communitarian understanding of social capital, the group based approaches take a homogenous understanding of communities and assume that organizing participants in groups will not only generate economic benefits but also build social capital. However, my findings show that the success of these groups is often measured in terms of their operational efficiencies, as it is financially and logistically difficult to engage each individual and it is cumbersome and intractable to engage entire village, rather than their ability to generate inclusive social capital. I demonstrate that in hierarchical communities, group-based approaches further strengthen the bonding social capital of rich and powerful, at the expense of bridging social capital. Compare to group-based approach, I found that village level implementation of the program is more conducive to building social capital. The success of a village level implementation that involve beneficiaries at every stage of implementation also addresses the debate between whether to follow a top-down or bottom-up implementation (Betts & Bloom, 2013, DFID, 2012; Fraser et al, 2006, White, 1996) arguing that a bottom-up implementation is more effective in addressing social and economic goals.

Finally, in the extant literature on social enterprises, scalability is assumed to be a given (e.g., Casanovas, et al, 2013, Dees et al, 2004) i.e. it is expected of all the social enterprise that they should quickly scale-up their operations in order to create any meaningful impact (e.g, Agapitova & Linn, 2016; Desa & Koch, 2013; Lyon & Fernandez, 2012). Popular, as well as scholarly, literature uncritically promotes the idea of scaling up and doing it quickly (e.g., Westley & Antadze, 2010). However, my findings established that scaling speed runs counter to generating inclusive social capital. When social enterprises are focused on adding more villages quickly, they do not pay sufficient attention

to power dynamics within the villages and end up exacerbating the current power relations by strengthening bonding social capital at the expense of inclusive social capital.

This dissertation is organized into 7 chapters. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature on social capital, social enterprises, and discusses various theoretical debates in these two fields. In this Chapter, I review and discuss the definition and main characteristics of the social enterprises. I also highlight various theoretical debates on social capital that are relevant to my research questions. This chapter is concluded by building a case for inclusive social capital, highlighting the research gap and formulating the research questions. In Chapter 3, I provide details on the research methodology in general and specific to research designed selected for this thesis. In this Chapter, I highlight various steps taken to uphold the rigor and ethical aspects of the research. I also provide a clear roadmap of how findings are organized and analysis to be conducted and discuss the case selection criteria and overall data collections schedule. Chapter 4 provides a detailed description of the context of the research setting for all the four cases. This Chapter also includes information about each individual case such as their social mission, organizational structure and social and economic contexts. Detailed demographic information about all the villages visited as well as data collection schedule for each of the cases, is also offered. Chapter 5 explains the findings from each of the cases. Chapter 6 integrates the findings from across the cases and discusses their theoretical implications, and Chapter 7 provides implication of the research, future research avenue, and conclusions.

2 Chapter: Social Enterprise and Social Capital

Social enterprises (SEs) have emerged in recent years as a new phenomenon in developed as well as developing countries (Agapitova & Linn, 2016; Lim & Chia, 2016; British Council, 2015; Hackett, 2010; Mair & Schoen, 2007). The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, the Aravind Eye Hospital in India, Sekem in Egypt, the Ashoka Foundation in the United States, and the Green Belt in Kenya are some notable examples (Yunus, 1998; Bornstein, 2007; Basu, 2012).

Increasingly, the SEs are seen as an expression of the civil society's response to local and global challenges (British Council 2015; Lim & Chia 2016; Hartigan, 2005; Sakarya et al, 2012). As the SEs aim to combine the best social practices with the best business practices to generate social, economic, and environmental benefits, they are portrayed as the alternative to the current development model (Huysentruyt, Mair, & Stephan 2016; Stephan, Patterson, Kelly & Mair, 2016; Agapitova & Linn, 2016).

However, the capability of the SEs in generating social, economic and environmental benefits is rarely challenged. The questions are rarely asked *whether and how* these benefits are achieved. Furthermore, there is a lack of focus in investigating the *social* in social enterprises. In general, the field lacks a critical engagement with the questions of power and politics. In this context, this chapter critically analyzes the origin and definition of the social enterprise in development discourse.

Furthermore, this chapter also presents an argument for using a theoretical framework to evaluate the social value of the social enterprise initiatives through the concept of social capital. From a development policy perspective, social capital, while controversial (Fine, 2001, 2003; Molyneux, 2002), has increasingly become influential in

the policy-making process. In this chapter, I discuss the dominant approaches of social capital in the development field--the communitarian and the critical approach -and build a case for a critical engagement with the *social* in social enterprises through the concept of inclusive social capital.

2.1 Social enterprises and development discourse

In development policy circle, the potential of social enterprises in addressing social, economic and environmental challenges is gaining wide acceptance. However, the origin of the social enterprises in the field and their place in the development landscape, governed by the ‘holy trinity’ (Howell, 2006) of state, market, and civil society, remains somewhat unclear. Traditionally, the state, market and civil society are seen the three main institutional domains of the development landscape (Banks & Hulme, 2014; Howell, 2006). Consequently, the dominant debate in the development paradigm often focuses on the question of which actors are the most appropriate agents for development (Banks & Hulme, 2014). However, the emergence of social enterprises challenges the dominance of current actors and, arguably, offers solutions that blur institutional boundaries.

The origin of social enterprises in development field is often linked with the discursive changes that have been taking place since the 1970s. Since the breakdown of the Bretton-Woods system in the early 70’s, neo-liberal perspective had dominated the development discourse. In this model, the state was seen as part of the problem of underdevelopment, and an argument was made for the reduction in its size, influence and ‘interference’ as a precondition for growth (Banks & Hulme, 2014; Fitzhugh & Stevenson, 2015; Kay, Joy & Donaldson, 2016). The central tenets of this discourse were a withdrawal of the state system from the welfare activities and an increasing impetus towards

privatization (Calvo & Morales, 2016). In the international development field, this was reflected in the push towards the free market and a package of structural adjustment policies accompanied by privatization, deregulation of the economy and reduction of the sphere of state responsibilities (Calvo & Morales, 2016; Molyneux, 2002).

While the success of the states in the Asian Tigers and China in achieving economic development has brought the state's role back into the spotlight, their scope in influencing development agenda has been limited by a lack of resources and, as some argued, by a 'bureaucratic, ineffective and wasteful' service delivery system which is seen 'antithetical to innovation' (Dees, 2007: 25).

As states, specifically in poor and developing countries, grapple with low capacity and lack of resources to provide welfare services, major global development institutions such as the UN and the World Bank endorsed a policy of proactively engaging businesses in development since the 1990s (Blowfield & Dolan, 2014). In this market-driven approach, the private sector is assumed to play a wider role in creating economic growth, prosperity, and well-being (Venot, 2016). However, it is now well noted that a system solely based on profit maximization, where profit is either re-invested in financial speculation or used for maximizing shareholders' value, has created an unprecedented concentration of incomes in the hands of the rich across the globe (Birdsall, 2003; Oxfam, 2016). Furthermore, a business model which solely prioritizes economic values and in which the social and environmental costs are externalized presents a severe risk to the economy, environment, and human life on the earth (Hudson, 2009; Bansal et al, 2014).

Following the limitation of state-driven and market-led ideologies, 'strengthening civil society' has become an explicit policy objective under the framework of 'good

governance' since the early 2000s (Banks & Hulme, 2014). This development model proposes that a 'virtuous cycle' could be built between state, market and civil society for creating balanced growth, equity, and stability (Lewis, 2002; Howell, 2006; Clavo & Morales, 2016). It is argued that a vibrant civil society will lead to the development and strong democratic process which in turn will foster strong civil society, thus leading to a virtuous cycle (Mercer, 2002). Such community-centric model prioritizes the role of civil society in building social relationships and community solidarity through decentralization and subsidiarity (Blowfield & Dolan, 2014; Venot, 2016). It encourages communities to identify their problems, to initiate and implement their own solutions, and to develop long-term community capacities that foster the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives (Sonnino & Griggs- Trevarthen, 2012). While civil society actors are incredibly diverse (ranging from grassroots associations, social movements, cooperatives, formal non-profits, foundations, and church groups among others) (Banks & Hulme, 2014) the promotion of social enterprises is a part of this broad framework that enlarges the logic of community and social solidarity in the development field (Bhatt, Qureshi & Riaz, 2017; Clavo & Morales, 2016).

Compared to the state and market, the civil society sector, by virtue of its grassroots activities, tend to be well placed in identifying social problems, and in certain cases, are also able to develop solutions to social problems. There is a very vast literature on the size and growth of non-profits, however, scholars agree that the emergence of non-profits in providing social and economic services can be attributed to market failure and government failure (Weisbrod 1975). Weisbrod (1975) develops the first general economic theory of the role non-profits. His work suggests that non-profit sector exists to provide public goods

that are not served by the market or the states (Weisbrod, 2009). Salamon, Sokolowski, and List (2003) build on the work of Weisbrod (1975) and explain the differences in the growth and size of non-profit sector in different countries. This line of research demonstrates that the size and growth of non-profit sector depend on demand heterogeneity; the size of government and the size of funding available for nonprofit organizations. However, this public good theory of nonprofits is criticized by Hansmann (1987) who argues that non-profit is not a provider of public goods, instead, the services provided by many nonprofits appears to be private ones. Instead of market failure and government failure, Hansmann uses “contract failure” theory to explain the existence of nonprofit organizations. He argues that the non-profit distribution constrains on non-profits enterprises make them more trustworthy compare to the for-profit firms in delivering goods and services.

However, most of the civil society actors do not have the capacity or resources to implement those solutions by themselves. Thus, the non-profit sector perpetually depends upon the state to provide resources (Salamon, 1987). Notwithstanding, there are also private (philanthropic) resources. However, increasing donor skepticism about their funds being spent on administrative overhead and fund-raising, rather on addressing social issues (Bennett & Savani, 2004; Kistruck et al, 2013; Moore, 2000), has sparked an effort to find alternative ways of addressing these issues. Studies have indicated that non-profits that are perceived as inefficient (i.e., spending more on administrative cost than actual social issues) tend to experience lower future financial support from stakeholders who are no longer willing to support such organizations (Kistruck et al., 2013; Thornton, 2006).

In this discourse, social enterprises are seen as capable of delivering public services and regenerating communities because they aim to combine the best social practices, such as caring for local communities and creating healthy interactions amongst the beneficiaries of its initiatives with the best business practices, such as creativity, efficiency, and scalability (Kistruck, Beamish, Qureshi & Sutter, 2013; Mair, Marti & Ventresca, 2012; Young, 2012). It is argued that social enterprises, by virtue of their use of 'efficient' business models are better placed in using resources more optimally. It is also emphasized that entrepreneurs with a social conscience (Harding, 2010) leveraging social innovation can bring power of entrepreneurship to solve pressing social issues (Defourny & Nyssens, 2010; Phillips et al., 2015; Young & Kim, 2015).

To summarize, the emergence of social enterprises in development field is seen as a response to three simultaneous trends that have been taking place since the 1970s: a) pulling out of state due to dwindling finances (state failure, Dees, 2007; Spear, 2008), b) ineffectiveness of markets in addressing social-environmental challenges (market failure), and c) inefficient resource utilization by non-government organizations (voluntary failure, Salamon, 1987). Furthermore, by combining the social practices of non-profits with the business logic of market, social enterprises are transcending the traditional institutional boundaries in development landscape and are bridging the divide between third sector and private sector (Scarlatto, 2013).

Due to their focus on solving social issues and generating social value, social enterprises are often mistaken for and are used interchangeably with cooperatives and other traditional social economy organizations. In the next section, I clarify the organizational

structure of social enterprises by differentiating them from nonprofits and ‘traditional’ social economy organizations.

2.2 Social enterprises and social economy

Social enterprises form an integral part of the ‘new’ social economy and differ significantly from traditional social economy organizations such as cooperatives, mutual associations, and charities (Pestoff, 2009; Borzaga et al, 2013). This distinction is important because in many developing countries, such as India, there is a vibrant social economy sector, which until recently was dominated by the traditional social economy actors. However, increasingly social enterprises are contributing to social economy sector. The differences between traditional social economy actors and social enterprises are summarized below.

First, traditional social economy organizations that consist of large agriculture cooperatives and mutual associations target the need of their own members or owners, whereas social enterprises put more emphasis on the general interest of the community rather than on purely mutualistic goals (Nyssens, 2006; Somerville & McElwee, 2011; Borzaga et al., 2013).

Second, while traditional social economy organizations have generally been set up as single-stakeholder organizations, many social enterprises include a combination of different types of stakeholders (workers, users, or volunteers) in their membership (Birch & Whittam, 2008; Borzaga et al, 2013).

Third, unlike foundations or charities, social enterprises earn a substantial proportion of their income through earned income strategies, rather than being dependent

on grants or donations (Luke & Chu, 2013; Teasdale, 2012). Some scholars suggest that the important differentiating criteria between not-for-profits and social enterprises are that social enterprises rely on revenue generation, market and self-funding operations (Dart, 2004; Birch & Whittam, 2008; Luke & Chu, 2013). A benchmark sometimes used for a social enterprise is that at least 50% of its turnover is earned income, although opinions vary on what the best threshold should be (Euricse, 2013).

While social enterprises are distinguished from other organizations as enterprises specifically created to pursue social goals (Euricse, 2013), the term lacks a universal definition and the label of social enterprise has been applied to a range of phenomena (Teasdale, 2011). For example, it has been used to refer to earned income strategies by nonprofits (Dees, 1998), voluntary organizations delivering public services (Di Domenico et al., 2009), democratically controlled organizations blending social and economic goals (Defourny & Nyssens, 2006), profit-orientated businesses operating in public welfare fields (Kanter & Purrington, 1998) or having a social conscience (Harding, 2010), and community enterprises addressing social problems (Williams, 2007). The definitions of social enterprises also differ among academics, policy makers, social entrepreneurs, and social investors (Dacin, Dacin, & Tracey, 2010; Dees, 1998; Mair & Marti, 2006; Nicholls, 2010) and reflect distinct regional differences (Doherty et al., 2014; Kerlin, 2010).

In general, three broad streams of social enterprise definitions exist (Mair & Marti, 2006): *first*, not-for-profit initiatives in search of alternative funding strategies or management schemes to create social value (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006; Boschee, 1998); *second*, socially responsible practice of commercial businesses engaged in cross-sector partnerships (Sagawa & Segal, 2000; Waddock, 1988); and *third*, a means

to alleviate social problems and catalyze social transformation (Alvord, Brown, & Letts, 2004). In the following sections, I discuss the commonly used definitions of the term social enterprise and define it in the context of my research.

2.3 Definitions and characteristics

The original use of the term *social enterprise* was first developed by Freer Spreckley in 1978 who described SEs as organizations that use Social Audit. For Spreckley, social enterprise is:

“An enterprise that is owned by those who work in it and/or reside in a given locality, is governed by registered social as well as commercial aims and objectives and run co-operatively may be termed a social enterprise. Traditionally, 'capital hires labour' with the overriding emphasis on making a 'profit' over and above any benefit either to the business itself or the workforce. Contrasted to this is the social enterprise where 'labour hires capital' with the emphasis on social, environmental and financial benefit.” (1981: 8)

While this early definition recognizes the triple bottom line (social, environmental and financial benefit) as an important criterion, it identifies cooperative as an only organizational form for social enterprises, and thus, ignores social enterprises that are registered as charities, for-profit or trust.

Over the past few decades, a greater variety of social enterprise forms have been recognized, and increasingly, social enterprises are understood as hybrid organizations that are transcending boundaries between sectors (Phillip & Hebb, 2010; Pache & Santos, 2013b; Grassl, 2011; Hackett, 2010). Consequently, the study of social enterprise has also moved beyond its cooperative roots (Hackett, 2010).

In addition to the nature of the organizational form, Kerlin (2010) has also noticed the regional differences in defining social enterprises. In Europe, the concept of social

enterprises still derives from the cooperative tradition of collective social action (Galera & Borzaga, 2009; Nyssens, 2006; Defourny & Nyssens, 2010). The European Research Network (EMES³) definition of social enterprises reflects the European tradition and holds true for most European countries (Phillip & Hebb, 2010). According to the EMES, the defining characteristics of the social enterprise “ideal type” include (Defourny, 2001, pp. 16–18):

1. A continuous activity producing goods and/or selling services;
2. A high degree of autonomy;
3. A significant level of economic risk;
4. A minimum amount of paid work;
5. An explicit aim to benefit the community;
6. An initiative launched by a group of citizens;
7. A decision-making power not based on capital ownership;
8. A participatory nature, which involves the persons affected by the activity;
9. Limited profit distribution.

The EMES definition of social enterprises combines the elements of cooperatives and non-profit organizations, and it places emphasis on a democratically accountable governance structure and a distribution of surplus back to the organization.

The concept of social enterprise in the United States is generally much broader and it includes “mission oriented revenue or job creating projects undertaken by individual social entrepreneurs, nonprofit organizations, or nonprofits in association with for-

³ The EMES (The Emergence of Social Enterprise in Europe) Project (begun in 1996) conducts research on social enterprise in European Union countries with funds from the European Commission.

profits⁴.” Furthermore, social enterprises in the US are oriented towards commercial revenue generation and are primarily conceived as an innovative business model (Kerlin, 2006, 2010; Doherty, et al 2014). According to Kerlin (2006), this commercial orientation in the US stems from the long history of market reliance.

The Social Enterprise Alliance, a national membership organization and a central player in the field in the US (Defourny & Nyssens, 2012), define social enterprise as: "Any earned-income business or strategy undertaken by a non-profit to generate revenue in support of its charitable mission". Alter (2007) provides a definition of social enterprise that is broad and reflects the commercial orientation of social enterprises.

“A social enterprise is any business venture created for a social purpose – mitigating/reducing a social problem or a market failure – and to generate social value while operating with the financial discipline, innovation and determination of a private sector business” (Alter, 2007: p. 12).

Unlike EMES definition of social enterprise, this definition does not make any reference to ownership or democratic control as a defining character. It directly focuses on solving or mitigating a social problem or market failure, and explicitly mentions innovation to improve social wellbeing within an entrepreneurial organization (Ridley-Duf

Debates around the legal structure also exists to understand the operation and structure of the social enterprises (see, for example, Hatch,1980; Brenton, 1985; Hansmann, 1987). Hansmann (2009), in his seminal work, *the Ownership of Enterprise*, explains why different enterprises show different distributions of ownership forms. He defines ownership by the formal rights of individuals to control the firm and to claim the firm’s residual earnings (profits). The organizational form of an enterprise would adopt the

⁴ the *Social Enterprise Magazine Online* <http://www.socialenterprisemagazine.org/>

most efficient and cost effective form to solve the market contracting problem. There are three costs associated with the organization of firms: cost resulting from collective decision making; cost resulting from managerial discretion; and cost that is inherent in residual earning. According to Hansmann (2009), these costs vary among patrons and firms will assign ownership to minimize “the total costs of transactions between the firm and all of its patrons” (p. 21). Balancing between the cost of contracting in the market and the cost of ownership is the key to success (Hansmann, 1980). Analyzing nonprofits enterprises through this framework suggests that nonprofits are not inherently different from other firms and their growth results from a particular mix of demands. According to Hansmann (2009), “the same factors that determine the most efficient assignment of ownership also determine when it is appropriate for a firm to have no owners at all” (p. 12). From this perspective, nonprofit by definition do not have owners and therefore, they are not entitled to distribute their profits to those who control the organization (Hansmann, 2009).

In addition to nonprofit organizational structure, there is also an emphasis on the for-profit model of the social enterprises. While the new emerging corporate forms do not force a choice between non- and for-profit but create new kinds of hybrids (Phillips & Hebb, 2010), the legal structure of a social enterprise has an effect on what type of funds they can attract (Geobey, Westley & Weber, 2012). For example, not-for-profits cannot solicit equity investments but can have access to debt capital. Recently many countries have legally recognized the hybrid structures such as Britain’s Community Interest Companies (CICs) or the US L3C (LowProfit Limited Liability Company). Such structures enable legal entities to have greater access to capital that may have been restricted for nonprofits and cooperatives in the past (Phillips & Hebb, 2010). According to Mair and

Marti (2006), the decision to choose a for-profit or not-for-profit set up depends on four factors: the nature of social needs that needs to be addressed, the amount of resources needed, the scope for raising capital, and the ability to capture economic value. Despite this apparent agreement in the field, there is an increasing push towards the for-profit American model of the social enterprises that puts a greater emphasis on market solutions driven by individuals committed to entrepreneurial action (Ridley-Duff, 2015; Cornelius, 2015; Cohen, 2015).

The above discussion illustrates the lack of clear consensus on the definition of social enterprises and shows the continental differences between the meaning and understandings of the social enterprises. While these definitional differences have dominated the research on the social enterprises, a detailed systematic literature review revealed the core characteristics of social enterprise that are universally accepted.

For the purpose of this dissertation, I identify social enterprises as organizations with following characteristics. A social enterprise is an organization that:

- Pursues objectives that are simultaneously social and economic in character.
- Generates revenue for sustainability and to pursue their social mission.
 - Reinvests surplus revenues in the social mission.
- Produces goods and services to maximize social value creation rather than maximizing economic value creation.
- is initiated by individuals dedicated to the social cause that meet the needs of the broader community.

To summarize, social enterprises, in the context of my research, are self-sustaining initiatives that apply market-based solutions to create social value in poor communities.

2.4 Exploring the social in the social enterprise

The mainstream research on social enterprises has been preoccupied with the operational issues of the SEs (Daya, 2014; Fitzhugh & Stevenson, 2015; Kay & Donaldson, 2016). The most prevalent themes in current research of social enterprises, for example, have been related to the internal operations of social enterprises where the objective is to identify the factors that enable or hinder the success of SEs or to develop the for-profit funding models for the enterprises. It is argued that the prevalence of these themes in the field has somewhat deterred a critical engagement with the social enterprises (Daya, 2014; Munoz 2010; Sud, VanSand & Baugous 2009; Cho, 2006; Arthur et al., 2006). A detailed literature review on the topic shows that the social analysis in the SEs is relatively absent and the field lacks an overall engagement with the critical issues that are at the core of the development literature. These include issues of power, identity, solidarity, collective action and capacity building.

Furthermore, the narrow focus in the literature on identifying quantitative indicators to measure the social impact also implies that there are still large gaps that remain in understanding the actual or potential effects of social enterprise, either at the individual level or at the collective level.

One of the reasons for this relative absence of *social* in social enterprises might be the assumptions that social enterprises, by definitions, are socially beneficial. This is based on the premise that if the business activities of a social enterprise are successful, then social

objectives will, in essence, be achieved (Arthur et al, 2006). Teasdale (2009, pages 7–8) highlights this narrative in the policy and practitioner literature which works on the assumption that if a social enterprise is commercially successful the social purpose will take care of itself. In the academic literature, the “business case” narratives have been prioritized and a conceptual and theoretical recognition of the “social” has been lacking (Arthur et al., 2006; Daya, 2014).

In India, for example, the social enterprise field is increasingly identified as mission-driven businesses that improve the lives of the poor while generating profits (see Intellectap, 2013). The policy discourse has been dominated by the discussion of identifying the business structure, financial viability and funding sources for these mission-driven businesses. However, there is a little discussion or critical analysis on whether and how the sector is achieving its social outcome.

Furthermore, the vast literature on microfinance and philanthropy challenges ‘the assumption that using business practices of innovation, scale and efficiency will automatically strengthen the not-for-profit sector (Daya, 2014; Haldar & Stiglitz, 2015; Thomas & Kumar, 2016). The primary criticism put forward by this body of research is that there are fundamental contradictions in both theory and practice between business and social logics (Lee & Lounsbury, 2015; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008, Zhao & Lounsbury, 2016). This contradiction is demonstrated in the philanthropy sector by Edwards (2009), who argues that most of the hybrid projects failed because of the high trade-offs that always seem to be necessary between social and financial goals (also see Cornforth, 2014; Costanzo et al, 2014; Madill, Brouard & Hebb, 2010; Mason & Doherty, 2015). There are many organizations that started off with a social purpose and steadily lost it as they became

more embedded in the market, giving rise to a concept called ‘mission drift’ (Ebrahim, Battilana & Mair, 2014; Epstein & Yuthas, 2010; Jones, 2007; Ramus & Vaccaro, 2014; Young & Kim, 2015). It means, over time, the excessive focus on financial objectives tends to squeeze out the social mission.

The research conducted on microfinance also shows the contradiction of combining the social goals of empowerment with the market logic of entrepreneurialism. Bee (2010), in a study of a microfinance NGO in Bolivia, shows that the prevailing market-based discourses which stresses the importance of self-reliance, efficiency and economic individualism fails to realize the explicitly stated goal of achieving empowerment through strengthening community and solidarity. Other scholars have expressed similar concerns (Byl & Vrendenburg, 2015; Copestake, 2007; Hishigsuren, 2007; Mersland & Strøm, 2010) in the contexts of social enterprises. Arthur et al. (2006) highlight this trade-off as:

“If the social side of social enterprise is too tied to a business case, then when, as they surely will, some significant social enterprise failures start to happen, the social aims and purpose will be difficult to salvage and re-legitimate: essentially the baby may go out with the bathwater” (p. 3)

These discussions illustrate that the social benefits of social enterprises cannot be taken for granted. As the governments are actively encouraging SEs as key actors, there is a clear need for more critical analyses of the social to evaluate the sector’s development potential.

2.4.1 What is the *social* in social enterprises?

According to Cho, (2006), the “social” in SE is vacuous unless and until it is explicitly specified. Furthermore, Daya (2014) also remarks that if social benefits are the aim and ethos of enterprise, the development potential of social enterprises cannot be

judged through narrowly defined quantitative tools and traditional economic indicators such as the number of jobs created, the amount of money invested and the quantity of products distributed. The impact of social enterprises must be conceptualized more broadly that captures the impact social enterprises have on the societies and communities. In this context, some scholars have proposed social capital as a social value to assess the impact of social enterprises in communities (Evers & Syrett, 2007; Majee & Hoyt, 2010; Islam & Morgan, 2011).

Social capital (i.e., social networks, trust, and norms of reciprocity) has been identified as the most important resources in community development (Putnam, 1993, 2000; the World Bank, 2002; Evers & Syrett, 2007; Woolcock, 2010; Islam & Morgan, 2011; Bhuiyan, 2011). Arguably, higher social capital in the communities serves as social collateral, facilitates collective action and creates safer and healthier communities. Given the importance of social capital in community development, it is argued that social enterprises are likely to be effective if they cultivate social capital in communities (Kay, 2005; Evers & Syrett, 2007; Birch & Whittam, 2008; Janssens, 2010; Somerville & McElwee, 2011; Ansari et al, 2012). There have also been a few attempts in the past to conceptualize the social impact of social enterprises using the concept of social capital (Evers, 2001; Amin, Cameron, & Hudson, 2002; Evers & Syrett, 2007; Majee & Hoyt, 2010; Islam & Morgan, 2011; Scarlato, 2013). In this dissertation research, I agree with the extant view that the concept of social capital provides a more comprehensive

understanding of social impact compared to the narrowly defined quantitative indicators, and adopt this concept for the analysis of social value creation.

However, it is important to note that whether the income generating activities of social enterprises actually create or destroy social capital in the communities remain understudied despite a growing number of policies by the UNDP (2008), EU (2010), and ILO (2011). This seems to assume the relationship and seek to promote social enterprises in expectation that this will automatically strengthen the social ties within the communities. Although there have been studies on social capital in the context of NGOs and other social organizations, the findings are mixed. Some studies found that the operation of NGOs has improved social capital in the community (Bardhan, 2002; Conning & Kevane, 2002; Rao & Ibáñez, 2005; Sanyal, 2009) while others found that social capital has deteriorated (Devika & Thampi, 2007; Sacouma, 2012; Wong, 2012). Moreover, as social enterprises are different from NGOs due to their hybrid form and their need to balance social and economic goals, these findings may or may not be applicable in their context.

Past experiences of for-profit organizations indicate that organizations that exploit social relationships for economic activities may actually result in the deterioration of social capital (Eikenberry, Kluver & Drapal, 2004). In the case of microfinance, some argued that the availability of micro-credit may disrupt traditional community self-reliance while enhancing debt dependence and reliance on retailers (Ansari et al, 2012). As a result, communities can become fragmented and may be left without traditional resources for basic survival. This highlights the negative effect that income generating activities can have in poor communities (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

In order to understand the impact that social enterprise can have on social capital, the next section provides a critical analysis of the social capital literature.

2.4.2 Social capital: A critical review of the concept

The concept of social capital is not new and scholars from various disciplines have contributed to the evolving meaning of social capital. In their seminal article, Woolcock and Narayan (2000) identify four approaches to social capital that capture the plurality of perspectives on social capital: the communitarian perspective; the network perspective; the institutional perspective and the critical perspective. Despite the plurality of perspectives, social capital, as used in development paradigm is mainly inspired by the communitarian approach. For example, the communitarian perspective dominates the way in which World Bank plans its poverty alleviation and women's empowerment programs. However, this approach has been criticized on the conceptual and empirical level and many modifications have been made to contextualize it. The network and institutional approach offer some improvement over the communitarian understanding of social capital. However, by overlooking the broader social economic context, they still reproduce the limitations of the communitarian approach. The critical approach to social capital, inspired by Bourdieu, recognizes the mutual embeddedness of economic and social life (Franklin, 2007) and offers much deeper insights into the processes that generate and mobilize social capital. While the development policy has been mainly shaped by the communitarian

perspective, the critical perspective has gained prominence in assessing the social-economic processes of exclusion and marginalization.

In the next section, I concentrate on these two dominant approaches to social capital. However, I also briefly mention the network and institutional approach and their contribution to the debate.

2.4.3 Communitarian perspective of social capital in the development

The concept of social capital is nothing new and it has been used extensively by Bourdieu (1977; 1986; 1989) and Coleman (1987; 1988a, b). However, it was the publication of Robert Putnam's seminal work, "Making Democracy Work" in 1993 with coauthors Leonardi, and Nanetti, that brought social capital into the development discussion. Putnam defines social capital as "the norms and networks of trust and reciprocity that enable people to act collectively" (Putnam et al 1993; p. 226). Unlike his predecessors Bourdieu and Coleman, who situated social capital in individual networks and relationships, Putnam recognizes social capital as a feature of communities and equates social capital with horizontal organizations, or "networks of civic engagement" (Portes & Vickstrom, 2011). These horizontal organizations, such as choral societies, soccer clubs, bowling leagues and bird watching groups are indicators of the stock of social capital spread throughout society (Putnam et al. 1993; Putnam, 2000). Participation in these organizations, as Putnam argues, enforces reciprocity, generates trust and facilitates collective action (Putnam, 2000; 2002). Thus, in practice, Putnam equates social capital with the level of associational activities in the communities and makes a distinction between 'bonding' (exclusive) and 'bridging' (inclusive) social capital (Johnston & Percy-Smith, 2003; Putnam, 2001, 2002).

Bonding social capital refers to the relationships between members of a clan (Ferlander, 2007), individuals belonging to same caste (Rankin, 2002) family members, and close friends with long shared histories; it excludes those who do not share social similarities and thus reinforces exclusive identities and homogeneous groups (Staveren & Knorringa, 2007). In contrast, bridging social capital is formed through ties between individuals who either have different social attributes or are separated by large distances (Nooteboom, 2007). This type of social capital is more inclusive and includes people from across different social divides.

While discussing the benefits of social capital, Putnam acknowledges that those associations which bridge social and political divisions can “foster institutional success in the broader community” and deliver superior outcomes in collective actions (Putnam, 2000). In general, it is argued, a higher stock of social capital in the community is a necessary condition for development (Woolcock, 1998; Fukuyama, 2001; Francois & Zabojnik, 2005) and a decline in social capital threatens the social fabric of the communities, leading to violence, corruption, and bad governance (Putnam et al., 1993; Portes & Landolt, 2000; Adler & Kwon, 2002). Thus, Putnam recognizes a virtuous cycle between civil society organizations and social capital, where social capital sustains civil associations, which in turn generates social capital (Putnam, 2000).

In this account, social capital is something that is possessed (or not possessed) by communities, and the benefits of social capital are also shared at community level i.e. community benefits as a whole instead of individuals benefiting at the cost of others.

Therefore, this approach is labeled as the communitarian approach to social capital (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

The communitarian perspective suggests many reasons for the importance of social capital in the context of development. For example, Putnam (2000) argues that social capital allows citizens to resolve collective action problems more easily. Related to social capital, the benefits of collective action are based on transaction cost arguments, which suggest that if people cooperate and trust each other, (i.e., they have higher social capital) then the transaction cost will be lower and each party will benefit by such a transaction (Williamson, 1987). In most situations, people often might be better off if they cooperate with each doing their share (Axelrod & Keohane, 1993; Kelley & Stahelski, 1970; Putnam, 1993b). However, theories of self-interested opportunistic behavior suggest that individual benefits more (or at least relatively more) by shirking his/her responsibilities and hoping that others will do the work for them (Granovetter, 1985; Williamson, 1987). This creates a situation where individual benefits take precedence over collective benefits. In the absence of institutional arrangements or other overseeing mechanisms, collective action becomes difficult. Institutional mechanisms that have the power to ensure compliance with a collectively desirable behavior elicit positive responses from individuals (Axelrod & Keohane, 1993). Social norms and networks, components of social capital, play the role of informal institutional mechanisms and enforce desirable behavior (Coleman, 1988). As Putnam mentions (2000: 288-90), ‘where people are trusting and trustworthy, and where they are subject to repeated interactions with fellow citizens, in other words, possess high social capital, everyday business and social transactions are less costly’.

Building on Putnam's initial findings, many studies confirm the potential benefits of social capital in a wide variety of fields such as economic development, community empowerment, good governance, health and education (Knack & Keefer, 1997; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000; Krishna, 2007). Due to the reported benefits associated with social capital, there has been an increasing interest in understanding how social capital is restored, generated and strengthened in the communities (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000; Islam & Morgan, 2011; Bhuiyan, 2011; Bertotti et al, 2012)

As the communitarian perspective equates social capital with local civic organizations, increasing the number and density of these groups in a given community to build social capital and to solve development problems are becoming a priority of community development programs (Adhikari & Goldey, 2010). Increasingly, group-based approaches to livelihood, including microfinance programs, are cited as examples of generation of social capital that are consistent with the communitarian perspective proposed by Putnam. According to Sanyal (2009) in microfinance programs, women's small groups based on trust, norms and reciprocity, work as social collateral and replace the requirement of financial collateral. These microfinance groups not only leverage on existing social capital but also generate social capital through economic ties among members, the structure of the group network, and women's participation in group meetings.

However, in communitarian perspectives, communities are seen homogenous and harmonious entities, and there is little recognition between the differentiation of bonding and bridging ties while building social capital (Vajja & White, 2008). For example, Ansari et al (2012) argue that any business initiative in poor communities should: (a) enhance the social capital between a particular community and other more resource-rich networks, and

(b) preserve the existing social capital in the community. Their arguments totally disregard the heterogeneity and inequality within the communities.

In the context of social funds promoted by the World Bank, Vajja & White (2008) find that the programs work under the assumptions that both types of social capital can be strengthened through community participation in the process of applying for and implementing social fund projects. It is argued that the experience of participating in a collective enterprise 'teaches' the community how to undertake such efforts, which is cited as an indication that these programs work (Vajja & White, 2008). It is further argued that the training will provide the skills necessary for managing project proposals, and possibly the links to the outside world to channel further proposals. The whole approach is that the very act of involving people in developing, monitoring and evaluating in itself builds social capital (Warner, 2001).

The overall emphasis of these programs has been on strengthening community organizations around investments to improve living conditions, rather than addressing power relations explicitly within communities (Vajja & White, 2008; Adhikari & Goldey, 2010; Reneta, 2011). There is no recognition that the community may not be homogenous, certainly not that there may be systematic differences in interests dependent upon a person's social position (Konrad et al, 2016; Portes & Vickstrom, 2011). Similarly, it is overlooked that depending on context, bonding social capital may also have negative consequences (Bertotti et al, 2012). In a heterogeneous society, benefits accruing through social capital might be expropriated by socially powerful ethnic or other groups at the exclusion of others (Kay, 2005).

Due to these inherent weaknesses of communitarian perspectives, some theoretical amendments have been made to make this perspective more applicable in unequal and hierarchical societies. For example, a number of studies analyze the development potential of social capital in the context of India (Bhattacharyya et al, 2004; Gupta, 2005; Krishna, 2007). This body of literature agrees that the structure of Indian society is different and therefore, social capital in this context cannot be understood and measured through the method developed in Western societies. Bhattacharyya and colleagues (2004) argued that unlike western countries, where the civil society groups actively participate in public life to achieve common goals, in India and especially in its rural areas, social capital does not exist at community level but manifested in the different segments of community. Similar argument is made by Krishna (2002; 2007) who emphasizes on a context specific measurement of social capital. In his research of 69 villages in the states of Rajasthan, India, he developed a 'locally relevant' Social Capital Index (SCI), which combined structure and cognitive features of social capital (Krishna, 2002). SCI includes livelihood stabilization, poverty assistance, employment, voting, campaigning, among others to measure the existing and future stock of social capital. Using this index, Krishna found that social capital can only lead to better development 'performance' if there are local agents to 'activate' this stock and if they use it to produce a flow of benefits' (Krishna, 2002: 29). More interestingly, in a 7 year follow-up study of the same region, Krishna (2007) concluded that social capital in the communities is mainly generated through two factors: a) through the formation of self-initiated local organizations and b) when there are 'local leaders' available in the community who mediate fellow villagers' interaction with government agencies and the market.

While these findings make significant contributions to the communitarian understanding of social capital, this work has several limitations. *First*, even though this work recognizes that societies are not harmonious and are divided along caste and class lines, the findings suggests that “self-initiated local organizations leads to social capital” at the community level (2007, P, 954). However, this research does not elaborate the processes through which social capital is generated at the community level. *Second*, while Krishna emphasizes the role of leaders, who have ‘linkages’ with state officials and market operators', in generating social capital, it is unclear what gives these leaders a strategic and authoritative position in the community. *Finally*, this research does not explain the social-economic positions of these leaders and their motivation (or lack of it) to leverage their networks for community development purposes.

Furthermore, this work overemphasizes the human agency where agents, i.e. leaders, are driven by an economic incentives and self-interest rationale to ‘activate’ social capital. While this research explains the volume and type of resources the key actors have, i.e. linkage with the government officials and markets, it does not sufficiently explain how structural factors, such as social inequality of caste, gender, and class, affect the capacity of individuals to access these valuable connections. It remains unclear how actors can create a mutually supportive relationship or why there are different experiences and meanings associated with solidarity and cooperation. Therefore, this work, which integrates a network perspective with the communitarian understanding, can also disguise inequality and power issues. As networks are not structured in an empty space, actors’ capacity to build and mobilize their networks is affected by social-economic and political context (Foley & Edward, 1999; Portes & Landlot, 2000; Cleaver, 2002).

The institutional approach addresses this limitation of network approach by emphasizing on the political context (Evans, 1996; Berman, 1997; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). For example, it explains how the rule of law, freedom of association, and political opportunities promote greater interactions between civil society groups and government officials. However, this approach assumes that social interactions take place in formal settings such as local association, political parties, or formal assemblies (Cleaver 2005; DeFillppis, 2001; Mosse, 2006). On the contrary, as argued by the critical approach, the processes of social interactions are constantly manifested and reproduced in daily interactions. In the next section, I expand on this argument, using the critical approach to social capital.

2.4.4 Critical approach to social capital

Critical perspective provides a theoretical framework to understand how structural inequalities are sustained and reproduced in societies (Allard, 2005). It focuses on how the social capital of one group can be conflictual with the social capital of another group. Thus, this perspective identifies the negative or downside of social capital with an acknowledgment that considering only desirable outcomes of social capital is limited in its approach (Warr, 2006).

It is increasingly recognized that social capital has both positive and negative side. It can provide a range of benefits to community members (specifically in poor communities) such as child care, house mending, job searching and emergency assistance (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). However, ‘sociability cuts both ways’ (Portes, 1998, p18). Sociologist have identified at least four negative consequences of social capital: exclusion of outsiders; excessive claims on group members; restrictions on individual freedoms; and

downward leveling norms (Portes & Sensenbrenner,1993). The negative consequences of social capital that are of interest to this study can be described as follows:

- a) Social capital may reinforce inequalities due to existing power asymmetry in communities, as powerful groups might use their strong networks to gain resources for its own member at the expense of other groups;
- b) Social capital may play a part in supporting anti-social behavior due to ‘perversity’ (Rubio, 1997; Field, 2003; Adhikari & Glodey, 2010), where some groups actively plot against other groups.

In many cases, strong ties that help members of a group often enable the group to exclude outsiders. For example, Portes and Landolt (1996) discuss how the strong business networks often restrict newcomers from entering a business. Similarly, Woolcock and Narayan (2000) show, highlighting discriminatory gender norms, how girls might be taken out of school because of community expectations. Even within the group, there could be a demand for conformity in exchange of support which can restrict individual freedoms. Portes and Vickstrom (2011) argue that “this downward leveling pressure in strong groups deters innovation and the acquisition of human capital as members have to follow in the footsteps of fellow members”. It is also important to note that poor and disadvantaged people possess very high level of social capital, however, their engagement with one another helps them little to improve their situation as there are few resources to draw from the network (Fine, 2003). Sometimes intra- ethnic high social capital (strong ethnic networks) may bar cross-ethnic integration and, thereby, help to promote racial inequalities (Field, 2003).

These negative aspects of social capital have been highlighted by Pierre Bourdieu (1986; 1989). Bourdieu's conceptualization of social capital is based on an understanding of social capital that is linked to socio-economic class (Arneil, 2006). He identifies three dimensions of capital: economic, cultural and social capital. Thus, capital, as seen by Bourdieu, is simultaneously both economic and a set of power relations that transcends a variety of realms and social interactions, which are normally thought of as non-economic (Warr, 2006). Social capital is one of three forms of capital which, taken together, "explain the structure and dynamics of differentiated societies" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 119). Bourdieu defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (1986: 248-9). Social capital thus has two components: a) it is a resource that is connected with group membership and social networks; and b) it is based on mutual cognition and recognition (Lewandowski, 2007).

The first aspect i.e. social network indicates that "the volume of social capital possessed by a given agent ... depends on the size of the network of connections that [s]he can effectively mobilize" (Bourdieu, 1986: 249). Thus, social capital is the quality of the total number and patterns of interactions rather than a common attribute of a group (Bourdieu, 1989). Bourdieu differentiates social groups from social networks (Lewandowski, 2007). Social groups, according to Bourdieu, are the categories in which we organize different socio-economic and economically similar individuals, where social networks are the interactions between individuals belonging to social groups (DeFilippis, 2001). Membership in social groups and an involvement in the networks developed within these social groups helps individuals improve their social position in a variety of different

fields by providing social status and prominence (Siisiäinen, 2000). Once status and prominence are acquired, individuals can improve their social position in a variety of different fields. However, this might not be the case for those who are from low social status groups (Allard, 2005).

The second characteristic of social capital is that it is based on mutual cognition and recognition (Bourdieu, 1986, 1989) which means that as social capital becomes socially effective, and its ownership is legitimized through the mediation of symbolic capital (Rankin, 2002). This consists of the "prestige, social status and renown attached to a family and a name" (Bourdieu, 1977: 179) and facilitates the accumulation and recognition of other forms of capital (Carrington & Luke, 1997). Thus, social capital is a resource in the social struggles that are carried out in different 'fields' or 'social arenas' (Bourdieu, 1989; Jenkins, 2002). Social capital is a core factor, among the other two forms of capital, defining the positions and possibilities of various actors in any 'field' (Lewandowski, 2007). Using the lens of symbolic capital, Bourdieu (1989) emphasizes 'the social construction of the content of social capital' (Fine, 2001:13), and the significance of the social and material contexts in which people generate resources (Franklin, 2007). Access to economic, cultural and social resources or capitals, are constrained and defined by social systems (Edwards, Franklin, & Holland, 2003) which are based on how individuals in a particular social arena perceive them.

Thus, a critical analysis of social capital reveals its coercive and exploitative dimensions and highlights how structures of power are reproduced in society (Kovalainen 2004; Franklin, 2007; Gidengil & O'Neill 2006; Lowndes, 2004; Rankin, 2002). It also helps to redefine social capital as part of a system of competing interests and values that

are framed by large inequalities of power (Arneil, 2006). While the communitarian perspective sees social capital as inherently good, social capital as resources depends more on the power position, network location, and social hierarchy of the members (Bourdieu, 1986) and it is important to recognize the relations of power both at the macro (e.g. groups or community) and the micro (e.g. household) level (Gidengil & O'Neill, 2006; Edwards, 2004; Mayoux, 2001).

Many recent case studies on microfinance have applied a critical lens to social capital to analyze the power dimension at the community and household level. For example, in her study of microfinance programs in Nepal, Rankin (2004) found that groups of borrowers are often divided along lines of gender and caste, which increases solidarity within the groups (i.e. bonding social capital) but leads to the exclusion of lower castes and women. Mayoux (2001) and Armendariz, Beatriz, and Morduch (2005) also found that the distribution of microfinance funds is not uniform, and in some cases, large chunks of funds are normally provided to the members who have more power (social or economic) in the community.

Moreover, feminist scholars have used a critical lens to criticize the blatant disregard of social capital theory to household inequalities. The communitarian perspective recognizes the social capital at the community level, disregarding the gender inequality and hierarchical relationship within the family (Arneil, 2006). As most of the microfinance programs are also based on the communitarian perspective, they have been criticized for taking an uncritical approach to household relations (Mayoux, 2001). Thus, gender relations that limit women's access to the funds they generate go unnoticed. Most of the funds are appropriated or controlled by men and this, at times, leads to household violence

(Goetz & Gupta, 1996; Rahman, 1999). For example, research conducted in Bangladesh on microfinance programs revealed complex and diverse impacts of gender relations (Goetz & Gupta 1996; Rahman 1999). A study by Goetz and Gupta (1996) shows that around 42% of the women were, in fact, borrowing for their husbands or other family members. In this case, increasing pressure to repay by credit programs' staff resulted in increasing levels of physical and verbal abuse in the household (Rahman, 1999). This type of intra-household violence is common, but many microfinance programs do not attempt to raise these issues and consequently, women also hide its occurrence from credit officers (Hashemi, Schuler, & Riley, 1996).

This discussion suggests that even though social capital provides some benefits to the members of a network, access to social capital as resources depends more on the power position, network location, and social hierarchy of the members (Bourdieu, 1986). Due to the power asymmetries in the community, social capital may sustain privilege and underpin disadvantage (Adhikari & Goldey, 2010; Field, 2003; Konrad et al, 2016; Portes & Landolt, 1996). In some cases, group loyalties may be too strong and member of powerful groups can leverage their social capital to undermine the less powerful groups, even if these less powerful groups possess social capital. This critical evaluation of social capital has significant implications for understanding how the income generating initiatives of social enterprises generate social capital. In the next sub-section, I evaluate these theoretical discussions of social capital in the context of social enterprises.

2.5 Social enterprises and social capital

The theoretical insights gained from the aforementioned discussion suggest that social capital has a ‘downside’ and that the social norms and networks that create social capital are themselves infused with issues of power and inequality (Molyneux, 2002; Edwards, 2004; Nixon, 2009). Networks, through their power dynamics, can include some members while excluding others. As a result, social capital that is generated through social enterprises may not be inherently good, and may disproportionately benefit the resource-rich within the community. Therefore, I argue that it is necessary to make a distinction between exclusive (i.e., social capital within the socio-economic groups) and inclusive social capital (social capital that cuts across social ties and brings people from different socio-economic status together) (Nixon, 2009). A focus on inclusive social capital recognizes the positive as well as the negative side of social capital and shifts the focus from social capital as an outcome, towards the processes and mechanisms through which social inequalities and hierarchies can be transformed and inclusive social capital can be generated (Bebbington, 2007).

I emphasize that without paying attention to the inequalities inherent in the communities, social enterprises run the risk of exacerbating already existing lines of hierarchy, coercion, and exclusion. Therefore, any interventions to build inclusive social capital in the community must give attention to the horizontal and hierarchical form of social capital and must understand whether social capital is produced at the individual or community level. Furthermore, I suggest that under such circumstances, a delicate balance will be required to create mechanisms that generate social capital to protect individual and collective benefits. However, the processes and mechanisms used by social enterprises to

generate inclusive social capital remain unclear and represent an important research gap for my study.

From a communitarian perspective, social capital is constructed and accumulated through horizontal community organizations. It prioritizes the involvement of social economy organizations, independent associations and civil society organizations in the construction of social capital. It is assumed that by participating in these organizations, individuals and groups who normally do not meet face to face would develop shared norms of reciprocity which would, in the end, ensure the smooth functioning of the community (Geissel, 2009). Assuming communities as homogenous and harmonious entities, this perspective takes an uncritical approach to community participation and views participation as a mechanism to produce inclusive social capital.

However, the discourse on community participation is widely divided on whether participatory activities are conducive to the development of inclusive social capital. For its proponents, participatory activities are viewed as a means to generate social capital and empower communities by mobilizing local knowledge and by ‘enabling people to present, share, analyze and augment their knowledge as the start of a process’ (Chambers, 1994). Participation is seen as a transformative power to change the relationships between powerful ‘uppers’ (development practitioners and other important outsiders) and local ‘lowers’ (the beneficiaries/subjects of development programs) (Williams, 2004). However, it is not clear how this transformative process takes place specifically when communities are heterogeneous and deeply divided around caste, class and gender lines. In this case, local ‘lowers’ are themselves divided into local ‘not so lowers’ and local ‘extremely lowers’.

For the opponents, participatory activities are a “tyrannical master-narrative which undermined autonomous political action” (Henkel & Stirrat, 2001; Cooke & Kothari, 2001). For example, Uma Kothari (2001) argues that the way participatory development programs include marginalized individuals and groups into the development process can actually bind them more tightly to structures of power because “the results are represented as authentic expressions of ‘community’ will, despite the fact that the knowledge they uncover is always mediated by the interplay of intra- and extra-community power relations” (Williams, 2004, P563).

Moreover, instead of empowering communities by shrinking the top-down power of the state, community participation is criticized for contributing to the spread of bureaucratic non-state power. This critique of participatory discourse is inspired by the seminal work of Ferguson (1994) who argued that “by reducing poverty to a technical problem and by promising technical solutions to the powerless and oppressed people development is the principal means through which the question of poverty is de-politicized in the world today”.

By prioritizing the role of development ‘experts’ in shaping the process of participation, participatory activities can become an addition to the already impressive armoury of ‘the anti-politics machine’ (William, 2004). Thus, even though in principle, a social enterprise can be participatory in organizing its economic activities, in reality, social enterprises can exert control over their interactions with community participants under ‘the aura of professionalism’. Moreover, the most poor and marginalized may not be able to participate in the group activities because of a lack of time and skill.

This discussion suggests that participation, which is the main mechanism of generating social capital in the communitarian approach, does not automatically result in social capital because of asymmetrical social positions, disparate access to economic resources and varying levels of skill and time (Abraham & Platteau, 2001; Fung & Wright, 2003; Dasgupta & Beard 2007; William et al, 2011; Wong 2012; Mansuri & Rao, 2013).

In the context of this discussion, I explore participatory processes to understand two inter-related questions: a) *Are the income-generating activities of social enterprises conducive to generating inclusive social capital?* and b) *How do social enterprises structure the beneficiaries' participation in their activities and how does this participation affect inclusive social capital?* In this thesis I investigate the mechanisms and processes used by social enterprises to structure the beneficiary participation, and how these mechanisms alter the pre-existing power structures within the communities and when they generate social capital.

While the above research questions address the effect of mechanisms and processes of participation in building social capital, the economic activities of the social enterprise itself can be detrimental to inclusive social capital. In the case of microfinance, for example, it has been argued that the availability of micro-credit through the external micro-finance agencies has the potential to weaken existing social ties as increasingly individual members of the community start relying on the outside agency rather than on other members of the community (Islam & Morgan, 2011). Furthermore, the empirical evidences on microfinance also suggest that if microfinance programs implement their activities through group formation, it creates solidarity among the group members instead of creating inter-dependency between the groups and within the community. On the other

hand, if the programs are implemented at the community level and involve all (or most) stakeholders in their operations, the process will result in inclusive social capital.

Thus, another assumption implicit in the literature is that the way social enterprises implement their programs can affect social capital. In this dissertation, I explicitly argue that if social enterprises structure their operations at the community level (instead of forming group membership) and create mechanisms that require interactions between various social groups (castes, religions, and other social classes) and stakeholders such as local producers, artisans, and community leaders then such interdependencies has potential to generate inclusive social capital. Therefore, I also explore whether the coverage of the implementation of programs (group level or village level) has an impact on the social capital generated by the social enterprise.

3 Chapter: Research Methods and Methodology

In this Chapter, I provide details about ontological and epistemological assumptions made, the methodology adopted, and methods employed⁵. I also provide details about various steps taken to ensure rigorous observations and reliable and valid interpretation. In the last section of this Chapter, I provide a road map for organizing findings and analysis.

The qualitative research was used for the data collection, analysis, and reporting (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative methodology has evolved over time and includes various approaches. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) defined qualitative research as a blanket term that encompasses several research traditions sharing some principles and characteristics. Simon (2010) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000) described qualitative research as naturalistic, holistic, interpretative, and reflective. The data collected includes a rich account of conversations, interactions, actors, and places (Simon, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The research presented in this study was designed to identify the underlying phenomenon and mechanisms about how social enterprises generate or fail to generate inclusive social capital while implementing projects that create income generating opportunity for the rural poor. Given the emphasis on understanding context, the complexity of various social issues involved, and exploratory nature of the research problem, I used multiple-case study approach. An exploratory qualitative inquiry rather than quantitative confirmatory approach was chosen for this research as it was more

⁵ I use the term ‘methodology’ to refer to axiological, ontological, and epistemological orientations to theory driven research. In my research these orientations are aligned with interpretivist and critical realist traditions. The term ‘methods’ is used in this thesis to refer to techniques to collect and analyze data.

suitable for dealing with research objectives and research questions for this study.

Qualitative research lends itself to observing and understanding various social interactions that take place in the rural communities, and the role played by various programs implemented by the social enterprises in facilitating (or not) these social interactions. Qualitative methods have potential to capture how communities enact and construct meaning around social interactions. Not only do qualitative methods lend researcher tools that help understand the perspectives of the research participants as reported by themselves but also independently observe their social interactions in situ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Bowen, 2008). In naturalistic enquiry informed by the “discovery-oriented” approach, the researchers keenly observe the phenomenon as it unfolds and do not attempt to manipulate the research conditions (or settings) through incentives or intervention, nor place any constraints on the range of possible outcomes of the research (Drisko, 2013; Erlandson, 1993; Patton, 2002; Seale, 2002). As Patton (2002) states, “what makes [any research] naturalistic inquiry is that real-world participants direct the change, not the researcher, as in the laboratory” (p.42; see also Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In addition, most qualitative studies, including this research, are exploratory in nature. In this sense, qualitative research is an emergent research design where data collection instruments, data sampling schemes, and propositions cannot be specified, completely or even partially, in advance. This does not mean a qualitative researcher will enter the field without any notion of what s/he is looking for. However, the researcher consciously remains open to new information, addition of new interviewees, and is prepared to let insights evolve from the observation. S/he remains flexible towards new insights that may emerge and is willing to alter the initial research design (Marshall &

Rossmann, 2010).

Consistent with the tenets of qualitative research, I adopted purposive sampling (Eisenhardt, 1989; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Ragin, 1992; Rosch, 1978; Yin, 2008) for this research. Each case in this study was purposely selected “to maximize the utility of information from small samples” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 230) with the emphasis on the identification of information-rich cases (Patton, 2014; Yin, 2008). In my selection of cases, I focused on a deeper exploration of cases within and between variations in themes that emerge from the study of these cases. In this study, the exploration of variations within and between cases was crucial because the village communities in India are very diverse and their experiences cannot be easily generalized beyond the individual cases.

Another advantage of qualitative study is its methods plurality, i.e. methodologically, insights into the views and perceptions of the participants are gained through multiple data collection methods and sources such as field observations; in-depth individual interviews; group interviews; and documents (Bowen, 2008; Lincoln, 1995). Yin (1994) recommend several sources of evidence for qualitative study— archival records, direct observations, documentation, participant observation, interviews, and physical artifacts. In addition, I was able to maintain extensive field notes about my own views and perception about what was happening in the field. This use of multiple data collection methods, multiple sources, and long engagement in the field, where I cumulatively spent twenty months, enhanced the trustworthiness of the information collected and insights obtained (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lincoln & Guba, 2005; Masrhall & Rossman, 2010).

The qualitative method of research aims for a rich description of the lived experiences of participants, at times labeled as informants (Husserl, 1931; Lincoln, 2009).

Qualitative research enables the investigation and exploration of the complexity of social interactions situated within the social contexts (Bryman et al, 1996; Riaz & Qureshi, 2016), at the same time, paying careful attention to specific details and nuances so that community members' reality is communicated through their own lived experiences (Bovaird, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Qualitative data collection methods such as in-depth interviews or participants' narratives strive to capture the participants' own voices and stories (Cornwall, 2003; Lincoln, 2009; O'Meally, 2014). Open-ended questions asked during the unstructured and semi-structured interviews provide in-depth responses about informants' experiences, feelings, and perceptions, and form part of the data to be analyzed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; O'Meally, 2014)⁶.

In terms of the analysis, qualitative research involves abductive approach (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2014; Dubois & Gadde, 2002), iterative process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Eisenhardt, 1989; Tufford & Newman, 2012), and comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lieberman, 2005), i.e., patterns and themes emerge from the participants' stories. These patterns and themes evolve through the rigorous iterative process, where emergent insights are critically evaluated based on every new piece of information available in the qualitative data (Bowen, 2008; Grbich, 2012; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Using abductive approach (Charmaz, 2009), I analyzed qualitative data to let patterns, themes, and categories emerge from the data rather than imposing these prior to data collection and analysis (Patton, 2014), and also rechecked/ retested these patterns, themes, and categories with new evidences evolved at various stages of data

⁶ Further information is provided under separate section on data collection.

collection, using this process iteratively.

In terms of interpretation of data, there is a delicate balance to be made. While interpreting and reporting the feelings and stories of the participants in the own words, it is also important to be aware that there might be social desirability issues in what they are expressing (Polkinghorne, 2007; Richman et al, 1999; Wilks, 2004). While making an interpretation, instead of taking statements at their face value, I took the help of notes that recorded gestures, expression, tone, amongst other things, and kept asking myself questions about consistency between verbal and non-verbal communication (Kelly et al, 1999). Becker (1958) suggests a set of questions that became my template to which I added several other questions:

“Does the informant have reason to lie or conceal some of what he sees as the truth? Does vanity or expediency lead him to misstate his own role in an event or his attitude toward it? Did he actually have an opportunity to witness the occurrence he describes or is hearsay the source of his knowledge? Do his feelings about the issues or persons under discussion lead him to alter his story in some way?” (p. 654-5)

The same logic of inquiry was applied to the ethnographic and non-participant observation of behaviors, social interactions, and other information I obtained through informal conversations. That being said, I agree with Becker (1958) contention that even when triangulation and follow-up interviews indicate that a participant might have reasonably misrepresented or knowingly reported something inaccurately, this still provides useful information about social milieu, about that participant him/herself, and social desirability issues (Becker 1958; Wilks, 2004). Motivated inaccurate statements can be interpreted given the respondent’s lived experiences, social situation, and/ or social

position (Becker, 1958; Denzin & Giardina, 2008). This is especially important and relevant in the social contexts, in which this research was conducted. The rural villages in India suffer from many prejudices, biases, and active animosity among various social groups⁷. There is a very high chance that information provided by participants may be inaccurate (on facts). However, as long as the information shared accurately represents the perspectives held by the respondents, such information still contributes to insights about research setting. The material conditions and objective facts, such as participation in meetings, number of villagers involved in the projects and other such things can be arrived at triangulation of various data sources.

Throughout my research I constantly checked for inconsistencies about material conditions and objective facts between observations, archival documents, interviews, and secondary sources to determine information and contexts that needed clarification so that objective data, such as number of households in the village, or proportion of various castes, among others, could be shown to be credible. For example, one district level project manager of an organization claimed that most of their projects are very inclusive and involve men and women equally. However, when I showed him many photographs of project meetings that were only attended by men without the presence of a single woman, he acknowledged the difficulty of involving women in the meetings.

⁷ Detailed information about social contexts of each case is provided in the Chapter 4

3.1 Rigor in Qualitative Research

Qualitative research poses some unique challenges. For example, in unstructured or semi-structured interviews, the researcher decides which pointers (leads for subsequent enquiry) to follow, which strands of discussion to probe further, and where to stop (Bowen, 2008; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In this sense, the researcher acts as a ‘data collection instrument’ (cf pre-determined survey instrument in quantitative research) central to the collection and analysis of data (Chenail, 2011; Morrow, 2005; Patton, 2002; Pezalla, Pettigrew & Miller-Day, 2012). The researcher’s professional and personal experiences with the research phenomenon, the researcher’s approach to engage the participants, and his or her prior knowledge of the research contexts and questions everything has potential to factor in the process of qualitative research. To leverage rather than being burdened by issues mentioned above, I resorted to various techniques and methods described in qualitative research. Some of them are discussed below in greater detail. (see Appendix A for the summary).

3.1.1 Reflexivity

Qualitative methodology necessitates that I, as a researcher, practice reflexivity because I act as interpreter and storyteller of the respondents’ story. Reflexivity is practicing mindfulness and being aware of how one influences and is influenced by the research process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). It means being constantly aware of and examining one’s own motives and the effects of one’s actions on participants and the research process (Kobayashi, 2001). “Reflexivity reminds the qualitative inquirer to be attentive to and conscious of the cultural, political, social,

linguistic, and ideological origins of one's own perspective and voices of those one interviews and those whom one reports on" (Patton, 2002, p. 65; also see Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010; May & Perry, 2014; Riach, 2009). Berg (2004) describes profound effect of reflexivity as a "shift in the way we understand data and their collection" (p. 154; also see Berger, 2015). Reflexivity results in a deeper level of understanding that include self-awareness and self-knowledge, which directly influence data collection, analysis and interpretation. When a researcher embrace reflexivity, s/he is making "use of an internal dialogue that repeatedly examines what the researcher knows and how the researcher came to know this" (Berg, 2004, p. 154; also see Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

For me, this internal dialogue pertained to my own experiences of observing various programs first at a personal level and then at professional level working as a development officer in the provincial government, albeit in an adjoining province to where this study was conducted⁸. During this time, I worked as a project development officer, I evaluated several programs and had a fair idea about how these programs are implemented and their varied outcomes. What I discovered in this study was that each village where these programs are implemented by social enterprises had very different stories, although they

⁸ Qualitative research is interpretive in nature and, by being so, is vulnerable to the researcher's interpretation of the data. Creswell (2014) highlight how important it is for the researchers to "explicitly identify reflexively their biases, values and personal background, ... that shape their interpretations formed during a study" (p.187; also see Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman, 2013; Merriam, 1988). In order for the reader to understand my personal perspective and the baggage/biases unintentionally I might bring into this research, I would like to disclose the following information: I have no relationship whatsoever with any of the organizations I studied. I have been previously employed by a federal government department but was involved in the implementation and evaluation of the provincial and federal programs in a province that was different than the province where this research was conducted. Also, at no stage during that job, was I responsible directly or indirectly in the evaluation of the any program implemented by any of the organization studied in this research. I have professional and personal experience with development programs that were implemented by NGOs and government agencies, and I believe that if these programs are implemented properly they have potential to impact lives in rural India.

also point to some unifying themes, some of which were consistent with my lived experiences while others surprised me. I paid close attention to this process of reflexivity so that it was applied continually throughout this research: from information gathering; through information organization and analysis, to interpretation and thesis writing. Maintaining a regular reflexive internal dialogue and journaling about my thoughts, feelings, and views helped me go back and forth between observations, informants' stories, social situations, and my own personal experiences, thereby helping me appreciate better and remain more open to what was being revealed in the data.

Acknowledging my own position, my beliefs, and my theoretical orientations vis-a-vis the research process was the first step in embracing reflexivity. In keeping with the tenets of interpretivist qualitative methodology, I acknowledge that I am not a detached and neutral observer. Even though I may be able to resort to bracketing my beliefs and values, my identity (i.e. who I am) and values (what I believe in) influence my interpretations and interactions with the people (Berger, 2015; Riach, 2009). I entered the field as a woman who has been educated in India as well as in Canada, who is relatively economically better off (than most of my respondents), and comes from very similar, yet different, social background. These identity categories defined the way I was perceived by the community, providing easy access to some people and difficult, negotiated access to others. I had to spend extended time in the field, sometimes several weeks in the same cluster of villages to overcome access issues and win the trust of all the social groups. I acknowledge that my social identity shapes the way I view the phenomenon (see Carr 2003; May & Perry, 2014); nevertheless, I am able to bracket my biases.

For example, as a development officer, I knew various challenges NGOs and

government agencies face in implementing income generating programs in the rural context such as, for example, whom to target, how to make program acceptable, how to make it more inclusive, and how to ensure women's participation. Also, as an individual, a girl who grew up in a small village, I personally was very aware of the challenges women face in the rural context where they have to manage household chores, take care of children and elderly, and spend substantial time in farming activities, if their family owns a piece of land. During the interview process, I was aware of these women's situation and it was easy for me to understand their perspectives. As I listen to how the women participants talked about the difficulty in attending various group meetings, balancing work at home with the work involved in various programs, and how they have to bear taunts and comments from men folk when women got involved in these projects, I was immediately able to relate to these stories and felt for their predicament; nevertheless, I was also surprised by their suffering yet their willingness to share their story honestly.

Growing up in rural India also exposed me to various types of discrimination perpetuated on the basis of caste, religion, economic class, and gender. While listening to the stories of the participant, I clearly paid attention to verbal, non-verbal, contextual, situational, as well other salient aspects. For example, I would pay attention to the location selected by the social enterprise to conduct their activities in the villages, whether the location was inclusive, if not, who are the ones excluded. Whether or not time selected for group meetings was suitable for everyone, especially for women. I kept reminding myself, whether I have included men and women from every caste, religion, and tribe in my interviews. I repeatedly asked questions to myself if I had made women and members of 'lower' castes comfortable enough so that they would willingly and voluntarily share their

personal stories. More so I empathized with them as I shared my personal life stories, and they became more willing to share their own.

Through these interactions, I came to realize a few things. Even though I had an exposure of spending eighteen years in rural communities and then three years implementing various projects, I did not fully fathom the level of gender and caste discrimination prevalent in many rural communities. I was also amazed by the determination, against all odds, many women and the member of 'lower' castes showed to participate in various projects and programs. At the same time, I was also disappointed, in many villages where the projects and programs were hijacked by the elite capture, at times in the connivance with those who were supposed to implement these programs for the benefits of the marginalized population.

My experience of these settings and situations was my guide in initiating conversation, however, I would quickly step back and let the participant guide the conversation rather than tainting it through my preconceived notions. The more I listened to their stories, the more I was able to reflect on accumulated insights and themes. As I went back and forth between the interviews, observations, and my own reflections, I understood more deeply how and why participants made particular statements, and why they perceived it that way. The concepts they described eventually become clearer to me. The more I went through this iteration, the more I understood their stories. Moreover, I was also surprised because even as a development officer and an individual who has spent most parts of her life in these contexts, many of their stories were totally new to me and never crossed my thoughts before listening to them. I was humbled by the honesty, and surprised (at times mortified) by the emotional intensity yet determination shown by the participants

during the interview process. However, although these emotions of humility and surprise surfaced in the data collection, analysis and interpretation process, I reflected on them in my personal journal that was geared specifically for my personal feeling and biases, if any, whereas my instant interpretations, understanding, questions, and curiosity about the events related to my research objectives were recorded in the memo, a separate journal. As journaling and reflecting process continued, I was able to see the distinctions between my roles as a researcher today versus a development officer in the past. I became more aware of my personal perspectives as a development officer and my learning as a researcher.

Furthermore, my months of engagement in the field taught me the importance of the interview process for the researcher, as a learner, as well as for the participant, as a revealer, and made me realize the value of the interview process even more. As the importance of interview as a process (and not an end) dawned upon me fairly early on, I started to keenly listen, rather than simply record, with an open heart and an attentive mind to the stories that participants used to describe their situation, activities, and travails in their own humble yet powerful ways because it reflected their perspective and in some cases, these stories were largely remained untold. Therefore, it was my responsibility as the researcher to put an extra effort to learn about the issues they were discussing - being aware of my own feelings, yet not letting it distract or interfere with what I was listening to - so that I could fully dedicate myself to listening with an open heart and an attentive mind.

The process of reflexivity, I believe, resulted in the robust data, analysis, and interpretation. It rendered the findings of the study, I believe, to be more credible and dependable. During this study, reflexivity became so ingrained that even after the analysis was over, I kept questioning what I was learning, how it was similar or different to my

experience, and what has been revealed to me during this study. These emergent questions and subsequent attention to those emergent question resulted because of the explicit attention to the feelings and situation of the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2010), the sense-making of their community (Gergen & Gergen, 2000), and the commitment to representing them accurately (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The following sub-sections provide short discussion about managing biases and bracketing.

3.1.1.1 Managing Bias

Managing personal biases, which arise from past experiences, values, and beliefs, is an important part of the qualitative research process. Being open to what I am observing, what my preconceptions might interpret, and what my participants are actually intending to communicate is important. Identifying where I stand and not letting that stance and my perception influence interpretation, instead, being open to the perceptions of my participants as these are their stories. I explicitly followed three courses of action to manage biases: journaling; exchanging my thoughts and research process with the other scholars who were grounded in these contexts, and committing myself to reflecting as much as possible the direct experience of the participants rather than how I perceived it to be. By maintaining a detailed account of the process of data analysis and managing my bias meticulously, I believe I was able to enhance the credibility of this study. I maintained multiple journals, one to note the things as they were happening or being narrated to me, another to use for reflections about the data, and the third to highlight the biases and my own opinions and feelings regarding various projects I followed for this study. I accurately maintained a meticulous schedule of data gathering, transcription, translation, and analysis, and unfailingly verbalized my insights in a journal.

3.1.1.2 Epoche/ bracketing

Researcher's past experiences influence how research problems are identified, framed, and explored and therefore has potential to introduce researcher bias, which presents potential threats and limitations to the credibility of any qualitative study (Husserl, 1931; Marrow, 2005; Sanders, 1982). Qualitative researchers recognize the implications of researcher bias and suggest *epoche* or *bracketing* as a process to mitigate those perceptions by deliberately recognizing and accepting researcher preconceptions and worldviews (Moustakas, 1994; Tufford and Newman, 2012). Morrow (2005) mention bracketing as an important aspect of qualitative research that involve a process of "making one's implicit assumptions and biases overt to self and others" (p. 254). While some scholars use label *bracketing* (Husserl, 1931; Kockelmans, 1987; Morgan and Smircich, 1980), others prefer the term *epoche* to describe the process of beginning the study with an open, unbiased mindset and setting aside preconceptions (Moustakas 1994). This does not mean that a researcher should feign total ignorance of the setting or research topic but rather that he or she becomes self-aware and use self-perception and self-consciousness "as pointers to knowledge, meaning, and truth" (Moustakas, 1994 p. 88).

In qualitative research, the researcher becomes the data collection "device" taking the role of observer and interpreter (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). This process starts much earlier and reflects itself in the topic that I (or for that matter any qualitative researcher) had chosen for research, and how I formulated it; however, it became more salient when I embark on writing questions for my semi-structured interviews. Which questions were included and which were not reflected partly on my attempt to bracket what I thought I already knew. I deliberately included the questions, for which I thought I knew the answer,

as to not govern by my predispositions.

On several occasions, where I was not clear on what should be appropriate questions to ask when discussion went beyond the questions I had noted for semi-structured interviews, I relied heavily on intuition and heuristic, which were the manifestations of my accumulated experience, and played a predominant role in addressing new situations and engaging into emergent discussions.

3.2 Triangulation

Triangulation is an important technique to ensure rigor and validity of qualitative inquiry that employs case study (Berg & Lune, 2011; Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991, Seale, 2002). Triangulation contributes to internal validity by using more than one analytical technique, more than one method of data collection, and/or more than one source of data to answer a research question (Flick, 2004). While it sounds intuitively simple and plausible, combining, for example, observational fieldwork and focus groups or interviews to achieve internal validity is difficult to perform in practice (Hammersley, 2008). Data collected using different methods have different assumptions embedded, which are less amenable to direct comparisons unless proper precautions are taken (Barbour, 1998; Wolf, 2010). While the replication of similar findings obtained using different methods provides corroboration or reassurance on account of triangulation, the absence of similar findings using different methods does not, however, provide grounds for rejection of findings owing to lack of triangulation. Because each method used in qualitative research provide a glimpse of parallel realities, each enabling insight into only a partial view of the whole picture.

In this sense, triangulation relies on intersubjectivity at best (Verhagen, 2005) and on superior explanation or reference point at worst, against which other explanations, understanding, interpretations can be, and should be, evaluated (Smaling, 1992). It is important to note that qualitative research embraces a relativist perspective, which recognizes the existence of subjectivity. Therefore, lack of triangulation may actually be due to the presence of multiple views rather than lack of validity, consequently it does not pose a threat to validity, instead, it merely provides further scope for refining interpretations. Either way, it is useful to collect data through various methods, from various sources, and various perspectives.

In order to obtain multiple perspectives (source triangulation), I made special efforts to access key informants from different positions in each of the organizations. Within organizations, I interviewed individuals at the top management positions (mostly founders, but also top executives), middle management positions, and field staff. In addition, to get outside perspectives, I also interviewed NGOs and other social enterprises, other than the selected four cases that were part of this study that were involved in the similar projects. I talked to government officials, teachers, volunteers, social workers, community members of various castes, incomes and social backgrounds. I used archival materials to supplement other sources of data. I consulted project reports of the organizations involved, and other documented sources (press releases, grant reports, and newspaper coverages). I also made extensive field observations. In order to enhance reliability through temporal triangulation (Shutz, 1974), some sites were visited repeatedly, and some informants were interviewed multiple times (formally or informally). I combined these different sources of data to produce a complex, detailed picture of the organization

activities, participation mechanisms, and the extent of coverage of their projects. Similarly, I combined the data I have from various organizations, sources, and individuals to produce a complex, detailed picture of participatory mechanisms. Within each organization, I balanced breadth and depth, i.e. how many villages I visited and how much time I was able to spend in each village. Adopting this balance in breadth vs depth, I was able to capture the experiences from a large number of villages, while also being able to delve into many of them more deeply.

The nature of this study (doctoral dissertation) did not provide the luxury of engaging multiple researchers to arrive at researcher triangulation (Giles, 2002; Johnson, 1997; Rennie & Watson, 2002; Snow & Trom, 2002; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006), however, I used every opportunity to triangulate my own observations and interpretations with other knowledgeable observers of various projects. I also continuously exchanged my insights, evolving templates and interim conclusions with two scholars, one based out of Hong Kong and another based in the USA, who were conducting their own research in the same region, albeit on different but related topics. As both these scholars have worked extensively in the rural context of developing countries and were familiar with the challenges faced by social enterprises in generating social values, they were academically situated to provide an alternative viewpoint to my observations, insights, and interpretation. Although this does not amount to and does not strictly follow the guidelines of researcher triangulation, nevertheless this does provide a limited implementation of the process.

3.3 Ethics considerations

Ethics approval for this study was obtained from Carleton University's Research Ethics Board (REB) prior to data collection. Ethics consideration included compliance with all the guidelines established by REB (see Appendix B to E) and specifically regarding informed consent and participant confidentiality (Creswell, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

According to Creswell (2014), all qualitative research reports must explicitly discuss how research ethics considerations were addressed. Researcher is responsible for respecting the desires, needs, and rights of the participants (Hewitt, 2007). Active or passive interactions with the participants have potential to interfere with day to day activities of the participants, bringing them some sort of inconvenience and at times reveal sensitive information (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Another concern is maintaining anonymity and confidentiality of the participants not only out of respect for their privacy but also to avoid any unintended consequences that may result in their identity be disclosed to the social enterprise or government agencies. Therefore, the names of the social enterprises and any participants have not been disclosed in this dissertation. Instead, pseudonyms have been used, and all other identifying information has been carefully masked.

I assured participants that this study presented no risks and the only inconvenience will be the use of their time for the research. Participants were also informed that I would have direct contact with them and I will know their names, and to that extent, anonymity would not be possible. However, I reassured them that confidentiality would be maintained throughout the process as each participant will be assigned an identification code/ pseudonym, and this code will be used instead of their name in all the data recording. I informed participants that these identification codes/ pseudonyms will be used in all the

interim results and the final report to protect their privacy and accord them confidentiality. I further informed them that only I will know their identities.

The objectives of the study were briefly explained to the participants, without providing specifics that would compromise research or bias the respondents. I also explained to them how the data will be gathered how it will be used. The consent form was either read by each respondent or read by me (for those respondents who could not read by themselves) just prior to the interview.

It was also clearly mentioned that their participation is completely voluntary and they are free to take part in the study or not and withdraw even after they decided to take part. All research participants were asked for written permission; however, many of the study participants were not literate and in that case, information sheets and consent forms were read out to them, their oral consent was recorded, and their permission was sought before proceeding with the interview. Data collection methods and activities, as well as their broad purposes, were explained to the participants. Written transcriptions that were based on the direct interview were made available to the participants who were willing to receive a copy⁹. The participants had final determination regarding whether or not to participate in the study, whether to continue with their participation even after they decided to take part in it and to what extent they would like to disclose their thoughts.

⁹ Many of the respondents were illiterate and were unable to read. Thus, the staff of social enterprises, some educated villagers, and government officials were involved in member checks process.

3.4 Conceptual definitions

From the literature review, my own past experience of working in a rural development sector, and limited pilot study of several field-based social enterprises, I had a priori expectation that the extension of coverage and degree of participatory implementation will play an important role in generating inclusive social capital by social enterprises.

For the purpose of this research a social enterprise was any organization that fulfills three characteristics: a) It is primarily created to solve some pressing social issues i.e. addressing social issues is the core mission of the organization; b) It does not depend perpetually or solely on donation/ grants (although donations might play some role, especially at the initial stage of the organization); and c) It reinvests surplus revenue, if any, in the social mission. Moreover, for the purpose of this research, I focused only on those social enterprises that address the livelihood needs of beneficiaries by creating economic opportunities¹⁰.

Inclusive social capital was observed in the community through careful consideration of the type (i.e. within or across the social divides) of social ties. Bonding social ties are defined as ties that are within their own social group, whereas bridging social ties are defined as ties that are outside their own social group. The strength of social ties

¹⁰ Social enterprises are involved in various social issues, generating livelihood being one of them, where they address these issues using business models and dual objectives of generating revenue for sustenance and creating social value by providing solutions to wicked social problems. Some of the example of social enterprises in Madhya Pradesh that are engaged in addressing non-livelihood related social issues are ZMQ (health sector), Toxics Link (environment sector) and AISECT (education sector)

was observed based on the established criteria of intensity¹¹ and frequency (Campbell & Lee, 1992; Granovetter 1973; Marsden & Campbell, 1984). Intensity is defined as how affectionately (or emotionally) someone feels attached to his/her tie; whereas frequency represents how frequently someone interacts with his/ her tie. Inclusive social capital in the community was observed as an increase in the instances of bridging ties and their strength as defined above.

The degree of participatory implementation was defined as the level of involvement of beneficiaries in the day to day operational and decision-making activities of the social enterprise.¹² Participatory implementation for the purpose of this research was defined as whether a social enterprise encourages the regular participation of all beneficiaries in its activities, including, but not limited to, decision making. Those social enterprises that involved beneficiaries at various organizational activities were labeled high on participatory implementation compared to those which did not.

The extent of coverage was defined as the scope of the project(s) by the social enterprise, whether it was at the group level or village level. The choice of whether or not coverage of a social enterprise was labeled at a group level or village level depends on how a social enterprise structures its activities. Coverage was labeled as group if the social

¹¹ Some scholars label intensity as intimacy (Granovetter, 1983; Wegener, 1991; Wellman & Wortley, 1990)

¹² In the extant literature participation is some time used in the context of collective actions (Ostrom, 1990; Paulsen, 1991; Rydin & Pennington, 2000), where it is an outcome of social capital. However, in my proposal, I am interested in understanding various operational and structural arrangements that social enterprises may resort to in their pursuit of providing livelihood opportunities to their beneficiaries. These operational and structural arrangements may facilitate differential level of participation of the beneficiaries in the activities of the social enterprises such that some social enterprises may involve all their beneficiaries in almost every activity and at all level of decision making while others may involve them either symbolically or not at all. The degree of participation in this proposal refers to this differential level of participation by beneficiaries in the structuring and decision making activities of the social enterprise.

enterprise either utilizes existing groups or creates new ones to structure and implement its activities. On the other hand, coverage was labeled as village level if everyone in the village, who is eligible, as per the pre-defined criteria, can potentially be part of the social enterprise's activities¹³. It is important to note that the activity need not be performed in a collaborative way in order to qualify as village coverage. For example, a social enterprise might create an income generating opportunity for the individuals in the village by helping each member to own a small farm and by training him/ her to take care of it by himself or herself. As long as everyone in the village who is willing to be part of the project is allowed to take part in the program, such an initiative for this purpose was labeled as village coverage.

3.5 Roadmap for organization of findings and analysis

Any qualitative study, by its very nature, is field based and has potential to generate new insights. Although I had a priori expectation that extent of coverage and degree of participatory implementation would affect inclusive social capital as shown in Table 3.1, there were other factors that emerge from my field study. These factors interact with a priori factors to create a rich configuration of when inclusive social capital will emerge and when it will not. However, for sake of clarity and ease of understanding, in Chapter 5, I organize my findings in two sub-sections: *a priori identified factors*; and *field emergent*

¹³ I would like to acknowledge that whether programs are implemented at group level or village level may depend on various factors including pre-existing level of social capital; however, this does not confound the study as I was able to ask my respondents whether there was increase in inclusive social capital in the community. The multistage nature of study, where I was able to visit several villages multiple times helped me observe the changes over time.

factors.

In *a priori factors* sub-section of the findings, I discuss various field observations related to extent of coverage, and degree of participatory implementation, and how these two factors affect inclusive social capital. In the *field emergent factors* sub-section, I discuss various factors that either enhance effects of two a priori identified factors on inclusive social capital, or have an impact on inclusive social capital in addition to these two a priori factors. These factors include a) range of programs being implemented; b) scaling speed – focus on covering many villages rather than engaging deeply with existing villages, and c) degree of focus on financial sustainability

3.6 Case selection criteria

As explained in Table 3.1 above, an a-priori expectation depended on the extent of coverage and degree of participatory implementation; the level of inclusive social capital will vary. However, the focus of this research was not so much

		Table 3.1: Extent of coverage, degree of participatory implementation and inclusive social capital	
		Degree of participatory implementation Low $\xrightarrow{\hspace{2cm}}$ High	
Extent of coverage	Group	Low inclusive social capital	Moderate inclusive social capital
	Village	Moderate inclusive social capital	High inclusive social capital

on reporting outcomes but was to understand various mechanisms and processes that affect inclusive social capital generation when social enterprise programs use different degrees of participatory implementation and extent of coverage.

A purposive sample of four cases (of social enterprises) was selected. These cases were identified based on initial communications, the detailed study of published cases,

information from development-oriented websites, academic institutions, and government agencies in India, and direct information from nongovernmental organizations. While selecting these cases, variations were ensured on both the dimensions, i.e. extent of coverage and degree of participatory implementation. In order to respect case confidentiality, these cases are identified with a pseudonym as *Alpha*, *Beta*, *Gamma*, and *Delta*. Each of these cases is discussed in further details in Chapter 4 and 5.

In order to isolate contextual differences, the cases were selected from the same region (Madhya Pradesh, the central province of India), with equivalent levels of literacy, poverty, and access to development infrastructure. I selected Madhya Pradesh province for several reasons. First, it is one of the poorest provinces in India. Second, it has relatively low literacy. Third, it has a diverse mix of religions, castes, and tribal population. Finally, many social enterprises are active in different parts of this province to address poverty-related issues (more information about research context is provided in Chapter 4).

All of the selected cases of social enterprises were involved in improving livelihoods through income generating activities for rural poor. The villages served by selected social enterprises are characterized by heterogeneous social groups and that most of these villages have hierarchical social structures along gender, caste and tribal divides. While the social enterprises selected were all involved in livelihood creation, work in the comparably sized villages in the same province, and target the rural poor, there were differences in their relative degree of participation and the extent of coverage.

3.7 Data collection schedule

Data collection was carried out in four stages (see Table 3.2)¹⁴ spread over 21 months. The multiple stages of data collection were advantageous because they allowed for iteration between data and emergent themes. Moreover, it also allowed for the triangulation of data as initial insights could be compared in different locations over time. In my interviews and observations, I was particularly concerned with capturing the perspectives of all the social groups, including lower castes and women, and data collection spread over four stages afforded me the opportunity to understand various implementation processes and discuss with various social groups. Furthermore, as inclusive social capital evolves over time, having multiple stages was very helpful in observing changes in inclusive social capital. I made specific efforts to ensure that the voices of weaker section of the society were heard throughout the data collection process.

For this study, I visited 80¹⁵ project related villages (19 *Alpha* , 18 *Beta*, 22 *Gamma*, and 21 *Delta*), i.e. villages where respective social enterprises were running their project and that fell in the regions considered for this study. In addition, I visited 36¹⁶ non-project related villages (12 *Alpha*, 7 *Beta*, 8 *Gamma*, and 9 *Delta*), i.e. villages that were close to respective social enterprises' project villages but were not served by any social enterprises nor they were part of any government project implementation. Moreover, in Stage-I, I also

¹⁴ Further details about data collection schedule are provided under respective cases in Chapter 4 (see Table 4.3, 4.5, 4.7, and 4.9)

¹⁵ This represents total number of unique villages visited. Some of the villages were visited twice and others were visited thrice. Therefor total number of village visits is 135 across the four stages.

¹⁶ This represents total number of unique villages visited. Some of the villages were visited twice and others were visited thrice. There total number of village visits is 63 across the four stages

visited 29 villages in regions other than the one used for this study and where social enterprises use in this study had their projects (5 *Alpha*, 6 *Beta*, 8 *Gamma*, and 10 *Delta*). The objective of visiting these villages was to get an idea about various projects by social enterprise and understand their modus operandi without forming any opinion about the region of my own study. During the study, I conducted 183 interviews with the executives, managers, headquarter staff, project managers, regional managers, and regional staff. I also conducted 95 interviews with district staff and field staff. I observed 49 group meetings (for *Alpha* and *Beta*), and 54 village meetings (for *Gamma* and *Delta*). I also conducted 62 group interviews with individuals who were participating in various projects, and 33 group interviews with the individuals who were not participants of any projects. In addition, I conducted 280 individual interviews with the beneficiaries, and 73 individual interviews with non-beneficiaries. I conducted 52 individual interviews with the various NGOs' staff who were familiar with one or more of the social enterprises chosen for this study. Additionally, I conducted 73 interviews with the field experts, government officials, agriculture extensions staff and other stakeholders¹⁷.

The interviews followed a semi-structured format in which I followed a basic framework for interview topics but also pursued interesting threads in the conversation (McCracken 1988, Denzin & Lincoln 2000). The interviews were conducted in Hindi and local dialects (except some interviews at headquarters that were conducted in English).

¹⁷ More details about case-wise distributions of interviews is provided in Chapter 4.

Individual and group interviews were recorded¹⁸, transcribed into Hindi or local dialect, and then translated into English.

I made extensive notes immediately after interviews and added any non-verbal cues I had observed (further details are provided in Appendix A). I tried to identify distinct concepts that were repeated in the data (Lofland et al. 2006). Data analysis was initially and partially carried out using NVIVO, version 8. NVivo allows coding the raw data into different types of “nodes” called free nodes and tree nodes. In grounded theory, free nodes are referred to as open codes and tree nodes are referred to as axial codes. Nvivo analysis resulted in 276 open codes: 52 open codes were bundled together to obtain *degree of participatory implementation*; 25 open codes were related to *financial sustainability*; 20 open codes were related to inclusive social capital; 72 open codes were related to *plurality of programs*; 62 open codes were grouped together to obtain scaling speed (or lack of it); and 45 open codes were combined to obtain social sustainability.

In summary, this chapter explained the research methodology adopted for the field work, data collection and analysis. I employed qualitative multiple case study approach to explore the key research question, *how social enterprises build inclusive social capital*. The data were collected using semi-structured individual interviews, group interviews, archival documents such as annual reports, organizations’ internal documents, and direct field observation of social dynamics and program implementation. Data were further triangulated by including multiple stakeholders. The data were analyzed using Nvivo. The

¹⁸ In some of the cases (mostly weaker castes but also in some cases dominant caste) I was not able to record the interviews due to special situation of the respondents and sensitivity of content. In all such cases I made extensive notes in my field diary.

next chapter discusses the research setting and provides a description of each of the four selected social enterprises.

Table 3.2: Data collection schedule								
	Stage 1				Stage 2			
<i>Alpha</i>	X				X			
<i>Beta</i>		X				X		
<i>Gamma</i>			X				X	
<i>Delta</i>				X				X
	Stage 3				Stage 4			
<i>Alpha</i>	X				X			
<i>Beta</i>		X				X		
<i>Gamma</i>			X				X	
<i>Delta</i>				X				X

4 Chapter: Research Setting and Case Description

In this chapter, I provide information about the research setting. I start with some general background information about rural India and justify why India was selected for my study. In a later subsection, I provide information about Madhya Pradesh province and outline reasons for selecting the poorest district of rural Madhya Pradesh. The rest of the chapter provides details about the four cases selected.

This dissertation study took place in rural India, specifically in the poorest rural districts of Madhya Pradesh province. Rural India is an appropriate setting for my research for several reasons: *First*, India is the second most populous country in the world and is home to one-third of the world's poor, and it was ranked 136 on the Human Development index (HDI) in 2013. 71% of the population of India is rural. More than 29% is below the conservatively estimated national poverty line,¹⁹ i.e. more than 363 million people live below the poverty line, of which 260 million live in rural areas, constituting almost 31% of the population in rural areas (GoI, 2014, Rangarajan Committee Report, 2014). The prevalent poverty also manifests itself in other socio-economic issues. For example, malnourishment is rampant in India, especially in the rural communities. Almost 46% of rural children under five, 40% of adult women, and 38% of adult men are underweight (compared to 33%, 25% and 26% respectively in urban areas). Many other related issues are discussed in detail in the subsection *Socio-Economic Issues in Rural India*, below.

¹⁹ Rangarajan Committee Report on Poverty submitted in June 2014 labels anyone as poor who is unable to spend 32 rupees (0.5 US\$) per day in rural areas, and 47 rupees (0.73 US\$) per day in urban areas. This is a conservative estimate compared to more globally accepted measures of poverty (i.e. US\$1.25/day or US\$2.00/day).

Thus, rural India presents numerous challenges and opportunities for social entrepreneurs to get engaged in addressing social issues.

Second, before starting my field research, I conducted a detailed review of published case studies and information from development-oriented websites, and had discussions with a number of organizations, such as Action for India Forum (social innovation), Acumen, Ashoka, Centre for Innovation Incubation and Entrepreneurship, Deshpande Foundation, Dasra, Echoing Green, Indian Angel Network Incubator, Indian Institute of Forest Management, Intellectap, Khemka Forum on Social Entrepreneurship, Khosla Labs, Rural Technology and Business Incubator, Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Tata Institute of Social Science, UnLtd India, Villgro, and others that keep repositories of social enterprises. My review of the social enterprise sector revealed that India currently provides one of the most dynamic social entrepreneurial spaces, with a fast emerging ecosystem that includes investors, training institutes, incubators, and entrepreneurial networks. Social enterprises, though not formally labeled as such in the past, have been developing in India for many years now and India is known as “an advanced laboratory for [social] enterprises serving low-end markets and for what succeeds and what fails in the effort” (Karamchandani, Kubzansky, & Frandano, 2009, p. 11).

Third, Indian villages are heterogeneous and various groups (differentiated by caste, religion, languages, and economic differences) exist in almost every village in India (Deshpande, 2000; Janssens, 2010; Lanjouw & Rao, 2011). Thus, this setting provides a rich context for understanding how the differences based on class, caste and gender result in unequal access to resources and institutions. Conducting research in Indian villages also offered me an opportunity to observe various dynamics that play out when social

enterprises implement their activities at the village-level versus the group-level and their relative effect on inclusive social capital. This setting also allowed me to observe how participation in social enterprise activities happens in a heterogeneous society and how various degrees of participation in the social enterprise activities affect the generation of inclusive social capital.

Finally, while all the above were substantive reasons for choosing India to conduct the proposed research, there was a practical reason as well. Having spent many of my formative years in the rural environment of India, and then working for three years in the microfinance sector in that rural setting, I brought an emic perspective to this research setting (Moorey & Luthans, 1984; Sabbagh & Golden, 2007). However, at the same time, being educated in Western institutions, I was able to bracket my personal biases and use reflexivity to observe phenomena (Brewer, 2000; Merriam, 2009; Morgan & Smircich, 1980). Moreover, I could communicate in Hindi, which is the language spoken by more than 40% of Indians and is particularly used in most of the provinces that are poor and are being served by various social enterprises.

4.1 Socio-Economic Issues in Rural India

Social enterprises are emerging as important actors in the Indian development landscape. Almost 28% of these social enterprises are concentrated in the agriculture sector (British Council, 2016). Agriculture, which is vital to India, suffers from drastic inefficiencies across the entire value chain (Intellectap, 2013). Most of the rural communities are still agrarian. The contribution from agriculture and associated activities to the GDP has declined from 52% in the 1950s to about 14% in the current decade,

however, more than 50% of the total population, and upwards of 75% of the rural population, is still dependent on farming and related activities.²⁰ The average growth rate of the agricultural sector has hovered at less than 2% post-liberalization, while the overall economy has grown by more than 7%. Some of the key reasons for this dismal growth rate are discussed below.

One of the primary issues is that Indian farmers mostly have small landholdings. Only 0.8% of farmers have farmland of over 10 hectares; about 13% have farmland of 4-10 hectares, and around 86%, who are classified as small and marginal farmers, have landholdings of below 2 hectares.²¹ These small and marginal farmers are engaged in subsistence agriculture activities. With increasing population pressure and no other livelihood opportunities in rural India, farmland is becoming fragmented (FAO, United Nation; Ministry of Agriculture, GoI). This is evident from the increase in the percentage of small and marginal farmers, from 61.7% in the 1960s to 86.1% in the first decade of 21st century. Similarly, the average landholding size declined from 2.63 hectares to 1.06 hectares in the same period. As small farmlands provide no economies of scale, the cost of cultivation is very high and income, if any, is marginal.

Another trend evident in the last several decades is the systemic decrease in investment in the agriculture sector. The share of agricultural investment within total public investment has been falling since the 1980s. The diminishing focus on the sector is mainly because, in policy domains, agriculture is no longer considered a viable livelihood option. Nevertheless, agriculture is still the largest employment generator and provides food

²⁰ Economic Survey, Government of India, 2014

²¹ The number for poor provinces like Madhya Pradesh are much worse. Most of the farmers I met during my visits to several villages had land less than 2 bigha (i.e. 0.32 hectares)

security to the entire country.

The impact of decreasing public investment is clearly visible. Existing infrastructure is inadequate to meet the needs of the farming population. There is an acute shortage of accessible and affordable infrastructure for irrigation, storage, transport and extension services. As this infrastructure requires large initial capital investments, long gestation periods, and low returns on investments, private investment has not flown into the agriculture sector. This lack of investment is clearly evident in the access to irrigation. Indian agriculture is characterized by a high dependence on rainfall and 60% of farming is categorized as 'highly risk' is rain-fed. Only 35% of agricultural land is irrigated, exposing small and marginal farmers to a much larger risk as they are more dependent on ground and rain water than large farmers who have access to canals.

Another impact of decreasing public investment has been the overall lack of access for small and marginal farmers to the inputs that can boost farm production. Historically, in India, public investments in agriculture have largely followed a subsidy-driven model. While the efficiency and coverage of these subsidies have been questionable, withdrawing subsidies has had an adverse impact on access to inputs for farm production and the income of small and marginal farmers tilling unirrigated areas, as they earlier used to benefit from lower input prices. With liberalization and the onset of globalization, there has been a decline in public investment in agriculture, and ensuring a steady supply of inputs at a reasonable price has been a challenge. Small and marginal landholders have little access to institutional mechanisms so they become increasingly dependent on money lenders for credit after public investments were withdrawn. A staggering 51% of farm households are completely excluded from the formal financial sector. An estimated 48.6% (or 43.3 million

households) is indebted to formal or non-formal lenders and 27.8% have borrowed from formal sources (banks, self-help groups, etc.). This places a severe burden on farm households, who more often than not are repaying these loans with an exorbitant rate of interest and are thereby trapped in a vicious circle of indebtedness, forcing them to take extreme steps, such as suicide, when their crops fail.

These challenges in rural economy present opportunities and a business case for entrepreneurs seeking to improve the lives of the rural poor (Intellcap, 2013). The four social enterprises selected in this research, for example, are working in livelihood sector and aim to support small-scale farmers through providing access to quality inputs, equipment, financing and other advisory services.

The programs of social enterprises take place against a complex social backdrop. The social context is particularly important in India, as social relations generally provide the framework for individual, social and economic activities. For example, the choice of livelihood is generally determined by possession of a farming plot, its size and quality, access to water and other resources, and membership of socio-cultural groups (e.g. caste, described below), as traditionally some social groups are associated with a particular activity such as growing vegetables (e.g. *Kushwaha*), and cattle/dairy activities (e.g. *Ahir*; *Gujar*). Social relationships, although hierarchical and exploitative, also facilitate transactions by being substitutes for formal institutions and providing the framework for economic activity (North, 1991). Two aspects of the social system are particularly salient for my study – caste and gender.

4.1.1 Caste-related issues in rural India

In this thesis, the terms ‘Scheduled Caste’ and ‘*Dalits*’ (formerly known as untouchables) are interchangeable, as are the terms ‘Scheduled Tribes’ and ‘*Adivasi*’ (indigenous tribal peoples). Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are terms used in the Constitution of India. At many levels, STs have been drawn into the caste system, “becoming a part of the caste-based division of labor,” and finding themselves “most usually at the bottom of the social ladder” (Agrawal, 2004, p. 225). This is particularly true in villages where ST reside among caste groups. For this reason, in most of this thesis, I treat the ST inhabiting the village under study in the same way as the caste groups. At the same time, I acknowledge the potentially problematic nature of such a treatment (see Baviskar, 2005, for an illustrative example; Arora & Sanditov, 2015), and, whenever the situation demands their separate treatment, I provide details relating to the SC and the ST separately.

Central to understanding caste in villages in India is the notion of the dominant caste (Srinivas, 1987). The dominant caste is identified as the caste that either has numerical strength in the villages or that hold a dominant status due to their access to various resources, such as land ownership and access to resources etc (Arora & Sanditov, 2015). According to Satyanarayana (2014, p. 48), caste is a “live force in modern Indian culture and politics” and it exercises a powerful influence on the Indian politico-economic order (Deshpande, 2001; Arora & Sanditov, 2015).

Caste, which means pure or chaste, is a term applied by the British colonial rulers to understand the complexities of the Indian social system which was based on some unique characteristics of kinship, endogamy, and profession-based communities and existed

across India (Vikas, Varman, & Belk, 2015). Earlier sociologists had described Indian caste as a unique system of social stratification because its legitimacy is derived from religious and ideological texts such as *Manusmriti*²². Explaining the distinctiveness of the Indian caste system from other types of affinity groups, such as ethnic segregation, Desai and Dubey (2012) state that:

“A status segregation grown into caste differs in its structure from a mere ‘ethnic’ segregation; the caste structure transforms the horizontal and unconnected coexistences of ethnically segregated groups into a vertical social system of superordination and subordination ...ethnic coexistences condition a mutual repulsion and disdain but allow each ethnic community to consider its own honor as the highest one; the caste structure brings out a social subordination and an acknowledgement of ‘more honor’ in favour of privileged castes and status groups (p.1)”

The most widely-held view of caste is that it consists of four broad *Varna* categories that are arranged in a rough hierarchy and divides society into four main groups: Brahmins (priests) at the top, followed by Kshatriyas (soldiers) and Vaishyas (traders), and these upper castes are followed by Shudras or low castes. At the bottom of the hierarchy are Dalits, or outcastes, who were considered untouchables. Louis Dumont, a French scholar and the author of a famous book on caste, *Homo Hierarchicus* (1970), presented the canonical formulation that has framed the conversation about caste over the succeeding

²² The *Manusmriti* is collection of rules and norms of ‘appropriate’ behavior and is considered to be word of Brahma, the creator of the universe. Many religious *Hindu* believe it to be the most authoritative statement on religious conduct. The text consists of 12 chapters containing of 2690 verses. Some of verses that are relevant here are reproduced in the Appendix 1.

decades and provided a rationale for status hierarchy. For Dumont (1970), the dominant principle of the Hindu caste system was purity, impurity, and hierarchy. In the graded hierarchical order of the caste system (Cotterill, et al, 2014; Dubey, 2016; Patil, 2013), the Brahmin (priest) maintains a superior status over the Kshatriya on the basis of the Brahmin's monopoly of the offering of sacrifices, and the Kshatriya maintains a superior status over the Shudra, and so on. The principles of purity and impurity guided the division of labor in the society. Other scholars also agree on the three defining principles of "the spirit of caste" (Jodhka, 2015; Vallabhaneni, 2015; Velaskar, 2016):

- a) Hereditary specialization: The hereditary association of caste and a specific trade or profession.
- b) Hierarchy: Personal status, as rights and duties, is unequally divided and determined by the rank of the group to which one belongs.
- c) Repulsion: The phenomena of mutual repulsion between social groups, division into opposed fragments, isolation at the group level, and mechanism to prevent alliances and relations across the group boundary, like endogamy, the concept of impurity, and food taboos. (Subedi 2013, p 57)

This view of caste has received support, but it has been criticized as a static view (Appadurai, 1986; Gupta, 2000; Srinivas, 1996; Berreman, 1991). Critics argue that the status theories of caste hierarchies are rooted in the religious inscriptions and this focus often ignores modern India in which concepts like purity are difficult to implement in day-to-day life (Desai & Dubey, 2012). Furthermore, comparative social theorists consider the caste systems not as a unique ideological or religious institution but as a matter of social differentiation and social stratification (Srinivas, 1996; Deshpande, 2000, Vikas,

Varman, & Belk, 2015). This approach regards the caste system as a system of exclusion and exploitation which is held together by material wealth (i.e. the landholding) concentrated in certain groups (i.e. dominant caste), more than a result of a general consensus among the population. Given the occupational underpinnings of the *Varna* system and the linkages between occupation and income, caste is not only religious or ideological subordination but also a system of material inequality (Deshpande, 2000, 2001; Zacharia & Vakulabharanam, 2011). Research on caste inequalities and their material basis has a long history (Desai & Dubey, 2012) and it can be traced back to some of the earliest research on *Jajmani* systems (Wiser, 1979).

The *Jajmani* order was, and in many rural areas still is, an important characteristic of the caste system. It defines the division of labor in varied forms across rural India. In this graded system, relatively ‘upper’ castes tend to be ‘*jajmans*’ (patrons) while lower castes tend to be ‘*kamins*’ (service providers)²³ (Ghosh, 2012; Jodhka, 2015; Kumar, 2016; Mishra, 2008; Sahay, 2004). Traditionally, Indian society was agrarian, and rural India is still dependent on agriculture and related activities. Because of this dependence on agriculture, the landowning upper castes (patrons) are the most dominant class under the *Jajmani* system. In this system, low-caste workers were expected to serve their high-caste patrons according to the caste-based division of labor (Vikas, Varman & Belk 2015).

The rights and remuneration of workers were based on the unwritten norms that

²³ The only exception to this graded caste hierarchy of *jajmans* and *kamins* is between upper castes (*Kshatriya* and *Vaishya*) and the uppermost caste, *Brahmins*. Even though *Brahmins* have a higher status in the caste hierarchy compared to *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas*, they serve as service providers (*kamins*) for religious ceremonies for *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas* (*jajman* in this case). In all other circumstances, a *jajman* is always of higher caste than a *kamin*.

were primarily determined by the upper castes. As the inheritance of occupations, i.e. what occupation one will take up is decided by the caste one is born into, it makes difficult for members of lower castes and Dalits to break the cycle of exploitation and exclusion (Kumar, 2016; Vikas, Varman & Belk 2015).

Due to this occupational underpinning of the *Varna* system, the caste system is seen as a system that entrenches people into economic and material inequality. However, these linkages between caste, occupation, and income are not accepted uncritically and some scholars have argued that the relationship between caste and occupation has been misrepresented. For example, Beteille (1992) argues that even during British Colonial rule, “many castes had more than half their working members in occupations other than those specifically associated with their caste” (p. 40).²⁴

Some scholars also argue that in an independent India the link between caste and occupation has weakened considerably. These scholars point out the principles enshrined in the constitution, and the measures taken by successive governments to abolish every form of caste-based discrimination. For example, the Constitution of India prohibits untouchability, under Article 17, and obligates the state to make special provisions for the betterment of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The constitution adopted the term ‘Scheduled Castes’ (used for the first time in the Government of India Act 1935) to refer to what have been historically oppressed castes (Dalits or untouchables) and the term

²⁴ This view has not been universally accepted. Many scholars believe that this observation of mobility is only valid for the occupations that are at the same level and normally performed by the upper castes, something labelled in the literature as horizontal mobility. There is a lack of evidence about whether upper caste members have ever taken up occupations traditionally performed by the lower caste members or by *harijans* (Agrawal, 2016; Jodhka, 2015; Vaid, 2012; 2014).

‘Scheduled Tribes’ to refer to various groups of historically disadvantaged indigenous people in India. After the promulgation of the constitution, and as part of a policy of affirmative action, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were provided a quota of 20% in educational institutions and government jobs, which was increased to 22.5% (SC 15% and ST 7.5%) and extended to public sector jobs in 1982. In the 1980s, another category was created and labeled as ‘Other Backward Castes’ (OBCs). They were described as ‘socially and educationally backward classes’. OBCs were provided 27% reservations in public sector employment and higher education.

In light of affirmative action and the increased participation of SC, ST, and OBC in education institutions and public sector jobs, some scholars argue that an individual’s caste and occupation are not as tightly coupled as they used to be. Moreover, market-based pricing for services, as well as land reforms and education have, it is argued, disrupted the link between caste and occupation (Beteille, 1992; Dantwala 1950). Some recent studies also document the dilution of the role of caste in shaping economic well-being and suggest that the politics of affirmative action and migration, as well as the expansion of Dalits into non-traditional occupations and the changes in agriculture, have combined to improve the relative position of Dalits in recent years (Kapur et al 2010; Beteille 1992). Based on these trends it has been suggested that the link between caste and economic status in modern India is minimal at best.

However, many of these debates have been theoretical or have used anecdotal evidence rather than being substantiated by recent empirical data (Agrawal, 2016; Cotterill et al, 2014; Vaid, 2014). Many surveys conducted by governmental and non-governmental agencies show persisting caste-based inequalities. Desai and Dubey (2012), using data

from a nationally representative survey of 41,554 households conducted in 2005, examine the relationship between social background and different dimensions of well-being. Their research highlights the impact of caste inequalities on inequality of opportunity and inequality of outcome. They argue that centuries of caste-based social organization have resulted in unequal access to land, education, business ownership, and occupation. They found that, compared to upper castes, *Dalits* and *Adivasi* are less likely to own land, and are likely to have fewer years of education, lower household-size-adjusted consumption expenditure, and fewer important social connections.

The similar disparity has been reported in surveys conducted by other governmental agencies. In December 2015, the Government of India released an Agri-census report, which shows that *Dalits* and *Adivasi* hold less than 20% of agricultural land. In addition, the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) found significant differences in the economic status of agricultural households in India. The NSS-2015 shows that Scheduled Tribes are over-represented among the landless and Scheduled Castes are over-represented among the marginal land-owners, whereas the majority of medium and large landholders are from upper castes.

This total domination of resources also extends to business ownership. Using comprehensive data on enterprise ownership from the Economic Censuses of 1990, 1998 and 2005, Iyer, Khanna, and Varshney (2011) document substantial caste differences in entrepreneurship across India. The *Dalits* and *Adivasi* are significantly under-represented in the ownership and workforce of enterprises. In addition, they also highlight significant differences in firm characteristics across caste categories. For example, enterprises owned by *Dalits* and *Adivasi* tend to be very small, less likely to employ labor from outside the

family, and more likely to belong to the informal or unorganized sector.

In addition to unequal access to resources in modern India, the clear boundaries associated with the caste system are also manifested in a variety of ways. For example, residency is often clustered by caste, with lower castes being located farther from the center of the village. *Dalits*, in particular, are isolated from much of society as they are considered impure. They are generally excluded from mixing with other castes in a variety of ways, such as by not being permitted to enter higher caste households or venture into the vicinity of upper caste hamlets, or not being allowed to share the same wells/water sources. Violations of these norms at times result in violent reprisals (Das, 2013; Jungari & Bomble, 2013; Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998).

The subordination of lower castes and SC also take place because of a complete domination of access to credit and agriculture inputs by upper castes. Traditionally, the merchant caste (*Vaishya*, e.g. *Agarwal*) are allowed to conduct business and run market transactions, and they control the supply of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and other inputs. More often than not, they exploit the SC and short change them in their transactions. Similarly, in most of the villages, the same caste (*Vaishya*, e.g. *Mahajan*) also has complete control over credit, and they charge a usurious interest rate from illiterate and helpless lower castes (Agrawal, 2016; Shah et al, 2007). Moreover, as caste structure is deeply entrenched, most of the government officials, including *Gram Sevak*,²⁵ do not provide any support to lower castes, and in many cases actually exploit their ignorance and gullibility.

²⁵ *Gram Sevak*, which roughly translates to ‘village service provider’, is a government official who is responsible for providing agriculture-related information to rural farmers and helping them to access various government schemes. However, in many instances we found that *Gram Sevaks* never visited the areas/hamlets of lower castes.

While members of upper castes can rely on their caste-based networks to access resources and gain preferential treatment, the members of lower castes lack connections to people in powerful positions (Desai & Dubey, 2012; Samuelson, 2013).

These processes lead to unequal access to productive resources and thereby result in material disadvantages. It has also been argued that even highly qualified members of lower castes face social and economic discrimination reproducing and exacerbating the existing social inequalities (Thorat & Newman, 2009).

Thus, India's constitutional guarantees notwithstanding, more than 154 million SC and 94 million ST in rural areas are still subject to social, economic, cultural and political exclusionary processes that are deeply embedded in social practices, norms, and values. SCs and STs are also socially and physically isolated living outside village boundaries or in prescribed areas and usually not allowed to access public resources like wells, ponds, and temples. Stringent social sanctions are applied if 'rules' are broken, including physical abuse leading to death in many cases (Mandal, 2012; Thorat & Newman, 2009).

4.1.2 Gender-related issues in rural India

Gender issues are also important to understand the social dynamics of India. Particularly in rural India, a woman's role in the household is greatly defined by social structures and familial ties and is visible in the gendered division of labor and behavioral norms, as well as other discriminatory practices against women. The persistence of gender discrimination, despite economic progress, shows the prevalence of a social structure that is dictated by strong patriarchal norms. Within this patriarchal structure, there are clearly defined gender roles. Men are expected to be the breadwinner, whereas, women are expected to take care of family members and maintain the household (Benería, 1995).

Consequently, the division of labor also reflects men and women occupying different spaces, where men occupy ‘public’ space and take all the decisions within and outside the family domain. Women belong to ‘private’ space and their household work is often devalued.

Addressing gender inequality and empowering women is “one of the central issues in the process of development” (Sen 1999, p. 202) and the principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian constitution. However, all empirical surveys by domestic and international agencies show that limited progress has been made towards gender equality (Khera, 2016; FAO, 2010, 2011; Desai & Joshi 2014;). This is reflected in the Gender Development Index 2014, where India ranks 151 out of 162 countries (UNDP).²⁶ In the past decade, while the Indian GDP has grown by around 6%, there has been a large decline in female labor force participation (from 37% in 2005 to 27% in 2014) (the World Bank)²⁷. The male-female wage gap has been stagnant at around 60% (Khera, 2016), while a recent report on the Monster Salary Index finds a 27% gender pay gap in white-collar jobs (Fabo, et al, 2014).

In rural areas, where agriculture is the main activity, women’s agriculture work tends to be invisible and is seen secondary to their role as caregiver and domestic labor (Dutta & Samanta 2006; Kaur & Sharma 1991). Research shows that most of the women in rural economies are involved in unpaid subsistence farming, which is labor intensive

²⁶ United Nations Development Programme: Human Development Reports. Data available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GDI> accessed on April, 12, 2016

²⁷ The World Bank data. Labor force participation rate, percent of female population ages 15+. Available at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS?locations=IN>, accessed on May 1, 2016.

and include activities such as, sowing, transplanting, weeding and harvesting (Alex, 2013; Boserup 1970; Burton & White 1984; Jafry & Sulaiman, 2013; Kingiri, 2013). These activities do not require equipment beyond the basics and therefore, women's agriculture work is often perceived as less-skilled and tedious, compared to men, who often perform technology-intensive activities and are more involved in cash crop farming (Ragasa et al, 2013; Rathgeber, 1990; Razavi & Miller 1995; Carr 2008).

Among small and marginal farm holders, women remain particularly vulnerable (Kanchi, 2010; King & Mason, 2001; Desai & Joshi, 2014). In India, their share of the agricultural labor force has been growing. They constitute more than 60% of those engaged in agriculture and related activities; however, a disproportionately high number of them are engaged in either cultivation or farm labor. Of the women who are engaged in agriculture-related activities, 83% are engaged as cultivators or farm laborers, as opposed to 67% of men (Agarwal, 2010; Srivastava, 2010). Approximately, 72% of rural female workforce was absorbed into agriculture between 1983 and 2005 compared to 40% for men (Desai & Joshi 2014). Despite this 'feminisation' of the Indian agricultural workforce, women encounter major barriers to farming when compared to their male counterparts. The biggest hurdle for women farmers is land rights. They are less likely to inherit or control agricultural land (particularly in northern states). According to the recent National Sample Survey (2015), more than 80% of the land is still owned by men.

They have been largely excluded from male-targeted agricultural support programs (Desai & Joshi 2014). Moreover, restrictions on their movement, their lack of connections to powerful persons, and various social norms, have restricted the ability of women to influence decision-making. As succinctly stated by Desai and Joshi (2014), "these

disadvantages have left the rural female labor force in India predominantly informal, asset-less, and excluded (or self-excluded) from policy dialogues”.

After highlighting caste and gender issues that exist in rural India generally, I now turn to Madhya Pradesh province, which is where I conducted my case research.

4.2 Research Sites

I chose to observe the implementation of social enterprise projects in the poorest districts of the central Indian province of Madhya Pradesh (MP) and their impact on inclusive social capital. MP is considered one of the poorest provinces in India,²⁸ with about 32.78 million people (44.3%) living below conservatively estimated²⁹ poverty line (GoI, 2014, Rangarajan Committee). 45.2% of the population of rural areas and 42.1% of the population of urban areas live below the poverty line (GoI, 2014). As per UNDP estimates, 48.6% (35.5 million) of the MP population live below poverty line³⁰ (GoI, 2009). The severity is further visible when a multidimensional poverty index is utilized. As per this measure, 68.1% of the MP population lives in poverty.

²⁸ MP is one of the eight poorest Indian provinces, having widespread and acute poverty. These eight provinces together account for 421 million poor people, in comparison to 410 million poor people living in the poorest 26 African countries combined (UNDP, 2010). Therefore, many social enterprises, NGOs and other social organizations are very active in MP

²⁹ Estimate of poverty is based on the poverty line of *monthly* per capita income of Rs 772 (~ US\$ 12) for the rural area and Rs 1154 (~US\$ 18) for the urban area (GoI, 2014, Rangarajan Committee). If the traditional measure of US\$ 1.25/day is used then the number and percentage of poor people will be much higher. UNDP estimates about 48.6% of the people in MP live below the poverty line.

³⁰ <http://www.in.undp.org/content/india/en/home/operations/about_undp/undp-in-mp/about-mp/> accessed on 20 February 2014.

Table 4.1: Important Socio-Economic Indicators: India and Madhya Pradesh (MP)

Socio-Economic Indicators	India	MP
Contribution of agriculture (to respective gross domestic product)%	14.62	26.50
Contribution of industry (to respective gross domestic product)%	20.16	15.87
Per capita net national/state product in rupees (and in US\$)	33731 (526)	19736 (308)
Human Development Index value (HDI)	0.467	0.375*
Inequality adjusted HDI	0.343	0.29^
Gender Development Index (GDI)	0.590	0.516#
Global Hunger Index	23.3	30.87~
Prevalence of underweight children under 5 years of age (%)	42.5	59.8
Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)	0.283	0.374
% poor as per MPI	53.7	68.1
* Fourth poorest performing Indian province in terms of HDI (Human Development Report 2011 by Institute of Applied Manpower Research and Planning Commission)		
^ Lowest Income Adjusted HDI among all the provinces (Inequality Adjusted Human Development Index for India's States 2011, UNDP)		
# Third poorest performing Indian province in terms of GDI (Gendering Human Development Indices: Recasting the Gender Development Index and Gender Empowerment Measure for India, Ministry of Women and Child Development, GOI)		
~Highest Hunger Index amongst all the provinces (India State Hunger Index 2009, IFPRI)		

Approximately 71% of the MP population is engaged in agriculture as their primary livelihood.³¹ However, agriculture contributes only about 25% to Gross State Domestic Product, and its share is declining, while the percentage of the population who are engaged in agriculture-related activities has remained stable. While the practice of agriculture is widespread, most farmers struggle to supply their families with sufficient food; food insecurity is a constant problem. The majority of the population lives in rural areas (72.4%) where they subsist on tiny and underproductive farm plots.³² Insecure land tenure, periodic droughts, pests, and floods cause difficulties for farmers, which is reflected in the grim fact

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

that over 16,190 farmers committed suicide between 2001 and 2012 due to crop failures³³ (Jain, 2013), making MP one of the most food insecure provinces in India.

The consistent shortage of food, along with some social practices, has resulted in high malnutrition rates and high infant (67/1000) and maternal (3.35/1000) mortality rates³⁴. UNICEF estimates that two-thirds of children in MP are malnourished and that the level of malnourishment in the province is higher than in most sub-Saharan Africa countries. MP has one of the lowest nutrition and health indicators among the Indian provinces (National Family Health Survey, 2006)³⁵. Consequently, MP has the highest Hunger Index (> 30) and is the only province that has been labeled as being in the ‘extremely alarming’ category of the India State Hunger Index (Menon et al, 2008). Only seven countries in the world have a higher Hunger Index than MP. Important socio-economic indicators for India and MP are provided in Table 4.1. MP performs poorly on all of the indicators even in comparison to the already very low standards seen at the country level. According to the UNICEF (2016), the poverty rate is the highest among scheduled tribes (STs), and scheduled castes (SCs). This report covers data for 2011-2012, which shows that 55% population of STs and 39.48% population of SCs were living below poverty line of \$1/ day. The report calculates that every second household among the ST community in the rural areas of MP is still estimated to be poor.

Gender-based exclusion and exploitation are also very common in MP. In Gender

³³ National Crime Records Bureau Reports

³⁴ http://www.unicef.org/india/state_profiles_4341.htm accessed on February 15, 2014.

³⁵ International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and Macro International. 2007. *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3), 2005–06: India: Volume I*. Mumbai: IIPS.

Development Index, MP performs below the national average (UNICEF 2016). Within traditional norms, women are consigned to very specific roles and domains. The participation of women in agriculture sector is still 79.45 % (Gosh & Gosh, 2014) and mainly consists of menial agricultural labor, such as planting, weeding, or harvesting by hand. Men, on the other hand, conduct business and perform higher-status agricultural work, such as decision-making regarding crop choice, using tractors to plow, or working with motorized water pumps.

The socio-economic background that is discussed in previous two sections, provide a useful backdrop for the emergence of social enterprises. In the next section, I provide an overview of social enterprise sector in India.

4.3 Social Enterprise Sector in India

India has a strong social economy sector which until recent years has been dominated by ‘traditional³⁶’ social economy actors such as cooperatives. Initially, cooperatives served the rural sector very well particularly in key industries such as dairy and in key functions such as providing members access to credit (NRAA, 2009). In recent years, however, cooperatives have experienced increasing politicization which has lowered member commitments, raised opportunism and free riding (Trebbing & Hassler, 2012, *cf* Bijman, Muradian & Schuurman, 2016; Singh, 2008, 2010). This has resulted in poor performance, as well as problems with proper utilization of financial and managerial resources (Datta, 2004; Singh, 2008). Therefore, cooperatives have trended towards greater

³⁶ In chapter 2, I explain the differences between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ social economy actors

market orientation and there has been a growth of ‘new’ social economy actors such as social enterprises (Trebbing & Hassler, 2012).

There is no clear definition of social enterprises in India and the policies pertinent to the development, sustainability, and management of social enterprises are yet to be designed (Satar & John, 2016). However, given the steady deregulation of the social and economic sectors since the 1990s and the significant social challenges facing India, the interest in social enterprises is growing. For example, in its 12th five-year plan (2012 to 2017), the government of India has prioritized social enterprise innovation as part of its ‘Decade of Innovation’ program and has committed to establishing a capacity-building ecosystem around enterprises that are working in poor communities. The social enterprise sector in India is still at a nascent stage and most of the initial growth in social enterprises has occurred without government support (Dasra, 2015).

The initial growth in the sector can be traced to the founding of several microfinance and livelihood related social enterprises between 2005 and 2007 (GIZ, 2012). According to British Council (2015), more than 57% social enterprises were established within last five years, driven by the increasing availability of social investment and the establishment of support organizations such as incubators, accelerators, and skills training workshops. However, access to capital still remains one of the biggest challenges to founding and growing social enterprises.

Reports agree that the primary barriers for social enterprises in India include the lack of legal framework, difficulty accessing capital or grant funding, lack of awareness about social enterprise models among banks and support organizations, shortage of managerial skills, and challenges recruiting and retaining other staff (ADB, 2012; GIZ,

2015; Oberoi, 2016). Lack of government support during initial growth stages and lackluster support thereafter has meant that the social enterprise sector in India has developed in policy lacuna. As a result, the industry displays a diverse range of social enterprise models and approaches compared to other regions (e.g. Hong Kong) where social enterprises have been extensively supported by the government (Defourny & Kim, 2011; Karamchandani, et al, 2009; Oberoi, 2016). According to Satar & John (2016), the multidimensional nature of social enterprises, as well as the diverse nature of social challenges in India, has made it difficult to define and delimit the boundaries of social enterprises.

The foremost issue facing social enterprises in India is a lack of legal structure. This differs from the United Kingdom (UK) where social enterprises can be registered as Community Interest Companies (CICs) (Nicholls, 2010; Ridley-Duff & Bull, 2015) and the United States (US) where social enterprises can be registered as low-profit limited liability company (L3C) (Artz et al, 2012; Cooney et al, 2014). In India, there are no special categories leading social enterprises to register themselves as either for-profit or non-profit entities even though their income structures don't fall neatly into either of these categories.

Regardless of the legal distinction between for-profit and non-profit organizations, attracting early-stage investments has been a universal barrier for social entrepreneurs. Most of the existing financial support only become available after a social enterprise has been operational for a few years. For non-profit social enterprises, this has resulted in their dependence on external agencies for the sustenance. Their ability to raise funds from financial institutions has been limited. Further, few support systems are available during a social enterprise's early years barring the fellowships offered by a few foundations such as

the Ashoka Foundation, the Skoll Foundation, and the Indian Angel Network. Despite this support, it is extremely difficult for social enterprises in the initial phase of their operations to find a firm footing. Supporting foundations prefer to offer fellowships or grants to more established non-profits. This policy has contributed to the challenges start-up social enterprises face. This problem is aggravated in the Indian sector due to a scarcity of investors and the fact that many ventures, particularly those that work for the poorest of the poor, generate few revenues. For-profit enterprises have comparatively easier access to finance as these enterprises have a clear income stream and the ecosystem is very well established. However, there is a risk that a social enterprise faces when pursuing for-profit model, as this can lead to the problem of mission drift through which investors expect large returns which can detract from the entrepreneur's original social mission (Comforth, 2014; Ebrahim, Battilana & Mair, 2014; Mersland & Strom, 2010; Ramus & Vaccaro, 2014).

The absence of any clear legal status and associated incentives for social enterprise in India hurts social entrepreneurs as few investors are willing to invest in social enterprises. The underdeveloped financial markets in the Indian context exacerbated by the lack of standardized legal status for social enterprise have made it extremely difficult for a social entrepreneur to secure financial support from formal financial systems. Together, these factors impair the sustainability of social enterprises leading to many failed initiatives. Most of the social enterprises in India work at the local level and at very small scale. They manage their activities from locally generated resources, such as community contributions, small donations, and sometimes the social entrepreneur's own income (Baporikar, 2016; Clyde & Karnani, 2015; Kummitha, 2016; Rajan et al, 2014; Singh 2016).

However, outside funding is becoming increasingly acceptable as evidenced by the growth of impact investing (Rajan et al, 2014). Total money invested through impact investing was \$1.17 million in 2000, which grew to \$250 million by 2011 and to \$906 million by the end of 2014³⁷, making India the second largest destination for the impact investment (Rajan & Koserwal, 2013). Nevertheless, impact investing in India remains under-developed, and most of these investments go to tech start-ups based out of metropolis rather than to rural initiatives (Kummitha, 2016; Rajan et al, 2014; Singh, 2016). Whereas impact investment in the US is delivered through various institutions such as community banks and community development financial institutions, impact investment in India remains dependent on large specialized organizations such as Incube, Charioteer, and Unitus Seed Fund. The only exceptions to this large institutional driven impact investing are Milaap Social Ventures and Rang De that are non-profit organizations and aggregate small impact investors through crowdfunding platforms (Ashta, 2012; Rajan et al, 2014).

Impact investing in India can be traced back to 1982 when the Ashoka Foundation provided grants to Indian social entrepreneurs (Oberoi, 2016). However, it is only in recent years, India has witnessed an increase in the number and size of impact investments in social enterprises³⁸. In 1997, Grassroots Innovations Augmentation Network (GIAN) became India's first non-profit socially minded venture capital fund (VCF). In 2001

³⁷ *Invest, Catalyze, Mainstream: The Indian Impact Investing Story*. Intellect. 2014. Accessed on 5 June, 2016, and available at <https://www.giz.de/de/downloads/giz2015-en-invest-catalyze-mainstream-india.pdf>

³⁸ It is important to note that as there is no legal status for social enterprises in India, it is difficult to ascertain how much impact investment is going into social enterprises, not-for-profit, or for-profit businesses with triple bottom line. The information provided here includes all three categories.

Aavishkaar registered as the first for-profit VCF. Early growth in the impact investor community was slow. For example, it took Aavishkaar seven years to accumulate \$14 million for its first fund. Since then, the number of VCF and their size has increased considerably. Some of the largest actors in the field are: the Omidyar Network, Aavishkaar, Acumen Fund, and Elevar Equity. Additionally, the Indian Government is also considering to set up a VCF of \$200 million.

These developments notwithstanding, social enterprise sector suffers from various issues related to securing funding. International funding is available only to organizations that have special certification. For social enterprises that are registered as a for-profit organization, this funding can be obtained in the form of equity and not as debt. International impact investors who do not have clear information about India's social enterprise eco-system are hesitant in equity investment as they perceive it as risky, whereas social enterprises are wary of equity as they suspect it might lead to mission drift. Thus, most of this international funding end-up in the metropolis based tech start-ups that build some sort of platforms for addressing social issues such as financial inclusion, and mobile phone-based platforms rather than in the initiatives that are attempting to generate livelihood for the rural poor, as is the case with four social enterprises selected for this case.

4.4 Selection of Cases

While some details about case selection are provided in Chapter 3, here, I will briefly recap the salient aspects of the process of selecting cases, before providing detailed information about each of the cases. Through a purposeful sampling the four cases, *Alpha*, *Beta*, *Gamma*, and *Delta* were selected based on an a priori expectation that, depending on

the extent of coverage (i.e. whether or not programs include a large proportion of the villagers) and type of participatory approach followed, the level of inclusive social capital will vary. While selecting these cases, variations were ensured on both these dimensions, i.e. extent of coverage and type of the participatory approach followed.

In order to isolate contextual differences, cases were selected from the same region (Madhya Pradesh, a central Indian province), with equivalent levels of literacy, poverty, and access to development infrastructure. All of the selected cases involve social enterprises that were engaged in improving livelihoods through income-generating activities for the rural poor. While the social enterprises selected were all involved in livelihood creation, worked in similar size villages in the same province, and targeted the rural poor, there were differences in the extent of coverage and type of participatory approach adopted by different social enterprises. In addition, they differ on the scale of operations (working in a relatively higher or lower number of provinces) and age (ranging between 7 years and 17 years since their establishment)³⁹.

4.5 Case 1: *Alpha*

*Alpha*⁴⁰ is a livelihood social enterprise in India that works in the agriculture sector to enhance livelihood opportunities for poor and marginalized farmers. It was established over a decade ago. *Alpha's* vision is to turn farming activities into an enterprise by instilling

³⁹ The age of organization here refers to the foundation of the organization. However, the programs I studied for each of these organizations were started five years ago (when data was collected). For some villages these programs were running for last five years, and for other villages they were implemented within 2-5 years. I selected villages carefully for each of the organizations so that I was able cover villages with various all stages of projects.

⁴⁰ A pseudonym to protect identity of the case

an entrepreneurial spirit in small farmers so that they become financially independent and secure, no longer dependent on government subsidies or at the mercy of moneylenders. To achieve its mission, the organization, as internal documents suggest, uses innovative farming practices and organize poor farmers in community-level institutions. During my interactions with the CEO, a graduate from one of the top business schools in India, he emphasized the need for taking a business-style approach to tackling the key challenges faced by poor farmers.

The market-based approach of the organization starts with identifying the problems poor farmers face in rural areas and explores how these problems can be turned into market opportunities. A market situation

<i>Alpha</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established in mid-2000 • Registered as non-profit • Recognition: awardee of the World Bank market challenge competition for innovative social enterprise • Field: Madhya Pradesh • Funding sources: grants, membership fees, fees from consultancy projects, commission from market linkages

analysis helps the company to understand market conditions in the area and in developing specific programs according to requirements of that region. The key plights of the small farmers in the area, as recognized by the organization, are low bargaining power due to their small produce; a lack of basic knowledge of how market systems work; a lack of information on the prevailing current prices; limited access to physical and financial resources; and a general lack of ability to expand and invest in practices that can add value to primary production.

In MP, the organization addresses these challenges by designing agriculture interventions that enhance capacities, increase bargaining power and provide access to

financial and physical resources, including timely input supply and updated information on prices and market conditions. These services are delivered through an institutional structure to ensure the long-term impact of the programs.

These village-level institutions are run by farmers and are portrayed as a successful example of community-owned and community-run institutions that ensure the sustainability of the programs.

4.5.1 Research location

The district in which I observed the operations of this organization has a population of 1.24 million (75% rural, 25% urban). The gender ratio is 912 women per 1000 men, poorer in the general categories (903/1000), but less adverse for Scheduled Tribes (943/1000). The SC and ST respectively represent 16% and 15% of the population in the district; however, the villages in which the organization operates have a slightly higher proportion of SC (24%), while the number ST (14%) is similar to the district average. More than 75% of the population in the district is associated with agriculture-related work in some way, and almost everyone in the villages served by the organization is associated with aquiculture-related work. The literacy rate is low (53%),⁴¹ even more so for rural women (37%).

⁴¹ This a liberal estimate, as anyone who can read and write their own name is considered literate.

Table 4. 2 Demographic details of the *Alpha* villages visited

Village#	HH	Literacy (%)		IMR		F/M Ratio	SC (%)	ST (%)	Poverty	Agricultural activities ^a
		M	F	M	F					
Villages involved in <i>Alpha</i> projects										
<i>Alpha</i> PV1	105	57	35	72	96	908	25	13	38%	86%
<i>Alpha</i> PV2	92	58	41	74	96	911	23	17	35%	86%
<i>Alpha</i> PV3	93	60	34	65	88	912	24	14	28%	91%
<i>Alpha</i> PV4	119	56	38	77	93	903	28	13	33%	91%
<i>Alpha</i> PV5	94	54	34	78	98	909	26	16	37%	89%
<i>Alpha</i> PV6	86	57	38	68	95	899	21	19	39%	89%
<i>Alpha</i> PV7	132	57	37	80	96	900	24	12	30%	90%
<i>Alpha</i> PV8	129	53	34	72	93	916	29	9	35%	92%
<i>Alpha</i> PV9	117	60	32	71	100	909	27	21	31%	89%
<i>Alpha</i> PV10	97	55	32	71	98	914	22	9	35%	87%
<i>Alpha</i> PV11	122	54	35	70	95	911	21	14	37%	88%
<i>Alpha</i> PV12	128	54	31	69	89	903	21	8	24%	85%
<i>Alpha</i> PV13	90	54	32	76	101	912	23	12	42%	88%
<i>Alpha</i> PV14	132	56	37	77	94	910	22	20	35%	91%
<i>Alpha</i> PV15	133	59	37	68	93	909	26	10	38%	89%
<i>Alpha</i> PV16	117	54	36	71	91	914	24	11	35%	87%
<i>Alpha</i> PV17	101	59	40	77	98	911	22	14	35%	88%
<i>Alpha</i> PV18	124	49	32	76	97	918	23	22	31%	90%
<i>Alpha</i> PV19	129	54	40	77	101	914	22	14	39%	86%
Nearby villages not involved in <i>Alpha</i> projects										
N <i>Alpha</i> PV1	109	58	35	68	94	906	27	17	33%	90%
N <i>Alpha</i> PV2	91	59	40	79	102	913	21	19	36%	89%
N <i>Alpha</i> PV3	124	56	36	73	99	907	23	15	36%	90%
N <i>Alpha</i> PV4	120	55	28	71	94	905	24	14	33%	90%
N <i>Alpha</i> PV5	99	57	37	77	96	919	26	14	29%	88%
N <i>Alpha</i> PV6	114	55	34	79	96	902	25	17	34%	89%
N <i>Alpha</i> PV7	103	54	39	72	98	909	27	21	33%	89%
N <i>Alpha</i> PV8	94	57	41	72	100	901	24	9	33%	88%
N <i>Alpha</i> PV9	112	58	35	69	96	899	26	12	23%	88%
N <i>Alpha</i> PV10	112	57	37	80	95	917	18	10	30%	90%
N <i>Alpha</i> PV11	113	57	35	71	91	911	26	12	28%	89%
N <i>Alpha</i> PV12	101	48	29	78	99	909	26	20	31%	90%
HH: Number of households; F/M ratio: Number of girls in 0-6 age group per 1000 boys in same age group; IMR: Infant Mortality Rate; literacy in the respective villages; SC: Scheduled Castes; ST: Scheduled Tribes ^a Percentage of population engaged in agriculture or related activities Poverty data obtained from the local records of families below the poverty line (BPL) Other data sources: local healthcare centers; respective village heads; Government of India Census Portal (http://censusindia.gov.in/pca/pcadata/Houselisting-housing-MP.html)										

The villages in this district are spread out, and the villages that I visited had clusters of houses (*tolas*) that were distinctly separate from each other. As in the other cases studied in this research, the villages were divided into segregated and caste-homogenous habitations or *tolas*. The dominant castes were located in the cluster that was at the center of the village or close to the main resources of the village – such as the temple, pond and school – and all other *tolas* were in peripheral positions in decreasing order of status in the caste hierarchy, with the Schedule Caste communities being located farthest from the main resources. In order to get an in-depth understanding of the social outcome of their programs, I visited, observed and met with people in 19 villages. The villages were selected based on the following criteria: the number of households was around 100; the organization under study (*Alpha*) was the only project implementation agency in the village (i.e. no other programs are being implemented simultaneously by any other organization), and the villages were heterogeneous (there are caste and class differences).

Table 4.3: Data collection details for *Alpha*

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Interviews with the <i>Alpha</i> executives	4	2		3
Interviews with project management staff at HQs	7	2	1	1
Interviews with regional managers	5	3		2
Interviews with regional project management staff	3	5	3	2
Interviews with district level managers	2	1	1	2
Interviews with field staff, livelihood service providers		12	6	1
Villages visited (<i>Alpha</i> projects)		19	9 ⁺	4 [#]
Villages visited (same region but no <i>Alpha</i> projects)		12	5 ⁺	2 [#]

Villages visited (<i>Alpha</i> projects but in a different region)*	5 [^]			
Group meetings observed	5 [^]	10	8	2
Group interviews with the beneficiary farmers	2 [^]	6	5	3
Group interviews with other farmers	2 [^]	4	3	1
Individual interviews with the beneficiary farmers	9 [^]	39	18	7
Individual interviews with other farmers	4 [^]	5	6	3
Interviews with NGOs familiar with <i>Alpha</i> 's work	5	3	4	
Interviews with field experts, government officials, agriculture extension staff	6	6	4	1
<p>* These villages were located in a different region than where the research was conducted. This region was similar in most aspects to the regions selected for the research. <i>Alpha</i> had similar projects running in both the regions.</p> <p>[^] These numbers refer to villages visited, meetings observed, and interviews conducted in the region mentioned above</p> <p>⁺ All of these villages were visited in the previous visit</p> <p>[#] All of these villages were visited in the previous two visits</p>				

In my interviews with the community members, I asked participants to provide their views on how the situation was before the project implementation by *Alpha* and how things have evolved during *Alpha*'s project implementation. In order to understand the village dynamics prior to *Alpha* starting work there, I relied on interviews and company documents. Interviews were conducted with groups as well as with individuals. The participants were members of the projects, non-members, field staff, regional managers, staff at the regional and central offices and the founder. I also visited 12 villages where neither *Alpha* nor any other agency was involved in any kind of project. The interviews and observations from these adjoining villages helped me to understand the contributions to social outcomes made by *Alpha*.

4.6 Case 2: *Beta*

*Beta*⁴² was established in the mid-nineties and was working in more than 15 provinces at the time of data collection. The organization targets some of the poorest districts in India, and its livelihood programs are concentrated in the BIMARU⁴³ provinces. The organization is part of a conglomerate that is involved in livelihood activities, microfinance, rural development consultancy, professional training of NGOs, and other projects. For this research, I focused on their livelihood activities and studied programs that only involved livelihood-related projects.

Beta is registered as a for-profit company and uses a hybrid organizational form⁴⁴ (Huybrechts, 2012; Pache & Santos, 2013) to address the needs of ultra-poor, poor, and marginalized communities, and at the

Beta

- Established in the mid-1990s
- Registered as for-profit
- Recognition: Founder is an Asoka fellow
- Main field operations: Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh
- Funding sources: fees from consultancy projects; earnings from training and education; membership fees, and returns on product and services.

⁴² A pseudonym to protect identity of the case

⁴³ BIMARU is an acronym that was coined by Ashish Bose, demographer and economist, in mid '80s for Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, provinces that were home to most of the poor in India. BIMARU in Hindi means perpetually sick. Since then, three of these provinces have been divided to create three new provinces, viz. Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Uttarakhand.

⁴⁴ 'Hybrid organizational form' are used by organizations that mix multiple types of institutional thinking, such as market logic, community logic, and social welfare logic, and are involved in activities that transcend the boundaries of purely for-profit or purely voluntary social welfare activities (Alford & Friedland, 1985; Reay & Hinings, 2009; Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012). One example is the type of social enterprises that adopt market logic to address social issues. Their goal is to achieve their social missions through revenue-generating activities.

same time generates revenue through consultancy and other related services. It has a variety of revenue sources: fees from consultancy projects, earnings from training and education, membership fees, and returns on product and services. The for-profit company status also allows the organization to secure long-term loans and “patient capital” (Novogratz, 2007), instead of relying on donations.

The founder of the organization has a rural background and lengthy work experience in the social development NGO sector. He also has a degree from a US University and is currently one of the strongest advocates in India for using a business approach to rural development. Under his supervision, an internal document from the organization suggests, the organization has become well known for designing efficient, scalable and cost-effective solutions for the rural poor. There is a strong belief in the organization that charitable, top-down models have failed in providing sustainable solutions to poverty, and that a comprehensive business approach that focuses on institutional development at the local level can have a positive, long-term impact on society.

The stated goal of the organization is to strengthen the livelihoods of the rural poor by enhancing their productivity, mitigating the risks associated with farming, and facilitating linkages to ensure a fair return to the farmers and their beneficiaries. Internal documents from the organization identify these linkages as being capital, human resources, technology, markets, institutions, and policies. At the operational level, this goal translates into the promotion of a large number of sustainable livelihoods for the rural poor, including women, through the provision of financial services and technical assistance in an integrated manner.

Multiple sources, internal documents, annual reports, promotional materials, as well as insights gained from the focus group and field interviews, suggest that the organization adheres to some core values while achieving its livelihood-related goals. The organization is committed to promoting livelihood for the poor, and at the same time cares about *equity* in gender-based and caste-based participation. Another core value of the organization is *sustainability*, which includes financial and social sustainability for their clients/ beneficiaries, financial and institutional sustainability for *Beta*, financial sustainability for the investors and environmental sustainability in all of its activities. The third core value of the organization is *scalability*. When solutions work, *Beta* aims to see them scaled up. The fourth core value of the organization is *devising innovative solutions*. This core value of the organization is inspired by the adage, ‘You cannot expect different results by doing the same thing over and over again’ or ‘No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it’. The organization believes in social innovations that address specific livelihood problems and are contextualized to local requirements.

Beta’s field and operational strategies in their livelihood programs are inspired by their goals and core values. Multiple internal documents highlight these strategies. *Beta*’s livelihood programs involve a variety of activities aimed at improving lives of poor people. In its very early stages of existence, the organization clearly understood that the livelihoods of the poor are affected by inadequate access to human, physical, financial, natural and social capital. The poor, predominantly in rural areas but also in urban areas, lack knowledge of markets, are unable to create linkages by themselves and have no means with which to form and maintain institutions. Even when they have the necessary knowledge,

they often get overwhelmed by various policies, regulatory issues, and procedural delays. Many government policies, though intended to benefit them, end up hindering improvement in their livelihoods due to bureaucratic intricacies, corruption and unscrupulous intermediaries. To address these and related issues, the organization has adopted a context-specific, multi-stage approach to livelihood promotion. First, it identifies the constraints to the income generation capabilities of livelihood activities that the poor normally or potentially engage in. Second, it designs solutions, products, and services that address most, if not all, of these constraints. The objective is to enable poor households to earn more and to improve lives. The carefully designed programs offered by the organization are based on the needs of the poor, as well as the specific context they are working in. Internal documents and my interviews suggest that the founder and top management of the organization believe that ‘income and lives of large numbers of poor households can be enhanced by systematically implementing multiple strategies at the household level, institutional level and at the sector or policy level.’

4.6.1 Research location

The district in which I observed the operations of this organization has a population of 1.56 million (72% rural, 28% urban). The gender ratio is 942 women per 1000 men, poorer for the general categories (936/1000), while it is less adverse among the Scheduled Tribes (959/1000). The SC and ST respectively represent 19% and 17% of the population in the district; however, the villages in which the organization operates have a slightly higher proportion of SC (23%), and a lower proportion of ST (13%). More than 78% of the population in the district is associated with agriculture-related work, and almost everyone in the villages served by the organization is associated with agriculture-related

activities. The literacy rate is low (59%)⁴⁵, especially for rural women (43%).

This district is populous and the villages in this district are relatively closer to each other. The villages that I visited had clusters of houses (*tolas*) very close to each other except for the *tolas* of the SC and ST. As in the other cases studied in this research, the villages are divided into segregated and caste-homogenous habitations or *tolas*. The dominant caste are located in the cluster from where there was the closest access to the main road, and also closer to the resources of the village – such as the temple, pond and school – and all other *tolas* were situated away from the main road in order of decreasing status in the caste hierarchy, with the SC communities being located farthest from the main road.

Table 4. 4 Demographic details of the *Beta* villages visited

Village#	HH	Literacy (%)		IMR		F/M Ratio	SC (%)	ST (%)	Poverty	Agricultural activities ^a
		M	F	M	F					
Villages involved in <i>Beta</i> projects										
<i>Beta</i> PV1	98	67	43	68	60	945	17	22	31%	86%
<i>Beta</i> PV2	122	65	45	67	59	944	21	23	29%	87%
<i>Beta</i> PV3	101	66	42	61	53	942	19	20	27%	89%
<i>Beta</i> PV4	92	62	43	66	58	939	23	21	29%	88%
<i>Beta</i> PV5	136	61	42	67	59	945	18	19	32%	87%
<i>Beta</i> PV6	133	66	45	65	57	935	16	22	34%	89%
<i>Beta</i> PV7	120	65	41	69	58	934	0	2	25%	87%
<i>Beta</i> PV8	105	61	39	63	56	949	32	18	29%	91%
<i>Beta</i> PV9	95	68	40	66	58	943	20	24	28%	89%
<i>Beta</i> PV10	112	60	36	69	60	945	19	18	33%	85%
<i>Beta</i> PV11	116	63	41	66	57	947	17	23	32%	87%
<i>Beta</i> PV12	109	63	39	67	56	932	0	4	26%	86%
<i>Beta</i> PV13	113	61	38	67	59	945	21	19	36%	88%
<i>Beta</i> PV14	139	66	44	66	58	943	19	23	34%	90%
<i>Beta</i> PV15	102	66	44	65	57	946	22	18	35%	89%
<i>Beta</i> PV16	118	65	43	64	56	945	20	17	29%	88%

⁴⁵ This is a liberal estimate, as anyone who can read and write their own name is considered literate.

<i>Beta</i> PV17	96	65	45	68	60	944	19	22	28%	87%
<i>Beta</i> PV18	124	59	37	66	58	948	18	24	27%	89%
Nearby villages not involved in <i>Beta</i> projects										
<i>NBeta</i> PV1	111	67	43	64	56	939	19	22	27%	89%
<i>NBeta</i> PV2	92	65	45	68	60	945	18	24	31%	87%
<i>NBeta</i> PV3	126	66	42	69	58	939	16	22	33%	89%
<i>NBeta</i> PV4	123	60	36	63	56	942	22	19	29%	88%
<i>NBeta</i> PV5	102	63	41	66	57	948	23	20	28%	87%
<i>NBeta</i> PV6	118	65	40	69	58	933	0	3	27%	89%
<i>NBeta</i> PV7	101	59	37	66	58	946	19	22	32%	90%
HH: Number of households; F/M Ratio: Number of girls in 0-6 age group per 1000 boys in same age group; IMR: Infant Mortality Rate; literacy in the respective villages; SC: Scheduled Castes; ST: Scheduled Tribes ^a Percentage of population engaged in agriculture or related activities Poverty data obtained from the local records of families below the poverty line (BPL) Other data sources: local healthcare centers; respective village heads; Government of India Census Portal (http://censusindia.gov.in/pca/pcadata/Houselisting-housing-MP.html)										

In order to get an in-depth understanding of the social outcomes of the programs conducted by the organization, I visited, observed and spoke to people in 18 villages. The villages were selected based on the following criteria: the number of households was around 100; the organization under study (*Beta*) was the only project implementation agency in the village (i.e. no other programs were being implemented simultaneously by any other organization), and the villages were heterogeneous (there are caste and class differences). In my interviews with community members, I asked participants to provide their views on how the situation was before project implementation by *Beta*, and how things have evolved during *Beta's* project implementation. In order to understand the village dynamics prior to the *Beta* starting working in these villages, I relied on interviews and the organization's documents. Interviews were conducted with groups as well as with individuals. The participants were members of the projects, non-members, field staff, regional managers, staff at regional and central offices and the founder. I also visited 7 villages where neither *Beta* nor any other agency was involved in any kind of project. The

interviews and observations from these adjoining villages helped me understand *Beta's* contributions to social outcomes

Table 4.5: Data collection details for *Beta*

	Stage1	Stage2	Stage3	Stage4
Interviews with the <i>Beta</i> Executives	3	2		3
Interviews with project management staff at HQs	8			2
Interviews with regional managers	3	2		2
Interviews with regional project management staff	2	4	3	3
Interviews with district level manager	2			2
Interviews with field staff, livelihood service providers		11	5	
Villages visited (<i>Beta</i> projects)		18	10 ⁺	4 [#]
Villages visited (same region but no <i>Beta</i> projects)		7	4 ⁺	2 [#]
Villages visited (<i>Beta</i> projects but in a different region)*	6 [^]			
Group meetings observed	5 [^]	12	7	
Group interviews with the beneficiary farmers	2 [^]	5	4	2
Group interviews with other farmers	1 [^]	2	2	1
Individual interviews with the beneficiary farmers	8 [^]	34	20	6
Individual interviews with other farmers	4 [^]	7	4	2
Interviews with NGOs familiar with <i>Beta's</i> work	4	5	3	
Interviews with field experts, government officials, agriculture extension staff	3	8	5	2
<p>* These villages were located in a different region than where research was conducted. This region was similar in most aspects to the region selected for the research. <i>Beta</i> had similar projects running in both regions.</p> <p>[^] These numbers refer to villages visited, meetings observed and interviews conducted in the region mentioned above</p> <p>⁺ All of these villages were visited in the previous visit</p> <p>[#] All of these villages were visited in the previous two visits</p>				

4.7 Case 3: *Gamma*

Established at the beginning of the previous decade, the *Gamma*⁴⁶ social enterprise is currently working in several provinces in India. In MP, *Gamma* is working in two districts and reaches out to approximately 50 villages in each of these districts. *Gamma* is registered as a non-profit consultancy firm and, according to the company's annual reports, it is financially sustainable. The funding model of *Gamma* follows a hybrid structure that includes a consultancy arm, which works on policy-making and advising, and a grassroots arm, which implements development policy in the villages. Most of *Gamma*'s revenue comes from consulting services to various policy agencies on strategies to be used at the operational level. Revenues earned from various consultancy projects are used to cross-subsidize the livelihood activities in rural areas.

Gamma

- Established in early 2000
- Recognition: Founder is recognized as 'Ashoka fellow'
- registered as a non-profit
- Field operations: Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan
- Funding sources: fees from consultancy programs; grants; membership fees

The founder of this organization was also exposed to the Western model of development through his academic experience in the US as well as through a job at big multilateral international institution and consultancy work later on. He also learned about various environmental issues at a top university in the US with support from a UN agency. He gained experience in indigenous models of development through his work at a rural NGO. His experience at that rural NGO gave him the opportunity to combine his academic

⁴⁶ A pseudonym to protect the identity of the case

experience and interest in Gandhian principles to improve rural development. As he continued his work in rural development, he attended several professional development workshops and short courses in some of the top public policy and development schools in Europe and the USA. The founder's experience is very well complemented by the managing director of the organization, who worked in the public sector for many years in various government agencies before joining this organization.

The economic model of the organization is based on the philosophy that the aim of economic activities is not solely profit-making or providing opportunities for income generation, but that it is also for the weakest in society achieving empowerment and for enhancing the overall well-being of the society. The organization's internal documents reflect this philosophy under three broad social missions: a) to promote self-reliance, b) to enhance self-respect among the beneficiaries, and c) to empower rural communities.

My interviews with executives, managers, field staff, project participants and other villagers, along with internal documents from the organization, show that to achieve sustainable livelihoods, the organization emphasizes the use of innovative ways of increasing returns on agriculture produce, and the empowerment of the community by creating local institutions. To achieve these mutually-reinforcing goals, the organization is involved in the following activities:

- A holistic approach to livelihood creation that not only includes farm-based development but also non-farm interventions;
- A focus on equity of opportunity that prioritizes small farmers from the marginalized groups;
- The creation of market linkages to help farmers obtain the best price for their produce, and supplementing this effort through providing regular information about prevailing market prices, helping with warehousing, and assisting with buyer

agreements

- Strengthening local institutions through right-based entitlements, learning, and innovation.

According to the founder of the company, these two social missions are achieved by taking an economically viable employment strategy that uses the assets and capabilities of the selected rural areas.

The organizational structure of *Gamma* is decentralized, non-hierarchical and informal. The head office of the organization is located in a metropolis and there are field offices in every district where the organization works. The field office is run by a project manager, who also doubles up as a team leader for about 4 to 8 young professionals known as community development officers (CDOs). CDOs are para-professionals who have educational backgrounds in the agricultural development and management fields. These professionals go through a competitive selection process and through rigorous training once selected. Their training involves a home-stay in a remote village and managing the way the host family lives their life. The experience exposes these young professionals to the social, cultural and economic issues affecting rural communities.

Each CDO attends to 5-10 villages. The CDOs are assisted by the community mobilizers, who are recruited from the villages that the organization is working in. Community mobilizers are chosen based on their strong interest in and knowledge of the local socio-cultural and economic conditions. Another criterion for in the selection of community mobilizers is their exhibited dynamism, interaction skills with diverse community members, and responsible behavior. The organization was working in 49 of the villages in the district that I visited.

4.7.1 Research location

The district in which I observed the operations of this organization has a population of 1.31 million (83% rural, 17% urban). The gender ratio is 918 women per 1000 men, marginally poorer in the general categories, but less adverse among Scheduled Tribes (956/1000). The SC and ST respectively represent 21% and 11% of the population in the district; however, the villages in which the organization operates have a slightly higher proportion of SC (26%) and ST (13%). More than 72% of the population in the district is associated with agriculture-related work, and almost everyone in the villages served by the organization is associated with agriculture-related activities. The literacy rate is low (59%)⁴⁷, especially for rural women (46%).

The villages in the district are divided into segregated and caste-homogenous habitations or *tolas*. The dominant caste is located close to the main resources of the village – the temple, pond and school – and all other *tolas* are in peripheral positions in decreasing order of status in the caste hierarchy, with the Schedule Caste communities being located farthest from the resources. In this area, at the top of the social hierarchy are the castes like Thakurs, Brahmins, Kayesthas, Jains and Baniyas, who among themselves have control over the major chunk of land holdings, trade, and business. The middle castes are Lodhi and Yadavs, who control most of the cattle. The SC communities in the district are mainly comprised of those from Harijan and Kushwaha castes.

⁴⁷ This a liberal estimate, as anyone who can read and write their own name is considered literate.

Table 4.6 Demographic details of the *Gamma* villages visited

Village#	HH	Literacy (%)		IMR		F/M Ratio	SC (%)	ST (%)	Poverty	Agricultural activities ^a
		M	F	M	F					
Villages involved in <i>Gamma</i> projects										
<i>Gamma</i> PV1	103	61	44	78	94	913	26	13	40%	87%
<i>Gamma</i> PV2	88	60	48	84	91	917	26	17	41%	88%
<i>Gamma</i> PV3	89	63	43	71	82	917	28	15	34%	91%
<i>Gamma</i> PV4	118	60	47	83	85	907	32	12	34%	93%
<i>Gamma</i> PV5	91	57	42	85	96	913	28	16	41%	92%
<i>Gamma</i> PV6	83	60	48	78	87	903	22	18	43%	91%
<i>Gamma</i> PV7	128	56	46	88	89	906	25	11	34%	92%
<i>Gamma</i> PV8	128	52	43	80	86	922	31	8	37%	94%
<i>Gamma</i> PV9	115	63	42	76	93	915	30	21	29%	89%
<i>Gamma</i> PV10	96	60	42	78	93	916	23	10	36%	88%
<i>Gamma</i> PV11	118	59	43	81	90	913	21	12	35%	91%
<i>Gamma</i> PV12	126	54	39	75	84	908	25	9	20%	87%
<i>Gamma</i> PV13	90	57	41	85	94	915	26	10	43%	88%
<i>Gamma</i> PV14	131	57	45	86	89	915	25	20	36%	93%
<i>Gamma</i> PV15	133	60	46	73	91	911	29	11	38%	89%
<i>Gamma</i> PV16	114	56	44	78	85	916	28	9	35%	87%
<i>Gamma</i> PV17	108	57	46	86	92	924	21	8	27%	90%
<i>Gamma</i> PV18	109	59	44	76	84	913	30	10	34%	91%
<i>Gamma</i> PV19	100	52	36	85	93	914	27	18	37%	90%
<i>Gamma</i> PV20	99	58	49	84	93	917	25	15	35%	90%
<i>Gamma</i> PV21	123	53	40	81	89	924	26	19	31%	92%
<i>Gamma</i> PV22	125	55	49	82	94	921	23	14	41%	85%
Nearby villages not involved in <i>Gamma</i> projects										
NGammaPV1	109	63	43	74	89	912	30	19	39%	92%
NGammaPV2	90	64	48	88	96	916	25	19	35%	90%
NGammaPV3	121	60	45	80	96	912	25	12	41%	90%
NGammaPV4	116	56	37	79	89	911	28	14	31%	92%
NGammaPV5	99	60	44	82	92	922	28	11	30%	90%
NGammaPV6	113	57	44	87	90	904	26	13	37%	92%
NGammaPV7	100	55	48	78	90	911	27	18	39%	91%
NGammaPV8	90	58	51	77	95	904	26	9	33%	88%
HH: Number of households; F/M Ratio: Number of girls in 0-6 age group per 1000 boys in same age group; IMR: Infant Mortality Rate; literacy in the respective villages; SC: Scheduled Castes; ST: Scheduled Tribes ^a Percentage of the population engaged in agriculture or related activities Poverty data obtained from the local records of families below the poverty line (BPL) Other data sources: local healthcare centers; respective village heads; Government of India Census Portal (http://censusindia.gov.in/pca/pcadata/Houselisting-housing-MP.html)										

In order to get an in-depth understanding of the social outcome of their programs, I visited, observed and spoke to people in 22 villages. The villages were selected based on the following criteria: the number of households was around 100; the organization under study (*Gamma*) was the only project implementation agency in the village (i.e. no other programs were being implemented simultaneously); the villages were heterogeneous (there are caste and class differences). In order to understand how the village dynamics were prior to *Gamma* starting work, I relied on interviews and company documents. The interviews were conducted with groups as well as with individuals. The participants were members of the projects, non-members, community mobilizers, CDOs, project managers, regional managers, staff at regional and central offices and the founder. I also visited 8 villages where neither *Gamma* nor any other agency was involved in any kind of project. The interviews and observations from these adjoining villages helped me understand the contributions to social outcomes made by *Gamma*.

Table 4.7: Data collection details for *Gamma*

	Stage1	Stage2	Stage3	Stage4
Interviews with the <i>Gamma</i> Executives	3	2	1	2
Interviews with project management staff at HQs	10	4	3	3
Interviews with regional managers	3	1	1	2
Interviews with regional project management staff	3	3	2	2
Interviews with district level manager	1	1	1	1
Interviews with field staff, livelihood service providers		8	4	3
Villages visited (<i>Gamma</i> projects)		22	9 ⁺	4 [#]
Villages visited (same region but no <i>Gamma</i> projects)		8	5 ⁺	2 [#]
Villages visited (<i>Gamma</i> projects but in a different region)*	8 [^]			

Village meetings observed	7 [^]	14	8	2
Group interviews with the participant villagers	3 [^]	7	8	2
Group interviews with non-participant villagers	2 [^]	4	3	1
Individual interviews with the beneficiary farmers	10 [^]	36	19	7
Individual interviews with other farmers	5 [^]	8	5	2
Interviews with NGOs familiar with <i>Gamma</i> 's work	6	4	4	1
Interviews with field experts, government officials, agriculture extension staff	8	5	4	2
<p>* These villages were located in a different region than where research was conducted. This region was similar in most aspects to regions selected for the research. <i>Gamma</i> had similar projects running in both regions.</p> <p>[^] These numbers refer to villages visited, meetings observed and interviews conducted in the region mentioned above</p> <p>⁺ All of these villages were visited in the previous visit</p> <p>[#] All of these villages were visited in the previous two visits</p>				

4.8 Case 4: *Delta*

Established in the mid-nineties, the stated social mission of *Delta*⁴⁸ is to build holistic and sustainable rural communities. According to several internal documents, the organization prides itself on being a pioneer in developing a commercially viable model that integrates economic development and environmental preservation, all the while keeping the generation of social value as its core mission. *Delta* works in the poorest region of MP. The area is drought-prone, has under-developed irrigation systems, and oppressive social structures.

The founder of *Delta* has strong personal ties with the region and his motivation for

⁴⁸ A pseudonym to protect identity of the case

establishing the organization emerged from his dedication to the region. Internal documents suggest that the founder wanted to create an organization that would make sustainability in every key aspect (i.e. financial, environmental, and social) a cornerstone of its impact. He decided to leverage business models while attempting to deliver environmentally sound development.

He recognized that, as an internal document elaborates, the region he wanted to dedicate his efforts to was poor, drought-prone and full of social challenges. In addition, most of the region was rural, with some small towns. More than 85% of the population lived in villages, and almost all of them were dependent in some form or another on agriculture-related activities. Thus, the founder recognized the need for integrating economic activities with social and environmental awareness to provide income-generating opportunities that are socially and environmentally sustainable.

<i>Delta</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established: mid-1990s • Recognition: Founder is recognized as ‘Ashoka’ fellow • Registered as not for profits • Field Operation: Madhya Pradesh • Funding sources: membership fees; consultancy fees, grants 	

Table 4.8 Demographic details of the <i>Delta</i> villages visited										
Village#	HH	Literacy (%)		IMR		F/M Ratio	SC (%)	ST (%)	Poverty	Agriculture activities ^a
		M	F	M	F					
Villages involved in <i>Delta</i> projects										
<i>Delta</i> PV1	102	50	38	78	90	899	31	17	45%	90%
<i>Delta</i> PV2	85	52	41	87	87	904	33	21	46%	89%
<i>Delta</i> PV3	86	53	37	72	76	902	35	17	37%	94%
<i>Delta</i> PV4	114	51	40	88	77	894	37	13	35%	96%
<i>Delta</i> PV5	87	52	36	85	89	898	34	19	43%	94%
<i>Delta</i> PV6	79	54	42	83	79	886	26	19	42%	91%
<i>Delta</i> PV7	124	48	39	89	83	891	32	14	37%	95%

<i>Delta</i> PV8	124	46	37	85	83	907	37	9	42%	94%
<i>Delta</i> PV9	113	55	35	80	86	899	36	22	28%	91%
<i>Delta</i> PV10	96	53	36	79	89	899	28	11	40%	90%
<i>Delta</i> PV11	115	49	36	82	84	897	25	15	33%	93%
<i>Delta</i> PV12	126	47	33	76	75	890	32	11	18%	86%
<i>Delta</i> PV13	87	51	34	85	88	899	30	14	45%	89%
<i>Delta</i> PV14	130	49	39	86	81	900	29	24	33%	96%
<i>Delta</i> PV15	131	51	40	77	82	894	34	13	39%	91%
<i>Delta</i> PV16	112	50	38	80	77	902	32	13	42%	87%
<i>Delta</i> PV17	107	47	40	86	85	908	25	11	31%	92%
<i>Delta</i> PV18	105	49	37	78	75	899	34	11	32%	91%
<i>Delta</i> PV19	99	41	30	86	85	900	33	19	35%	89%
<i>Delta</i> PV20	95	48	42	85	87	901	31	16	39%	90%
<i>Delta</i> PV21	120	45	34	84	81	908	32	21	35%	93%
Nearby villages not involved in <i>Delta</i> projects										
N <i>Delta</i> PV1	108	58	36	76	85	897	36	21	44%	91%
N <i>Delta</i> PV2	88	54	41	94	90	899	30	23	35%	91%
N <i>Delta</i> PV3	120	49	39	85	90	898	30	13	45%	92%
N <i>Delta</i> PV4	114	49	31	82	80	894	34	17	30%	92%
N <i>Delta</i> PV5	95	52	37	86	87	907	34	12	35%	90%
N <i>Delta</i> PV6	121	50	43	85	85	904	28	15	46%	88%
N <i>Delta</i> PV7	124	45	32	82	78	895	28	17	29%	89%
N <i>Delta</i> PV8	111	52	38	92	82	889	33	17	41%	92%
N <i>Delta</i> PV9	97	45	42	80	82	898	31	19	40%	91%
HH: Number of household; F/M Ratio: Number of girls in 0-6 age group per 1000 boys in same age group; IMR: Infant mortality rate; Literacy in the respective villages; SC: Scheduled Castes; ST: Scheduled Tribes; ^a Percentage of population engaged in agriculture or related activities Poverty data obtained from the local record of below poverty line (BPL) families Other data sources: local healthcare centers; respective village heads, Census Portal										

The organization is currently working in 3 districts of MP and reaches out to up to 250 villages. The organization is registered as being not-for-profit and uses a hybrid organizational form. The primary source of its revenue is membership fees and consultancy services to other organizations. According to their annual reports, the organization is financially sustainable.

Delta's vision⁴⁹ is to create ‘a society where every individual feels secure and lives a healthy and fulfilling life, without impacting nature adversely’. According to the organization’s internal documents, the farmers in the region have been struggling with food security and low agricultural productivity. The region has been facing severe drought and the government’s efforts to address the problem have been mostly unsuccessful because of their inherent technological and economic growth bias. These programs, as observed elsewhere (Vogel & Smith 2002, Clover, 2003, Misselhorn, 2005, Acevedo, 2011), focused on increasing production without addressing the problems of inequitable distribution, access, and affordability (Dreze & Sen, 2002).

Having deep roots in the region, the organization’s leaders understood that food security is a complex issue, one that includes a wide range of interrelated environmental, social, economic and political factors. Like any complex issue or wicked problem (Brown, Harris & Russell, 2010; Churchman, 1967), the organization recognized that addressing food insecurity would need an integrated approach that addressed ecological challenges as well as socio-economic aspects of the problem (Thompson & Scoones, 2009).

Table 4.9: Data collection details for *Delta*

	Stage1	Stage2	Stage3	Stage
Interviews with the <i>Delta</i> Executives	4	3	3	1
Interviews with project management staff at HQs	10	6	3	3
Interviews with regional managers	4	3	3	1
Interviews with regional project management staff	2	6	4	2
Interviews with district level managers	2	4	4	1

⁴⁹ Paraphrased to protect the identity of the organization.

Interviews with field staff, livelihood service providers		13	4	3
Villages visited (<i>Delta</i> projects)		21	11 ⁺	4 [#]
Villages visited (same region but no <i>Delta</i> projects)		9	5 ⁺	2 [#]
Villages visited (<i>Delta</i> projects but in a different region)*	10 [^]			
Village meetings observed	4 [^]	12	7	
Group interviews with the participant villagers	2 [^]	5	4	2
Group interviews with non-participant villagers	2 [^]	2	2	1
Individual interviews with the beneficiary farmers	7 [^]	34	20	6
Individual interviews with other farmers	5 [^]	7	4	2
Interviews with NGOs familiar with <i>Delta</i> 's work	5	3	3	2
Interviews with field experts, government officials, agriculture extension staff	6	5	5	3
<p>* These villages were located in a different region than where research was conducted. This region was similar in most aspects to the region selected for the research. <i>Delta</i> had similar projects running in both of the regions.</p> <p>[^] These numbers refer to villages visited, meetings observed and interviews conducted in the region mentioned above</p> <p>⁺ All of these villages were visited in the previous visit</p> <p>[#] All of these villages were visited in the previous two visits</p>				

4.8.1 Research location:

The district where this organization works has a population of 1.45 million (85% rural, 15% urban). The gender ratio is adverse, with 900 women per 1000 men. It is marginally poorer among the general categories and Schedule Castes, but less adverse for Scheduled Tribes (943/1000). The SC and ST respectively represent 25% and 10% of the population in these districts; however, the villages in which the organization operates have higher proportions of SC (32%) and ST (16%). More than 70% of the population in the district is associated with agriculture-related work, and almost everyone in the villages

served by the organization is associated with the agriculture-related activities. The literacy rate is low (52%)⁵⁰, especially for rural women (39%). The main crops in the region are wheat, millet, pulses, and oilseeds.

In order to get an in-depth understanding of the social outcomes of their programs, I visited, observed and met people in 21 villages. The villages were selected based on the following criteria: the number of households was around 100; the organization under study (*Delta*) was the only project implementation agency in the village (i.e. no other programs were being implemented simultaneously); the villages were heterogeneous (there are caste and class differences).

In order to understand village dynamics prior to *Delta* started work, I relied on interviews and company documents. The interviews were conducted in groups as well as with individuals. The participants were the members of the projects, non-members, community mobilizers, CDOs, project managers, regional managers, staff at regional and central offices and the founder. I also visited 9 villages where neither *Delta* nor any other agency was involved in any kind of project. The interviews and observations from these adjoining villages helped me understand the contributions to social outcomes made by *Delta*.

In this chapter, I have provided a detailed description of the research setting and offered the rationale for selecting India as the research site. Later in the chapter, I introduced four selected social enterprises and provided detailed information about their social mission, organizational structure, and socio-economic context. This chapter also

⁵⁰ This is a liberal estimate, as anyone who can read and write their own name is considered literate.

highlights the similarities and differences between the selected cases pertaining to the implementation of their programs. I provided demographic compositions of each of the villages I visited, and laid out the detailed data collection schedule for each of the cases. The next chapter discusses the findings from individual cases, especially focusing on how different structuring decisions taken by the social enterprises affect social outcomes, i.e. inclusive social capital.

5 Chapter: Research Findings - Inclusive Social Capital

In Chapter 4, I provided a detailed description of research setting and discussed the social mission, organizational structure and social and economic context of the four selected social enterprises, named as: *Alpha*, *Beta*, *Gamma*, and *Delta*. These four social enterprises were selected from the same province, and they all target the rural poor through livelihood activities. However, there were differences in the extent of coverage (group vs village level coverage) and relative degree of the participatory approach adopted by different social enterprises. In this Chapter, I discuss how the different structuring decisions (degree of participatory approach⁵¹ and level of coverage) taken by the social enterprises resulted in a different level of inclusive social capital. In the process, I address the key research questions and present the main findings of the study.

5.1 Case1: *Alpha*

Alpha is a livelihood social enterprise in India that works in the agriculture sector to enhance livelihood opportunities for the poor and marginalized farmers. In the previous chapter, I provided detail information on the social economic background of the district where *Alpha* is working. I visited 19 villages in the district to understand the social impact (i.e. inclusive social capital) of *Alpha*. As noted in the previous chapter, agriculture is the primary livelihood activity in the district, however, land ownership differs based on caste

⁵¹ It is important to note that the field observations about extent of coverage were consistent with the description on the websites and publicly available documents of the organizations. This was not the case about degree of participatory implementation. For example, *Beta* described their project implementation as highly participatory; however, that was only true for the villages that were included in the initial phase of the project. For the villages that were included in the later phase of the project, the degree of participatory implementation was only moderate. On the other hand, description about *Gamma* gave impression that the degree of participatory implementation is low; however, the field observation indicated that it was moderate.

and gender. With less than 2 bigha⁵² lands in their possession, the SCs and STs make the highest proportion of small, and marginalized farmers. Most of the women have no land ownership. The villages are sub-divided based on caste-homogenous habitations or *tolas*. These *tolas* are physically separated rather than contiguous.

In general, as is the norm in Indian villages, the dominant castes were located in the cluster that was at the center of the village or close to the main resources of the village – such as the temple, pond and school – and all other *tolas* located in the peripheral positions in decreasing order of status in the caste hierarchy, with the Schedule caste (SC) communities being located farthest from the resources. Against this socio-economic backdrop, the economic programs of *Alpha* are implemented.

The 2 by 2 matrix information shown in Table 5.1 is based on the level of coverage

(group vs village) and degree of participatory implementation (high vs low). The structuring decisions of *Alpha* represents group level coverage and low degree of participatory implementation of the program activities. As explained in Chapter 3, a

		Table 5.1: Structuring factors and inclusive social capital for <i>Alpha</i>	
		Degree of participatory implementation Low → High	
Extent of coverage	Group	<p><i>Alpha</i> Low inclusive social capital (group formation, low participatory implementation)</p>	<p><i>Beta</i> (group formation, moderate to high participatory implementation) Moderate inclusive social capital</p>
	Village	<p><i>Gamma</i> (village level, moderate participatory implementation) Moderate inclusive social capital</p>	<p><i>Delta</i> (village level, high participatory implementation) High inclusive social capital</p>

priori expectation was that the structuring decision of group level coverage and low level

⁵² 1 bigha=.4 acre or .16 hectares

of participatory implementation of the program would result in low inclusive social capital. The case of *Alpha* confirms that the group level coverage and low degree of participatory implementation failed in building inclusive social capital. In the following sections, I will elaborate the implementation process of *Alpha*, arguing that the structuring decisions of *Alpha* (mechanisms used in group formation and low degree of participatory approach, for example, exclusion of members in decision *making*) further marginalized the poor farmers, lower caste members, and failed to include women. I conclude that while the structuring decisions used by *Alpha* reduced the cost of running the programs they also reinforced the traditional power structure and failed in building inclusive social capital in the community.

5.1.1 Implementation process

The core mission of *Alpha*, as mentioned on their website and several internal documents, is to provide livelihood opportunities to the poor and marginalized farmers by enhancing their entrepreneurial skills. In the field, the livelihood strategies of *Alpha* involve three components: provide up-to-date information on agriculture activities, supply quality agriculture inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc.) at cheaper rates and offer training through farm exposure and demonstration.

The organization charges approximately ₹500 (five hundred India rupees or \$7) for the membership fees. Part of this money is used as seed money for future group activities, and the rest is used for providing up to date information to farmers. According to the Managing Director of the company, using a cost-effective market-based approach where farmers are seen as a valued customer and an entrepreneur, instead of the recipient of charity, would revolutionize Indian agriculture (Internal Livelihood Report, 2013).

The cost-effectiveness of the programs is ensured by implementing a group level

coverage and a top-down approach to participation.

“It is too difficult and time consuming to interact with each farmer... Neither we have resources nor so many people [field staff] to take care of it. We simply identify dominant farmers [lead farmers] and let them form groups and implement our guidelines” [Interview# 9, October 7, 2013, Alpha Project Manager1, Head Quarter]

“We have very clear guidelines about group size. We have clearly defined purpose for the groups. These groups are meant for aggregating the demand for agriculture inputs and aggregating the produce by the farmer to get then better price. We create for only this purpose” [Interview# 3, October 4, 2013, Alpha Vice President1, Head Quarter]

For example, in order to provide the information in a cost-effective way, the agriculture interventions in the village start with organizing farmers in groups. However, in my interviews with the top and regional management, the staff at the organization emphasized that the institution does not get involved into the micro-management of group formation process and instead simply identify lead farmers and leave it to them to create groups.

“We want to make the community self-sustainable. Allowing them to make their own group is the first step towards to it” [Interview# 20, October 24, 2013, District Manager]

“If we get involved in the group making process, we will have to get into the politics of the village. You understand right? It will take too much time. If villagers select their own group members, then they can select people, they get along with” [Interview# 17, October 19, 2013, Regional Project Manager]

These quotes show that the objective of this exercise is to keep the group formation process community driven. However, my observations in the field showed that the lead farmers (also labeled as progressive farmers), are self-selected or nominated by the

organization into a leadership position and play a key role in group formation processes and subsequent implementation of the programs.

5.1.2 Group formation and degree of participatory implementation

In my interviews with the field staff, I found that field staff first identifies the ‘lead’ farmers in the villages before initiating the program. According to the field staff, these lead farmers are identified based on their dominance in the community. They are normally either village head or relatively rich farmer. The staff also described them as farmers who have qualities to lead and command control in the communities. Some of them are also relatively better educated, are willing to take risk of experimenting with new practices and have resources to implement these practices.

“I have been working with [Alpha] for more than 8 years. It is not easy to form groups... much difficult to maintain them. It is better to select a dominant person from the village and let him form the group. Such groups are more stable because that person has more control over the farmers and he is able to implement [the project] as per [Alpha’s] guidelines.” [Interview# 207, March 12, 2014, Alpha Field Staff_2]

“We call them lead farmers. Some prefer to call themselves progressive farmers. The idea is that these farmers are rich. They have more resources. No one in the village is more capable of taking risk. Many lead farmers are among the first to try new technology [agri-practices]” [Interview# 541, November 18, 2014, Alpha Field Staff_15]

These lead farmers are responsible for explaining the benefits of the program to the other individuals in the villages and convincing them to join the groups. In general, the membership is open to anyone who has land ownership and is involved in farming.

However, in my field observation and interaction with the field staff, I found that the field staff encourages socially homogenous groups (members from the same socio-economic background) as they believe that such groups are less prone to conflicts and more conducive to peer learning.

“By now you already know this. We do not want complications in our groups. We let the lead farmer select members who are from his community [caste] and his relatives or friends. If they are all big farmers then their requirements are same. This way groups work smoothly” [Interview# 756, March 11, 2015, Alpha Field Staff_19, whom I met on all my three visits to these cluster of villages]

“One of the functions of these groups is to learn from each other. Sometimes we simply demonstrate the new practice to the lead farmer and expect he will explain to other group members. This happens more easily if all the members of the group are from the same caste and have similar farming requirements... We advise lead farmer to select group members [who are] similar to him” [Interview# 544, November 21, 2014, Alpha Field Staff_17]

As later discussed in this Chapter, the creation of the socially homogenous group in the villages strengthened the pre-existing bonding social capital at the cost of the possibility of generating bridging social capital or inclusive social capital. This approach of homogenous group formation further marginalized the poor and failed to reach to women, as lower caste members were rarely allowed in the groups and no women groups were created. Furthermore, as discussed below, it also reinforced the economic and social status of the lead farmers.

While implementing the program, one lead farmer is made responsible for forming the farmers' groups in a village, which includes 15 to 20 members. Each village where the

organization was working, on average, had 3-4 groups. Due to implicit and explicit encouragement, and the prominent role of the lead farmer, who tend to select the members of his caste only, all the groups were socioeconomically homogenous. Each group had a president (lead farmer) and a secretary. My field observations, interviews with the group members, and interviews with the non-members corroborated this process of group formation:

“I didn’t know anything about this [project]. [Lead farmer’s name] informed me and invited me and other relatives to form the group... Most of us are relatives and have our fields next to each other” [Interview# 262, April 25, 2014, Group Member, AlphaPV15]

“[Lead farmer] didn’t ask anyone of us. Nobody told us anything. He formed the group with [member of] his caste. All of them are rich farmers. This have big land and money.” [Interview# 576, November 27, 2014, Non-member, AlphaPV3]

The lead farmers identify farmers’ problems and bottlenecks and serve as a link between the community and the field staff of the organization. Their main responsibilities are to organize weekly group meetings and conduct farm demonstration. Weekly meetings are used by the organization to provide new information on farming techniques and practices. These meetings also provide an avenue for discussing daily lives, politics and social events in and around the villages. These meetings are open meetings, which mean that non-members can also attend these meetings. The meetings are conducted in the evenings when farmers are relatively free and the venue of the meeting is the house of the lead farmers.

In addition to the weekly meetings where farmers are introduced to farming

practice, the demonstration is another key component of the program. Demonstrations are used as hands-on training sessions. The company uses a demonstration plot (a small land) and applies improved techniques (agricultural practices, high yield inputs) to show the effect of best practices on the yield. The demonstrations are also conducted by the lead farmers on their own farms and are facilitated by the field staff of the organization. According to the staff, the lead farmers are most suitable for conducting demonstration because they can take risk and keep some part of their lands to experiment with new inputs and techniques. For example, following is a representative quote of the views expressed by several staff on various occasions:

“Lead farmers have bigger plot of land. They can easily keep a small portion of it for demonstration. Most of the time new practice leads to higher yield and they benefit from it. Even if new practice does not result in higher yield, it only affects them marginally. Because they use only small portion of their land for demonstration” [Interview# 211, March 15, 2014, Alpha Field Staff_5]

In order to help lead farmer learn new practices, the staff of *Alpha* also organizes farm exposure visits to various farms that have implemented good agriculture practices. This new knowledge learned by the lead farmer is then disseminated among the group members. According to the organization, a group based approach is valuable as it collectivizes the farmers and provides faster and more appropriate solutions for field problems.

“Before the start of this project, we used to interact with the farmers on individual basis. That process was time consuming and frustrating for our field staff. It was difficult to develop trust with each individual farmers and then make them learn new practice. They realized that they were repeating almost everything to each farmer... The formation of groups by the lead farmers have

reduced the job of field staff. Now they need to simply train the lead farmer and their job is over.” [Interview# 11, October 8, 2013, Alpha Project Manager2, Head Quarter]

The peer pressure among the socio-economically homogenous group helps in making decision quickly and collaboratively. Most importantly, group trading and marketing brings in advantages of an increase in bargaining power and farmers save money and time through bulk purchase of inputs. As the program is run by the group of farmers, it also brings a sense of ownership. Furthermore, recruiting locals as the lead farmers who manages the programs in the village helps *Alpha* in establishing its credibility among the farmers.

“Bringing farmers together benefits them multiple ways. One helps them reduce their costs and other helps them earn more revenue. When they buy inputs such as seeds and fertilizers together, they can negotiate lower prices of these inputs... When they combine their produce and sell directly to wholesaler rather than to a middleman, they get better price for their produce.” [Interview# 754, March 10, 2015, Alpha District Project Manager]

“We trust [lead farmer]. He is from our own caste. All the group members have family relationships [ties]. We feel like this is our own project. ” [Interview# 32, October 23, 2013, Group Member, AlphaPV11]

The literature has reported a similar phenomenon. As noted by Annamalai and Rao (2003), trust is the most valuable commodity in rural India and no transaction will happen without trust, irrespective of the strength of the contract. Lead farmers due to their dominant socio-economic status in the villages help the program in gaining the trust of the farmers, at least from the members of their own caste. Relying on lead farmers to form groups also help the organization to reduce the efforts required to form the groups. As the villages are segregated by caste, *Alpha* management believes that it is efficient for the

organization to let the group formed by the lead farmers from the villagers living in close proximity, and therefore caste homogenous. Executives and regional managers believe, as some scholars have found (Barr, Dekker & Fafchamps 2015), that physical proximity among the group members increases the frequency of chance encounters and reduces the costs of maintaining regular contact. Furthermore, the lead farmers are relatively well-off farmers in the villages, therefore they could provide the space for storage of the agriculture inputs and produces, as well as a place to conduct meetings.

According to the company documents of *Alpha*, the program raised the income of the farmers by 25-30% (Annual Report, 2014-15). Participants benefited from the programs by cutting the cost of fertilizers and pesticides by the removal of the middlemen, as well as the increased use of bio-pesticides and bio-fertilizers. In every *Alpha* village I visited, at least two or three farmers, in addition to the lead farmer, found the training sessions useful in learning about the new practices such as organic farming and seed spacing. For other members, the group membership has been useful in providing information about pricing and helping them sell their crops in the market. The opportunity to visit demonstration plots in other villages and provinces also helped lead farmers in accessing new technology, seeds, and input.

In terms of creating social ties, the top management viewed that their innovative approach of lead farmers was successful in increasing social interaction among farmers. The top management expressed the social impact of their programs in following words:

“Our goal is to make community self-reliant and create community ownership of the program. We could have managed the program ourselves but that would have created dependency. So, we let the people of village manage the program. We only facilitate them. They decide what they want to buy, where they want to sell. They decide that themselves in the meetings. Earlier, there was no formal arrangement for the farmers to meet. Everyone would go their own way.

But now, they meet, they discuss and share their knowledge and difficulties with each other. They learn from each other and now they manage things on their own...all because we were able to bring them together through the groups” [Interview# 193, March 3, 2014, Alpha Vice President2, Head Quarter]

Overall, there was a consensus among the *Alpha* staff at various levels (excluding the field staff) that the approach provided opportunities to farmers to learn from each other. They noted that farmers working together and mentoring each other are a more effective way of knowledge transfer. The staff also believed that the lead farmer approach created sustainability of the program by increasing a sense of ownership among the members. Arguably, as farmers knew the local context very well, they were able to manage the programs efficiently. However, as I discussed below, the lead farmer approach benefited only a few people and reinforced the economic and social status of the lead farmer in the villages.

5.1.3 Assessing the social impact of *Alpha*: Inclusive social capital

To explore the impact of the structuring decisions (level of coverage and degree of participation) of *Alpha* on the inclusive social capital, during my visit to the villages, I asked questions regarding the social ties of the people and how the networks of caste and gender contacts have changed over the years. I supplemented this information through observation of the daily life in the villages. My research suggests that the group structuring decision taken by the organization had some unintentional consequences which proved detrimental for the building of inclusive social capital.

As described above, the organization aims to provide effective and efficient solutions to rural problems, specifically targeting the poor and marginalized farmers. However, in the following paragraphs, I will demonstrate that the program’s use of a group-

based approach that is led by the lead farmers went contrary to the objectives of the program as they reinforced the traditional power structure in the villages. Here is it important to note that in recent years, the lead farmer approach has become very popular among the social enterprises (SEs) that are working in the agricultural sector (Ambasta, 2017; de Janvry et al, 2016; Lama et al, 2015; Singh, 2014). The policy environment has also been uncritically supportive of the approach. As mentioned earlier, for *Alpha*, the rationale behind the approach was to enhance peer to peer learnings and to create group ownership that would ensure the sustainability of their programs. Apparently, farmers learn and adopt best practices when they see someone among them taking a risk and are the first to adopt them.

However, who are the lead farmers and how are they “identified”? I asked these questions to many field staff and came to learn that while the lead farmers have resources to take the risk, they are in some instances are relatively better educated, and command a dominant position in the communities, they are also socially and economically the most well-off farmers in their own respective villages. In an unequal and hierarchical social structure where higher caste control most of the economic resources, the lead farmers also happened to be the farmers from the dominant caste. Therefore, while appointing the most privileged people in managing the program reduced the cost of running the programs, it also, unintentionally, reinforced the traditional power structure that the organization wanted to change⁵³.

⁵³ Several organization documents including Annual Reports 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 are replete with the phrases: “empowering small and marginal farmers”; “strengthen agriculture practices of small and marginal farmers”; “strengthening the livelihoods of small and marginal farmers”; “transforming lives of poor clients”; “achieving women empowerment”; and “striving for gender equality”. The ground reality was

Furthermore, the program lacked a participatory implementation process. As mentioned in the beginning, my interviews with the staff members portrayed the high participatory nature of the group formation program and all the processes surrounding it. However, my interviews with the participants and the observations in the field show that the company takes a top-down approach to implementing the projects and has a heavy reliance on expert knowledge. The organization made all the decisions, either directly or through lead farmer, related to group formation, meeting schedules, activities, among other things. For example, the lead farmers are identified by the organization and are trained to run the meetings and train other farmers. Instead of selected by the community members, the lead farmers are 'identified' by the field staff of the organization. When I questioned the non-participatory nature of the selection process, the field staff of the organization defended the whole process stating that when the lead farmers are selected by the organization, it increases the legitimacy of the position and avoids the politics of elections between different groups. Several field staff members also suggested that even though the process seems non-participative, the majority of people in the village support the existing elites to take such position as they are perceived to have legitimacy for the position. However, according to some participants, the lack of participation in selecting the key position has failed to mobilize the people in the villages. My own observations from visits to several villages and through in-depth interviews confirmed that the top-down approach of selecting the lead farmers proved unsuccessful in engaging poor and marginalized

that the organization did not do enough to include lower caste, poor farmers, and women in the farmers' group.

segment of the community. Even within the groups, the complete domination by the lead farmer resulted in the better involvement of the those who were closer to the lead farmer, while other members of the group feeling left out. This also led to a lack of ownership of the program by the group members, and hence resulted in less interactions among the members themselves, as well as between the group members and the villagers.

The domination of the lead farmers was so great that during my initial field visits, my first contact point had always been the lead farmers. They were always pre-informed by the local district staff about my visit and would invite the members of the program in their houses for a meeting. Most of the attendees were the family members, close relatives and the neighbors of the lead farmers. As the group composition was homogenous, mostly the group included members from the same caste and clan. These meetings were mostly dominated by the lead farmers and they painted a very positive picture of the programs. However, my individual meetings with the people in the villages showed a different picture.

It was surprising to find that small farmers from the marginalized caste were mostly not in the group. Even in very few exception if they were in a group, they were not participating in any activities (or were not encouraged to participate). When I asked the reason for their disinterest, they told me that initially, they did want to join the program so when the lead farmers asked them to form the group, they formed. However, they complained that they were always discriminated in the meetings and field demonstration. For example, two poor farmers from lower caste shared their feelings:

“I went to meetings two times. Both times I sat near the door. No one asks me to come inside. I do not want to go again... I could not hear anything clearly

where I sit... it is not useful” [Interview# 574, November 26, 2014, Non-member, AlphaPV14, used to be group-member earlier]

“Sometimes, they will order tea, snacks, but they did not offer me” [Interview# 769, March 28, 2015, Non-member, AlphaPV19, used to be group-member earlier]

These complaints were quite common. The marginalized caste complained that they were never allowed inside the house of the dominant caste, even if it was related to the organization’s work. They were also made to sit on the floor and were never offered any tea, snacks even when others were eating. So, they stopped attending the meetings.

They also confided that the same thing happened on the field demonstrations that were conducted by the organization on the lead farmers’ farm. In the demonstration farm, the family and the relatives of the rich farmers would get priority. Moreover, as the villages are segregated based on caste, where the marginalized caste live at the periphery of the village, they were often uninformed about the schedule of meetings. When the marginalized farmers of lower caste expressed their interest in attending the meetings and demonstrations, they were either ridiculed or ignored.

“I met Thakur (the lead farmer) one day on my way and asked him when the demonstration is. He just laughed and said, ‘what would you do with this knowledge. you will not learn anything’. I did not like how he said it” [Interview# 270, April 29, 2014, Non-member, AlphaPV7, used to be group-member earlier]

The program further marginalized the poor farmer based on its structuring decisions. As most of the marginalized caste were also the ones with the small land, their input requirements were different than the other farmers and often it was ignored by the

rich when ordering input supply. For example, some farmers only wanted seeds that required low water input, as their farm had no irrigation facility. However, these seeds were low yield seeds, which were not desirable for the rich farmers, who had access to irrigation and were able to use high yield varieties that consumed more water. Thus, whenever there were differences in requirements, the groups/ village always sided with the rich farmers, and poor and marginalized farmers' concerns were not taken into consideration. *One small farmer quoted that,*

“I had hoped that I will receive seeds and fertilizers at lower rates but so far it hasn't been done. When it comes to selling my crop, they don't help us”
[Interview# 265, April 26, 2014, Group Member, AlphaPV11]

Some small farmers also mentioned that when the program started they had high hopes that they would get new information and easy, cheap credit. As poor farmers also faced cash constraint, getting interest free loans, or subsidy was one of their priority. However, in their opinion, the program failed to take into consideration and benefited the already rich people in the village.

“Only those who were rich and had contact with rich farmers benefited from the program.” [Interview# 231, March 22, 2014, Group Member, AlphaPV6]

“Only 4-5 people think it is benefitting them...these people are very close to the secretary and president”. [Interview# 268, April 27, 2014, Non-member, AlphaPV4]

When I asked the management about the very little participation from the small and marginalized farmers or farmers from lower castes, they acknowledged that there has been some contention among the community members regarding the field demonstrations and weekly meetings and they are trying to work on it:

“The upper caste farmers want these meetings to be in their home. Meetings mostly take place in the lead farmers house. It is difficult to convince them to let lower caste enter in their house. We wanted to have meetings at common places like school premises but were unable [to convince them]”. [Interview# 542, November 15, 2014, Alpha Field Staff_15]

‘Ideally demonstration should be conducted in each farm, however, it is too expensive and time-consuming, so we have to select a few farms. We select the farmers with big lands because they can take risk and experiment with the new methods. The poor farmers cannot afford to take such risk’. [Interview# 13, October 5, 2013, Alpha Regional Project Manager_3]

The location of the meeting was also a contentious issue. The meetings were always conducted in the home of the lead farmers. The lead farmers and *Alpha* field staff justified this practice and stated that the homes of lead farmers were big and could accommodate more people. However, I observed, and many villagers confirmed, that not everyone felt welcomed at the meetings conducted in the house of the farmer of upper caste. When I asked one of the host farmers, if he allows everyone from the village in his houses to attend the meetings, he replied,

“Yes, everyone can come... but this is village, you see, we have some norms in the villages, different from the cities, when we are in the village, we have to follow these norms” [Interview# 30, October 29, 2013, Lead Farmer_4, AlphaPV18]

While there were no direct monetary incentives associated with the position of the lead farmers, there were many other benefits that comes with the positions, such as opportunities to be the first in their community to learn new techniques, opportunities to

travel for meetings or visit other successful programs, and community recognition during meetings or on radio programs. The lead farmers also received free inputs (hybrid seeds, fertilizers) from the company for demonstration purposes. These tangible and intangible benefits received by the lead farmers also reinforced the disparity and inequality. Many also felt discomfort by various benefits enjoyed by lead farmers and his extended family. This was expressed by one group member:

“The programs clearly favor the rich, the staff come to the village to meet the lead farmers and does not meet or share information with others. We hardly can spend time with him” [Interview# 260, April 18, 2014, Group Member, AlphaPVI]

There were clear evidences from the field that while the program aims to target poor and marginalized, in practice, the structuring decisions of implementing the program through the lead farmers alienated the marginalized caste. As the lead farmers are identified by the field staff of *Alpha* on the basis of their association with dominant caste and higher wealth and are being justified as they having higher education, risk taking ability, and leadership quality. While forming groups, the lead farmers first prefer individuals from their own caste and clan. However, while the homogenous groups led by the lead farmers increased efficiency in forming groups and reduced the cost of delivering programs, they also had an undesirable effect at the community level. The way that programs were designed attracted rich farmers and excluded poor farmers. As the groups were led by the local social and economic elite, intervention channeled through them reflected the preferences and interests of those elites, rather than the interests of the community as a whole. By excluding individuals who were poor and belonged to the marginalized caste,

the program did not allow the formation of cross-cutting ties.

The program also failed to be gender inclusive. The criteria for membership in the groups was that anyone involved in farming and also owns land could become the member of the program. However, most women don't own the land, resulting in them being excluded from the program even though they spend an equal amount of time farming, if not more. My discussion with the staff clearly showed a lack of strategy to incorporate women in the program. My interviews with the members of the groups showed the complete disregard of women's contribution to agriculture. Many flatly rejected the idea of a women's group. Comments like "they do small work but don't do the main work" or "they don't understand the main work" were very common. Following quotes show the thinking of the male farmers and village heads:

"They [Women] don't have time for this. They should take care of household chores. This [group formation and meetings] is men's arena. They know what is needed for farming... Women at best know how to cook" [Interview# 562, March 27, 2014, Group Member, AlphaPV6]

"Women at home only watches [television] programs... what do they know about agriculture or what do they have to do with agriculture" [Interview# 229, March 27, 2014, Village Head, AlphaPV2]

"The women from the village don't have brains...even if you teach them, they won't understand" [Interview# 232, March 29, 2014, Village Head, AlphaPV4]

Due to the prevalence of these discriminatory gender norms, women were not incorporated in the program. So, the social interactions among the women from same or different caste, and social interactions across the gender did not emerge.

To conclude, the structuring decisions of *Alpha* failed to build inclusive social capital in the communities. The top-down implementation of the program and a focus on

market opportunities without understanding the social dynamics motivated the company to adopt the group based approach led by the lead farmers. The organization made all the decisions, either directly or through lead farmer, related to group formation, meeting schedules, activities, among other things. Thus, the degree of participatory implementation was very low. This led to a lack of ownership of the program by the group members, and hence less interactions among the members themselves, as well as between the group members and the villagers. The program failed to incorporate marginalized groups (SCs, STs, and women) due to discriminatory gender and caste norms. The program was essentially run by the socio-economically well off (lead) farmers which reinforced the caste inequalities in the village and failed to create social ties across gender and caste.

5.2 Case 2 *Beta*

Beta is a *for-profit* livelihood social enterprise which aims to strengthen the livelihoods of the rural poor by enhancing their productivity; mitigating the risks associated with farming, and by facilitating linkages to ensure a fair return to the farmers and beneficiaries. The published documents of *Beta* show a strong commitment to promote *equity* in the gender-based and caste-based participation. The program also put financial sustainability and scalability as the core value of their program. In order to get an in-depth understanding of the social outcome of the programs conducted by the organization, I visited and observed 18 villages. Chapter 4 provides detail information on the social mission, organizational structure and social economic context of *Beta*. Here, it is useful to highlight that *Beta* works in the district where caste and gender-based differences in accessing the productive resources are very prominent, and as noted in the case of *Alpha*,

the residential areas in villages are also largely segregated along caste lines.

In the two by two matrix, the economic activities of *Beta* are labeled as highly participative and the extent of coverage is at the group level.

The priori expectation was that the group level coverage and a high degree of participatory implementation in the structuring of the program will result in a moderate level of inclusive social capital. The case of *Beta* confirms that the group level coverage and a high degree of participatory implementation, i.e. participation of members at all the level of decision making and various avenues and methods to ensure participation of the members in program activities, were relatively successful in building cross-cutting ties among different caste. However, its failure to include women in the program (no women groups were created), as well as too much focus on scalability and financial sustainability at the later stage, show the limitation of the program in building a high level of inclusive social capital. Thus, in addition to the a-priori factors (extent of coverage and degree of participatory implementation), the case of *Beta* introduces two new factors: scaling speed and degree of focus on financial sustainability and their effect on inclusive social capital. In the following sections, I will elaborate on the implementation process of *Beta* arguing that a shift in focus towards scalability from an in-depth involvement with the community diverted the attention towards rich farmers, excluded poor, specifically women and limited the potential of building inclusive social capital.

5.2.1 Implementation process

At the field level, the livelihood strategies of the organization involved three components: provide up to date information about agriculture activities, supply quality agriculture inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc) at cheaper rates and offer training

through farm exposure and training

In the field, these strategies of *Beta* are implemented through a network of field livelihood staff (FLS). These FLS are selected from the local areas and are trained as para-extension worker and para-veterinarian to deliver in-person extension services to the farmers. He or she covers 200–400 farmers for one crop or activity. The organization charges a subscription fee for the agriculture-extension services that includes training in soil testing, pest management, Vermi-compost etc. and information about prices and market conditions. According to the staff, it has been difficult to convince farmers to pay

for the services, as they are used to receive them for free from the government. Even though government services were delivered inefficiently, a reliance on free services and a low trust in a private agency, presented a challenge for the

		Degree of participatory implementation	
		Low	High
Extent of coverage	Group	<i>Alpha</i> (group formation, low participatory implementation) Low inclusive social capital	<i>Beta</i> Moderate inclusive social capital (group formation, moderate to high participatory implementation)
	Village	<i>Gamma</i> (village level, moderate participatory implementation) Moderate inclusive social capital	<i>Delta</i> (village level, high participatory implementation) High inclusive social capital

organization to win clients. To win the trust of the people, the field staff of *Beta* organizes several meetings before implementing their programs. According to the Regional head of the program

“Before choosing any village for implementation of our projects, we go to these villages and discuss with the villagers to know their needs, concerns, and requirements. We ask them what they want. Why they want those things? How we can help them? We want to keep it all about them and not about us”- [Interview# 62, November 4, 2013, Beta Regional Head]

The village head also confirmed this process in following words:

“[Beta] first came to this village about 8 years ago. They talked to almost every man in the village. They held several public meetings in the choupal [common meeting place in the center of the village] -[Interview# 309, May 27, 2014, Village Head, BetaPV13]

The organization also has a strong presence in the area through their partnership with the local government in delivering various services through a small kiosk that deliver services such as making Adhar cards (identity card), issuing land records and preparing birth certificates. The organization leverages the linkages created through these services to convince villagers to join their programs.

After the meetings, those who are interested in joining the programs are encouraged to organize in informal groups. The group approach used by the organization is based on the logic that organizing farmers in a group can enhance peer-to-peer learning, increase productivity and deliver services in a more cost-effective way. The groups are also used for advising and training the farmers on the best agriculture practices and linked them to the suppliers for cheaper access to inputs, services, and new information. The organization believed that these methods could increase the income of the farmers by 30 to 40%.

“The simple methods are not very cost intensive. We mostly use the locally available resources such as animal waste and bio-pesticides. If used properly they can increase productivity by 30 to 40 percent. I would say even more.”- [Interview# 51, November 1, 2013, Beta Vice President, Headquarters]

5.2.2 Formation of group

The first step of implementing the program starts with the farmers' group formation. Each group has 20 members. There was no clear information about the process of group formation in any of the internal documents of the organization. However, my discussions and observations in the field showed a preference by the organization for heterogeneous groups. Several field staff explained that heterogeneous groups that consist socio-economically different members are more useful for poor and marginalized members as these groups provide them an opportunity to interact with people who have more connections, monetary and other resources. The following comments by the FLS show the initial implementation process:

“We set-up some basic rules of membership. We do not want criminals in our group nor do we want defaulters. We wanted groups to be as diverse as possible. Beyond these basic rules, we left it to villagers to decide who will be member of group and who will not” [Interview# 292, June 23, 2014, Beta FLS-4]

“All the groups we form allow members from all the casts. We do not have any quota but we encourage villagers to form mixed caste group” [Interview# 592, December 8, 2014, Beta FLS-15]

One farmer from the dominant caste also confirmed that:

“Many years ago [Beta] started forming group. They invited all the men in the village to meeting... They explained [the project] and advised us to form group. They told us to include everyone” [Interview# 603, December 22, 2014, Group Member, BetaPV18]

Each group has one president and secretary. The president and secretary are selected by the members of the groups. However, in the mixed caste groups, *Beta* ensures that the two positions are shared by the people from the different caste. Following

comments from participants explain this point.

“I was village head for several years... When [Beta] started this project and asked villagers to select a president, everyone suggested my name... Lower caste proposed one of their own... We made him secretary” –[Interview# 789, April 26, 2015, President (upper caste), Beta group, BetaPV8]

“Most of the groups have one president and one secretary. However, some groups also have treasury... President is always from an upper caste. In many groups secretary is from lower caste” – [Interview# 296, June 26, 2014, Beta FLS-8]

“Some villages here have lower caste [population] more than 40%... We ensure that their voice is heard... Most of the groups have secretary from lower caste” –[Interview# 299, June 29, 2014, Beta FLS-11]

Each group has weekly meetings conducted by the field livelihood staff (FLS) along with community mobilizers responsible for the respective village. The purpose of these meetings are to discuss the problems and explore the solutions related to the agriculture practices. On average, there are 3 to 4 groups in one village. These groups are federated in a village level organization (VO) which consists of two members from each group. VO has monthly meetings and it takes all important decision regarding buying, selling, processing, and marketing.

The organization is also involved in the field demonstration of best practices. Field demonstration includes hands-on experience of various farm practices that are relevant to target village clusters. These demonstrations are conducted on the farm of any willing farmer. Those who are interested have to keep some part of their land for the experiments of new practices and are charged a small token fee for the service.

5.2.3 Participation level

The program activities of *Beta* are relatively more participative than *Alpha*. In my field observation, I found that the group formation in *Beta* is a self-selection process and the members select their own president and secretary. In the group meetings the farmers discuss what type of extension services they want in their village; if they are interested in field demonstration; what type of agriculture practices they want to see in their field. These meetings also discuss other things that happened in the village that week including someone's upcoming wedding, the social events a member is going to attend, etc.

The organization uses a grading system to evaluate the performance of members. The grading system ranked groups based on of A (strongest) to C (weakest) using the following criteria: attendance in the meeting, contribution in decision making, and sharing information with the other members. Group members who perform well in the grading measure are widely praised in the group meeting which inspires members and creates positive motivation for everyone.

The annual reports, other internal documents of the organization, my discussion with the staff, as well as field observation corroborated the positive economic impact of the programs. The annual report (2014) of the SE showed a 58% increase in the income of the participants (compared to the non-participants) resulting from the adoption of the best practices and the removal of the middlemen. The organization estimated that farmers got 7-10 % higher price than earlier by removing the middlemen, as well as saved substantially on the cost of agriculture inputs.

Some farmers also mentioned significant improvements in their yields and the data published by the organization showed that the participating households have enhanced their

food supply. One farmer commented:

“The company has given me new hopes. I receive quality seeds and fertilizers from the company at a reasonable rate. It saves me time and money. I also receive an extra premium of Rs 100-150 per quintal on selling soyabean and wheat as compared to local market” -[Interview# 337, June 25, 2014, Group Member, BetaPV2]

Some participants also reported new attitudes regarding planning for the future. A few farmers commented that they want to save extra money that they are making for the future and would invest in buying a tractor and many cattle. The training provided by the organization is also seen helpful in capacity building. Many farmers started experimenting in their farms with new crops and finding solutions with the help of each other which, as found in the literature (Classen et al 2008), show higher levels of confidence, and capacity among the members.

5.2.4 Assessing the Social Impact: the Inclusive social capital

The structuring decision taken by the organization had mixed results on social outcome i.e. inclusive social capital. Instead of creating homogenous groups, that are popular in the policy circle, the organization preferred mixed groups where socially and economically well-off farmers were grouped together with the poor and marginalized farmers. These types of groups, under facilitating conditions, allow information sharing between people who have different sets of experiences and skills.

To make sure that these mixed groups are functional and not hijacked by the rich members, the staff of the organization emphasized several points: the post of president and secretary would be shared between different castes; demonstration facilities would be

available to each farmer; and all the meeting would be organized in the public places rather than at the socially dominant farmers house.

The locations of meetings were very important and I have noted that when meetings are conducted in a neutral place (in the school ground, a shop, and the office of the gram panchayat) it is easy for the facilitator to ensure that all the members are treated equally. Despite their caste differences they all can sit together at the same level and eat together. These mechanisms used by Beta in the implementation process initiated the process of creating new social norms that were inclusive of lower castes.

Furthermore, the grading system that evaluated the group performance created a healthy competition among the groups. While there were no monetary incentives involved, openly recognizing the best group members in group meetings and the best group in the village level meetings, motivated farmers to attend the meetings and to become more actively engaged. This resulted in the cohesion within otherwise heterogeneous groups. This experience was in contrast to that of *Alpha*, where the domination of the nominated lead farmer in the group contributed to the erosion of trust and support.

The group level norms were replicated at the village level structure. These village-level organizations were also representative of the caste differences and provided an opportunity for interactions among different groups members. The village level organization not only helped members economically by negotiating better terms for buying inputs, selling village produce, and securing loans but was also a platform for social interactions and was helpful in creating social ties among the members from the different groups. During my visits, many farmers confirmed that these village level meetings provided opportunities for learning and meeting different people. The staff and some

community members reported that the frequency of interactions among the different community members was stronger now than it was before and the sharing among the villagers, even between members of different caste groups, has increased. This was confirmed by the regional head of the programs:

“We were initially concerned whether mixed caste groups can function. Whether they will help in increasing interactions or generate friction... Most of the groups we form allow members from all the casts. Initially, there were several issues but over time we found that mixed caste group were responsible for increasing social interactions among various communities”-[Interview# 778, April 7, 2015, Beta Regional Manager]

“Having members from various communities is difficult at first... you can compare the villages where we have mixed-caste groups with those villages that are serviced by other organization that do not have such groups. In the villages with mixed-caste group you will see more social interactions between upper caste and lower caste members. They talk to each other more frequently.”- [Interview# 590, December 6, 2014, Beta FLS-13]

This friction/difficulty was explained by one Secretary (marginalized caste) in following words:

“Previous President [upper caste] did not even invite me for group meetings. He used to conduct meeting at his home with upper caste members only. We insisted having meetings at the common place such as choupal or school... We changed the President... This [current] President [upper caste] first conducted meetings in the verandah of his house. [Upper caste] members used to sit in chairs and we [lower caste] used to sit on floor. We complained and threaten not to join any meetings until it is conducted in a public place. Finally, the meetings started taking place in the school playground” [Interview# 601, December 21, 2014, Group Secretary, BetaPV9]

Many members also confirmed that the extension staff (FLS) has been very helpful in providing new information and helping them with their problems faster and more effectively compared to the government officials. Farmers from marginalized caste who were members of the programs, also noted that the FLS were always courteous and would visit their houses to check regularly if they needed any assistance.

The various mechanisms used by the organization show that the program was also relatively successful in creating a balance between guidance from the organization and group autonomy. The group formation was left to the members but the organization was involved in the facilitation process providing a clear guideline on heterogeneous groups and sharing power. Furthermore, providing evaluation criteria for the group performance that enhanced cooperation among the group members created a balance between cooperation and competitive individualistic behavior.

This case clearly demonstrates that diverse groups are difficult to establish and maintain over time, and a good facilitation is essential from the staff. However, diverse groups are potentially more productive in terms of creating cross-cutting social ties. As observed in the literature (Devaux et al, 2009), it was difficult for *Beta* to structure different processes around heterogeneous groups; however, once established and having survived the initial hiccups, these heterogeneous groups were more effective in terms of creating cross-cutting social ties. With time and growing mutual understanding, the interdependence and shared economic interests encouraged members of the group to work together in the interest of the group.

The programs have been relatively successful in providing efficient and effective delivery of agriculture services to the farmers who have been inefficiently served by the government. The heterogeneous groups also created space for different groups to interact with each other and thus, enhanced social interactions among the members. However, there were many barriers to entry that excluded certain groups.

First, the programs failed to incorporate women in the program. Almost no women were included in any of the groups, except their symbolic presence in three groups (one

women member in each of them) out of 18 villages I observed. During my interviews, many women expressed interest in joining the groups, however, they complained:

“[Beta] only allow members if they have land in their name. None of the women in this village owns a land” - -[Interview# 342, June 26, 2014, Non Member, BetaPV18]

The organization’s field project manager commented that

“Not a single group have women in the leadership position. Neither President nor Secretary. In fact, most of the groups do not have even a single women in the group.” – [Interview# 589, December 5, 2014, Beta Field Manager-4]

The staff also blamed male members in the community for not supporting women’s groups. The regional head mentioned that

“It’s not easy to convince these people to include women in any economic activities. We thought of creating a women only farmer groups. But there was strong opposition from the male farmers to this idea” – [Interview# 283, May 2, 2014, Beta Regional Manager]

According to one village head,

“Even if they [women] have land in their name, and even if they are member of the group, they do not understand anything about farmer group. So what is the use of including them in the group or inviting them for the meeting?” - - [Interview# 315, June 2, 2014, Village Head, BetaPV16]

Second, there were also some complaints about the fees structure which was used to create financial sustainability of the program. As discussed earlier, the FLS provide information and demonstration services to those farmers who pay subscription fees. While this expanded economic choices of some farmers, very poor farmers found it cost-prohibitive. Poor farmers with less than 2 bigha (1 bigha=.4 acre or .16 hectares) land found

the fees expensive and didn't join the program. The economic design of the program attracted farmers who were from marginally poor, middle income or rich economic background but not from extremely poor income group.

Third, while gender was excluded in all the villages, in villages *BetaPV3*, *BetaPV4*, *BetaPV7*, *BetaPV10*, *BetaPV12*, and *BetaPV15*, I found that the groups were totally dominated by the rich farmers. These villages only had exclusively homogenous groups, between close-knit wealthy farmers, despite having a sizable population from poor and marginalized farmers, as well as from lower castes (excluding *BetaPV7* and *BetaPV12*, which had only a few families of lower castes). When I discussed this field observation with the management, they explained that from the past few years the organization has been going through some big challenges and one of them was how to deliver their program while maintaining financial sustainability. There has also been an increasing push towards the scalability in the management circle. The executive officer of the organization mentioned that the biggest challenge for *Beta* is how to expand its program without compromising its mission. Initially, the management thought of increasing fees of the existing members. However, the organization's internal information shows that, if that happened, many farmers would leave the programs. So, the program needed to change its business strategy. A reading of the documents and analysis of the interviews showed that since 2008 *Beta* programs were centered on sustainability and scalability. As the emphasis shifted on scalability the organization decided to target farmers with greater influence in the farming community.

“When program started we were intentionally slow in our implementation. We wanted to understand local context... Learn from our missteps. Now we are familiar and have better idea about how to quickly expand our presence in

these villages. In last six years we have covered more villages in each year compared to immediately previous year”- [Interview# 773, April 2, 2015, Beta Senior Vice President, Head Quarters]

“Your observations are right. We changed our strategy several years ago. Initially, all our groups were mixed groups. I mean, we had farmers from very low, medium and high income... These groups were balanced in terms of caste representation... But we realized that such groups were difficult to form and slow to take-off... This was slowing down our expansion. Don’t get me wrong. We still create mixed groups but we are also open to homogenous, whenever they are easier to form.”- [Interview# 775, April 2, 2015, Beta Senior Project Manager-2, Head Quarters]

“In the beginning of 2008, I think. We started focusing on expanding quickly. We were to cover many villages and form as many groups as possible... It is much easier to form groups that are mainly consist of rich upper caste members... These groups also have much higher [monetary]transactions as their [farm] input demands are high and they have higher produce... Good for our economic impact.”- [Interview# 778, April 7, 2015, Beta District Manager]

Hence, *Beta* focused their efforts on rich and more accessible villages whose farmers were considered influential in growing soybean and other crops. The organization believes that by extending their programs, which were originally aimed at small and marginal farmers, to larger farmers in the adjoining villages produce many benefits. The rich farmers’ enhanced yields generated additional output as well as employment opportunities for the poor in the nearby villages, an outcome that company believe is in line with their mission.

This organization presents an interesting case to understand the impact of various strategies on inclusive social capital. In the initial stage of program implementation, *Beta* was careful in terms of spending sufficient time in each village before the creation of the groups, paying close attention to including men from all the socio-economic status.

However, in its quest for fast growth, *Beta* lost that focus. Some strategies taken by the *Beta* increased social interactions among the people from different groups. However, when the program focused more on financial sustainability and scalability, it changed the dynamics in the villages and created social ties exclusively among the members from the same clan and caste.

5.3 Case 3 *Gamma*

Gamma is a social enterprise registered as a non-profit consultancy firm and aims to provide livelihood opportunities to the farmers by increasing agriculture productivity and to empower the community by creating local institutions. To achieve these goals, the program proclaims to take a holistic approach to livelihood that includes farm based development and non-farm interventions. In order to get an in-depth understanding of the social outcome of their programs, I visited and observed 22 villages. In chapter 4, I provided detailed information on the social mission, organization structure and social and economic context of the *Gamma*. *Gamma* is working in one the poorest districts of the MP where social discrimination based on caste and gender is rampant. As noted in the case of *Alpha* and *Beta*, village segregation based on caste is also a common feature of the villages where *Gamma* is working.

In the 2 by 2 matrix, *Gamma* represents a low degree of participatory implementation and village level coverage. A priori expectation was that the village level coverage and low degree of participatory implementation will lead to a moderate level of inclusive social capital. In the following sections, I will elaborate the implementation process of the *Gamma* and I argue that *Gamma* used various mechanisms in village level

coverage that created space to address the differential need of its members. Furthermore, by incorporating men and women from different caste and economic status, and creating interdependencies in the villages, the program was relatively more successful in building inclusive social capital compared to *Alpha* and to certain extent even compared to *Beta*.

5.3.1 Implementation process

The economic programs of *Gamma* are implemented at the village level. Anyone who is involved directly or indirectly in the agriculture activities are eligible to join the program. The village level implementation in *Gamma* has two important characteristics: first, the implementation process takes into account the social dynamics in the villages; second, *Gamma* leverage its partnership with local government⁵⁴.

The implementation process starts with the meetings organized in each tola/hamlet. As villages are segregated based on caste,

where each caste has its own hamlets/tolas, organizing meetings with each tola allows the

Table 5.3: Structuring factors and inclusive social capital for <i>Gamma</i>			
Degree of participatory implementation			
		Low	High
Extent of coverage	Group	<i>Alpha</i> (group formation, low participatory implementation) Low inclusive social capital	<i>Beta</i> (group formation, moderate to high participatory implementation) Moderate inclusive social capital
	Village	<i>Gamma</i> Moderate inclusive social capital (village level, moderate participatory implementation)	<i>Delta</i> (village level, high participatory implementation) High inclusive social capital

⁵⁴ It is important to state that all the four social enterprise selected for this study partner with the local government and leverage these partnerships with differential success. Alpha wasn't able to leverage the partnership, whereas Beta leverage is only fractionally better than Alpha. Gamma did a better job of leveraging its partnership and Delta, as discussed in later section, went a step ahead.

organization to reach to every caste. The objective of meetings is to understand the social and political dynamics of the villages and also to identify resources that could be helpful in the long-term sustainability of the program. After the tola wise meetings, a village level meeting is organized in which those who are interested in joining the program participate; however, this meeting is open to anyone in the village. A village level committee (VLC) is formed in which two persons from each tola are elected as representative members. The village level committee includes men and women from each caste. The president and the secretary are selected from different castes and serve for one year. The selection of president and secretary is done on the rotation basis so that members from each tola and caste get a chance to serve as president and secretary. *Gamma*'s field project manager explains:

"We do tola wise meeting because it ensure participation of each community. In these meetings our goal is to understand the social and political dynamics of the village. We also explain the participants the need for community institution. We ask them who they would like to elect for these institutions. We give them example of Sarpanch election (head of the panchayat) and ask them what minimum qualification they find necessary for their representative"
[Interview# 109, December 5, 2013, *Gamma* District Project Manager]

The election of the members of the VLC is conducted every five years. The VLC are linked with the local government and adopt their program related to gender empowerment, creating awareness about girl child education, and informing women about the new government schemes. According to the staff, one objective behind the promotion of community institutions is to make the program sustainable. These community institutions, starting from the base to top, work collectively for the benefit of their members, and within a few years becomes independent of the organization (*Gamma*). They also negotiate collectively with other stakeholders and access services for their members.

The members are introduced to farming and non-farming interventions through weekly meetings and field demonstration. These weekly meetings are held in the public locations such as village choupal (central open public space) or in a school. The field demonstrations are held either on the government land or on the plots that are conveniently located for all the villagers.

Compared to *Alpha*, *Gamma* followed a more comprehensive participatory approach. As described in Chapters 4, and mentioned above, the implementation process in *Gamma* begins with a tola/hamlet wise meeting. As most of the villages are segregated based on caste, where members of higher caste usually live at the entrance of the villages, without such approach the marginalized groups are rarely included into the discussion process and rarely have a chance to express their expectations from the programs. Meetings with each tola gave *Gamma* opportunities to reach to all the segments of the village and to learn how best to deliver their economic programs given the social and political dynamics of the village. However, the participatory process in the case of *Gamma* ended after identifying the issues important to villagers. *Gamma* devised the solutions and organized resources without taking additional input from the villagers.

5.3.2 Village level coverage and moderate degree of participatory implementation

The farmers are exposed to farming practices that enhance the productivity of their crops. They are acquainted and equipped with synergistic practices that supplement existing crop cultivation methods. Farmers are also exposed to high-income generation activities like horticulture. These farming practices include seed treatment, optimum spacing between two plants in a row and between two rows of plants, land preparation, in-house preparation of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides, and vermiculture. Farmers are

familiarized with these practices in the weekly meetings that are followed by the field demonstration. Farmers are also encouraged to adopt mixed cropping to simultaneously increase their yields, restore soil fertility, and optimize water utilization.

The organization gives priority to small farmers who belong to the marginalized castes:

“All our activities are centered around empowerment. We are committed to providing opportunities to women, socially and economically marginalized farmers.” [Interview# 90, December 2, 2013, Gamma Founder, Head Quarters]

“We work in very poor districts. About 30-40 percent of the population in these villages are below poverty line and 35-45 percent are from marginalized castes. We ensure that poor farmers and members of marginalized castes get proper representation in the groups... We prioritize their participation.” [Interview# 92, December 2, 2013, Gamma Senior Executive, Head Quarters]

As small farmers do not have plots big enough to continue current practices as well as implement (in part of their field) newly learned farming practices, the organization encourages them to join horticulture, which can be adopted in a small part of their field on an experiment basis, and if successful expanded to larger portion of their field in subsequent years. In the villages I visited, the small farmers were trained to grow pomegranate, mango, and papaya. The organization also promotes intercropping of fruit orchards with vegetables like chili, tomatoes, and eggplants to ensure continued income in the off season. The small farmers are also provided a one-year supply of the inputs and other preventive measure on horticulture.

I observed 31 village meetings during my visits and stay in 22 villages. It was noticeable that female members of the program are included in all the meetings, and field demonstrations, and are also trained as para-agri experts who help other farmers with best

practices for improving productivity. Initially, training for women and men are organized separately, however, with time as the program consolidated, women are encouraged to invite any male member of their family in the training meant for women. Similarly, women are encouraged to attend training meant for men.

“Farming in most of the villages is a joint effort. Men and women work in the fields. They might work at different times. They might work on different activities. Therefore, we include both in our training program. Because of typical setting in villages, it is not always possible to train them together”
[Interview# 374, July 10, 2014, Gamma Field Staff_3]

“To respect community norms we initially formed separate groups for men and women. Over time we allowed them to invite their family members... Now we have some women groups in which men also join for the field demonstration”
[Interview# 641, January 6, 2015, Gamma Field Staff_10]

These interventions are overseen by the village level committee and discussed in weekly meetings and a hands-on training is provided in the demonstration farm. Weekly meetings for the men were organized in the evening and weekly meetings for the women were organized in the afternoon time. All the meetings took place near the demonstration farm.

For the demonstration farm, the organization work in the collaboration with the local government and use the unused land to develop it as a demonstration farm. In the demonstration farm, the team tests their new organic farming practices such as bio-composting, vermicomposting, and seed preservation. The demonstration farms use labor from the landless people, specifically employing women.

5.3.3 Assessing the social impact of *Gamma*: Inclusive social capital

Interviews with the regional and field staff of the organization, project members,

and villagers provided insights on the effect of the program structuring decisions on inclusive social capital. *Gamma*'s economic operations were structured around the needs of the villagers that take into account the social dynamics. The agriculture interventions by *Gamma* included multiple forms. To incorporate small farmers, *Gamma* introduced horticulture and provided training, farm exposure that were specifically designed for them.

“Untouchability is a huge problem in this area. Upper caste does not want to mix with the lower caste. Lower caste are small farmers. We want to design program that can make these small farmers self-reliant but we also do not want to bypass rich farmers. So we have come up with this approach that allow us to include everyone but we can also focus on small farmers” [Interview# 379, July 13, 2014, Gamma Field Staff_8]

The landless were incorporated into the program through non-farm activities, which included construction in the farm and procuring livestock. While prioritizing small farmers in the program, the field staff of the organization did not exclude the farmer in the villages with larger plots. They were also supported by providing information and interventions on improved productivity practices about the crops they were cultivating.

Furthermore, as an entry point activity, the program built a demonstration plot using the unused land in the area. This demo plot became communal property and through the development of the demo plot, the organization ensured that everyone who was interested, could attend and see the demonstration. The method was useful in many ways: first, as demonstrations were not on the farm of the upper caste, as is the normal practice in many government projects, the poor and marginal farmers from the lower caste were not intimidated by attending the process. It also provided a public space to organize meetings. For the construction and maintenance of the demonstration farm, the organization hired small and landless farmers from the villages to ensure that the community is self-reliant

and interdependent. In addition, the organization recruits para-vets, supervisors and other supporting staff from within the village they serve. This creates mutual interdependences and a strong sense of community.

Women were also included in the program ran by the organization. They were not only exposed to the advanced farming practices but were also trained as para-vet and para-agri expert. As most of the livestock rearing is done by the women in the villages, training them as para-vet seemed useful to further enhance their skills.

“I am a para vet. I have been taking care of animals since I was little, but no one valued that. But now, after taking some trainings, people ask my advice. I like it” -[Interview# 392, July 25, 2014, Group Member, GammaPV3]

While the training for men and women were conducted separately, they were encouraged to invite their family members of the opposite gender to attend the meetings. The village level committee that represented diverse castes and gender, was instrumental in building cross-cutting ties.

“Village committees are important part of our program implementation. They serve many important functions. Villagers can discuss any problem their village is facing and let us know. [Gamma] try to find solution for them... These committees are represented by all castes, men and women... I have seen the effect of these committee... I can confidently say that village committees have improved social interactions among the villagers even between lower caste and upper caste members” [Interview# 806, May 8, 2015, Gamma District Project Manager]

“Almost half of the population of this village is from lower castes and one-third of villagers live in poverty [are below poverty line] ... When [Gamma] created village committee many in the village opposed it. They did not want to have lower castes in the committee... Now [after eight years] I can say forming [diverse] committee was the best thing happened to this village... Compared to nearby villages that do not have committees, our village has better social interactions among people of different castes” [Interview# 818, May 23, 2015,

Village Head, GammaPV9]

There was a striking difference between villages where *Gamma* has implemented its project (forming VLC) and nearby villages that were not served by *Gamma*. In the *Gamma* villages, I observed and several respondents acknowledged, social interactions between various castes was much higher compared to nearby non-*Gamma* villages.

As mentioned before, the village level committee (VLC), through which the *Gamma* implement its program, is linked with the local government. The linkages with the government program allowed the VLC to adopt the program related to gender empowerment. They used this platform to create awareness about the schemes for women and girl child. For example, in these meetings, the staff and officials informed the farmers that if they buy land on their wives name they would get 2% off on stamp duty. This scheme was implemented by the MP government to address women's land rights. However, many farmers weren't aware of this. In the villages where *Gamma* was working, many farmers informed me that they carried out recent land purchase in their wife's name.

"The program told us about the new government schemes. I can save stamp duty if I buy land in my wife's name. We farmers have become smart now...I bought land in my wife's name" -[Interview# 422, August 21, 2014, Group Member, GammaPV8]

"Yes, earlier I had no land on my name but now I have one. Even though it may be used by husband, I feel good to have something in my name" - [Interview# 403, August 7, 2014, Group Member, GammaPV12]

To summarize, by combining their economic programs with the government's social schemes, *Gamma* created an avenue for the people in the villages to get involved in the social issues while working towards their economic goals. Furthermore, in the

implementation process, *Gamma* used various mechanisms that created space to address the differential need of its members. By incorporating men and women from different caste and economic status, and creating interdependencies in the villages, the program was relatively more successful in building inclusive social capital compared to *Alpha* and to certain extent even compared to *Beta*.

5.4 Case 4 *Delta*

Delta works in the poorest region of the MP. The area is drought prone, has an underdeveloped irrigation system, and an oppressive social structure. In order to get an in-depth understanding of the social outcome of their programs, I visited and observed 21 villages. The goal of the *Delta* is to build sustainable and holistic communities. To achieve this goal, the organization undertakes two mutually reinforcing strategies: promoting sustainable agriculture practices; and promoting social and water conservation.

Delta aims to provide a long-term sustainable income for the family by promoting sustainable agriculture practices. This strategy includes: increasing productivity through the introduction of the modern scientific practices such as system of wheat intensification (SWI); adopting better yielding local varieties (such as water efficient and/ or pest-resistant seeds); and reducing cost of cultivation by adopting locally developed sustainable practices such as bio-pesticides and bio-fertilizers.

Delta also focuses on conserving soil and water and on regenerating natural resources by combining local knowledge with the modern scientific practices. This strategy includes: building bund, retention-walls, and terraces, when suitable for soil conservation, and constructing water harvesting structures such as farm ponds, stop dams and check dams

for water conservation. These structures increase ground water levels in the drought prone area.

The farm ponds and other water conservation projects follow a cost-sharing model, wherein the machinery is provided by *Delta* and the project members (farmers) bear the entire operational cost of creating the farm pond, which includes the labor,

		Degree of participatory implementation	
		Low	High
Extent of coverage	Group	<p><i>Alpha</i> (group formation, low participatory implementation) Low inclusive social capital</p>	<p><i>Beta</i> (group formation, moderate to high participatory implementation) Moderate inclusive social capital</p>
	Village	<p><i>Gamma</i> (village level, moderate participatory implementation) Moderate inclusive social capital</p>	<p><i>Delta</i> High inclusive social capital (village level, high participatory implementation)</p>

fuel of the excavator, and the daily wages of the operator. The suitability of a location to build check dams and other water conservation structures for storing rainwater is decided based on scientific study and planning by the organization.

In the two by two matrix, *Delta* represents high participation and village level coverage. It was expected that these two structuring decisions would generate a high level of inclusive social capital.

My findings confirm that the mechanisms used by *Delta* were in fact, conducive to build inclusive social capital. I argue that a village level implementation allowed the program to cater to the diversity of interests in the community and a high level of participation in decision-making activities resulted in high level of inclusive social capital. In the following sections, I explain the implementation process of *Delta* and its effect on

inclusive social capital.

5.4.1 Implementation process:

The primary mission of the organization is to create sustainable and holistic development of the villages. To reach this goal, *Delta* runs multiple programs in the villages which include: agriculture interventions; building village level infrastructure and collaborating with the Gram panchayat (local government) to deliver welfare services. The management of the organization believes that the sustainable and holistic development of the villages can only be achieved when everyone in the village is involved in the program. For this purpose, the organization ensures full participation of all the villagers. Such complete participation results in ownership of the program by the villagers and in due course, the projects are community run and community owned.

“Our approach is simple yet difficult. It is simple at the concept level and difficult at the implementation level. Conceptually we only want to work in a village if we can involve everyone in that village... We conduct several meetings the villagers assessing their needs and helping them find solutions. We make it clear in these visits that [Delta] will only engage with them if all the villagers - men and women from every caste – are included. This is not easy to ensure. But we are committed and we insist.” [Interview# 145 January 3, 2014, Delta Senior Executive, Head Quarters]

“You spent so many months in our villages did you find any committee that doesn’t include all the castes? ... You won’t find because that is what is core to our implementation process. This is the first step in involving any village. We are prepared to spend several months and years, if needed, to create that trust. Without ensuring participation of everyone the village we do not proceed further.” [Interview# 827 June 4, 2015, Delta District Manager, Head Quarters]

“It is easy to say we will include everyone in the village. But when we start

implementing the issues crop-up. How should we tackle gender issues? How to address caste issues? Even if we assume for a moment that caste and gender issues can be resolved, how should we create economic opportunities for everyone in the village? These are not trivial questions.” [Interview# 701 Feb 7, 2015, Delta District Manager]

The condition of participation of all segments in the program is a stringent criterion in the societies where social discrimination based on caste and gender is a norm and thus the politics of implementing the program becomes important. The implementation process starts with the staff of the organization visiting the villages and negotiating various stages of the implementation process in the series of meetings. As explained below the implementation process is highly participative.

5.4.2 Participatory approach

According to the Management of the organization, community participation is very crucial at every stage of implementing their program

Participation is at the core of our program. We believe in the idea of “hamara ganv [our village] to convey our mission to the people. What we mean by this is that every member in the community has to work towards creating a model village...because it is their village. Every person has to take in charge of not only their lives and but also need to realize the responsibilities they have towards themselves and towards the environment” [Interview# 147 January 3, 2014, Delta Senior Vice President, Head Quarters]

The **first stage** of the program is to build consensus in the village through community mobilization. In this stage, negotiations are conducted around the assets and the resources available in the villages and around the needs of the communities. As the villages are segregated based on caste, the field team of the organization conducts meetings in each tolas/hamlets. During these meetings, the participants are asked about the types of

services they would like for their families and what types of facilities they would like to see in their villages. Furthermore, this negotiation process is also used in identifying available resources in the villages, i.e. unused land, unused well, old water harvesting structure and labor availability. Thus the discussion process with each community takes into account three key issues: available resources, the individual needs of the families, and the collective need of the communities.

In this process, the communities are also informed of their roles and responsibilities. To become a member of the program, all the participants have to agree on the following commitments: they will only use organic fertilizers and pesticides and water efficient crops, and they will contribute (in cash or in kind) to the building and maintaining of the water harvesting structures in the villages.

Once the negotiation process is completed and a consensus is reached, the organization, with the participation of the villagers, elects a village level executive committee that oversees the implementation of the village level infrastructure. In the formation of the executive committee, the participation of every group (including women and members from the SC-ST) is ensured. The members of the executive committee are selected by the each of the tolas/hamlets, including one man and one woman representing each caste and gender.

The Executive committee, which includes 15 members, is representative of gender and caste differences. The elected Village Planning Committee (VPC) is registered as a Society under the Society Registration Act, 1860 Indian Law. Society status enables VPC to deal with external agencies and to access government development funding if and when needed.

The *second stage* includes agriculture interventions. In this stage, all farmers are provided training on sustainable agriculture practices and are provided an opportunity to attend an exposure visit to other successful cases. These farm exposures also include a visit to the area that has successfully implemented water and soil conservation. The visits also help farmers to understand the benefits of building village level infrastructure to conserve the soil and water in the villages.

The implementing conditions laid down by the organization demand a change in the prevailing lifestyle of the village community. The farmers start adopting these conditions placed by the programs which include collectively using bio-fertilizers, taking crops only twice in a year and using drought resistance seeds. In the beginning, leveraging their partnership with the government agencies, the inputs are supplied by the organization at subsidized rates. In the later stages, the organization establishes market linkages with suppliers and buyers.

In the *third stage*, the organization further enhance their collaboration with the local government to deliver welfare programs which include public distribution system, programs for women empowerment and literacy programs. The meetings at the General Body are also used as a platform to create awareness about the adoption of the crops that are suitable for the local climate and resources and does not have an adverse impact on the environment. The whole village is involved in the adaptation process. The farmers are informed about the water scarcity, rapid depletion of ground water table and fragile ecosystems and are educated about the environmentally sustainable practices, such as the use of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides and other practices based on local knowledge.

In the *fourth stage*, the process of building water infrastructure starts in the villages.

The members collect 500 rupees per household as a village fund to build the infrastructure. The organization provides support for technical surveys and other managerial assistance. The landless families contribute their labor in construction and also building nurseries around the area.

In all the stages, villagers are involved and encouraged to take ownership of the projects. The villagers are trained to carry out tasks like surveying and leveling. The activities are monitored by a supervisor who is also from the village. The idea behind this inclusive implementation is that people begin to feel responsible for the project and work hard to make it a success.

5.4.3 Assessing social impact: inclusive social capital

The process of implementing the program adopted by the organization has been relatively successful in creating cross-cutting ties by developing a village level identity.

As *Delta* works in the villages where gender and caste based discrimination is prevalent, involving everyone in the implementation process was quite a radical idea. Specifically, creating an inclusive structure through the executive committee that was representative of the caste and gender differences met with lots of resistance. For example, the people from the lower caste shared their worry that their voices would not be heard in the implementation process and they would not get the respect of the higher caste people.

Furthermore, historically, the villages in the region are situated in a way that the primary source of the water (well) are located in the area of rich and dominant caste. They can also afford water pump and motor to access water for their farms. So, involving them in the negotiation process and getting their approval was difficult. The collection of money for the community fund was also a contentious issue. The rich were not interested and the

poor did not understand why they also have to pay the same amount as the rich farmers. All these issues came up in the first negotiating process which aims to build consensus on the villages. For example, the issue of equitable payments by all the members of the community was negotiated in among the community members and after long discussions spread over several meetings, the members agreed that those who have the capability to pay will pay in cash or in other capital intensive resources, such as cement, and those who are poor and unable to pay in cash or capital intensive resources will pay through their skills and labor.

Another important cultural issue involved the use of water from shared sources. Traditionally, in these villages, lower castes were not allowed to use water from the sources that were used by the upper caste. This is a very sensitive topic and many villages that are not served by the organization still suffer from tensions around sharing of water sources. Thus, getting upper caste agree to share the source of water with the lower caste was a big hurdle. In my observations of the several nearby villages that were not served by *Delta*, I found that the lower caste family has to still travel longer distances to fetch water even when there was a source of water within the village.

According to the management of *Delta*, two strategies were used to build consensus: a) a convergence with the local governance's model of inclusive governance, and b) an assurance of economic benefits at individual and village level. *Delta* also used a team that was itself representative of different caste and gender and was well aware of the social dynamics in the villages. The staff during their stay in the villages continuously reinforced the ethics, social justice, and benefits of inclusiveness through various stories, movies, and theater. These ethics were slowly but steadily internalized by the farmer

facilitators and members of the executive committee.

In the negotiation process, the staff presented the idea of a “model village” to the people of the villages. The concept of model village helped in creating a new identity by dis-embedding identity from the caste. For example, during the meetings, the staff often discussed with the participants about the individual benefits they will receive if the programs are implemented. The highlighted benefits included not only individual level gains such as an increased productivity in agriculture; an increase in ground level water; access to various government welfare programs but also the social and community benefits of the programs such as how having these facilities will make their village different from others. The following quotes are representative of how several field program managers used to promote the idea:

“Don’t you want to live in a village which set an example for the other villages? Which has facilities that even the towns in the nearby areas don’t have?” [Village meeting# 9 September 23, 2014, Delta Field Program Manager_2]

“Your village will be the model for other villages to look up to. No filth, no open gutter, and no litter. Everyone will have access to clean water and village will be like a big family. Everyone in the village will work. Be it farming, teaching others, producing something in their own home, or forming small groups to run a small business. In order to achieve that everyone in the village should be part of this” [Village meeting# 12 September 27, 2014, Delta Field Program Manager_1]

In order to create awareness and social norms around their programs, the field staff of the organization used video screenings and organized various small fairs and theaters in their livelihood centers. The staff also created awareness about the climate change and how the water scarcity is going to affect everyone irrespective of their caste, gender, and economic status. The regional, district and field staff of organization collaborated to create

plays that show the plight of farmers in the case of climate change and staged these plays in the gram sabha.

Whenever and wherever the infrastructure was built, the regional staff of *Delta* invited the district officer to inaugurate and congratulate the people of the villages. This also created a sense of accomplishment in the villagers. The villagers were complemented in every stage for their unity despite their differences. Through this process, the staff of *Delta* worked toward creating a sense of we-ness among the people of the villages, persuading them to rise above the individual self-interest and to think about the village benefits as a whole while fulfilling their individual interests.

“In last seven years our village has become clean and green. Many villagers in their spare time help with plantation. Earlier government used to do plantation but nobody took care. Only a few of those plants survived. After [Delta] established our village as model village, all the villagers want to live up to that label.” [Interview# 842 June 19, 2015, Village Head, DeltaPV13]

“I have observed much higher level of cooperation among the villagers since our village become a model village [under stewardship of Delta]. In the village meetings many of us suggest way to improve our village and then volunteer. We use our spare time to remove rubbish, plant trees, and in general help improve our surroundings.” [Interview# 728 February 23, 2015, Female Villager, DeltaPV9]

It is also important to note here that *Delta* was able to implement this elaborate process because of their long-term orientation in various program implementation.

Social events mentioned above and several others that were related to local festivals that were celebrated by all were organized by *Delta* cut across the caste and gender divide. These social events provided opportunities to sit and eat together and interact with each other. In these villages with a very long history of discrimination, these were seen as a

major step.

During my field visit, I home stayed in many of the villages and had opportunities to interact with villagers and observe the social interactions in these villages. Most of my homestay was with the family of the marginalized caste. They were very welcoming of my stay and felt happy that they had a continuous supply of water, so, in their views, I could feel as comfortable in their home as I would feel in the home of a rich person. During our conversations, they also confirmed the positive changes the village went through in the past 7-8 years.

“If you have come before in my house, I would not have felt comfortable. Earlier, we did not have water for shower and other activities. We used to go to near river to shower and wash clothes. It wasn’t good...but now everyone in our village has water for drinking and for shower whether higher caste or lower caste” [Interview# 499 October 19, 2014, Female Villager, DeltaPV2]

The rich and dominant caste also showed more openness toward the social changes.

One of the priests (Brahmin) in a village told me:

“Earlier I wouldn’t have let the shadow of a lower-caste passed on my body but now these people come to the temple and I have to accept it. Things have changed because of the model village [initiative] by [Delta]... Inter-caste meetings and social interactions in the temple are not seen as taboo anymore.” [Interview# 491 October 12, 2014, Male Upper Caste Villager, DeltaPV4]

Similar views were expressed by a village head:

“I don’t like that women don’t cover their head in front of elderly and watch TV and laugh loudly. But things have changed in this village. Now every Monday they have Bhajans and they also invite women from another tola... what can I say...time has changed” [Interview# 488 October 5, 2014, Male Upper Caste Village Head, DeltaPV7]

The program has also been relatively better in gender inclusiveness. Throughout the implementation process, women have gained increasing levels of autonomy and agency. The organization arranged special agriculture training session for the women in the villages. They were also trained in running seed banks. In every meeting, women were asked to join. In collaboration with the local governance, the program has started distributing sugar and wheat, as part of public distribution system. Women were put in charge of running these programs. The literacy program in the village was also popular among the women and I met many women who expressed their joy to be able to attend the school.

“I am coming from school. I still cannot read. It is difficult at this age but our madam says there is no age to learn and she brings in the class new story and today she brought a book with many pictures. It was good” [Interview# 486 September 30, 2014, Female Villager, DeltaPV21]

In all the meetings that I have attended, I found equal participation of the women. While this is significant progress, as Sanyal and colleagues (2015) caution, ‘the process of renegotiating boundaries of womanhood and caste is ongoing and fluid one’. While some people in the villages were optimistic about the changes as they were unfolded, others were more skeptical. Some expressed their concern over the increasing movement of the women in the villages. While it was socially permissible although not always easy for the women from marginalized caste to go out from the house, to participate in the meetings, and to get involved in the construction activities without using veils, the women from the dominant caste (Thakur and Rajput) faced stiffer resistance in stepping out of their homes and mostly

used veils when they were out of their home. When *Delta* initiated the collaboration with the local government, the upper castes families only approved the participation of their women in more 'honorable' work such as teaching, managing public distribution programs. Some members of the dominant castes weren't very happy with the way marginalized castes were able to attend meetings in the temples, and were getting all the facilities from the program.

The minor grudges, friction, and tension related to gender and caste-based discrimination mentioned in the preceding paragraph still persist in some of the villages, especially *DeltaPV7*, *DeltaPV18*, and *DeltaPV20*. However, in my field observation and interviews with the villagers, I found that compared to nearby other villages where *Delta* was not involved, the frequency and intimacy of the contacts within and across the castes and gender were much higher in the village where *Delta* was involved.

The creation of the village level institutions that converged with the local governance institutionalized the new norm of inclusion. These decision-making bodies at the level of the village open up spaces in which women and marginalized individuals can legitimately participate in discussions on the main concerns and issues faced by the villagers. Furthermore, the interventions had an individual as well as social dimension. The farmers were encouraged to implement improved practices in their own farms through exposure to training and supply of inputs to the individual farmers. At the same time, they were also made aware of the village level benefits that accrue through a village level planning that included water conservation, climate change adaptation, waste recycling. The combination of these two interventions helped in addressing individual needs while creating collective interdependence among the villagers. The negotiation process used in

the implementation of the projects created a discursive space for interaction among different segments of the society, increasing frequency and intimacy of the interaction and creating inclusive social capital.

5.5 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the impact of different structuring decisions on inclusive social capital. As demonstrated, all four selected social enterprises differ in the extent of coverage (group vs village) and the degree of participatory implementation (high vs low). *Alpha* organized its economic program at the group level and used a top-down approach where lead farmers, instead of the members, played a dominant role in decision making. These structuring decisions prevented inclusive social capital from developing. In the case of *Beta*, economic programs were organized at the group level and had a high degree of participatory implementation. The mechanism used in group formation and different avenues and incentives for participation created some cross-cutting ties among the members from different caste but failed to reach women, and ultra-poor. *Gamma* structured its program at village level and had a low degree of participatory implementation in program activities compared to *Delta*. The village level implementation created interdependencies among the village members and build cross-cutting ties across social economic status. *Delta*, through its structuring decisions, addressed the diversity of interests, created interdependencies and increased interactions within and outside the program activities. Thus, the highly participatory approach and village level implementation used by *Delta* created a high level of inclusive social capital in the community.

In the next Chapter, I provide a comparative analysis of the cases, linking them with the theory and highlighting theoretical contributions.

6 Chapter: Comparative Analysis and Discussion

The purpose of this research was to explore the question: *how do social enterprises build inclusive social capital?* I used the concept of inclusive social capital to analyze the factors and mechanisms used by social enterprises to produce an impact on communities and to show the theoretical limits of both communitarian and critical perspectives' use of the concept of social capital for explaining the social outcomes of the social enterprises. The concept of inclusive social capital recognizes that social capital is not inherently good, as portrayed in the communitarian approach because the social norms and networks that create social capital are themselves infused with issues of power and inequality (Mosse, 2006; Cleaver, 2005; Portes, 1998). Assessing the social impact of social enterprises through the concept of inclusive social capital underscores the processes and mechanisms through which social inequalities and hierarchies can be understood and eventually transformed (Bebbington, 2007). Inclusive social capital was primarily observed as the cross-cutting social ties, and wherever it was possible, I focused on the strength and intimacy of cross-cutting social ties.

The potential of social enterprises in creating inclusive social capital was assessed based on the level of coverage and the degree of participatory implementation. I proposed that social enterprises that organize their economic activities at the village level, and have a high degree of participatory implementation in all their activities, including decision-making, are more successful in building inclusive social capital compared to those that have group level coverage and low degree of participatory implementation.

In addition to village level coverage and a high degree of participation, in this

research, I also observed that the potential of social enterprise in building inclusive social capital also depends on various associated mechanisms which can be summarized as: plurality of the programs being implemented, scaling speed, and balancing financial and social sustainability

In this chapter, I compare the different approaches to the community used by four social enterprises to demonstrate how the way they organize economic activities produces different impacts on social capital. Building on insights from the existing literature on social capital, I demonstrate that while the critical approach to social capital offers insights on understanding the lack of development of inclusive social capital in the case of *Alpha* and to some extent *Beta*, this approach is limited in explaining the relative success in building inclusive social capital in the case of *Gamma* and especially of *Delta*. I argue that the critical approach to social capital takes a static understanding of Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* and thus fail to explain the process of social change that can take place in hierarchical societies.

In the following sections, I first explain the theoretical debate in the field, highlighting the meaning and importance of *habitus*. In later sections, I compare various mechanisms used by the SEs and analyze their contribution to inclusive social capital. Based on this analysis, I draw theoretical insights and highlight the theoretical contributions.

6.1.1 The debate in the development field

In chapter 2, I critically analyzed the literature on social capital and discussed two prominent theoretical approaches in the development field: the communitarian approach and the critical approach to social capital. I argued that the development discourse on social

capital has been dominated by these two opposing theoretical views. The communitarian understanding of the social capital (Woolcock & Narayan, 2002; Krishna, 2002; Kay, 2005; Evers & Syrett, 2007; Woolcock, 2010; Islam & Morgan, 2011; Bhuiyan, 2011) views the communities as rational, homogenous and assumes that participation in economic activities will automatically create social capital (Putnam, 1992, 1995). The critical discourse (Cleaver, 2002, 2005; Mosse, 2007; Rankin, 2002; Molyneux, 2002; Edwards, 2004; Nixon, 2009) views social capital as an individual asset, arguing that the benefits of economic activities are always ‘hijacked’ by the rich and powerful members of the communities (Bourdieu 1977, 1984) and thus economic and development programs tend to reinforce the existing power and unequal relations in the communities (Levien, 2015; Lahiri-Dutta & Samanta, 2013; Desai & Dube, 2012).

In this dissertation, I use the concept of inclusive social capital to show the theoretical limits of both the communitarian and critical perspectives of social capital. The insights drawn from the four cases studied in this research also add to the growing literature in the development theory that attempts to bridge a divide between the rational and the critical model of development. The empirical analysis of the four social enterprises in the previous chapter illustrates the relative success of *Delta* and even *Gamma* in building inclusive social capital compared to *Alpha* and even *Beta*. I argue that in order to understand the relative success of *Delta*, a dynamic understanding of the *habitus* is required.

6.1.1.1 *Habitus* and critical approach

Habitus can be understood as the specific systems of dispositions (i.e. specific ways of thinking and acting) and practices that are characteristic of specific social groups and

classes. Bourdieu defined *habitus* as:

“a subjective but not individual system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class constituting the precondition for all objectification and apperception”. (Bourdieu, 1977: 86).

As this definition implies, *habitus* (i.e. deeply internalized dispositions) is first acquired through the processes of imitation, and repetitions of social practices and by participating in social relations. However, once internalized, *habitus* generates perceptions, expectations, and practices that reflect the original socialization experiences (Swartz, 2002). Thus, Bourdieu interprets *habitus* as socialized subjectivity through which actors interpret and create “intentional action without intention” (Vikas et al, 2015). Seen from this perspective, social practices are not a result of economic calculations (as portrayed by network approach) or well-established rules (as claimed by institutionalists) but rather derive from the predominantly subconscious internalization.

Habitus generates action in structured social contexts that are known as *fields*. In Bourdieu’s work, the concept of *field* is closely interlinked with the concept of *habitus*. *Fields* are various social arenas in which people express and reproduce their dispositions, and where they compete in pursuit of desirable resources (Gaventa, 2003). Bourdieu contends that meanings of movements across *fields* are often contested. The normative structure that regulates actors’ practices, as well as actors’ interests and positions in them, are different in different *fields* and therefore, certain modes of practice in a *field* are not always easily transposed into another one. For example, *fields* help in explaining the different positions and expectations that women and men occupy in

‘public’ and ‘private’ space. It is socially expectable for a man to be in ‘public’ (working, discussing, meeting, etc), however, the movement of woman from ‘private’ to ‘public’ space are often challenged (Bondi, 1998; Kern, 2005; Rose, 1993; Spain 2014), and sometimes even seen as an act of expulsion. Similarly, the internalized caste based social norms also dictate different behavior across the *field* as seen in caste-based segregation and discrimination in the public space (Deliege, 1999; Hoff & Pandey, 2006; Thorat & Attewell, 2007). These gender- and caste-based norms have been naturalized over a long period of time and appear as objective facts. Thus, *habitus* appears to be fixed and permanent and according to Bourdieu (1990), once established, *habitus* endures, and cannot be easily changed. However, it should be noted that *habitus* is not fixed or permanent, it is not something that an individual can never overcome, though such change is difficult and requires time (Navarro, 2006). Thus, the disposition of *habitus* can be a force for change as well for continuity.

Bourdieu argues that the disposition of *habitus* will reproduce past behavior in *fields* if the constraints and the opportunities encounter in the new *field* are similar to those that were available during the formative period of *habitus*. As I will show in the subsequent sections, the structural design adopted by *Alpha* and to lesser extent *Beta* were consistent with the *habitus* of their participants and therefore they kept the exclusionary structure intact.

However, *habitus* can change when individuals enter in *fields* where a certain manner of behavior does not work (Corsun & Costen, 2001; McLeod, 2005; McNay, 1999, Schuller et al, 2000). When the dispositions of *habitus* do not fit well with the constraint and the opportunities of fields, in those circumstances change is most likely

to occur (Crossley, 2003; McNay, 1999). The case of *Gamma* and *Beta* show this in a limited way; however, *Delta* provides a clear successful example.

Thus, the concept of *habitus* shows that social practices are generated from the intersection of *dispositions* and *fields*. Therefore, social enterprises that are working in the communities first need to understand the social dynamics that reflect the intersection between *habitus* and *field* and then design mechanisms that could alter both.

In the following sections, I compare the implementation process (level of coverage and degree of participatory implementation) among the four social enterprises and explain how their mechanisms affected *habitus*.

6.1.2 Group coverage, degree of participation and *habitus*

In the previous chapter, I discussed that the income generating programs of *Alpha* and *Beta* used group-based implementation, while *Gamma* and *Delta* used village level implementation. Programs that are structured in such a way that anyone in the village could become a member are said to have village level implementation. On the other hand, programs that restrict membership to a certain group of individuals based on some pre-qualifying criteria are said to have group level implementation. The analysis of the cases allows me to conclude that the degree of coverage matters and that, implemented properly, village level implementations are relatively better at creating inclusive social capital than group level implementations.

This finding is important as it stands in stark contrast to the group based approach which is the prevailing method used by the social enterprises in organizing their economic activities (Haugh & Talwar 2014; Desai & Joshi, 2014; Bradley, Chakravarti, & Rowan,

2013), apparently inspired by the ‘successes’ of the self-help and microfinance groups (Swain & Varghese, 2009; Deininger & Liu, 2013) and the uncritical imitation of the group approach by the social enterprises. However, the processes around group formation, group composition, and group activities have received very little attention and remained less understood in the context of inclusive social capital generation.

The uncritical approach to group formation has theoretical roots in the communitarian understanding of social capital, which assumes that organizing individuals in groups will potentially bring social and economic benefits for the rural population in general and for the poor in particular (Thorp, Stewart, & Heyer, 2005; Hans, 2014). It is claimed that small-sized, voluntary, socio-economically homogeneous group with participatory decision making can affect poverty directly, via improved income generation, or indirectly via generating social capital in the communities and leading to empowerment, collective action and political activism (Thorp, et al, 2005; Agarwal, 2010). However, the findings from my research challenge these assumptions. I found that in regard to building inclusive social capital (cross-cutting ties), group-based projects have less potential unless group formation is participatory-process driven, groups are heterogeneous, and groups are connected through village level institutions.

Among the four cases selected for this research, *Alpha* and *Beta* use group formation as a primary way of organizing their economic activities and thus, provide a deeper understanding of how the group formation process and the group composition affect the inclusive social capital.

The group formation process, used by *Alpha* relied heavily on the lead farmers. The lead farmers were identified by the field staff of *Alpha* on the basis of their education, their

risk-taking ability, and their leadership quality. In most of the villages, upper caste farmers, who were also rich, fulfilled these criteria. Once identified from a particular village, the lead farmer was then responsible for the selection of the group members, structuring group processes, conducting group meetings, and evolving group norms. As mentioned earlier, these strategies used by *Alpha*, seemingly allowed the participants to encounter a new *field*, however, the constraints and opportunities offered in the new *field* were consistent with the existing *habitus*. The lead farmer, already rich and powerful and commanded a certain level of control in the communities benefited the most from the program. The implementation process did not contest their power position and to a certain extent, reinforced it as was seen in group formation process.

In group formation, the lead farmers prioritized individuals from their own caste and clan. The group homogeneity was also encouraged by the regional and field staff of *Alpha* because they believed that homogenous groups are cohesive and could reduce the cost of maintaining regular contact. Furthermore, the status of the lead farmer in the community and their selection through the organization prevented them from taking any interest in creating dialogue among the different groups to facilitate networking. As the programs were implemented through the lead farmers, i.e. local elite, the interventions reflected the preferences and interests of those elites, instead of the interest of the village as a whole. This shows a theoretical weakness of the communitarian perspective, which believes that development agencies rely on the collective disposition of the participant to implement the program. However, the case of *Alpha* shows that in hierarchical communities, it is often the rich and powerful who effectively mobilize and organize villagers to make community interventions possible. Furthermore, the exclusion of women

and farmers who were poor and belonged to the marginalized caste show that the structural design adopted by *Alpha* and to lesser extent *Beta* were consistent with the *habitus* of their participants. For example, by excluding women and lower castes members in their program, *Alpha* kept the position, meaning, and expectation associated with the private *field* intact. Similarly, by implementing the program through the rich and affluent farmers, the organization did not challenge the established *habitus* around caste norms. Although *Beta* was marginally successful in involving the members of lower castes, it also exhibited similar patterns by not involving women, and later stage mostly catering to rich farmers.

Compared to *Alpha*, the institutional design adopted by *Beta* was more conducive to creating cross-cutting ties at the community level. The decision to create heterogeneous groups, with mixed caste, where the positions of the president and the secretary were shared between individuals of 'higher' and 'lower' castes, increased interactions between rich and poor farmers. While initially this move was only seen as symbolic, the small changes that followed after the sharing of these positions had a big impact. For example, conducting meetings in the public spaces, sitting at the same level, eating food together during the meetings and attending training and social events together challenged the existing *habitus* and initiated the process of creating new social norms that were inclusive of lower castes.

Beta ensured that these group based norms were replicated at the village level through village level organization (VO). These VOs in the villages provided a platform for the villagers to express their needs, satisfaction, and concerns. The federated structure had not only been helpful in achieving financial and economic gains but also created a space for the individuals in the village to come together and discuss economic and other interesting issues. Thus, although *Beta* used a group level approach, it had a hybrid

approach in terms of coverage: all the groups within the village interacted with each other and they had VO that acted as a platform for groups and other villagers to interact with each other. However, the frequency of these interactions was on a monthly basis only.

Although there were many differences between *Alpha* and *Beta* in terms of how they mobilized groups and implemented their programs, there were some similarities between them as well. Neither *Alpha* nor *Beta* engaged women in their programs, even when both the organizations made frequent reference, in their documentation and other materials, to the under-representation of women in development initiatives and stated a strong commitment to redress this imbalance. However, the failure of both SEs in achieving a gender inclusive model demonstrates the challenges in overcoming gender inequality and discriminatory structures. The management at all the levels, and the field staff at both organizations stated that the rural women are actively engaged in agriculture work. However, the comments from the group members, village elders, and the male family members exhibited a complete disregard for agriculture work and other farming activities performed by the women. To the extent that the women were excluded from the programs of *Alpha* and *Beta*, the opportunities for creating ties among women and across genders were lost.

To conclude, the entry of the *Alpha* and *Beta* social enterprises created new economic opportunities for the people in the area. However, the exclusion of women in both the cases and lower castes farmers in *Alpha* shows that both the organizations failed to address structural constraints without challenging *habitus*. For Bourdieu, any meaningful change in *habitus* can only occur when an organization understands the intersection between *habitus* and *field* and prepares strategies that alter both. This implies

that economic or normative activities alone are not enough to change actor's practices but need to have a combination of both. To challenge a particular *habitus* that is a result of traditional socialization, there is also a need for "cultural configurations" (Sanyal, Rao & Majumdar, 2015a).

However, *Alpha* and *Beta*, in their quest for economic activities and their implicit assumption that economic activities will automatically decrease social inequality, overlooked gender biases and power relations and thus failed to create new norms of behavior and lost opportunities to facilitate inclusive social ties. This resulted in the fragmented social capital in the community, where (powerful) groups were able to strengthen within-group bonding social capital. Between-group social capital was not generated, and weaker segments of the society were further marginalized. Thus, without proper institutional design and mechanisms, economic activities may not generate inclusive social capital.

Compared to *Alpha* and *Beta*, the institutional designs adopted by *Gamma* and *Delta* were relatively successful in building inclusive social capital. In the following sections, I discuss the program designs adopted by *Gamma* and *Delta* and how they were conducive to generating inclusive social capital.

6.1.3 Village level coverage, degree of participation and *habitus*

Compared to *Alpha* and *Beta*, the approach adopted by the regional and field staff of *Gamma* and *Delta* was to design programs that targeted *all the villagers* irrespective of their caste and gender. This approach has been relatively more conducive in creating cross-cutting ties. Village level implementation was more successful in creating inclusive social capital because it helped in bringing everyone in the communities together and created a

discursive space for incorporating the economic as well as the social needs of participants. Furthermore, the program successfully created village ownership among the participants by building interdependence and mutual reliance among the members. Village level ownership ensured the sustainability of the program and along with high degree of participatory implementation increased the likelihood of residents working together for a common purpose and their willingness to support each other, as noted in the literature (Ryan, Agnitsch, Zhao, & Mullick, 2005; Chowdhury & Santos, 2010; Pless & Appel, 2012).

In addition to village level coverage, *Delta* also followed a much more comprehensive participatory approach compared with *Alpha*, and even *Gamma* and *Beta*. In the case of *Alpha*, the organization implemented all the decisions, either directly or through lead farmer. Thus, the degree of participatory implementation was very low, which resulted in fewer interactions among the participants. *Beta* had a higher degree of participation compared to *Alpha*. *Beta* recommended that group membership should be heterogeneous and allowed the villagers to decide who they wanted to select as their president and secretary. These participatory processes did delay formation of the groups in several cases, however, the intense level of interaction and discussion ensured the dialogue among various caste members. These interactions were helpful in creating cross-caste ties. Nevertheless, like *Alpha*, *Beta* was also unsuccessful in including women in the participatory activities and consequently failed to disrupt the status positions in the communities.

Comparatively, *Gamma*, and more specifically *Delta*, used high participatory approaches in their initial phase of program implementation. The implementation process

in both *Gamma* and *Delta* begins with a tola/hamlet wise meeting. As most of the villages are segregated based on caste, the marginalized groups are rarely included in the discussion process. However, meetings with each tola allowed *Gamma* and *Delta* to reach to all the segments of the village and provided a deeper understanding of the social and political dynamics of the village. This helped them to find the best way to deliver their economic programs. As noted earlier, this critical understanding of the community is a necessary element to transform the *habitus*. Understanding social dynamics reveals the disguised form of domination that results from initial socialization and are expressed in the *field*. Accordingly, it allows social enterprises, development agencies, and other organizations to prepare strategies in which the dispositions of *habitus* can be challenged by creating new norms of behavior. Indeed, in the case of *Delta*, the participatory implementation process was used in altering the socio-economic behavior of the participants.

Delta not only used the participatory processes to identify challenges to income generating opportunities but went a step further and organized meetings at village level with the purpose of including everyone in the participatory negotiation of the economic activities around the assets and resources available in the villages, a process uncommon but recommended in the literature (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1993). Recognizing assets and capacities opened up the discussion for how these assets should be optimally invested. For example, the goal of *Delta* was to provide livelihood to the poor while conserving the environment and creating sustainable communities. In order to achieve these goals, the organization, with the participation of villagers, identified not only what type of market interventions were needed but also what type of infrastructure, partnership, and collaboration were available in the villages. The main physical assets in these villages

were large plots of vacant lands and unused and dilapidated water infrastructure that were being used for rubbish dumping. The villages also had government town halls that were rarely used. In addition, there were unemployed youth and landless people who would migrate to the nearby construction area to earn a living. To utilize these physical and human resources, *Delta* solicited villagers' suggestions. These enhanced participatory processes created intense interactions among the villagers. The requirement of full participation by all the community member in the implementation process, despite their caste and gender, challenged the caste and gender-based dispositions as well as the position and expectations associated with the private and public *fields*

The village level negotiation of identifying assets and resources created a discursive space for interaction. However, these discursive spaces created by *Gamma* and *Delta* were not conflict-free zones. As noticed by Bourdieu, the economic activities initially create conflicts between old and new form of interests or alignments (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This conflict often manifests itself, as Bourdieu would argue, in a contest between those actors who want to hold on to their older *habitus* that symbolizes traditions and others who are willing to adapt. As the case of *Delta* underscored, the old powerful elite did not like the social changes that were happening in the villages and often expressed the longing for the past 'glorious' days.

These observations also suggest that there is little homogeneity of interests among the individuals and the participation in the economic activities results from a diversity of interests that individuals have by virtue of their system of dispositions and practices—*habitus*. Interestingly though, the critical approach applying the *habitus*, has not been very optimistic about the convergence of these different interests and thus implies that when

there is a conflict of interests, the interests of rich and powerful will dominate the conversations. However, the case of *Delta* demonstrates that a convergence among the divergent interest is possible, if the program design allows space for the individual as well as collective needs, as espoused in the literature (Gibson & Graham 2006). In my field work, I identified various mechanisms that were used by *Delta* and *Gamma* that were conducive in creating these commonality of interests. : plurality of the programs being implemented, low scaling speed, and balancing financial and social sustainability

6.1.4 Diversity of Interests and plurality of programs

Most of the villages I visited were very diverse in terms of caste composition and income level. This observation is consistent with the critical approach that community does not constitute a clearly homogenous group of actors with the same sets of interests, practices, or dispositions (as believed by the communitarian perspective), and instead are composed of social groups like class, caste, and gender. Membership in these groups are not voluntary but acquired by birth (Bourdieu, 1986). Due to their different dispositions, these diverse social groups in the villages had very diverse needs, requiring many programs and activities. However, despite the heterogeneity of needs, the programs run by *Alpha* and *Beta* only relied on the one strategy or one type of intervention in the village. Although the ‘one size fits all’ approach reduced the cost of their operations, it failed to incorporate various marginalized groups, including women.

The negotiation process in *Gamma* and *Delta* involved multiple ‘stakeholders’, where each stakeholder prioritized their own individual household needs. For example, farmers in the villages wanted to increase the agricultural productivity and to raise income for their families. The village’s local government was under pressure to implement their

programs in an efficient manner and wanted to partner with other organizations. The rich farmers in the villages wanted to earn more money by lending their resources. The economic activities of *Gamma* and more so of *Delta* prioritized these individual needs in their program design, and thus aligned divergent but compatible interests. As mentioned earlier, the primary aim of *Gamma* and *Delta* was to increase agriculture productivity of the farmers by training them about the best practices, helping them to store and sell their produce in the market. These economic programs took into account the economic needs of the individuals. Furthermore, the diversity of the interests (landless farmers, youth, women) was incorporated by running multiple interdependent and compatible programs in the villages. For example, the poor and landless farmers were hired as laborers in the construction of demonstration plots, and in building water infrastructure. The educated youth were trained as para-vet and program supervisors. The welfare services that ran in the collaboration of the local government hired local women for delivering these services.

The discursive space where diversity of the interests was negotiated was also used by *Gamma* and *Delta* to create collective responsibilities. The individuals who were part of the projects were trained to take care of the environment and social issues such as literacy and health care. In each meeting and training session, the farmers were informed about the need of soil and water conservation, and each participant took a pledge not to take the third crop and only use water resistance seeds.

These agreements were sustained by creating interdependent relationships. *Gamma* and *Delta* ensured that community is self-reliant. The SEs achieved this goal by recruiting para-vets, supervisors and other supporting staffs from within the villages where they served. This created mutual interdependences and a strong sense of community among the

members. As the program also incorporated every segment of the communities through multiple interventions, it helped to attain the dual objective of empowering marginalized groups without alienating others in the community, all this while keeping the focus on the income generating activities.

Through the multiple strategies discussed above, *Delta* and *Gamma* were able to create a collective identity. In the villages where these SEs were working, I found individuals more aware of their social and collective responsibilities towards the environment and towards the health and education of their children (including the girl child). They were also less discriminatory towards the other caste members and were more open to interact with each other in social gatherings.

6.1.5 Scaling Speed

According to Sanyal (2015b), *habitus* is embodied and manifested through daily practices that are individually cultivated through societal collaboration and have publicly recognized and shared meanings. It suggests “strong socialization” (Lizardo & Strand 2010, 211) that is achieved through non-propositional/ discursive mechanisms and therefore transforming *habitus* is a slow and long-term process and need a deeper understanding and a long-term engagement with the community. However, as discussed in Chapter 4 & 5, the entry level strategy used by *Alpha and Beta* centered on identifying the market opportunities. In order to attract individuals in their programs and to win their trust,

*Alpha and Beta*⁵⁵ relied heavily on providing free services and subsidized inputs.

The group formation in *Alpha* could be described as target based where the field staff was only responsible for identifying lead farmers in as many villages as possible and asking these lead farmers to form as many groups in their village as they wished. In short, the focus was on the creation of numerous groups in a very short period of time. In fact, the success of the field officers was measured based on how many groups they have created. In order to attract more people in the short period of time, in many instances, the field staff of *Alpha* provided joining ‘bonuses’ and free inputs sourced from the government. These ‘target’ based groups that were created to just fulfill the organizational requirement of fast ‘growth’ had no potential to create social ties as they did not involve any hand holding and did not undergo any process of community mobilization. Therefore, the participants had no long term commitment.

The field staff of *Beta*, on the other hand, spent time in the community in the initial stage of the program and invested efforts, and resources in training and skills development through delivering essential services to the individuals. These activities not only brought legitimacy to *Beta*’s programs, but also helped them justify the inclusion of all the castes in their groups. However, over the period of time, *Beta*’s strategy changed and they started focusing on the fast growth rather an in-depth involvement in the communities.

This ‘quick’ access tactic used by the *Alpha* and *Beta* (at later stage) did not allow them enough time to understand social dynamics in the villages. The implementation

⁵⁵ It is important to note that in the initial years, *Beta* did focus on slow implementation and spent more time in each village; however, after five year of implementation of the project they changed their strategy and started focusing on was growth and high speed scaling.

strategy of these two SEs was driven by a high scaling speed and fast growth. While this approach has helped them create many groups quickly and significantly increased their reach to large number of villages, without understanding the social dynamics in the villages, the programs reinforced and strengthened already existing power relations in the communities, and failed to create inclusive social capital.

In contrast to the ‘quick’ access strategies used by *Alpha* and *Beta*, *Gamma* and more specifically *Delta* used an intentional strategy of low scaling speed. Their long-term strategy was centered around understanding the community dynamics and building community infrastructure. As discussed earlier, *Gamma* and *Delta* started their program by a thorough understanding of community dynamics. The staff spent many days in the villages, enforcing the idea of inclusion among the community members. The entry point activities also included building local infrastructure that was used to run the various program (storage, meeting place and in some case demonstration farm). The focus on understanding village context completely and taking holistic view rather than adding more villages help them create mechanisms that were more conducive in building inclusive social capital.

6.1.6 Social Sustainability Vis-a-Vis Financial Sustainability

The programs of *Alpha* and *Beta* were organized around the business principles of efficiency, growth and revenue generation. This is consistent with the growing literature which shows there is an increasing push towards the commercialization of the social enterprises that places revenue generation at the heart of discussion on the social enterprise (Cohen, 2015, Daya, 2010; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Dart, 2004). The market logic behind this revenue generating model is based on the idea that if social enterprises earn

more revenue they will have more financial resources for their social programs. In this move towards creating a standardized model of social enterprises, scale, efficiency and financial sustainability are seen as the core characteristic of the social enterprise. However, this exclusive focus on scaling, efficiency, and revenue generation come with a cost that sometimes results in mission drift (Cornforth, 2014), i.e. losing focus on social objectives, and instead solely focusing on generating revenues.

The debates around exclusive focus on growth and financial sustainability and its impact on the social outcome have started emerging in the social enterprise literature, and would certainly become important with time (Bornstein, 2004; Sud, Vansandt & Baugous, 2009). However, how a focus on growth and revenue generation by social enterprises impacts the social outcomes is not yet studied well through field-based research in the literature. There is some evidence that restricting the understanding of social enterprise to growth and financial sustainability might lead to a repetition of failures that were observed in 2010 in the microfinance sector in India (Cull, Demirgüç-Kunt & Morduch, 2008, 2009; Sud, Vansandt & Baugous, 2009). In this case, for the sake of fast growth and financial sustainability, many unscrupulous players in the sector that was primarily designed to help rural poor, resorted to practices that were at best reckless and at worst exploitative. Thus, there is legitimate concern that pushing the field further in the direction of commercialization, and neglecting social outcomes, might result in eroding the depth and breadth of improvements that can be made in people's lives (Cohen, 2014).

The analysis of *Alpha and Beta* and their shift towards a more commercial model show that the increasing push towards fast growth in a short term can have a detrimental impact on the inclusive social capital. For example, the focus on fast growth in the case of

these two SEs, resulted in the unscrupulous targeting of the clients (those who were already relatively well-off) instead of a careful selection of the beneficiaries (those who were really poor and needed financial support to increase their income sources).

Alpha prided economic efficiency in its program. According to the company logic, the cost of implementing the program in the remote area would be very high if the company doesn't come up with innovative solutions. By identifying a lead farmer, as per this logic, the organization fulfills two of its mandates: reducing the project cost and increasing participation by allowing peer-to-peer learning. However, as elaborated in the case, the lead farmer approach, with its special focus on scale and economic efficiency meant that the relatively powerful segments of the community were able to form the groups together, access the benefits of the program and further marginalize the poor and weaker sections. This resulted in the fragmented social capital in the community, where (powerful) groups were able to strengthen within-group bonding social capital, whereas between-group social capital weakened, and isolated or weaker segments of the society were further marginalized.

Beta, while strongly committed to the development of poor farmers, in the later years shifted towards a fast scaling model, focusing on rich farmers as they already had resources and were able to conduct high-value transactions. The focus on, efficiency, and financial sustainability also created mission drift. As the Chapter 5 demonstrated in detail, the focus on financial sustainability combined with scalability shifted the target populations from the poor to the rich farmers. In this model, the organization has an incentive to select those people who already possess the characteristics that a project aims to create, selecting entrepreneurs, innovators, and independent, modernizing individuals. Using them as target

audience assured success. The social mission of *Alpha* and *Beta* was to provide livelihood opportunities to poor and marginalized farmers with a special focus on women farmers. Superficially, from the top to the bottom, each staff of *Alpha* and *Beta* seemed to be driven by this mission. However, the findings suggest that the process of implementing the program was run by an economic logic which prioritized economic efficiency over the social outcome. In this framework of economic logic, marginalized groups, such as poor farmers, lower castes, and women, were deemed as ‘unrewardingly hard work’ (Mosse, 2004) i.e. groups that might ‘consume’ lots of organizational efforts without a commensurate financial outcome. They had small plot of land or lacked other financial resources, they were assumed to be risk averse, and they were thought of lacking “the capacity to inspire” others (Appadurai, 2004). Their assumed lack of capacity to collaborate with others made them, in the eyes of project implementers at *Alpha*, useless for achieving project goals. As a result, while the program was financially sustainable, the social outcome in *Alpha and Beta* was conflicted. The groups reinforced rather than challenged existing structures and marginalized the poor farmers.

On the other hand, the analysis of *Gamma* and *Delta* show that for social enterprises it is vital to ensure the primacy of the ‘social’ even though the ‘enterprise’ has to be financially sustainable in order to continue its activities and to expand them over time. Social enterprise, if it is to be a real alternative for addressing social issues, must structure its programs that can effectively challenge the structural barriers that limit a person’s life opportunities. Such structural barriers include, in the context of India, not only economic poverty but also social marginalization, as experienced by lower castes and women. Whilst business skills are certainly of value in working alongside communities to identify aspects

of their tangible and intangible assets that could be used to generate livelihoods, sensitive social awareness, and critical social interactions are also needed to design programs that have potential to generate inclusive social capital. The combination of market-oriented

Table 6.1: Summary of Case Findings			
Degree of participatory implementation			
Low  High			
Extent of coverage	Group	<p><i>Alpha</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lead farmer identified by <i>Alpha</i> -Lead farmer (president) selects secretary & members -President, secretary, and almost all the members are from upper caste -No women participation -Group based implementation -No structured village level interactions among the groups -High scaling speed -Focus on financial sustainability at the cost of social value creation -Very low plurality of programs 	<p><i>Beta</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Beta</i> helps create village level committee (VLC) -Villagers & VLC select president and secretary -<i>Beta</i> recommends to have president and secretary from different castes -Insignificant participation of women -Group-based implementation but VLC ensures dialogue between groups -Initially moderate, later high scaling speed -Initially balance between social and financial sustainability, later more focus on financial -Low plurality of programs
	Village	<p><i>Gamma</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Gamma</i> creates VLC with diverse caste, gender, <i>tola</i> membership -VLC overlaps with local government entrusted with women empowerment -President, secretary selected by <i>Gamma</i> from different castes and serve on rotation basis -Substantial participation of women -Village level implementation -Initially low, later moderate scaling speed -Balance between financial and social sustainability -Moderate plurality of programs 	<p><i>Delta</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Delta</i> performs community mobilization involving everyone in the village -Solicits inputs from the villagers on services/ products they need -Villagers identify the problems and the resources they have -<i>Delta</i> co-creates solutions to the problems with the villagers -Engages the local government in the process -Village level implementation of multiple programs -Low scaling speed -Initially more focus on social sustainability, later balance between financial and social sustainability -High plurality of programs

models with social awareness and careful structuring of social outcomes can allow for a sustainable social enterprise model to emerge. At the same time, it is important to understand that in a heterogeneous society with class, caste, and gendered hierarchy local

tensions and obstacles may hinder the translation of the model into effective social development unless inclusive participation, village level coverage, and multiple interdependent programs are implemented. The findings of the empirical cases are summarized in Table 6.1.

6.2 Summary of Theoretical Contributions

The four cases studied in this research provide insights to understand the mechanisms implemented by social enterprises that result in the inclusive social capital. In addition, this research identifies the limitations of the communitarian approach and extends the critical understanding of social capital by discussing mechanisms and processes that could transform the '*habitus*'.

In the previous section, I argued that the structural design adopted by *Alpha* and *Beta* overlooked gender biases and power relations in the communities. Without understanding the social dynamics, the creation of formal and informal arrangements in their income generating program had the undesirable effect of strengthening existing bonding ties among the rich and socially powerful farmers. Ignoring the fact that these villages are heterogeneous led the *Alpha* and *Beta* to rely on the one strategy or one type of interventions in the villages. This 'one size fits all' approach failed in addressing the heterogeneity of interests that individuals have by virtue of their *habitus*.

The concept of *habitus* and *fields* suggests that communities do not constitute a homogenous group of actors who have the same sets of interests, practices, or disposition. All actors are shaped by their material conditions as well as their different experiences. This poses a challenge for development agencies, such as social enterprises, to design and

implement program that can change the normative structure and transform the unequal social practices. These different positions of the members across the *fields* can be transformed by an institutional design that addresses the diversity of interests through the incorporation of a critical understanding of social dynamics. The economic arrangements of *Delta* and *Gamma* started the process of deconstructing the participants' existing *habitus* – and cultivating a new *habitus* by creating a discursive space through village level implementation and a high degree of participation. I also found that implementing a plurality of programs, maintaining low scaling speed and managing a balance between social and financial goals, can alter the mode of practices, ie. cultural configurations (cf. Kistruck, Qureshi & Beamish, 2013). Thus, income generation alone is not enough to spur inclusive and evenly felt development (Bradley, Chakravarti, & Rowan, 2013; Konrad et al, 2016), unless supported by processes, activities, and incentives that are social in nature.

7 Chapter: Conclusions and Future Research

In recent decades, social enterprises have become important actors in the field of international development and their potential in addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges has been widely recognized in the development policy circle (the World Bank, 2016, the UNDP, 2008; 2015; Rogerson, 2014; British Council, 2015, 2016). In the literature, it is argued that social enterprises are better equipped in achieving sustainable development goals and addressing development challenges as they balance dual objectives of economic and social impact (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Battilana et al, 2015; Besharov & Smith, 2014).

The academic and practitioner literature mainly presents the positive side of social enterprises and their social impact (Eversole et al, 2013; Goyal et al, 2017; Haugh, 2005; Lyon & Ramsden, 2006; Vazquez-Maguirre et al, 2017). In policy circles, social enterprises are seen to have potential to address current socio-economic challenges (ADB, 2016; British Council, 2016; Etchart & Davis, 2003); however, their actual contribution in creating social impact is rarely scrutinized (Dey & Steyaert, 2012; Vik, 2016).

It is assumed that social enterprises are inherently social and as long as they are financially sustainable, the social will take care of itself (Teasdale, 2009; Diochon & Anderson, 2011; Daya, 2014). However, my findings challenge the assumption that social objectives are automatic results of the economic activities of social enterprises and highlight the need for a critical examination of the *social* in social enterprises. Furthermore, critical review of the extant literature and insights from my research demonstrate that the *social* needs to be understood through a broader social impact on the community instead of narrowly defined economic or financial indicators.

To capture broader aspects of social impact, I examined four social enterprises in the communities using the concept of inclusive social capital as an outcome. Inclusive social capital shows the transformative potential of social enterprises as it implies breaking of the unequal social norms and therefore provides a broader framework to assess the *social* in social enterprises. The findings of this research reveal that the social enterprises that implement their programs at village level and create participatory discursive spaces to address diverse need are more successful in building inclusive social capital compared to those that only focus on economically well-off and socially homogenous groups and/ or implement programs without participatory components. Furthermore, a long-term orientation, along with deeper engagement with the community, and a balance between financial and social objectives is also conducive in building inclusive social capital. These mechanisms -village level coverage, the degree of participatory implementation, plurality of economic programs, long-term and deeper engagement in the communities and a balance between social and financial objectives - challenges the normative and material aspects of discriminatory practices and thus changes the *habitus*, which results from deeper socialization and sustains unequal norms. Based on these findings, in the following sections, I offer policy recommendations and avenues for future research. From public policy perspectives and best practices guidelines, this research contributes to the growing literature on social values measurement in the context of social enterprises. Measuring social impact has proved to be challenging (Ebrahim et al, 2014; Geobey, Westley, Weber, 2012; Harji & Jackson, 2012; London et al., 2010; Seelos & Mair, 2005b; Tracey & Jarvis, 2007) primarily due to extensive reliance on anecdotes about economic outcomes (Grieco et al, 2015; Kistruck et al, 2013; Ryan & Lyne, 2008; Weber et al, 2017), but also due to

unclear conceptualization of social outcomes (Di Domenico et al., 2010; Kroeger & Weber, 2014; Neck et al, 2009) and the lack of a theoretical framework to study those outcomes. Thus, it is difficult to measure and document success (or failure) of SEs in social value creation (Dart, 2004; Mook et al, 2015; Weerawardena & Mort, 2006).

While there is no framework to assess the social impact of social enterprises at the broader community level, increasingly it is expected that social enterprises should be transformative, and an agent for social change (Austin et al, 2006; Nicolopoulou et al, 2015; Sakarya, 2012). My research provides an understanding of factors responsible for the development of inclusive social capital and offers a broader framework to assess the social impact of social enterprises. The findings of this research have theoretical and practical implications as building inclusive social capital implies overcoming the power hierarchies of caste, gender, and other societal barriers. Thus, this framework offers researchers a deeper understanding of the social impact that can be created by social enterprises if they use a right degree of coverage and participatory implementation processes along with addressing diverse needs, engaging deeper and long term in the communities, and striking a balance between social and financial objectives. The framework also allows a critical engagement with the field of social value creation and helps in understanding the transformative potential of the programs being implemented by the social enterprises.

There are several practical implications of focusing on inclusive social capital as one of the outcomes of social value creation. Building inclusive social capital has implications for social enterprises working in the communities and are concerned with the long-term sustainability of their programs. While the current research on social enterprises

predominantly focuses on the financial sustainability of social enterprises and their programs, increasingly, social sustainability of the programs are also becoming an important concern for not only social enterprises but also for the policymakers. Social enterprises should design their programs with high degree of participatory implementation that results in community ownership. Such programs can most possibly sustain themselves even when the respective social enterprises are not there to facilitate them. My research demonstrates that building cross-cutting ties among the members from different social-economic status in the communities can ensure that programs are broadly owned and run by the community members.

By designing their program with a high degree of participatory implementation, village level coverage and creation of discursive spaces that incorporate individual as well as collective needs, social enterprises can empower the communities and develop the ownership of the programs. Empowered communities that have a common sense of ownership of the programs are critical for the social sustainability and continuation of the programs (Ahmad & Talib, 2015; Purdey et al, 1994; Steiner, 2016), and provide social enterprise an opportunity for disintermediating themselves (Kistruck et al, 2013), or what is labeled and deemed necessary in the policy circles as ‘exit’ strategy (IFAD, 2009; IFC, 2015; Levinger & McLeod, 2002).

The findings of my research are not only relevant to social enterprises but also have broader implications. Inclusive social capital as an outcome of development program can be used by international development agencies, national and provincial government departments and NGOs as a measure of social value creation. To the extent inclusive social capital leads to community ownership, it can also be used as a policy strategy and a tool

by the development agencies to address the problem of elite capture. Extant development literature is full of evidences where community development program often results in elite capture (Dasgupta & Beard, 2007; Fritzen, 2007; Platteau, 2004; Platteau & Gaspart, 2003). Elite capture can happen at any stage of the program implementation: at the beginning; during early stage; and at the late stage (Lund & Saito-Jensen, 2013; Platteau & Abraham, 2002; Platteau et al, 2014).

There are several references in the literature, where it was noticed that if and when the implementation agencies leave without any proper exit strategy, the powerful members of the community may hijack the processes and capture the resources (Platteau & Gaspart, 2003). Without providing much guidance, Fritzen (2007) suggest that structuring of development programs might be related to lower risk of elite capture. My research findings provide initial insights into the mechanisms that might help reduce the risk of elite capture. The social enterprises that structure their program with a long-term orientation and a deeper engagement with the community, as well as balances the material (economic) and non-material (social) dimension, can be instrumental in instilling new norms and practices and challenging the status hierarchies. Thus, the process of building inclusive social capital can ensure the social sustainability of development program, avoid perpetual dependencies on the external agencies, and circumvent elite capture.

The research findings also shed light on how to ensure the participation of the most marginalized in the development programs. Inequalities and exclusion of marginalized communities, based on their caste, gender and economic status, from development activities has been a major concern of the development agencies (World Bank 2015; 2013). The extant research has argued that social inequality and hierarchies often leave the poorest

with “threadbare social networks” (Clever, 2005), and these relations of inequality prevent them from taking action or even aspiring for change (Appadurai, 2004; Classen et al, 2008; Qureshi, Sutter & Bhatt, 2017; Riaz & Qureshi, 2016). In such a social context, some researchers suggest that the most marginalized can challenge structural inequalities by building heterogeneous community ties (Narayan 1999; Classen et al 2008). However, these streams of research also conclude that there is little evidence or roadmap to the formation of such heterogeneous community ties (Classen et al 2008). My research identifies the mechanisms that are conducive in building these social ties. The findings suggest that in the hierarchical communities, development agencies must understand the social dynamics of the communities before implementing their programs. Instead of relying on the ‘quick’ access techniques of distributing free inputs, or offering other monetary incentives, a long-term engagement with the community is necessary. This research recommends that the economic activities of social enterprises must be preceded by social activities. These social activities could include, but not limited to, conducting village-level activities, such as organizing fairs, screening movies, and celebrating social festivals that require community members to come together, sit and eat together, to instill the values of inclusion, and to create mutual understanding, and interdependency.

International institutions like the World Bank increasingly view social enterprises as an agent to further their mission of reducing poverty and as a sustainable means of creating impact in private sector, and the governments (World Bank, 2016). However, the policy of the Bank in nurturing social enterprises through grants and loans still falls within the framework of inclusive business that predominantly focuses on scalability, profitability, and bankability (ADB, 2016). The exclusive focus on scalability is a result of

emerging phenomenon of impact investing, where investment goes to those social enterprises that show potential for high scalability and offer a high return on investment. Social enterprises are encouraged and sometimes pressured into achieving fast growth and scalability.

My research demonstrates that such an approach is fraught with problems and runs counter to generating inclusive social capital. When a social enterprise is focused on scale and profits, it may not allocate sufficient resources, time, and attention to specific dynamics within the villages and might not take into account various tensions and conflicts. Constant preoccupation with fast growth might force social enterprises to target rich and capable clients instead of poor and marginalized because that way the measure of success is guaranteed (Li, 1999). It has also been noticed that when scalability and profitability are the goals, the performance of field staff is measured by the numbers of members added, groups created or the number of villages covered, instead of their deep engagement, long-term commitment, and role in community mobilization. The approach of short attention span, superficial engagement, and lack of understanding of social dynamics has no potential in creating inclusive social capital and a meaningful participation of community members.

Instead of an exclusive focus on scale and profit, this research advises a balance between financial sustainability and social objectives and recommends optimal scaling speed that can be achieved without compromising the social mission. Donors, development agencies, and government bodies that provide financial resources to social enterprises should adopt a holistic view around scale and should facilitate optimal scaling that is not detrimental to social objectives. Scaling expectations that are firmly rooted in the social

context in which social enterprises operates, and support long-term finance, without expecting a high return on investment (e.g. patient capital by Acumen Fund) have the potential to ensure an appropriate balance between social and financial goals. Development agencies that are committed to long-term community impact should be attuned with cultural and social complexities of the region they are involved (Rao & Walton, 2004; Riaz & Qureshi, 2016). The goal of the international development agencies should be to commit human and financial resources to foster social enterprises that are engaged in the difficult task of challenging the status hierarchies and power relations by building inclusive social capital. This is a task that by its very nature is not amenable to fast growth and quick scalability, as each region and sometimes each village might present very distinct challenges to overcome and generate inclusive social capital.

This research also offers insights on the implementation process of programs. In the current development parlance, it is generally assumed that the best way to implement any development program is through group formation (Burney & Naylor, 2012; Edwards, 1999; Rivera & Coming, 1990). The assumptions behind this received wisdom seem that it is financially and logistically difficult to engage each individual and it is cumbersome and intractable to engage entire village. Thus, groups form a good middle ground between interacting with the individual and interacting with the village. It is argued, in the rural context, due to access issues, such a group approach can potentially result in scale economies, promote collective action, and increase bargaining strength of the members in market transactions for land, labor, as well as outputs (Bernard & Spielman, 2009; Fischer & Qaim, 2012; Desai & Joshi 2014).

The legitimacy of groups as an operational unit further gained ground with the

often-touted success of self-help and micro-credit groups. It has been argued that group based microfinance program has been successful in building social capital in the community which in turn empowered women and their collective action. However, the success of these groups was more often measured in terms of their operational efficiencies rather than their ability to generate inclusive social capital. In fact, in most of the cases, these groups are self-organized, the social capital is an antecedent for the formation of these groups. Furthermore, in group formation, the homogeneity - members from same social-economic status - is encouraged by the implementing agencies. For example, many village development schemes currently running in India, including National Rural Livelihoods Mission, Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas; Tejaswini Rural Women Empowerment Program, use group-based approach and also advocate for homogeneous groups. However, findings from my research demonstrate that homogeneous groups further consolidate the bonding capital at the expense of bridging social capital and thus have no potential of building inclusive social capital. Instead of homogeneous groups, this research proposes forming heterogeneous groups that are connected by the village level organizations and where leadership is shared between different social groups, i.e. have president and secretary from different castes. Furthermore, this research recommends development agencies to implement their programs at village level instead of group level. Village level implementation allows the agencies to target all the villagers despite their caste and gender and creates a discursive space where individual and social needs to people are taken into consideration and the resources and assets of the village can be utilized. It also suggests that degree of participatory implementation is important. The target members of the programs should be included in every aspect of program design, implementation,

and decision making. To that extent, bottom-up implementation of the program is better than top-down implementation (Betts & Bloom, 2013; DFID, 2012).

In summary, my recommendations to the development agencies, government bodies, and social enterprises are: a) whenever possible implement program at village level; b) structure the program in such a way that it has high degree of participatory implementation; c) achieve balance between social and financial sustainability through deeper level engagement with the community and optimal scalability; and d) engage in a plurality of programs to address a diversity of interests.

7.1 Limitations and Future Research

The findings from the four cases provide useful insights for development policy and theory. However, no research is without limitations, and these limitations signal useful avenues for future research. Summarized below are limitations and future research directions.

First, although multiple cases and multiple data collection techniques used in this research provide an opportunity for rich description and in-depth understanding, the findings of this research offer limited generalizability (Naumes & Naumes, 2006, Yin, 2009) due to the purposive selection of the cases. The observations and insights provided in this thesis are what I observed in these four cases. To the extent the contextual factors of other cases might be different, the observations may or may not be replicated. For example, all the cases in this study were involved in livelihood (income generation) activities. It will be interesting to replicate this study for the cases of social enterprises that are engaged in Madhya Pradesh but are not involved in livelihood activities.

Second, this research was conducted in a single province in India. The choice to select all the cases from the same province was helpful in increasing internal validity, as villages chosen for all the cases were very similar. Even though this province has a population of 73.34 million (only 18 countries have a higher population than this) with deeply entrenched poverty and social inequality, the findings of this research may or may not be applicable to other developing countries due to different social and economic context. It would be interesting to replicate this study in other developing countries with similar levels of poverty and social norms.

Third, being a person who spent my formative years in India, I bring an emic (insider) perspective to bear on the cases studied in this thesis. This is generally recognized as a strength because this helps the researcher understand the situation better than a person who is not embedded in the socio-cultural milieu. However, this may also represent a potential limitation of the study. Sometimes an etic (outsider) perspective is more revealing as the *etic* researcher does not take any observation for granted and questions each piece of information available to him or her, because this information may not be consistent with the *etic* researcher's frame of reference. Such questioning may bring forth many exciting new insights, which I might have missed because I might have "taken-them-for-granted" even though I took extreme care and bracketed my pre-conceived notions and used reflexivity. Future researchers may form a team of *emic* and *etic* scholar to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

Fourth, while I made various attempt to triangulate my findings, the field research was conducted when the projects were already started in some of the villages. In those villages the interviewees recalled their experiences about their social capital before the

project was implemented; however, I also covered several villages where I was able to see projects from the beginning. Moreover, even the villages where I could see projects right from the beginning, 21 months of data collection was just sufficient enough to see the development of inclusive social capital. It would be interesting to conduct a longitudinal study where projects are not implemented in any villages before the study starts. Such study will not suffer from any recall biases, and the objective data on social capital may be collected before and after the project is implemented.

Fifth, one interesting emergent finding of this research was how partnering decisions with local government helped *Gamma* and *Delta* to use economic resources to implement their programs and generate inclusive social capital. However, how these partnerships are built and sustained was outside of the scope of this research. As this theme emerged from the field research, no systematic research design could be used to study how partnerships are built. This, too, presents an interesting opportunity for future research.

Sixth, this research explored the degree of participatory implementation and its impact on inclusive social capital. There is a possibility that the degree of participatory implementation might be dependent on the formal and informal governance structure (and legal form) of the social enterprises. The interaction between participatory implementation of the program and the governance structure of the organization provide an interesting avenue for future research.

Seventh, as social enterprises are relatively new type of organization, the question of accountability has not been very well researched. However, we know from research in non-profit sector that it is subjected to downward, upward, and horizontal accountability (Ebrahim, 2010). The same should be true for social enterprise sector, with additional

complexity that emerges from the hybrid nature and dual mission of social and financial sustainability. Future research should explore accountability issues in social enterprises through the lenses of stakeholder theory and stewardship theory (Mason, Kirkbride & Bryde, 2007).

Eight, this research found that higher scaling speed is not conducive to building inclusive social capital. However, the motivation for scaling speed was not explored in this research. Specifically, it may be interesting to know the motivations behind high scaling speed of some of the social enterprises. Are there normative and mimetic pressures? Are there network effects or some other natural monopoly potential in play? The *why* behind the motivations to scale is important and provides an interesting avenue for future research.

Finally, the focus of this study was on the mechanisms used by social enterprises in structuring their livelihood related programs with the beneficiaries, and the impact of these structuring decisions on inclusive social capital. While it would be interesting to learn the motivations of these social enterprises, it was beyond the scope of this research. The research questions such as why some social enterprises prioritize social mission over economic missions or where does the social spirit come from or impact of the philosophy of the founder on the functioning of the social enterprise, all provide useful avenues for future work.

7.2 Transferability of the recommendations

The intent of this research was to arrive at an in-depth understanding of structuring of various participatory activities and their effects on inclusive social capital through in-depth study of four cases. Case studies have implications for other contexts, but the

implications are generally left implicit (O'Reilly 2005), and even when they are explicitly stated, every care is taken to provide contextual boundaries and peculiarities under which they are applicable (Silverman, 2013). What case study narratives do make explicit is the theoretical insights obtained from these thick descriptions (Geertz, 1994; Ponterotto, 2006). To the extent I could provide thick descriptions and a synthesis of various data sources and data types, I believe the transferability of the findings has been enhanced (Bechky, 2006; Freeman, 2014; Geertz, 1994; Ponterotto, 2006).

The multi-stage nature of the study has also helped increase the transferability of research findings (Moustakas, 1994; Payne & Williams, 2005; Schofield, 2002). For this reason, I believe, I have provided sufficient contextual information regarding the cases to enable readers to draw their own parallels between the cases in this thesis and their own settings (Corbin & Strauss 2008; Lincoln & Guba 1985; Ruddin 2006; Seale 2002). Below, I summarize the contextual aspects of this study and its transferability.

This research was conducted in India, which is the seventh-largest country in the world in terms of land mass and has 17.5% of the world's population, making it the second most populous country after China (British Council, 2015). Despite being one of the fastest growing economies, India is home to around 40% of the world's poor, with just under 30% of the population living below the poverty line and it ranked 128th in the Human Development Index (HDI) (CIA website). In addition, the heterogeneity in social life (differences among provinces, cultures, and social practices), and social economic inequality based on gender caste and class, make it a rich context in which to understand the transformative potential of social enterprises.

Moreover, Madhya Pradesh, where all the four social enterprises were engaged in

their activities, is one of the poorest provinces in India that resembles the poorest 26 countries on many socio-economic indicators (UNICEF, 2016). To that extent, the importance of livelihood activities and gender issues may be as salient in those countries as they are in Madhya Pradesh. Research insights and recommendations from my research, especially in relation to village level coverage, degree of participatory implementation, and plurality of programs to accommodate diversity of interests -may be transferable to the social enterprises that are engaged in livelihood programs and are interested in developing inclusive social capital.

Similarly, elite capture is a phenomenon that is observed in most of the heterogeneous societies (Dasgupta & Beard, 2007; German et al, 2013; Iversen et al, 2006; Labonne & Chase, 2009; Pan & Christiaensen, 2012), where heterogeneity might arise because of gender, ethnicity, or economic classes. The findings of my research indicate that in this context, whether it is in Africa, Latin America, or Asia, a focus on generating inclusive social capital might represent an antidote to elite capture.

Finally, impetus on scalability of social enterprises is a global phenomenon. There are reasonable concerns that unfettered scaling leads to mission drift of social enterprises, as was observed in the microfinance meltdown in India in 2010. In my research, I also found that overt emphasis on scalability was responsible for *Alpha* to lose sight of the social sustainability. I believe these findings are transferable to the contexts where social enterprises are engaged in the livelihood generating activities in the social milieu that is similar to Madhya Pradesh, such as in rural Africa, Latin America and Asia.

It is my expectation that findings in this dissertation will be useful to understand the structuring decisions social enterprises make, the implementation mechanisms they use,

and the scaling speed they adopt that are conducive to, or not, generate inclusive social capital. I also believe my findings will be useful to development agencies, government bodies, and social investment organizations to appreciate the importance of generating inclusive social capital in alleviating discriminatory practices and breaking down the power relations which are prerequisite to social change.

Appendix A Steps taken for credibility and dependability of research

Important research consideration	What they mean	How I implement them
Reflexivity (Brewer, 2000; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Watt, 2007)	Conscious awareness of the context of knowledge construction, including researchers own biases, through the research process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Research diary ○ Observational note ○ Methodological note ○ Theoretical note ○ Analytical memo * Faithful recording of various problems that arose in the data collection process * Conscious recording of various choices made in the field and their potential implications on the research findings * Constantly considering rival explanations and various ways the data may be organized and how that might affect my interpretation
Bracketing (Merriam, 2009; Morgan & Smircich, 1980)	Method to mitigate the potentially harmful effects of preconceptions on research process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Constant reminder of my personal biases arising from emic perspective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ideology, culture, gender and education * Do not let understanding obtained through literature review override or taint my observation in the field * Frequent check for credibility, dependability, triangulation, and transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) * Constantly interacted with other scholars who are familiar with the context to expose any biases that might have crept in. * Capture information from the perspective of the participants and check with them whether the data so obtained make sense to them

<p>Triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Merriam, 2009; Seale, 1999; Patton 2002)</p>	<p>To check and establish validity in the research by analyzing a research question from multiple perspectives, sources, and/or methods.</p>	<p>* I ensured <i>methodological triangulation</i> through employing multiple methods of data collection. For example, to ascertain degree of participatory organization of activities, I a) conducted interviews with the participants; b) conducted group interviews; c) observed activities of the participants; d) read social enterprises' archival information such as organization's records and documents on how various activities are structured.</p> <p>* I ensured <i>data triangulation</i> through use of data from different sources of information. For example, for understanding the degree and inclusiveness of social capital I interviewed: a) beneficiaries; b) social enterprise staff; and c) other stakeholders. The interviews related to same social enterprise but conducted in different places were compared for data triangulation. Similarly, interviews conducted in the same villages but in different stages were compared for data triangulation.</p> <p>* I ensured <i>investigator triangulation</i> through constant interaction with other field based scholars, who were aware of research context and were working in the same region albeit on different projects. Given the nature of study, i.e. independent and individual dissertation, exhaustive investigator triangulation was not possible; however, regular exchange of notes and interpretation with other scholars was helpful in achieving at least some level of investigator triangulation.</p>
<p>Transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lewis & Ritchie, 2003; Payne & Williams, 2005)</p>	<p>The degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings (transferability findings is assessed by user)</p>	<p>* To ensure transferability, I resorted to <i>thick descriptions</i> of the context, processes, and observations. I provide highly descriptive and detailed presentation of research setting, participants, and findings, so that readers of my study can understand complex context in which social enterprises work and promote social interactions in variety of ways. Thick description provided in this study help readers to decide the applicability of my study in their context. I provide adequate evidences in the form of quotes, field notes, and excerpts from archival documents.</p> <p>* In addition, to ensure transferability, I carefully selected cases that have <i>maximum variation</i> on degree of participatory activities, as well as differences in the extent of coverage (group/community). Similarly, maximum variation (or diverse attributes) was given due care to select</p>

	rather than researcher)	interview participants, e.g., I selected participants from various communities, castes, gender, age group, and economic status.
Dependability (Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Merriam, 2009; Morse et al., 2008; Seale, 1999)	Findings should be consistent with the data presented.	* In addition to resorting to <i>reflexivity</i> and <i>triangulation</i> (as described above), I used <i>audit trail</i> method to increase dependability of my study. I maintained a journal of not only observations, experiences, and events but also of my thought processes, insights, and various choices I made in the design and analysis. I noted down extensively how I arrived at my findings/ results from my observations, interviews, and archival sources. I described in detail how data were collected, how they were summarized into manageable categories, and how I arrived at various themes of dominant discourses.

Appendix B Interviews with the social enterprise founders/ Executives

Interview Structure/ Schedule

(Interviews with the social enterprise founders/ Executives)

Title of Project: How do social enterprises build inclusive social capital? : An Exploratory Study

Babita Bhatt, (Doctoral Candidate)

(Norman Paterson School of International Affairs – Carleton University)

Note: The interviews conducted for this study were semi-structured. Thus, questions provided below represent sample. In actual interview, interviewer will ask follow-up questions based on the answers/ information provided by the interviewee.

Date: _____

Venue: _____

Time: _____

Introduction (5 minutes):

The interviewer (Babita Bhatt) will discuss the purpose of the study with the interviewee, which is how various mechanisms and processes used by social enterprise effects social capital in the community.

Preliminary questions (5 minutes):

The interviewer (Babita Bhatt) will introduce herself and ask the interviewee general questions about him/ her. An ice-breaker question or two will assist with

settling them in and relax the participant. For example a question related to the weather or overall economic situation.

Conduct of interview/ main questions (30 minutes, five minutes for each question and an extra five minutes, if necessary):

1. How do you organize your beneficiaries in income generating activities?
2. How decisions regarding implementing various programs are arrived at?
3. Do you involve beneficiaries in such decision making, and how?
4. When you implement your programs in any community what criteria do you use to define/ segment your beneficiaries? In other words, what are the requirements to be fulfilled by the community members to qualify to be your beneficiaries?
5. Would you be able to describe degree of social interactions amongst the community members when you first implemented your programs? Have you seen increase or decrease in social interactions amongst the community members since you implemented your programs?

Conclusion (5minutes):

Is there anything else you wish to add?

This entails a debriefing session, asking the participant if there is anything else they would like to add and asking are they happy with the interview. The interviewer (Babita Bhatt) will try to answer any questions in this section to ensure the participant understands the purpose of the study and what will happen with the findings.

Thank you for your time and participation.

(*all times are approximate, to be used as a guideline, as some sections will not take the allocated times.)

Appendix C Interviews with the staff of the social enterprise

Interview Structure/ Schedule

(Interviews with the staff of the social enterprise)

Title of Project: How do social enterprises build inclusive social capital? : An Exploratory Study

Babita Bhatt, (Doctoral Candidate)

(Norman Paterson School of International Affairs – Carleton University)

Note: The interviews conducted for this study will be semi-structure. Thus, questions provided below represent sample. In actual interview, interviewer will ask follow-up questions based on the answers/ information provided by the interviewee.

Date: _____

Venue: _____

Time: _____

Introduction (5 minutes):

The interviewer (Babita Bhatt) will discuss the purpose of the study with the interviewee, which is how various mechanisms and processes used by social enterprise effects social capital in the community.

Preliminary questions (5 minutes):

The interviewer (Babita Bhatt) will introduce herself and ask the interviewee general questions about him/ her. An ice-breaker question or two will assist with settling them in and relax the participant. For example a question related to the weather or their favorite sports.

Conduct of interview/ main questions (30 minutes, five minutes for each question and an extra five minutes, if necessary):

1. How do beneficiaries interact with your organization?

2. How do they interact with each other?
3. Are there regular meetings with the beneficiaries, and how such meetings are conducted?
4. Could you describe such meetings in detail?
5. Would you be able to describe degree of social interactions amongst the community members when you first implemented your programs? Have you seen increase or decrease in social interactions amongst the community members since you implemented your programs?

Conclusion (5minutes):

Is there anything else you wish to add?

This entails a debriefing session, asking the participant if there is anything else they would like to add and asking are they happy with the interview. The interviewer (Babita Bhatt) will try to answer any questions in this section to ensure the participant understands the purpose of the study and what will happen with the findings.

Thank you for your time and participation.

(*all times are approximate, to be used as a guideline, as some sections will not take the allocated times.)

Appendix D Group interviews with the staff of social enterprises

Group Interview Session Structure/ Schedule

(Group interviews with the staff of social enterprises)

Title of Project: How do social enterprises build inclusive social capital? : An Exploratory Study

Babita Bhatt, (Doctoral Candidate)

(Norman Paterson School of International Affairs – Carleton University)

NOTE: Text Marked in ****...**** represents additional reminders meant to guide
the focus group facilitator only

******The completion of the introductory section of the focus group should take
approximately 10-15 minutes******

I) Introduction and instructions:

Hello, my name is Babita Bhatt. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this
focus group meeting. Just to remind everyone, I am looking forward to your
views on how social enterprises build social capital

******Distribute the Name tags – Use only first names or if there is chance that participant
do want what to share their identities with each other then use pseudonym for the
participants******

In a minute, we will all introduce ourselves – please use first names only. But
first, I would like to walk you through the consent form that is in front of you.

******Review informed consent form and answer any questions about it. Collect signed
consent forms and ensure that participants have a copy of the letter of information to
take with them******.

Confidentiality: **read aloud**

Before we begin our discussion of how social enterprises build social capital, I want to spend a few moments talking about *confidentiality* and to go over some basic ground rules for our focus group discussion today:

- Everyone's views are welcomed and important.
- The information which we will collect today will be attributable (*connected or associated*) to you as a group.
- We will not identify quotes or ideas with *any one person* of this group. Because of the nature of small communities or groups, it is possible that people could link participants in this room to quotes in the report. This is why we need to talk about confidentiality.
- We *are* assuming that when we learn about one another's views, they remain confidential. In a small community (group) like this, people are identifiable to some degree by their views and opinions.
- Having said this, and having made these requests, you know that we cannot guarantee that the request will be honored by everyone in the room.
- So we are asking you to make only those comments that you would be comfortable making in a public setting; and to hold back making comments that you would not say publicly.
- Anything heard in the room should stay in the room.
- All voices are to be heard, so I will step in if too many people are speaking at once or to make sure that everyone has a chance to speak.
- I may also step in if I feel the conversation is straying off topic.
- After the discussion, I will invite you to fill in an anonymous "post-workgroup information sheet" to help me generally describe the kind of people who were part of the group today.
- You can expect this discussion group to last about 90 minutes.

Use of Tape Recorder

- As you will recall, this focus/discussion group will be recorded to increase accuracy and to reduce the chance of misinterpreting what anyone says.
- All tapes and transcripts will be kept under lock and key by my Supervisor Professor Christina Rojas or me.
- Names will be removed from transcripts. Participants will have coded numbers attached to their name which only I will know.
- Only my thesis supervisor and I will have access to transcripts (with personal names removed) of this focus group.
- For transcription purposes, I might remind you to say your first name for the first few times you speak so that when I'm transcribing the tape I can

get used to recognizing your voice. That will ensure we assign the correct code to each person's answers. I will give you a gentle reminder.

- I'll also ask that when using abbreviations or acronyms, you say the full name at least once to aid transcription.
- We may also use a "flip chart" to write down key points during the focus group and take notes.

At this point, group members can quickly introduce themselves –remind them that it is 'first names only'.

Hand out any materials (if applicable) that the participants will need during the focus group including pens or scrap paper. Give them a few minutes to read over any written material noting that they can make notes in the margins before the discussion begins

II. INTERVIEW

- Focus group discussion begins with the facilitator asking the first question.
- Open up discussion for general responses of participants to each question.
- Interview questions:
 - What are the best ways of involving beneficiaries in social enterprise activities?
 - How these various participatory activities help improve social interactions amongst the beneficiaries?
 - What are the advantages and disadvantages of implementing income generating projects are individual level, group level and community level?
 - Is there anything we forgot or something important that we should know about "how social enterprise build social capital?"

III. Wrap-up:

Remind participants that "what is said in the room should stay in the room".
Thank the participants.

Appendix E Interviews with the beneficiaries

Interview Structure/ Schedule

(Interviews with the beneficiaries)

Title of Project: How do social enterprises build inclusive social capital? : An Exploratory Study

Babita Bhatt, (Doctoral Candidate)

(Norman Paterson School of International Affairs – Carleton University)

Note: The interviews conducted for this study will be semi-structure. Thus, questions provided below represent sample. In actual interview, interviewer will ask follow-up questions based on the answers/ information provided by the interviewee.

Date: _____

Venue: _____

Time: _____

Introduction (5 minutes):

The interviewer (Babita Bhatt) will discuss the purpose of the study with the interviewee, which is how various mechanisms and processes used by social enterprise effects social capital in the community.

Preliminary questions (5 minutes):

The interviewer (Babita Bhatt) will introduce herself and ask the interviewee general questions about him/ her. An ice-breaker question or two will assist with settling them in and relax the participant. For example a question related to the weather or their favorite sports.

Conduct of interview/ main questions (30 minutes, five minutes for each question and an extra five minutes, if necessary):

6. What are the most important benefits you received from the social enterprise program(s)?
7. How do you interact with other beneficiaries for the program related activities?
8. Are there regular program related meetings, could you describe such meetings in detail?
9. How you will describe your role in the social enterprise activities?

10. How would you characterize your social interactions with other beneficiaries prior to social enterprise program implemented and after this program was implemented?

Conclusion (5minutes):

Is there anything else you wish to add?

This entails a debriefing session, asking the participant if there is anything else they would like to add and asking are they happy with the interview. The interviewer (Babita Bhatt) will try to answer any questions in this section to ensure the participant understands the purpose of the study and what will happen with the findings.

Thank you for your time and participation.

(*all times are approximate, to be used as a guideline, as some sections will not take the allocated times.)

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