Development theories have undergone several changes over the decades. During the 50s and 60s industrialisation was the primary concept of development. This model of development accentuates on replanting the historical experiences of the developed countries to developing countries for the purposes of high economic growth. Therefore to promote growth, strategies directed towards industrialisation were perused intensely. It became evident in the 70s that industrialization largely failed to improve standard of living for majority of population and benefited a certain segment of a society that was already well off leaving the majority of the population behind in developing countries. Being heavily criticised for the approach of industrialisation, development scholars felt the need for more humanitarian and welfare oriented approach. Therefore, the concept ‘sustainable development’ was invented which is highly emphasised in all development strategies and programmes currently. Sustainable social development is the concept of this study and it is defined in terms of improved healthcare, education and overall social wellbeing. It also emphasises on participation in public domains and accessing recourses and services.

The role of information and communication in development has always been highly emphasized however approaches of information and communication have been changing over the years. Today, more flexible and two-way information and communication approaches for development are highly emphasised in development strategies. In this context, Internet is perceived as a perfect tool for two-way information and communication. Internet is also seen as having great potentials to overcome the vast problems of developing countries and to enhance sustainable social development.

The main objective of this study is to find out whether Internet serves as a tool for sustainable social development in a developing country like Nepal. The main theoretical assumption is that Internet provides its users with a gateway to improve their healthcare, education and social wellbeing. Furthermore, it also provides improved accessibility to resources and services, and to participate in decision making process. Therefore, the users should use Internet to have access to the above mentioned purposes.

The main findings of this study suggests that there are a very few Internet users in Nepal and the users represent mainly rich and well educated elite class of the society. In general, majority of the users, do not use Internet for the purposes of social development in Nepal. In the Nepalese context, there are too many factors preventing Internet use in wider scope: high costs of access, high illiteracy rate, poor infrastructure, poor economy etc. Therefore, Internet is unlikely to serve as a tool of social development until the steps are taken to improve the preventing factors.

The empirical data of this study was collected by field interviews in Nepal. The other sources are various literatures on development and communication.